



Who is Jesus? The Gospel of John – Week 7

Preacher – Sandy Mason | Text - John 3:1-21

Summary:

For the first time in John's gospel, we see Jesus engaged in direct teaching (something he will do many times as his ministry unfolds). Jesus meets with one of the Pharisees named Nicodemus – who was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin – the high court of justice in matters of Jewish life. During this discussion, Jesus reveals deep truth about the nature and source of eternal life to an educated man, a man who was steeped in the traditions of Israel and the Law, yet did not understand Jesus' mission or even the very nature of salvation – the "new birth." In this passage, Jesus begins to show that his mission would not conform to human expectations, and he begins to break down the assumptions and understandings of his day in new and unexpected ways.

Discussion:

1. What was the most important take-away for you from this week's message?
2. Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night (v. 2)? Was he afraid, or did he want Jesus' undivided attention? Or is it something else? Whatever your answer, make sure to support it from the text.
3. What is the reason Nicodemus gives for his respect for Jesus (v. 2)? What is he missing in his understanding of Jesus' true identity? **Application:** What's the danger of misunderstanding Jesus' true identity and purpose, and how can we avoid this?

4. Notice that Jesus takes the conversation in a totally different direction: from Nicodemus' testimony about Jesus' identity to Jesus' statement about being born again (v. 3). Why does Jesus take the conversation in this direction? What do you think he was anticipating from Nicodemus?

5. Nicodemus is clearly confused about the nature of this "new birth." What does Jesus mean when he uses this language (vv. 5-8)? **Application:** Have you experienced this 'new birth?' Based on Jesus' description in this passage, how can you know?

6. Why is the Pharisee here so confused by what Jesus is saying (v. 9)? Why do you think Jesus is so incredulous at his lack of understanding? **Application:** Can you identify with Nicodemus in this passage? Why or why not?

7. How does Jesus argue for his authority to make such sweeping claims about the nature of eternal life (vv. 11-15)? Why is **he** in a position to make these statements about spiritual 'new birth' vs. natural birth? Look especially at vv. 14-15.

8. What's the Son's purpose (vv. 16-18)? To whom is the offer of eternal life – "new birth" – made?

9. What is the mark of those who have been born again (vv. 19-21)? What is the mark of those who have not? **Application:** What does it look like to "come to the light," as Jesus says in v. 21? It is sometimes easier or more attractive to remain in the dark? Why do you think this is?

10. How would you 'title' this section? In other words, how would you restate the main purpose John had (as the author) in writing this passage?