

No Dennis Hurt

Order of Worship for June 6th, 2010, Communion Sunday

Pre-service song

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship: Psalm 99 and Prayer

Songs of Worship:

“Come, Now is the Time for Worship”

“We Bow Down”

“Glorify Thy Name”

Overhead

Overhead

Song # 9

Offering

The Lord’s Supper (George Kerley serving)

Song of Preparation: “Power of the Cross”

Invitation and Prayer dedicating God’s People

Prayers consecrating the elements and distribution

Overhead

Message: “You must be Born Again’ John 3: 1-21

By Richard Frahm

Closing Song: “Since Jesus Came into My Heart”

Song # 503

Parting Word of Grace

Enjoy refreshments and conversation in the Fellowship Hall
Then join one of the Discipleship Hour classes

Baccalaureate Service at 5:30pm in the Sanctuary
(refreshments to follow?)

“The Prayer Closet”

June 6, 2010

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

(Colossians 4:2a)

This week let us be united in praying for:

1. **Russel and Sharla Weisner serving in Malaysia:** that the Lord will protect them as well as open many doors to prepared hearts; that the volunteer teaching team will demonstrate the love of God to the English language students; that the team will be spiritually guarded and physically protected
2. **President Obama:** that he will seek the counsel of godly men; that he will rightly measure the effects of policies and words and not be deceived by mere intentions; that the Spirit will protect him from deceivers and manipulators; that God’s peace will fill his heart and mind
3. **OCS Faculty, Board and Staff:** that they are encouraged by pre-enrollments for next year; that end of the year tasks are efficiently done; that communications with parents are encouraging; that the start of summer brings refreshment and thanksgiving for a good year
4. **Military Personnel of the Week: Pvt. Casey Brubaker** (son of John, grandson of Larry and Wanda Brubaker):
5. **College Student of the Week: Rebecca Bronson at Bethel University** (daughter of John and Nini Bronson): that she is content with completing her college education; that she secures good employment at the start of post-college life; that she remains spiritually strong and focused

What brings me to this section of scripture for a Sunday morning talk? It was the section of scripture God used to answer many questions at critical times in my life. I asked myself these questions, am I Christian, how do I know, how did I come to know Jesus as my savior, eternal security is that possible with such a bumpy journey that I was having and so much more. So I want to share some of those truths He revealed to me with you, in hopes that they may draw you closer to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In these 21 verses we see God’s entire plan of salvation (earthly things). I believe the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus are some of the most important passages in the Bible. Nowhere else do we find stronger statements about the two mighty subjects, the new birth and salvation by faith in the Son of God. There are many sermons in the 21 verses, but we will focus on Jesus teaching on the new birth.

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him,’”

Briefly, about Nicodemus, he belonged to the Pharisees a salvation by works party, was a member of the Sanhedrin, a scribe; i.e. a professional student, interpreter, and teacher of the law. The history of Nicodemus is meant to teach us that we should never **“despise the day of small things”** in our quest for truth and God. (Zec. 4:10) Remember, Nicodemus, was one of only two men who did honor to our Lord’s dead body. He helped Joseph of Arimathea to bury Jesus, when even the apostles had forsaken their Master and fled. His last things were more than his first. That is an encouragement to us that slopped up our first things.

Commentators have a great time discussing why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night; I’m just going to say I’m glad he did. (He is a perfect example of the wind blowing into his life)

“And (he) said to him, Rabbi we know that you are a teacher come from God”...This amounted to saying, “We—I and other likeminded persons (cf.2:23; 3:11)—know that you are a prophet.” The reason which Nicodemus gives for this conversation is given in these words...**“For no one can do these signs which you do unless God is with him.”** Nicodemus is convinced that Jesus must stand in very close relation to God to be able to do these signs, and he is correct.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mothers’ womb and be born.” The question has often been asked to what did our Lord answer? I think Jesus as he did on many occasion answered to what he saw going on in Nicodemus heart. He knew that Nicodemus like all the Jews was expecting the appearance of the Messiah and I think he could see that Nicodemus felt that he found Him. On the other hand Nicodemus had not asked any questions. So Jesus answered

him for he could read the hearts of men/women. Case in point **“But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” (John 2:24-25)** Jesus could read the questions that were buried in the heart of Nicodemus. When was the last time you got real honest and cried “search me O Lord and know my heart”. Jesus answered a deep question in Nicodemus heart not something he came to ask Jesus. The reason he was there was to see this miracle worker and I believe report back to his fellow members of the Sanhedrin. But praise God this visit changed his life.

“Verily, Verily I say” this expression is unique to the Gospel of John and very remarkable. It is a phrase that is familiar to all Christians: “Amen,” twice repeated. It is found 25 times in this Gospel, always at the beginning of a sentence, and always used by Christ. In every place it implies a very solemn, emphatic assertion of some great truth, or heart-searching fact. No other writer in the New Testament except John, ever gives the double “Amen.”

And so it is, that in a most serious way Nicodemus was told he had to be born again. I think Nicodemus says to himself what kind of riddle was the young man of God giving to him? Well it’s no riddle; it’s one of the most profound truths in the Bible.

The meaning of Jesus when He said, “Except a man be born again,” is a subject on which there is a wide difference of opinion in the Church today. The expression does not stand alone; it is used six times in the Gospel of John, once in 1st Peter and six times in 1st John. Common sense and fair interpretation of language, point out that “born again, born of the Spirit, born of God, are expressions so intimately connected with one another, that they mean one and the same thing. The only question is, “What do they mean?”

Some think that to be “born again” means nothing more than “an outward reformation, or such outward conformity as a proselyte might yield to a new set of rules of life.” The more we see secularisms in the Church the more this is the case.

