

Transformation - John 3:1-10

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast.! I will walk by faith and not by sight.

Well, good morning and welcome to Calvary Chapel Charlotte. You can turn to John chapter 3, beginning John 3. So exciting. It took us five weeks to get through John 1 and then two weeks to get through John 2.

It's going to take us a little while to get through John 3. There's so much here. Lord willing, we'll get through 10 verses today. So last week we finished up John chapter 2. We saw we had those two events given to us.

Right after Jesus has begun to call his disciples at the end of John chapter 1, he then goes up to Galilee. We have this quick account in Galilee at the wedding feast at Cana.

And then still in John chapter 2, the next thing is his cleansing the temple. So he's gone from Galilee, he's back down to Jerusalem. Really quick. Chronologically, as you look at the scripture, like in the harmonizing of the Gospels, it appears like these events happen first.

[1 : 42] That you have Cain of Galilee, and then right after that you have the Passover that he goes down, cleanses the temple the first time. The other Gospels give an account where it's right before his crucifixion, his trial and crucifixion, a second time.

So he goes down and he cleanses the temple. And we saw how with both, with the water to wine and the cleansing of the temple, they were kind of, in a sense, mirror images or two sides of one coin.

Where Jesus first brought conversion, where he brought the water to wine, and then came cleansing, where he cleansed the temple. But they both were something that was ceremonial, something of the law, and Jesus made them into something so much more.

The water, he turned to wine. The temple, the structure, he said, well, of the temple of my body, I will raise up this body in three days. Something so much more.

And something that we saw we can take part in. We can take part in those things. We can take part in transformation. We can take part in cleansing. But John 3 then, with all that's been happening, Jesus is the word made flesh who dwelt among us from John 1.

[2 : 46] In John 2 and 3, this idea of transformation, I mean John 2, transformation and cleansing. We're going to continue to look today, as he gets into John 3 here with Nicodemus, this idea of transformation.

Jesus is going to bring this to the forefront. This is the first teaching that we have of Jesus in the scriptures. The first time he's actually taught that he's going to give doctrine, give teaching. We have his words that he's spoken to the disciples in John 1 and then in John 2.

But here we're going to see now it's his first time as he teaches. So would you pray with me? Lord, we just offer up this time to you, Lord. Our times and our seasons are in your hands, Lord.

Whether the times change or not, you don't. And we thank you for that, Lord. We thank you that you remain the same, Lord. We thank you for your word settled in heaven, in the heavens, Lord. It will neither change, Lord, or be movable, Lord.

It is a solid rock in our lives. And that's because it represents who you are, Jesus. You are the word made flesh. And Lord, you are just as solid as your word. And you're just as true in our lives. And I thank you, Lord, that what we know of you is not just by experience.

[3 : 49] And it's not just by knowledge. But the two come together so perfectly, Lord, that we can fellowship with you. We can receive from you. You've given us your Holy Spirit to understand the scripture, to understand how to apply it to our lives.

And Lord, our lives in essence are so short. And even the time that we have, Lord, even if we want to give as much time as we have, we can't spend all of our time studying, Lord, and in your word. So, Lord, we have to accept that you've given us enough to know you sufficiently, to enter into a relationship with you that will last into eternity. And then we will know as we are known.

Today, Lord, give us our portion. Let the scripture encourage us, Lord, to refresh us and give us a hunger, a real hunger, Lord, for more of you. We love you.

In Jesus' name, amen. So, as we start in John chapter 3, we all know one of the verses it contains, right? Probably the most famous verse in the Bible in the sense that it's most off-quoted in the Bible. [4 : 50] John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever, whosoever would believe in him would not perish, but would have actively, currently, presently, eternal, age-abiding life.

It would never end. And most likely in our salvation story, that probably was involved somewhere in there. John 3, 16. The majority of us probably had somewhere where that was involved in us coming to know the Lord.

And as we see Jesus beginning, in a sense, his teaching ministry, the first time that he will begin to teach the word, we know from John 1 that in him was life.

And the life was the light of men, the illumination of men. That was the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world. So Jesus now, we will see the word made flesh offering light and life to the world.

Offering to the world something that only he can bring. And how does he give that? Does he give that through an experience? Well, kind of. I mean, you have to experience Jesus.

[5 : 58] I know that's like a word, like, oh, today, you know, I want to encounter God. I want to experience God. You can go too far with that. But you have to experience Jesus. You have to encounter him. You can't just not, like, well, I only just know about him, but I've never experienced him or encountered him.

You have to. There is a part there that has to take place. But it's not just experiencing Jesus. It's not just, well, I rubbed up against him once in Harris Teeter, you know, and like, I feel pretty good now. It's not just that, well, I've seen him turn water to wine or I've seen him feed the 5,000. You know, I heard some of his teachings, but, you know, the main thing is I experienced him.

No, no, no. Well, you can go too far the other way. And be like, oh, I have studied the teachings of Jesus. Well, how has that impacted your life? What have you experienced about Jesus? Have you encountered him through that?

No, he's just like any other teacher, just like any other historical writings. They're just interesting.

You know, there's some good stuff in there. No, they have to go together. Jesus is the full package or he's no package, right?

[7 : 00] It's either all of Jesus or it's none of Jesus. He doesn't come piecemeal. And so Jesus will begin to do what? He will offer light and life in himself, the word made flesh.

