

**Theme: The gift that fills your need, is needed by all.**

### **John 3:1-8**

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup>Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.<sup>[a]</sup>”<sup>4</sup>“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit<sup>[b]</sup> gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You<sup>[c]</sup> must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”<sup>[d]</sup>

#### **1) Introduction:**

Is it a want or a need?

What’s the difference between a want and a need. If you want something, that usually makes it on your Christmas list. Wants are things that aren’t necessary to survival but would make things more enjoyable. You want an air fryer. You want a wardrobe update. You want a bike.

If someone gives you a gift that fills a want, it brings you joy. You’re thankful that someone has taken the time to think of you, and you will get some purpose out of the gift. But if you wanted something and you didn’t get it, it’s not the end of the world. If you wanted a bike but someone but someone got you a socks. You can be polite, give that fake smile, and say “Thank you”.

But what if it’s not a want, but it’s a need. Imagine you are a broke college student, the money in your bank account has just been spent on rent. You don’t have groceries waiting for you at home, and you aren’t sure where your next meal is going to come from, and out of the blue a stranger comes up to you and gives you a gift. They give you a brand-new air fryer. It would be a good gift, but not given the circumstances. The gift doesn’t fill the need. Keep imagining the scenario as a broke college student. You’re unsure where your next meal is going to come from, and out of the blue a stranger comes up and gives you groceries. And not just a loaf of bread and peanut butter. But bag after bag of groceries. More than you could possibly imagine. **When you are in need, the only gift that will cut it, is a gift that fills your need.**

Let’s move past Christmas lists, wants, and physical needs, to a spiritual focus. Are human beings wanting something from God or in need of something from God? Do we just need some blessings from him that will give us a little joy, or some purpose in our life? Or is there something even deeper. Are we by nature lacking or deficient in some way? The more we

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experience life, the more we realize our own weakness, and failings, and sin, and the consequences of sin, and the reality of death. We are in need. **When you are in need, the only gift that will cut it, is a gift that fills your need.** Could it be that through Baptism God gives you the gift you need?

## **2) Nicodemus Context (v.1-2)**

Nicodemus was a man who did not recognize his need but wanted to learn more about Jesus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a powerful one. Yet we find him approaching Jesus in a unique way. He come to see Jesus at night. Could this be because he was afraid of what his other Pharisees would say if they found out he was speaking with Jesus? It could, or it could be that Jesus would have so many people around him each day, that they only opportunity to speak in depth with him was at night.

Whatever the circumstances, Nicodemus approaches Jesus unlike his colleagues. The Pharisees had called Jesus' work demonic and had dismissed anything he had done. Nicodemus calls him **Rabi**. This is a term used of respected teachers. He cites what he knows about Jesus, **stating that he is a teacher who has come from God**. The way Nicodemus knows this, is that **No one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him**. The sign that had just been performed that likely grabbed his attention was Jesus' wedding miracle. Jesus had been at a wedding the chapter before and had turned water into wine.

Nicodemus begins his dialogue with Jesus, like we would begin conversations. He states some common ground, shows that he respects Jesus, and even gives evidence that he was aware of what Jesus was doing possibly wanting to learn more about Jesus.

## **3) Nicodemus Need (v3-5)**

Jesus skips the small talk and gets right to the heart of things. This leader of Israel is missing out on a key piece of theology, and Jesus is going to tell him exactly what it is.

**Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.**

While Nicodemus mentioned Jesus signs, and wonders, Jesus says. Nicodemus you are focused on the wrong thing. It's all about the kingdom. God's rule and reign that begins now and will last for eternity; eternal life! you won't see it unless you are born again. Unless you are born again as God's child, you won't experience eternal life in God's kingdom.

Nicodemus is confused. While Jesus has spoken of a spiritual rebirth, Nicodemus is thinking of a physical birth, and maybe, slight comically wonders, "How can I go back into my mother's womb?" That's not possible!

