

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of April 26

Introduction

The fact that you are here is amazing. There is only one you on this unique planet. What if your parents had never met... or what if one of them had married another person? ... What if your parents' parents had never met? What if your parents had decided to stop with one child and you're the second? ... e.g. John Wesley was the 15th child of nineteen! When you stop and think about it, each of us is a miracle. And being BORN AGAIN is also a miracle.

Earth is amazing. Third from the sun, strategically rotating neither too close nor too far from the sun, we are told even the most secular scientists say there seems to be a super intellect behind the remarkable precision found on this big blue-green sphere of life. Certainly, even now, some One is ingeniously, creatively, carefully, and lovingly sustaining *LIFE* as we know it. And yet, Scripture says, there is something not right:

“For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22).

Background

Why is creation groaning? A good question and one many have pondered since the Fall of humanity. Creation groans because sin entered the world when the first man and woman chose to be like God instead of being *with* God and *loving* God. When sin entered the world, pain entered the world; the zest for real life (*zoe*) was torn away; the span of life (*bios*) was entangled with hardship. Yet, John gives us the Good News of God's Son – by looking to the Lord Jesus Christ – the One who is coming into the world, we can experience new life and be born from above.

Read John 3:1-21

Discussion:

- Nicodemus is a teacher of teachers and a member of the Sanhedrin. In his position as a respected member of the Jewish high council, part of his responsibility was to examine anyone who might be an imposter. Yet, when Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night, he sounds more like he is searching than demanding. What do Nicodemus' opening words say about his heart?

- Nicodemus asks Jesus: “Rabbi ... we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you” (John 3:2). Here is a teacher (a Pharisee, a Jewish religious leader) whose opening statement infers deeper questions. What else stands out to you regarding these first words Nicodemus says to Jesus?
- When Nicodemus says: “... we all know that God has sent you to teach us” do you wonder, if *they all knew*, where are they? Why is Nicodemus the only one, at least at this point, who is intentional about meeting with Jesus one-on-one?

Without the Spirit of God, we will not understand the miraculous signs pointing to Jesus. Jesus says, “unless you are born again (born from above), you cannot see the Kingdom of God” (v3). Even this explanation seems to puzzle Nicodemus: “How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?”

Discussion:

Look carefully at what Jesus says in vv5-8. After each phrase, write down what the Holy Spirit reveals to you.

- “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit” (v5).
- “Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again’” (v6-7).
- “The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit” (v8).

The word for *wind* translates the same as *pneuma*, the Greek word for *the Spirit*. People are born again only through faith. Jesus said, “... you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit” (v8). Billy Graham once told a famous TV personality: “You have to come by faith ... you'll never be able to reason it out. If you try to reason it out, you're sunk.” Nicodemus was trying to figure out how to be born again... but he couldn't. Searching is important, and searching for purpose and meaning is important. Yet, there must be a time we stop, surrender, and simply look to Jesus. Nicodemus had been a hard worker when it came to keeping the Law. Like many of us, he worked hard at religion. But Jesus says: *That is not enough. You must be born again. Look to me. This is how you are born again!*

When Nicodemus, a man with wealth, religion, and respect, asked “How are these things possible?” – it seems Jesus calls him out for not knowing better. Our attempt to control God will always end in disappointment and destruction. We cannot control the wind, and we cannot control the breath of God’s love, grace and salvation. We must submit to the force of His Spirit, and thereby undergo a radical change that begins to prepare us for transition from this earth to one day being acceptable before God in heaven.

Discussion:

- What causes perversion and confusion?
- Why must we trust the Spirit to give us new birth?
- How does Jesus further explain new life, salvation, and his mission in the world? **Re-read John 3:10-15 alongside Numbers 21:4-9.**

Each of us must look to Jesus. He is lifted up and taking our place in death on a cross. No one can look for us... we must each make that choice. Lift your eyes and trust in Christ. Have you looked up to Jesus? He loves you and has already paid the price to save you.

- Repent of sin.
- Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Obey him. Follow him.

Pray and Confess:

Lord, I have sinned, and I need you to save me. Lord, please forgive me of my sin, and help me to live for you. I cannot live the Christian life apart from your Holy Spirit. Please fill me with your Spirit and empower me to live for you. Lord, I trust you and receive you into my heart. Lord, please make my heart your home.
In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Read together John 3:16 (NKJV) –

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Close by reading John 3:22-36

One Year Bible Reading

- Apr. 26: Judges 6:1-40, Luke 22:54-23:12, Psalm 95:1-96:13, Proverbs 14:5-6
- Apr. 27: Judges 7:1-8:17, Luke 23:13-43, Psalm 97:1-98:9, Proverbs 14:7-8
- Apr. 28: Judges 8:18-9:21, Luke 23:44-24:12, Psalm 99:1-9, Proverbs 14:9-10
- Apr. 29: Judges 9:22-10:18, Luke 24:13-53, Psalm 100:1-5, Proverbs 14:11-
- Apr. 30: Judges 11:1-12:15, John 1:1-28, Psalm 101:1-8, Proverbs 14:13-14
- May 1: Judges 13:1-14:20, John 1:29-51, Psalm 102:1-28, Proverbs 14:15-16
- May 2: Judges 15:1-16:31, John 2:1-25, Psalm 103:1-22, Proverbs 14:17-19



Text: John 3:1-21, 22-36, Phil. 3:7-11, Titus 3:3-7

PLAIN TRUTH:

**Looking to Jesus as _____ moves us
from _____ life (bios) to
_____ life (zoe).**

- 1. Reinventing yourself is _____ and _____.**
- 2. The _____ is the only way to _____ life.**
 - a) _____ is what God has done FOR you and _____ is what God does IN you.
 - b) Regeneration is a newness of God’s grace and power that he does IN you.
 - c) Jesus has come down from heaven, so he could be lifted up. _____ to Him for _____ life!

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