But how does he do that? By teaching, by teaching the word. And what do we have? Well, I don't have the experience of Jesus, the physical experience, the person of Jesus. But I do get to experience the presence of God through the word and through the Holy Spirit.

So Jesus will begin to teach. And remarkably, his first teaching is not to the people, right? Most of his ministry is teaching the people, the group of people, whoever they are, the people.

He teaches the common people. He teaches those who are interesting or interested. He teaches people who aren't very interesting, too. Believe me, he teaches me. But he taught a person.

But this person essentially represents the best that the people would have to offer. This was the best guy. If you were going to offer, like, okay, who's going to go and represent, like, what is the best that we could offer to kind of put before Jesus?

[8 : 05] This is that guy. This is Nicodemus. If you look in your bulletins, I put an outline. And it's usually just kind of very broadly showing some breakdown of how you could break the scripture down that goes to our theme.

Today's is more broken down how I believe the conversation is going through this text. And so we don't get lost. It's kind of following what's on the screen.

It's a little more spelled out on the screen. Verse 10 will begin that last heading, but we will not get into that until next week. So what is happening here? Jesus is going to begin speaking about transformation. It's going to blow Nicodemus' mind.

But verse 1 and 2, Nicodemus comes and he begins to state things to Jesus. And what he's essentially doing is he's stating the obvious. He's saying, hey, man has no inward reality with God. Now, Nicodemus doesn't say that. But what he states just shows that that is so. He's stating something very obvious as he comes to state these things to Jesus. In verse 3, Jesus then asserts that a transformation is required to see God.

[9:09] Jesus says, hey, there is something that's required that to see God, there will be a transformation. Nicodemus in verse 4 will essentially ask, how can that be? How can you undo sin? How can we turn back the clock? Oh, that was in the flow of it, guys. And then Jesus in verse 5 and 8 through 8, he gives that process.

He says it's a process and a presence that's needed to undo sin. So Nicodemus then, he says, okay, how can it be possible? Jesus tells him how it's possible. And Nicodemus then says, well, how then do I essentially receive that?

How is it possible for me to enter into that? He says, how can sin be undone? Jesus will say, here's how. Nicodemus will then say, well, then how is it possible for me? And Jesus will show how transformation is possible and obtainable through verse 10, through the end.

So as we jump into the text here in verse 1, first we have Nicodemus coming. And he's stating something to Jesus, which is interesting. Because Jesus says in verse 3, we'll answer him.

[10:14] But he never asks a question. And we'll get to that in a minute. But there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. Nicodemus means victory of the people. This is the people's guy.

This is the best they got. This is the victory of the people. A ruler of the Jews. A Pharisee. A man that was a Pharisee. A ruler of the Jews.

So a ruler of the Jews would mean he was probably part of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin, you'd have a ruling class called the Sanhedrin of Jews in each town. And so this would be the one that he would be in Jerusalem. This is like top at the top, guys.

And he was a Pharisee. The Pharisees, they came after the Jewish exile. So Israel is exiled out of the land. They go into the Babylonian captivity. They come back. And they established then this quasi-spiritual, religious, hierarchical order called the Pharisees.

It's not something that scripture establishes. It's something they established. The people did. They promoted outward observances of external acts and rights.

[11:17] They promoted national identity. There's more than 6,000 of them. And these are those that throughout the Gospels will accuse Jesus of ambition, of being a glutton, of being disrespectful to them, of all kinds of things.

These are the guys. They're the ones there that are representing the spiritual barometer in Israel. Nicodemus will eventually come to Jesus again.

Well, not to Jesus. He will come and be part of Jesus' story at the crucifixion. So we know Nicodemus will eventually believe. And as we get into other parts of the Gospels and even into Acts, we'll see that there's groups of Pharisees that believe, but they're all kind of a little afraid to say anything.

We're going to see that here about Nicodemus. Nicodemus here representing the best that the people had to offer, but it was all based on what?

Outward. An outward act. Nicodemus will recognize who Jesus is, but not based on who Jesus is.

[12:27] It's who he thinks he is by his own perception. Paul, if you remember, in Philippians, he will essentially give the same credentials that Nicodemus could come with and say here.

Paul says, He's like, hey, I want up Nicodemus. Circumcised the eighth day.

Of the stock of Israel. Of the tribe of Benjamin. A Hebrew of Hebrews. As touching the law of Pharisee. Concerning zeal. Persecuting the church. Touching the righteousness which is in the law. Blameless. Guys, I was the people's guy. And what's verse 7, Paul says in Philippians. Yeah, but that doesn't matter anymore. I don't want to talk about that.

I want to talk about Jesus. What things were gained in me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Nicodemus, who appeared to have everything going for him. He seems to have understood that Jesus had something more.

[13:30] Somehow, this guy Jesus that just shows up. And I don't know what he knew of him, but they knew he cleansed the temple. And he said, this is my father's house. And so he comes to him.

In verse 2, and he came to Jesus by night. And he said to him, Rabbi. Master. Teacher. We know that you are a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that you do.