So Jesus clarifies and makes crystal clear the need and the solution.

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**Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

#### **4) Our need (v.5-6)**

What is the problem? What is Nicodemus need, it's our need as well. **Flesh gives birth to flesh.** Sinners give birth to sinners. We have a sinful human nature that we inherited from our parents, and they inherited from their parents, and all have inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve. We are sinners. We are born sinners.

As cute as babies are, do you know what babies are born as? Sinners. My wife and I don't have to sit down and figure out when do you think it's an appropriate age to teach our daughter how to get in to trouble. We don't talk through what developmental milestone she should hit to teach her how to be selfish, or steal toys from others. We don't need to teach this; she knows it by nature. **Flesh gives birth to flesh.** Sinners give birth to sinners.

The truth that Jesus speaks is that those who are not reborn of the Spirit will not see or enter the kingdom of God. The consequence of sin is an inability to see or enter the kingdom. Do you see our need? If the reality of every human being is that we are going to experience death, and that there is life after death. Either eternal death, separation from God, hell, the kingdom of Satan or eternal life, lived in the kingdom of God.

What kind of God would we have if he just gifted us some temporary blessings on earth. If God was focused on giving us wealth, health, and prosperity in our lives on earth but didn't do anything about our eternity what kind of gift would that be. If God gave us a huge mansion, or a body that had no creaks or cracks, or a life of never having to worry about finances. We'd have to say, the gift doesn't fill the need. **When you are in need, the only gift that will cut it, is a gift that fills the need.**

#### **5) The Gift that Fills the Need**

God gives the gift that fills the need. God gives the gift of rebirth. Jesus says, **The Spirit gives birth to spirit.** Capital S Spirit means the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives birth to a new spirit in us. How does he accomplish this? When someone is born of **water and the Spirit.** How does this happen? Baptism where God has called us to use water, and speak his name over the child that his brought forward. The Holy Spirit is at work in baptism taking the child and giving them a new birth. The sinful nature still remains, but there is a new nature. The new man. Faith is at work in our hearts that has been worked by the Holy Spirit. It trusts in the promises of God and will not experience death.

The phrase born again, it can actually be translate as "born from above". I think this is appropriate as we think about being born again. Since you have been baptized, you are born from above. God has taken the fate that was promised to you, and has given you a birth that

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will last for eternity. Everyone will experience death. But since you have been reborn, physical death is not the end. Instead you will see and you will enter the kingdom of God. You have been born of water and the Spirit. God sees our need and gives a gift that fills our need far beyond anything we could imagine. You have the promise of eternal life. Faith in Jesus work assures you of this, and this Spirit given faith is given to you through Baptism, rebirth through the water and the word.

#### 6) **The Gift needed by everyone.**

Who need this gift? Everyone! Jesus says “**no one**” can enter the kingdom. Because Flesh gives birth to flesh. So can children sin. Yes. Children are also in need of God’s gift, so why wouldn’t we give it to them. That’s why we baptize children.

In the Psalms David is recording saying, **Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.** If children can sin, why would we keep them from the promise and gift that God gives through baptism. When a child is brought forward to this baptismal font they are given rebirth. The Holy Spirit is active working faith in their heart.

In a different area of the Gospel Jesus clearly teaches that children can believe, and that he wants children brought to him. In Matthew 18 Jesus says , **“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”**

God cares about the faith of children and says harsh words about those who would destroy it. Therefore, we baptize children, and we thank God that he has given this gift to us.

#### 7) **Conclusion**

Our God is a gift giver, and he gives us the gift we need. The kingdom of God has been promised to you. The promise extends not just to adults but to children. Take heart knowing that God had you in mind from the creation of this world. Think about this, think of how long God was waiting to baptize you. God knew the day, and the place, and the pastor or Christian who he would use to utter simple words. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit while pouring water over your head. God is a gift giver, and you been given the gift that is needed.

Amen.