

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

06 September 2026

Conversations of Jesus: Nicodemus

Text: "Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily I say to you, Except a person be born again, they cannot see the kingdom of God." *John 3:3. John 3:1-12*

Today we begin a series on sharing the good news.

Is it easy for you to share the Good News of God's love?

The easiest way is to tell what God has done for you.

Simple is always best, even if it seems to simple.

Like: Norman Vincent Peals once had an interview with a very prominent businessman in New York City.

The businessman came into his office and laid out before Dr. Peal a very tragic tale of years of confusion, frustration, tragedy, and misplaced values.

Over a series of years his life had painted a very dark picture.

He said to Dr. Peal, What do you think I should do?

The minister said, "I have a solution for you.

It is simple and you are a very sophisticated and intelligent man.

I doubt you would want to hear it."

The man said, "I think I would like to hear it."

The minister said, "No, I don't believe you would. It is too simple."

Again the man responded by saying, "I want you to tell me."

Dr. Peal repeated, "I really don't think you want to hear it."

After a while the fellow became incensed and he pressed him and said, "Look, tell me what your answer is."

Dr. Peal said, "What I think you really need to do is get down on your knees and tell God that you are a sinner and ask God to forgive you and change you."

The gospel of Jesus Christ is profoundly simple and simply profound.

The Bible speaks of another conversation between a minister and a businessman.

In this conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus articulates the simple and profound truth of his gospel.

To discover and experience a personal and life-changing relationship to a living God is so profound that it is like a birth.

It is like being born all over again.

To be born again will not turn you into some kind of a weird personality, but it will actually complete your personality so that you will become the person God intended for you to become.

When Jesus said, "You must be born again," what was he saying?

This new birth is a beginning.

Just as you have to have a physical birth to begin a physical life, you must have a spiritual birth to begin a spiritual life.

There must be a beginning.

You do not become a Christian by accident.

You do not drift into it or wander into it.

It does not happen to you without you knowing about it.

It does not come about by a process of absorption, or association; you cannot be reborn just by being around Christian people or attending church.

Neither do you become a Christian by inheritance.

Just because you were born into a Christian family, just because your wife or husband or your brothers or sisters are believers, does not mean that you are a Christian.

No, you must have a beginning.

You do not become a Christian just by having some kind of a good warm feeling about God, or about the world, or about religion, or about life.

It is good to have those feelings, but you do not become a Christian just by experiencing some kind of nebulous, vague emotion.

You become a Christian when you come to that time and place in your life when you are willing to personally and intelligently accept Jesus Christ into your life.

That is the beginning.

Spiritual birth is experienced in different ways.

Some people's spiritual birth is very dramatic and emotional.

They weep many tears.

They tremble and experience an inward ecstasy.

That must have been the way Paul of Tarsus had his beginning.

But other people's beginning is very matter-of-fact, very simple.

They do not hear an audible voice.

They just make a simple decision.

Some people have their spiritual beginning when they are very young.

Others begin as adults.

Usually when a person begins with Christ as an adult, the change is more dramatic and more difficult.

For some it is difficult to say the exact moment they began with Christ.

Ruth Graham has said repeatedly that she does not know for sure the first time that she trusted Christ.

G. Campbell Morgan, one of the greatest biblical expositors who ever lived said, "We cannot tell the first time the sun came up, but we know that it had come up. To be born again means that I am able to say. I have had a beginning. My relationship to God is personal."

To be born again is to experience an inward change.

The Bible says that you and I have a basic problem and that problem is sin.

We are sinners, not just because we do bad things or because we commit individual acts of sin, but because the Bible says it is our nature.

It is our nature to be selfish and sinful.

We are born with that nature, and therefore we commit individual acts of sin.

When Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be born again, he was telling him that what he needed was an inward, radical revolutionary change that had to do with that sinful nature.

A little reformation is good, but it is not enough.

A little religion is good, but it is not enough.

Change must occur on the inside.

Let's suppose a person bought a pig and decided to keep it for a pet.

Keeping the pig in the house and cleaning it, bathing it, and dressing it.

Do you know what would happen the first time that pig got out of the house?

It would find the closest mud puddle and get as dirty as it could.

Do you know why?

Because that is its nature.

Our nature will experience a radical change when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior.

When a person by faith accepts Jesus Christ, a beautiful thing happens: a change takes place on the inside.

Things you once loved, you begin to despise.

Things you once despised, you begin to love.

Scripture says, "If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

God gives you new values, new priorities, new goals.

This new birth is a miracle.

It is not something you do for yourself; it is something God does for you.

Nicodemus said, "I don't understand how this happens."

Jesus said, "Nicodemus, do you feel the wind blowing on your face? You don't know where the wind is coming from or where the wind is going. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

It is a miracle.

Being born again does not mean our struggles are over.

In fact, the opposite is true: we will have even greater struggles because the Holy Spirit comes in to do battle with our old sinful nature.

But because of the miracle of the new birth, we are promised a new life.

The good news is that you can be born again.

You do not have to live the same old frustrating, sinful life.

You can have a new life, a new beginning.

You can experience change.

You can have a miracle in your life if you will come to Jesus Christ just as you are and trust him.

How wonderful is that?