Except God be with him. There's no question in there. He's making a statement. The phrase Pharisee, singular. Nicodemus here. He was a Pharisee, it says. Or of the Pharisees. But he's coming alone. The phrase Pharisees, when you see a Pharisee alone, is mentioned eight times in the Bible. Pharisees, plural, is ten times that. Eighty times. These guys were always in a group. It's like none of them wanted to go to Jesus alone. They were way too afraid. They would always go in groups. You very rarely see them alone with Jesus. And here he comes alone.

[14:29] But how does he come? Well, he came by night. I think that tells us a few things about this man. We know first he's alone. He seems like there's some fear there. That there's some shame.

He came alone. He came afraid. He came ashamed. He didn't want anyone to know. He's like, oh, I can't. I really want to go and talk to Jesus. And he says to him, we know. So it seems like there's some other people as well that are like, we want to know about Jesus too.

So Nicodemus, you go and ask him. I mean, you're the best guy. You're most qualified to go and stand toe to toe to Jesus. But he came without understanding. He didn't understand Jesus.

I think for you and I, just like Nicodemus, the main point is he came. He came. He was alone. He was afraid. He was ashamed. He didn't have complete understanding.

But he came. How many times have I come to Jesus? And I would have to say, you can only have come to Jesus alone. I'm sure you came ashamed, possibly a little afraid, without complete understanding.

[15:33] But then you found Jesus. And like Nicodemus, you realize you got a whole lot more than you were counting on. Nicodemus, he came willing to receive.

He doesn't specifically ask a question, but Jesus will begin to talk to him and respond to him. And he's not like, well, you're just crazy. What are you talking about? I don't need this. No, he's receiving it. The Pharisees, like we said, they seem to come in groups.

In John 12, 42, it says, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him. But because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

Like, oh, I can't really say anything. It's going to really affect my career direction. And, you know, I just can't say anything. No matter how large our group may be, we must come to Jesus alone.

There is no other way. But Nicodemus recognizes something about Jesus, which I think is remarkable. Jesus will say later on in the chapter, he will say, are not you the master, the teacher, the master, the teacher of Israel?

[16:36] He's the guy. And yet he comes to Jesus and says, Rabbi, he recognizes Jesus is greater. We know you're from God. He recognizes Jesus is origin. We know that God is with you for no man can do these things except God be with him.

And he recognizes Jesus is ability as divine. Nicodemus recognizes Jesus as one who is of greater knowledge, greater origin, greater ability.

So he's a man coming willing to receive from Jesus, even though he doesn't completely understand him. But he wants to know more. But he still thinks Jesus is what?

Well, he still thinks of him as a man. Because we know you are a man. Perhaps, though, perhaps Nicodemus thinks, well, maybe this greater man, maybe he can help me become a greater man as well.

Because Nicodemus has everything on the outside. He's got it all. But what does he know he doesn't have? There's something missing. There's something. Perhaps this greater man, Jesus, could help me be a greater man.

[17:44] His focus is all external. But external accomplishments cannot fill an inner emptiness. No matter what my external accomplishments are, it's not going to do anything to fill this inner emptiness.

And I think you probably know that yourselves. Have you ever ordered anything off Amazon?

Before you get it, it's the most exciting, fulfilling thing. Like, this will be it. This is what I really need in my life. Once I get this, you get it.

You open it. It's like, yeah, that's great. And then you're scrolling on your phone a little few hours later. If I could just add to that, that'll do it. No matter how great our outer accomplishment is, it can't fill that inner need, that inner emptiness.

And Jesus will now rock Nicodemus' world by telling him it is not a greater man that's needed. It is a new man. Nicodemus, you'll never reach what you're seeking.

You need something new. And here in verse 3, Jesus now will assert that transformation is required to see God. Nicodemus essentially stated, hey, I don't have this.

[18 : 41] Because all I recognize of you, Jesus, is that which is external. So I realize I don't have something internal. And so Jesus now is going to assert that inner transformation is required.

Jesus answered. Again, did Nicodemus ask a question? No, but Jesus gives the answer because he is the answer. In the beginning was the word. The word was with God.

And the word was God. Guys, we are not the answer. We're not the answer for other people. We're not the answer for their needs. But we do have an answer that we can give them.

As 1 Peter 3.15 says, To sanctify, to set apart, to put him in a place that nobody else holds in your life, the Lord God in your hearts. I do have an answer. And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is within you with meekness and fear.

You should have a reason. And you should have hope. And you should have a God sanctified in your heart. If any of those things are not there, you're not going to be able to give someone an answer.

[19 : 45] I believe in Jesus. Yeah, but he's just one among many good things in my life. You know? Hope. A reason of the hope that's in my life. Can someone look at my life and say, boy, you got something that I don't have.

Despite all of my accomplishments. Jesus knows the answers to the questions that we are all asking, even when we don't know how to ask them. As Nicodemus comes and just makes this statement.

He says, you're a great guy, Jesus. You came from God and you're doing things from God. This is really cool of you, Jesus. What is Jesus here behind that? I wish I had what you had. I wish I knew what you knew, Jesus.

And Jesus says to him, as he says so many times in the Gospels, truly, truly. I say unto you.

I say unto you, Nicodemus. He doesn't just say. It's personal. Everything Jesus says is not just true, but truly true. Really true. And this one who Nicodemus recognized as master, teacher, and divine, he will speak truth to Nicodemus, to the individual, to him personally.

