

The Essentials: The Gospel of John

Session 2: John 3: 1-17

Opening Collect

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Watch Video

Read: John 3: 1-17 (out loud)

Discussion:

1. There has already been mention of “signs” in the gospel of John, and Nicodemus immediately calls Jesus a teacher. What might have been a sign to Nicodemus that Jesus was “a teacher come from God” (John 3: 2)?
2. Nicodemus is a Pharisee and a religious expert on the Jewish law. Imagine how he might have understood having a relationship with God. What do you think that would look like?
3. Being born means being animated and given life. Now, read vv. 5-8 closely. What role does the Spirit play in making us aware—lively and attuned to—new life in the kingdom of God?
4. Remember again, that Nicodemus is a religious expert, with clear views of who was included in God’s kingdom. In vv. 15 and 16 Jesus uses language like “whoever” and “everyone”. What might this say about those who receive God’s grace?
5. Read vv. 16-18 closely. These verses are undoubtedly complex. What do they say about who Jesus is and his purpose?
6. How might what you’ve learned today about God’s saving purposes shape your relationship to God? How might it change the church’s engagement with the world?

Check in and Closing Prayer

John 3: 1-17

1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ ³ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ ⁵ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” ⁸ The wind^l blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ ‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^l

¹⁶ ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ ‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.