Some think that to be “born again,” means to be admitted into the Church by baptism and to receive a spiritual change of heart inseparably connected with baptism. Some think “born again,” is to follow Jesus because he is such a great teacher and do your very best at keeping the Law of God.

So what does “born again,” mean. Being “born again,” means that complete change of heart and character which is produced in a person by the Holy Spirit, when he repents, believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and becomes a true Christian. It is a change which is often spoke of in the Bible. In Ezekiel it is called “taking away the stony heart and giving a heart of flesh,”--- “giving a new heart, and putting within a new spirit.” (Ezek. 10:19; 36:26) Nicodemus should have known this.

However, Nicodemus fails to grasp the meaning of “born again,” so he says to Jesus **“How can a man be born when he is old?”** Jesus had uttered a saying which would apply to any person. Nicodemus, as if to show the absurd character of the saying, takes the most extreme case: one certainly cannot conceive of the idea that an old man would actually have to be born all over again. Nicodemus continues, **“He cannot again enter into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”** The very suggestion seems utterly impossible to this Pharisees, to his rhetorical question he expects a negative answer.

“Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. This most challenging verse has many attempts at interpretation and I’m not going to go into them now because it would take a whole sermon to do them justice. I’ll attempt to give a brief summary of what I think is the proper interoperation of this verse. Where water and Spirit are found side by side, in connection with baptism, the evident meaning

, therefore, is this; being baptized with water is not sufficient. The sign is valuable, indeed. It is of importance both for pictorial representation and a seal. But *the sign should be accompanied by the thing signified*: the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. It is the latter that is absolutely necessary if one is to be saved. Note, in this connection, that in verses 6 and 8 we no longer read about the birth of water but only about the birth of the Spirit, the one great essential. Think of it this way, the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit is not finished until the believer enters heaven, what a comfort.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” One could paraphrase as follows: sinful human nature produces sinful human nature (cf. Job 14:4 “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.) The Holy Spirit produces the sanctified human nature. So what does Jesus say **“Do not marvel that I say to you, You must be born again.”** Nicodemus is being taught that salvation is a gift from God, and that, in its initial stage, it is brought about by an event in which man is necessarily passive. (I know I’ll hear from some of you) A person can do nothing about his own birth. As Jesus had said, “You must be born anew.” I quote from New Testament Commentary by William Hendriksen “Very often, in present-day preaching, this word *must* is misinterpreted. It should be clearly understood that, in harmony with the entire context, it does not refer to the realm of moral duty, but to that of the divine decree. When Jesus says, “you must be born again,” he does not mean, “By all means see to it that you are born again.” On the contrary, he means, “Something has to happen to you: the Holy Spirit must plant in your heart the life form from above.” And Nicodemus should have had a sufficient penetrating knowledge of his own inability and corruption to understand this at once. He should have shown by his expression or by his words that the teaching of Jesus regarding this absolute necessity and sovereign character of regeneration is so very strange and surprising.” Nicodemus did not see himself as a sinner, perhaps a problem we have all had a one time or another.

The sovereign character of regeneration (that’s what we have been talking about) is clarified by an illustration taken from the action of the wind. We are dealing with a comparison here. **“The wind blows where it wills and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from and where it goes to.”** Nobody on earth can direct the wind. It acts with complete independence. It cannot even be seen. That it must be there you know, for, in striking any object it make a sound. Its source and its ultimate goal or destination no one knows. Jesus adds, **“So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”** The relation of the wind to your body resembles that of the Spirit to your soul. The wind does as it pleases. So does the Spirit. Its operation is sovereign, incomprehensible, and mysterious.

Conclusion: I would like to read you something from the great English preacher Charles Spurgeon “The spiritual man discerns Him, feels Him, hears Him, and delights in Him, but neither wit nor learning can lead a man into that secret. The believer is often bowed down with the weight of the Spirit’s glory, or lift up upon the wings of His majesty. But even he knows not how these feelings are at work in him. The fire of holy life is at seasons gently fanned with the soft breath of divine comfort, or the deep sea of spiritual existence stirred with the mighty blast of the Spirits rebuke. But still it is forevermore a mystery how the eternal God comes into contact with the finite mind of His creature, man. God is filling all heaven, meanwhile, and yet dwelling in a human body as in a temple; occupying all space and yet operating upon the will of judgment, the mind of the poor insignificant creature called man.

We may inquire, but who can answer us? We may search, but who will lead us into the hidden things of the Most high? He brooded over chaos and produced order, but who will tell us after what fashion He worked? He overshadowed the Virgin and prepared a body for the Son of God, but onto this secret who will dare pry? His is the anointing, sealing, comforting, and sanctifying of the saints, but how does He work all these things? He makes intercession for according to the will of God. He dwell in us and leads us into the truths of God, but who among us can explain to his fellow man the order of the divine working?

Though veiled from human eye like the glory that shone between the cherubim, we believe in the Holy Spirit and therefore see Him. But if our faith needed to sustain it, we should never believe at all. Mystery is far from being all that the Savior would teach this simile. Surely He means to show us that the operations of the Spirit are like the wind for divinity. Who can create a wind? The ambitious of human princes would scarcely attempt to turn, much less to send forth, the wind! These steeds of the storms know neither bit nor bridle; neither will they come at man’s bidding. Let our senators do what they will; they will scarcely have the madness to legislate the wind!” (From The Essential Works of Charles Spurgeon)

TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION, ‘TODAY IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.’

Hear the words of the prophet Ezekiel “Then I will sprinkle water upon you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh. I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be my people My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations.” (Ezekiel 36: 25-30)

You must be “Born Again” repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lets pray.