[20 : 56] And if the one that is a master and teacher and divine does not personally speak to me, I've got nothing. I certainly have nothing to offer anybody else. And I don't just mean John 3, 16.

Well, I've believed God so loved the world. And I'm a believer. And I don't have to have Jesus. My master, teacher, and the one who's divine. He needs to be speaking to my life. Or I have nothing to give anyone.

What do I have if I don't have his true words? Nicodemus, his view is all external. Jesus is all internal. Nicodemus, God is with man.

And Jesus, God needs to be in man. A man, man, no matter how good he is or how much he knows or how great his deeds, is unable to do what, says Jesus?

To see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says, Jesus, you're great. You've done many great things. Great deeds. You know so much.

[21 : 53] And Jesus says, well, no man can qualify himself for the kingdom of God. What is required to be in the kingdom of God? To see, to perceive, to experience God's kingdom requires a new birth.

A new source. A new life. Birth. What is it? Birth is entering into life at someone else's instigation. The conception.

The carrying. The delivery. The bringing to life. The person who is experiencing being born has no part in any of that except to experience it. Except to be there.

You know, it's not like you, ding, ding, ding, on the umbilical cord. It's time. Get me out of here. Right? It doesn't work that way. Birth is just entering into life completely at someone else's instigation.

Birth means what? A new life. A new person. A new arrival. And a never before experienced event for that person who's being born. So Jesus is saying, for you to see the kingdom of God, Nicodemus, you must have a new life.

[22 : 57] You must be a new person. You have to have a new arrival. And you have to have something in your life you've never experienced before. You must be born again. There's absolutely

no other way for us to enter into this life than by how?

This life. Anybody else get here other than birth? Please don't say yes. Then we got other things to talk about. No.

Even Jesus was born what? A man. He came as a baby. He didn't come as some celestial being. He became a man to enter into this life with us.

Why? So that he would give the ability so we could enter into a life with him. So he says new birth. He's just saying you need something. You need a new life, Nicodemus. You need a new source. You need a new. You got to be a new person.

And you've never experienced this, Nicodemus. I want to look briefly at this phrase, the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? Well, the Pharisees asked the same thing to Jesus. They demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come in Luke 17.

[23 : 58] And Jesus responds and says, the kingdom of God does not come with observation. Neither shall they say, lo, here, lo, there. Here it is. There it is. Let me give you directions. Put in your Google Maps.

You'll get there. Now behold, the kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God is not something currently that is visibly seen or partaken of, like going to another state or town or whatever.

The kingdom of God is also, when you'll see through scripture, you'll see the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. They appear synonymous because when you look at the other gospels, where kingdom of God is used primarily in John, and kingdom of heaven in Matthew, they parallel each other.

They'll cross over. It seems they're the same thing. They're just emphasizing different things. So the kingdom of God would emphasize who is the king. The kingdom of heaven emphasizes where it is from, right?

The kingdom of God is present, and the kingdom of God is future. It's present spiritually. When Jesus says, hey, it's not here yet for you to say, lo, here it is, or lo, there it is.

[24 : 59] It is within you. It doesn't mean it will always be that way. It exists spiritually in individual members and their fellowship together. When we are here, we operate as citizens of the kingdom of God, first and foremost.

You know, our bylaws as a church, we do have them. They say that we will follow and abide by the laws of the nation and of the land where they do not conflict with what we see in the Bible.

Because we are first citizens of this. And there are places in this world where being a citizen or following the laws of a nation conflict with the laws of this kingdom.

As the Pharisees would say to Jesus or the Sanhedrin, I mean, not to Jesus, the disciples, you know, you can't preach anymore in this name. And they say, well, we have to obey you. I mean, we have to obey God. We can't obey you.

We're not of the same kingdom here, guys. So when we are together, in a sense, the kingdom of God is here, right? We operate in that way. Now, it's not like this building and this space and this property is now God's kingdom.

[26 : 07] Because when we're not here, guess what's not here? Well, God's kingdom is not still here. It's like, you know, I just, I need to go and hang out over in God's kingdom. I'm going to go to Calvary Chapel Charlotte. That's not how it works.

But because you're here and I'm here and Jesus is here, we have the kingdom. As citizens of the king and of the kingdom of God, we are to prioritize that kingdom in our life.

Matthew 6, 33. But seek you first the kingdom of God in priority, in practice, and in life and his righteousness. And then all these things relating to this kingdom will be added unto you.

But to participate in God's kingdom, it requires something. To be born. Born. You must be born a citizen. Just as a natural man must experience birth to be a citizen, we must be born to be a citizen. And I don't mean just a citizen of a nation. I mean to be a citizen of this kingdom of man. You have to be born into it. To be a citizen of the kingdom of God, you must be born. So then a natural man, you and I, who have been born into this natural kingdom, we need something that we don't have.

[27 : 14] That we're not going to get in this kingdom of the natural. We need rebirth, a recreation. Something that makes us then into a spiritual man to be part of the spiritual kingdom. Where does that come from?

Well, in the Greek here, when he says you must be born again, it's the same idea of regeneration, of transformation. But literally it is from above. You must be born from a different source, from a different place.

Where does new birth come from? It comes from above. 1 Peter 22 and 23, Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently, being born again.

Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. By the word of God, which lives and abides forever.

And so Jesus is putting this mind-blowing concept in front of Nicodemus.

