

SERMON OUTLINE John 3:1-15

How to Become a Believing Believer

SIGNS OF AN UNBELIEVING BELIEVER

He Came by Night

His Belief Was Rooted in Signs

He Was Confused by Jesus' Words

HOW TO BECOME A BELIEVING BELIEVER

New Birth Is Needed to See the Kingdom of God

New Birth Is Needed to Enter the Kingdom of God

New Birth Comes from the Spirit

There is Mystery in the New Birth

The New Birth Means that the Kingdom of God Is Already and Not Yet

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MAIN POINT

In the story of Nicodemus, John provides us with a few signs of unbelieving belief as well as the means to overcome it. Signs of unbelieving belief include coming to Jesus in secret, coming to Jesus merely because of His signs, and leaving Jesus more confused and discouraged. And the means by which God has given for His people to become genuine believers is a new spiritual birth. New birth is needed to see and enter the kingdom of God, it comes from the Spirit, there is mystery in it, and it means that the kingdom of God is already and not yet.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your thoughts on the text/sermon? What most stood out? How was it helpful? Confusing?
2. Have you ever heard of "regeneration" or "being born again" before? What's your understanding of what that means?
3. Have you ever met someone who was an "unbelieving believer"? How did you know? What did you notice about them?
4. Are you more willing to align with Jesus when His adversaries are least likely to notice? Are you embarrassed to be associated with Jesus around certain groups of people? Do you have your own version of coming to Jesus "by night"?
5. What are you expecting or demanding from Jesus before you really follow Him? What areas of your life are you holding back from Jesus as you wait on something more than what He's already given and revealed? Or, from the other angle, what has drawn you to Jesus to begin with? What is it about Jesus that makes you interested?
6. Is the Word of God a source of clarity and joy and life for you or is it a constant source of frustration, confusion, and dismissal? Do you say with the Psalmist (1:2), "[My] delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law [I] meditate day and night"? Or, like the fool is your delight in expressing your own opinion (Proverbs 18:2). Are you eager to sit under the preaching of the Word and study it yourself or do you find it dull and largely unhelpful? Does Jesus' teaching bring life and energy or boredom and dullness?
7. Which aspect of the new birth do you find most interesting? Which is most confusing? (Listed above.)
8. Have you experienced the new birth?
9. In what way/s did the sermon help you see the greatness of God?

AREAS OF APPLICATION

10. Share the gospel this week in the confidence that comes from knowing their belief is the Spirit's work, not yours.
11. Read the chapter on regeneration in Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. Carefully consider the verses he cites.
12. Prayerfully consider whether you know any unbelieving believers. Graciously and lovingly share your concerns with them along with Mark 9:14-29.
13. Talk about any questions you have regarding regeneration at your DG. Share any passages you can think of that speak to it.
14. What is one specific thing you mean to do differently in the power of the Spirit as a result of the things you saw or heard in this text or sermon?

PRAYER POINTS

15. Adoration. Praise God for being the giver of all life—physical and spiritual. Praise God for being filled with love.
16. Confession. Confess unbelieving belief in yourself or indifference to it in others.. Confess being embarrassed by Jesus.
17. Thanksgiving. Thank God for causing you to be born again. Thank God for helping us to see unbelieving belief in Nicodemus.
18. Supplication. Ask God to grant believing belief to the people in your life. Ask God to help us see His Word as it truly is—and not to miss it as Nicodemus did. Ask God to help our church to spur one another on in belief.