

May Teaching Theme: The Book of Ruth/Pentecost

讲员 Speaker: Pastor Peter Linghui Tian

题目 Topic: Born Again

经文 Scripture: John 3:1-21

Monthly Theme: The Month of May took us through the end of the Resurrection season to the celebration of Pentecost. On this 5th Sunday of the month, we took some time to examine the well-known but significant story in John 3:1-21.

五月 May: 五旬節季節 Pentecost Season

May 2nd – 路得記 4: 扭轉乾坤的君王寶血 Ruth 4: Reversal, Restoration, Resurrection

May 9th – 突破障礙的聖靈 The Spirit Breaking Barriers [萬國教會 Church of All People] (使徒行傳 Acts 10)

May 16th – 上主升天 Ascension of the Lord (使徒行傳 Acts 1:1-11, 詩篇 Psalm 47)

May 23rd – 五旬節 Pentecost (利未記 Leviticus 23:15-21, 使徒行傳 Acts 2) (五旬節 Pentecost)

May 30th – 重生 Born Again (約翰福音 John 3:1-21)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

[Sermon Slides](#)

Discussion Questions (Pastor Tian):

- (1) Read John 3:1-21 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the story?
- (2) 是什么原因促使尼哥底母来见耶稣？为什么强调在“夜里”来见耶稣？What prompted Nicodemus to come to see Jesus? Why the emphasis on coming to see Jesus "at night"?
- (3) 重生与进神的国有何关联？何谓重生？What is the connection between rebirth and the kingdom of God? What is rebirth?
- (4) 重生与圣灵、洗礼和耶主耶稣被钉十字架之间有何关联？What is the connection between rebirth and the Holy Spirit, baptism, and the crucifixion of Jesus?
- (5) 为什么说“重生”是三位一体之神的作为，我们的责任是什么？Why is it said that "rebirth" is the work of the Triune God, and what is our responsibility?

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on John 3:1-21:

- *Characters:* Jesus, Nicodemus (Pharisee, Jewish ruling council, thus a respected, senior religious teacher in Israel. We should note that religion and politics were not separate entities at this time, like our experience in the U.S.)
- *Setting:* At night (It is not completely clear the significance of why Nicodemus comes at night, but John's use of night is usually negative, so many have speculated that Nicodemus didn't want to be seen visiting Jesus.)
- Nicodemus does not suggest Jesus is a prophet or even the Messiah, but an influential teacher of God. So at this point, Nicodemus is curious about Jesus but not yet

confessing him as the promised Messiah (later how in John 19 it appears he has as he accompanies Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus body).

- When we read “flesh” and “spirit,” we should note that the contrast isn’t between a lower and higher aspect of human nature but simply the distinction between human beings and God.
- **V5:** To understand Jesus’ words here, we need to understand the prophecy he was referring to, found in Ezekiel 36:25-27 (Read it.)
 - In Ezekiel 36:25-27, water signifies cleansing from impurity, and the Spirit depicts a transformation of the heart that will enable people to follow God wholly (live like Jesus). Right after this passage in Ezekiel comes the famous “Valley of Dry Bones” passage where the Spirit brings life to dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision. This idea is similar to what we read in Joel 2 last week about a new age when God “pours out his Spirit” on all people.
 - Secondly, we can understand the symbolic nature of our “Baptism” in Jesus’ words. Baptism in “water” brings people into the kingdom-movement begun by John the Baptist (the church, the Jesus community is the continuation of that movement), and baptism in the spirit brings people into the transformed life that Jesus offers.
- It is important to note that throughout this passage, we see the corporate reality of the “Kingdom of God” and the individual reality or transformation by the Spirit held closely together. Personal change and social transformation must be held together.
- **V8:** The word we translate Spirit and Wind are the same word in both Hebrew and Greek. Here Jesus is drawing an analogy between the wind and the effects of the Spirit. “The point is that the wind can be neither controlled nor understood by human beings (remembering, of course, that this was written before modern meteorology alleviated at least some of our lack of understanding). But that does not mean we cannot detect the wind’s effects. We hear its sound, watch the swaying grasses, see the clouds scudding by, hide in fear before the worst wind storms. So it is with the Spirit. We can neither control him nor understand him. But that does not mean we cannot witness his effects. Where the Spirit works, the effects are undeniable and unmistakable.” (D.A. Carson).
- **V14-15:** To understand Jesus word’s here, we need to look to Number 21:4-9 (Read it) and understand how John consistently uses the phrase “to be lifted up.”
 - Though this story seems very odd to us, it makes Jesus’ point clear. The Son of Man (Jesus) being “lifted up” on the cross will become the ultimate healing balm. “Humankind as a whole has been smitten with a deadly disease. The only cure is to look at the Son of Man dying on the cross, and find life through believing in him” (N.T. Wright). When we look at the cross, we look at the results of our evil and what God has done about it. Jesus took the evil that is deeply rooted in us upon himself so that we can be healed.
 - Interestingly, the serpent entwined around the pole has become a symbol to this day of healing by many medical organizations, tracing back to multiple cultural narratives. The story in Numbers is the earliest story on record connecting the snake to healing. But, the symbol comes to prominence from the stories of the mythical Greek god of healing, Asclepius, who Homer mentions in *the Iliad* (8th