And Nicodemus then asks him, How? How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

[28 : 20] And I think this is where we get the idea. And Nicodemus is actually, is essentially asking, How do I undo this? How do we work this way? Okay, so I enter, I'm old. I've lived this life and I still haven't attained this.

So let's start over. I go back into my mother's womb. I'm just going to be born exactly the same. I'm still going to be in the natural. I'm still going to be part of a kingdom that, How am I going to get any further along than I am now?

I am Nicodemus. I'm victory of the people. What more can I do, Jesus? But he's trying to understand Jesus' words through what? Through his natural understanding.

Jesus' words cannot be understood through natural understanding. Because they are not of this kingdom. The natural. Jesus says in John 6, 63, It is the spirit that quickens.

The flesh profits nothing. Nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

Remember, we just saw last week, he said, If you destroy this temple, I will raise it up again.

[29 : 22] And they thought, Well, we've been building this temple for 47 years. And he was talking about his body. And they couldn't understand. Nicodemus is seeing the natural as a barrier to Jesus' words.

Well, you can't do this, Jesus. How is that going to happen? But the natural is never a barrier to the spiritual. Never. He was right in that we can't undo or redo the effects of sin.

I can't undo that. I can't redo, you know, the garden. I'm stuck. But that is not a barrier to Jesus.

Praise God. And it's not a barrier to the spiritual. Why was Nicodemus seemingly so surprised?

At Jesus' words. Well, I think it was due to the fact that belief at this time was that Israel was experiencing the new covenant. They thought they were. They were in the land, which is one of the promises of the new covenant.

They were waiting the Messiah to come. And the Pharisees, this movement of the Pharisees spoke to them and said, Hey, we have cleansing and spiritual transformation.

[30 : 24] We're good. Jeremiah 32, 37 and 39 says, Behold, I will gather them. I will gather Israel out of all countries where I have driven them in my anger and in my fury and in great wrath.

And I will bring them again into this place and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be my people and I will be their God and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever for the good of them and of their children after them.

Verses 40 through 41. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good. But I'll put fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.

Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good and I'll plant them in this land surely with my whole heart, with my whole soul. So the new covenant, and there's a whole bunch more scriptures if you want to write them down or take a picture or whatever.

Three aspects of the new covenant. God promised to gather Israel. He promised a cleansing and spiritual transformation and he promises the reign of Messiah over Israel and the world. In Jesus' day, Israel, they're awaiting number three.

[31 : 35] One and two are good. Nicodemus was most likely under the assumption he already had obtained the new birth in the sense of, well, we're in the land and we're seeking and waiting for a Messiah.

I'm sure I'm there. But then, here he is with Jesus. Here he is, wondering if Jesus maybe has something he doesn't have. Why couldn't Israel or any of the Old Testament believers have experienced the new covenant?

Why couldn't Nicodemus say, well, no, no, no, no, no, we can be in the new covenant. We're good. We're in the land. We can do this. The new covenant required sin to be dealt with and the new

covenant required a new source of life, a new nature.

And that's Ezekiel 11, 19. And I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within you and I will take the stony heart out, sin must be dealt with, and will give them a heart of flesh, a living heart, my spirit within you.

It needs a new source. That has not happened. When does that happen? None of it is possible until Jesus' death and resurrection. What does Jesus say at the last supper in Luke 22, 20?

[32 : 48] He says, likewise also the cup after supper he took, he had just done the bread, he said, this is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.

Jesus' death removed sin, took away the stony heart. Jesus' resurrection gave a new source of life. So the new covenant was not instituted until Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

A death to remove sin, a resurrection to give a new source of life. So Jesus is blowing Nicodemus' mind here and telling him, no, Nicodemus, you need a new source.

And I am the source. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me. What was the promised effect of the new covenant?

Okay, the new covenant would come. We know that belief, faith has been from the beginning, that those that believe are children of Abraham. They are his spiritual children.

[33 : 47] In the same way that Jesus would say to the Pharisees, you of your father, the devil, are they actually his children? No, in the sense that spiritually, they are through the way that they continue in the lies that he promoted from the beginning.

So it's not faith that makes us part of the new covenant. Well, the gift of faith is not the new covenant. Faith allows us to enter into the promise of the new covenant. But the promise of the new covenant is the indwelling life of the spirit, that we will have a new heart.

Galatians 3, 13 and 14. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. He took the sin away. Being made a curse for us. I love how he quotes this. For it's written, curse is everyone that hangs on a tree.

Okay, someone's like, well, I don't know. Was Jesus really the payment? Was really? By being on the cross, it verified that he was looked at by God, by the word of God as a curse.

He took all of sin on him. It's remarkable that Jesus, the one who did no sin, would willingly put himself in a place to be called a curse. Why did he do that?

[34 : 49] That the blessing of Abraham, what blessing? That his seed, singular, Jesus would be a blessing to the whole world. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

So now, because of the new covenant, we can have our stony heart removed of sin, and we can have something that they could not have until Jesus revealed that promise to us, which is what? Now we can have the spirit. We can have new life in the spirit. Jesus fulfilled the covenant of Abraham's seed, being a blessing to the whole world, by instituting the new covenant in his blood, the removal of sin, which now allowed the whole world to be blessed with the ability to receive the new life of the spirit by his resurrection.

This is blowing Nicodemus' mind. Blows my mind too. Jesus does that. That he says, hey, not only, not only am I going to take away your sin, I'm going to give you a new heart and a new source and a new nature and a new life, which is not dependent or originating with you.

It originates with my father. It's the spirit that he gives. In verse five through eight, Jesus then will give the process. The process is the presence that undoes sin.

[36 : 11] And Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

So Nicodemus is like, how in the world can sin be undone? Jesus tells him, this is how through the new covenant will remove sin and will give a new source.

And he says, here's how that will work. Truly, truly, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he can't enter into the kingdom of heaven. He explains the process. The word except there means all who are not cannot.

Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water, all who are not born of the water and of the spirit cannot be part of the kingdom of God. You must be. There's no other way in.

Water and the spirit. What does it mean? I don't know. I got a couple ideas. I don't know for sure. I think it's referring to Ezekiel. It could maybe be referring to just the natural versus the spirit, the spiritual, because he'll say that which is flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

[37 : 18] But that kind of seems obvious and redundant that, well, you have to be born a human by birth, water, and you have to be born spiritual birth, natural and spiritual. But that kind of seems obvious.

I think he's referring to Ezekiel. Part of the new covenant. When you read the, in Ezekiel 36, where he describes the new covenant, he says in verses 25 through 26, then I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Excuse me. Will I cleanse you? A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit. Will I put within you? And I'll take away the stony heart out of your flesh. I'll give you a heart of flesh.

And that kind of makes sense with what Jesus is saying. Hey, except a man be born of water and of the spirit. What did we see in John chapter two? We need a transformation and cleansing.

He transformed the water to wine. He cleansed the temple. And here he's saying cleansing and transformation is required to see, to perceive, to experience and dwell in God's kingdom. We must be transformed.

[38 : 24] We must be washed. Something that is not natural or physical. Jesus says that which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of spirit is spirit.

100% categorically unchanging. That which is flesh. 100% categorically unchanging. That which is spirit. The two cannot be interchangeable.

There's no possibility of them ever becoming anything else. For Nicodemus, but I've lived my whole life trying to become something I'm not. And Jesus says, it's not about how you live your life.

It's if I'm going to give my life and you must then receive a life. There's no crossover from the flesh to the spirit. First John 1 5.

This then is the message which we've heard of him and declare unto you that God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. The two, the two can never be together. Light and darkness have never met.

[39 : 28] Every time light enters the room, you know, Hey, come on, light. The darkness isn't here. You want to meet him? Sure. Every time he comes in, darkness leaves. It's like, man, I can't meet that guy. The two have never met. What originates from the nature of the flesh, Adam's fallen nature will always remain of that nature.

Reformation can never bring about transformation. No matter how much I reform this flesh, it's still of Adam's nature. It's still Adam's fallen nature. What an amazing blessing to know that I don't ever need to fear the outcome of the spirit.

I don't need to be afraid that something weird is going to happen. Well, what if it turns into something that's bad of the sin nature? What if it leads me into, I don't have to fear that.

The two are not the same. I never need to fear the outcome of the spirit in my life. Marvel not. Jesus says, Hey, don't wonder at this.

You may not always understand Nicodemus. You may not always even appreciate what the spirit is doing in your life, but you can always trust the results, Nicodemus.

[40 : 41] Don't wonder at this just because you don't understand it. Don't marvel because you might be a little afraid of what it means to be transformed. You can trust this. Do not wonder that I said unto you, you must be born again.

Essentially, Nicodemus, you're not that good. Don't think so highly of yourself, bro. You're not, you're not all that. Okay. Yeah, but I got these degrees and I'm, you know, I am the teacher and don't think so low of God either.

Don't think that God is so unable and so weak and so that he can't do this. God is too high to be reached by man, but God will bend, bend low to reach down to man.

We're never going to reach God. Nicodemus, you're thinking way too high of yourself here, buddy. But hey, recognize God will bend low to reach to you. Don't think that God can't do this.

Nicodemus was blown away that his physical heritage as God's chosen people did not qualify him to be God's spiritual heritage. He thought, we're God's people.

[41 : 51] I'm just coming right on into this. And Paul will go on to expound on that in the New Testament a whole lot. But here, Nicodemus, Jesus says to him, you must, you must, there is no other way.

There's a lot of things that we're told we must do, especially when we're kids. You must, you must, you must. I confess, you know, for the older ones that are out of my house, there's many things I told them they must do because I didn't want to do them.

But of course, not for the ones that are left in my house. I would never do that for them. Those are things they must do because it's imperative for their life development. But Jesus doesn't tell us anything that we must do just because.

If we must do it, it's from a heart of love. It's from a heart of care. And it comes from a place where Jesus says, I'm going to give my life because I know what I must do. So that you must do this. You must, Nicodemus. Now, Nicodemus, you know about the wind, verse eight, the wind blows wherever it will. And you hear the sound thereof, right? Well, yeah, but you can't tell where it comes from or where it's going.

[42 : 58] So is everyone that is born of the spirit. The wind come, the wind blows where it lists. It just means it, it goes where it has a mind to whatever it has a mind to do.

It just appears to do. This is, he's giving the characteristics of those that have a spiritual source. The spirit, like the wind, it's real, it's present, but it's not visible, right?

I think we could all say that when the wind blows, it's real, it is present, but it's not visible. It has its own purposes. I don't know what the wind's doing or why it's doing it. It's perceived only by its effect, not by its physical presence to see it.

It has a direction known and understood only to itself. And it cannot be contained. He says, Hey, Nicodemus, the one who is born of the spirit, who has this spirit, the spirit is a source, as a life. Man, that, that person, he's got something in him. It's real. It's present, but it's not visible.

Nicodemus. It's not like, Oh, I can tell that person is a Christian because, you know, when you get saved, the tips of your hair turn bright green.

[44 : 11] So it's really easy to tell that the one led by the spirit, they seem to have their own purposes that you just sometimes can't figure out. Man, does the Holy spirit have his own purposes. Sometimes you're like, we are going this way.

And like, it's blown the other way. It's like, Whoa, where are we going now? It's perceived by its effect. Can I see the spirit moving in your life by the effect? I can see it, man, that is a spirit filled believer.

Has a direction known and understood only to itself. And it can't be contained. You can't contain it. You can't put Jesus in a box, but he put himself in a book. Those who have derived life from the spirit will never be understood by those who don't have it.

Never. Don't, don't try and explain it in the sense of like, why are you doing that? We'll give them a reason for the hope, but like, they're never going to understand what God's doing in your life because they don't have what you have.

The life in the spirit is not a predetermined course. It's going to blow all over, but it does have a predetermined destination. It always leads to Jesus.

[45 : 16] Hereby know you, the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. You may meander all over the place being led by the spirit. We have.

I never thought I'd be in Charlotte. I never thought I'd be in North Carolina. I didn't think I'd be pastoring a church. And it kind of scares me because I think, oh Lord, I sure hope the rest of my life is one straight linear projection, but I doubt it.

I kind of doubt that's true. For you and I, the new birth, it does so much more than just make us righteous. It's not about a physical outward cleansing.

It's not even about a temporary cleansing. It's the continued abiding living life of the spirit, which then doesn't just make me righteous. It keeps me righteous. It's a continual source of life and cleansing.

Nicodemus then answers, how is this possible? Okay. And this is where I think he's receiving this. All right, Jesus. Okay. How can these things be?

[46 : 17] And I think he said it. I think there's something in Nicodemus where he's like, cause we know he's going to believe he's going to go. He's going to, he's going to make himself ceremonial, ceremonially unclean for the Passover. He, the teacher of Israel, Nicodemus, who knows how many homes he was invited to for the Passover.

Would you come and bless our Passover? Bless our Seder. And he's not going to be there because he's going to go with Joseph of Arimathea. And they're going to get Jesus off the cross.

And Jesus is nailed to a cross. And they're going to take a crowbar and they're going to have to pull those nails out. And they're going to have to take him down. They're going to wash and wrap that body. And he's going to be unclean.

So Nicodemus is asking Jesus, how can this be? Man, I want that. Is that what you have, Jesus? His question is genuine, but his understanding is only according to the natural.

Even if he accepts what Jesus is saying regarding spiritual transformation, I think he does. He's completely at a loss of how to accomplish this. How do I do this, Jesus? How can I have this?

[47 : 28] Verse 10, 10 through 15, but we won't get into 15. Jesus shows how it's possible. He shows that transformation is not only possible, it's obtainable.

Nicodemus. Jesus answered and said unto him, are you the master of Israel? And you don't know these things. We're not going to get into the rest of what Jesus answers, of how it's possible.

Listen, if you've not obtained it, if you've not received it, if you're sitting there going, how is that possible? I've never been born again. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that if you would believe in him, if you would put faith in his work of removing sin, the cross of giving new life through resurrection, you can have eternal life.

You can have a new source, a new birth and a new beginning. We'll get into much more of that next week. But Jesus doesn't have any desire to leave us or Nicodemus in suspense regarding his works.

How is this possible? And Jesus says, well, stay tuned. I'm not going to tell you, Nicodemus. That doesn't come until later in my ministry. Sorry.

[48 : 42] No. What he's saying here though, is you should have known. You are the teacher of Israel and you should have understood the promise that was given to Israel, that there would be a cleansing, that there would be a new heart, that you take away the stony heart.

You should have known. And I wonder in my life, when I ask Jesus questions of how shall this be? And he says to me, aren't you a teacher of the church at Calvary Chapel Charlotte? Shouldn't you know?

Yeah, but I don't believe it. It's usually my issue. It's like, well, I know, Lord, I know you said that, but I mean, are you really going to do that? March 12th will be our third anniversary of planting the church.

Woohoo! Praise God. And for that first, I don't know how long, it just seemed like, God, are you going to, are we ever going to get in Charlotte? We were in Mount Holly. We were in McCaddenville.

It's like, God, I know you could, but how? Remember when Jesus, the leper comes running to him, not the leopard, the leper comes running to him.

[49 : 45] And that would have been completely outside the law. Like to run into a crowd is capital punishment. He would have been put to death from a distance. They would have stoned him. And he comes running and he kneels down. He says, Master, I know if you will, you can make me clean.

I know you can do this, Jesus, but will you? And Jesus did what? He said, I will be thou clean. Is that what he did? Jesus, it says, he reached out, he touched him.

He said, I will be clean. And that blew everybody's mind. Jesus is unclean. Wait, but now the leper's clean. Does that mean Jesus is unclean or Jesus is clean? Yes. Jesus reached out to you and I and became unclean on the cross.

He was a curse so that he could bring cleansing to us. And we say, well, Jesus, you took sin. Jesus, where'd the sin go? He who was clean, he who knew no sin, became sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God.

And I think I know what Jesus can do. I believe he can do it, but will he do it for me? Will he do that in my life? Will he bring transformation in here? He has no desire to leave us in suspense.

[50 : 52] The promise to Israel, a new cleansing, a new heart, and a new spirit. Jesus was not surprised by Nicodemus' lack of knowledge. It's not like he's like, I didn't know you wouldn't know this Nicodemus.

He knew. He's simply stating that neither Nicodemus or Israel had been taught correctly. You don't understand because you're looking at this through natural eyes. The promise is a new cleansing, a new heart, and a new spirit, not something that you can grab and hold on to in this part of this world. Jesus says, do you not know these things? What things? The things that are understood by the spirit from God's word, not the things that are understood according to our natural perception.

He who keeps his commandments abides in him and he in him. And by this we know.

Do you want to know? How do you know? I don't want to be left in suspense. I want to know. How do I know if I abide in him? And by this we know that he abides in us. How do I know if I have the

new life of the spirit?

[52 : 00] By the spirit whom he's given us. He who keeps his commandments abides in him. That doesn't mean, well, I just got to do a Nicodemus. I'll keep his commandments and then he abides in me.

Fantastic. And I in him. What it's saying is the one who keeps his commandments is proof that he has something within him. The one who abides in Jesus and has Jesus abiding in him. The one who has the spirit abiding in him and abides in the spirit. That is the only one who keeps his commandments. Don't think he who keeps his commandments is possible any other way but by the spirit.

He who keeps his commandments, well, that's going to have to be someone that's experienced a new life. They're a new person. They've had a new arrival. Something they've never experienced before because nobody else who's ever kept his commandments except the person who has a new source, a new life, is a new person.

Something we've never experienced before. Any Nicodemuses here that have kept his commandments and say, hey, Jesus, you're a good guy but so am I. No.

[53 : 06] We come to Jesus and we say, Jesus, I'm coming afraid. I'm coming alone. I'm coming ashamed and I'm coming without understanding but I'm going to come, Jesus.

I am going to come to you. Nicodemus came to Jesus seeking a man who could tell him more about God. Tell me more about God. You seem to be a godly man. What he didn't know was that he needed a man who was God to transform him not so he could know more about God but so he could be accepted by God.

That's what he's done for us. As he took that cup, it would have been great for communion, guys. I know. He said, this is the cup of the new covenant. Why do we drink that?

Why do we remember that? Because we need to remember that it's not me. It's not my source. This life. Inward transformation means a new life, a new person, a new arrival.

Something I've never experienced before. But it doesn't end. Because remember when we get to 16, it's age abiding, everlasting life. It will continue forever. I don't have to worry about this covenant ending.

[54 : 16] I don't have to worry about my flesh making it null and void. That which is born of the spirit is spirit. Praise God. It is not learning, but life that is needed for Messiah's kingdom.

And life must begin by cleansing and transformation. And that is a spiritual work that God does in our life that we cannot do. But he is willing to do it.

His death removes sin and his resurrection provides a new source of life. Amen? Amen. Oh, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. That he who knew no sin would become sin for us.

That he would become a curse for us. That he would hang upon a tree and become what we already were. We're already cursed. We're already of a nature that has no ability to partake in a kingdom which is spiritual, which has no ability to partake of God.

And no matter how much we may be like God, no matter how many deeds we do for God, no matter how many qualifications we have that say, well, I'm from God, we cannot receive God except God do a work in us.

[55 : 37] Thank you, Jesus, for stepping in my place and becoming something that I was already to then give me the ability to become something I could never be apart from you.

Lord, as we worship you now, as we stand and worship you, renew in us, Lord. Renew in us the joy of our salvation.

Remind us again that our sins are forgiven even when we don't know how, even when we have shame, even when we don't understand, even when this stupid old sin nature which is joined to this body trips me up and I come with my head hung low and ashamed and I realize I've not acted like a man who's from God, of God, or acts like God.

I can come to you and I can come alone. I don't have to bear that shame before anyone else. I can bring it to you. And then thank you, Jesus, that we don't live alone, that we have this wonderful body, Lord, of your believers, Lord, of your people.

A body much better than that of the Pharisees. Lord, we can be those who have come, maybe we were Pharisees, but we can become those who have new birth and we can live as a new family in a new kingdom.

[56 : 59] Oh, Jesus, we love you. Come quickly and take us, Lord, home to the kingdom, Lord, that's prepared for us. Lord, I want to hear that voice telling me to enter into the joy of the Lord.

Amen. If you're not living in the reality and fullness of that new life, live in it. It's there. It's real. It's alive in you. Don't live in the old life.

Enjoy the new life of the Spirit. And if you need prayer, if you need to talk about that, if you've just got some questions, I'd love to pray with you or talk with you. Live a full life, a resurrected life this week.

Amen. Amen. May the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. God bless you all. Enjoy some fellowship. Walk in newness of life.