Century BC). In later Greek and Roman mythology, we see the two snakes on the pole symbol usually traced to stories of the mythical gods, Hermes or Mercury. Many Hospitals have their roots in Christian practice, as Christians were called to care for the sick even if it potentially meant themselves getting ill and dying. By the early 2nd century, churches had built infrastructure to care for the sick, following the way of Jesus, and many trace the first hospital to Bishop Basil of Caesarea in 360 AD in Cappadocia. [Working in the Medical field might be a more Christian vocation than you think! :)]

- **V16-17:** The final word in Jesus is love, not condemnation. “The point of the whole story is that you don’t have to be condemned. You don’t have to let the snake kill you. God’s action in the crucifixion of Jesus has planted a sign in the middle of history. And the sign says: believe, and live.” (N.T. Wright). This reality should inform our posture towards those who don’t believe in Jesus and how we go about evangelism.

Notes on Q3:

- The “*Kingdom of God*” describes God’s saving and transforming reign as King, which has already arrived in some aspects in Jesus and will be fully realized when King Jesus returns and makes all things right. Through the Holy Spirit, we (and those around us!) get a taste of “Heaven on Earth” (The Kingdom of God). We see this in both our experience of deliverance from our sins and the empowerment to live like Jesus.
- “*Born Again*” carries the idea of new life, new identity, a renewal of our whole nature. “The coming of the kingdom at the end can be described as the regeneration of the world (Mt. 19:28, NIV ‘renewal’), but here what is required is the regeneration of the individual before the end of the world and in order to enter the kingdom.” (D.A. Carson) This regeneration or transformation in a new life can only come from the Spirit of God making us new (which He promises He will do when we put our trust/faith/allegiance in King Jesus).
- “Born Again” has become a popular phrase in modern Christianity and is worth our reflection on the significance of the idea. When they give their allegiance to King Jesus, some people experience a radical spiritual event of new joy, love, forgiveness, and change that really makes them feel they have experienced “new birth.” Other’s experience a slower process of learning to trust Jesus (this is especially true for those born into Christian families). However, the importance of being “Born Again” is not necessarily the “Born-Again Moment,” but the fact that you are now alive! This emphasis is the same with everyday human life. “What matters for most purposes is not that once upon a time you were born—though of course sometimes it matters that you can prove when and where you were born. What matters is that you are alive now and that your present life, day by day and moment by moment, is showing evidence of health and strength and purpose.” (N.T. Wright). Essentially, we know you were born because you live now (you don’t need to hang your birth certificate on the wall!). Similarly with being “born-again,” we know you are “born-again” by how you live now.

Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):

耶稣与尼哥底母谈重生

田传道，5月30日

"有一个法利赛人，名叫尼哥德慕，是犹太人的官。这人夜里来见耶稣，说：「拉比，我们知道你是由神那里来作师傅的；因为你所行的神迹，若没有神同在，无人能行。」耶稣回答说：「我实实在在地告诉你，人若不重生，就不能见神的国。」尼哥德慕说：「人已经老了，如何能重生呢？岂能再进母腹生出来吗？」耶稣说：「我实实在在地告诉你，人若不是从水和圣灵生的，就不能进神的国。从肉身生的就是肉身；从灵生的就是灵。我说：『你们必须重生』，你不要以为希奇。风随着意思吹，你听见风的响声，却不晓得从哪里来，往哪里去；凡从圣灵生的，也是如此。」尼哥德慕问他说：「怎能会有这事呢？」耶稣回答说：「你是以色列人的先生，还不明白这事吗？我实实在在地告诉你，我们所说的是我们知道的；我们所见证的是我们见过的；你们却不领受我们的见证。我对你们说地上的事，你们尚且不信，若说天上的事，如何能信呢？除了从天降下、仍旧在天的儿子，没有人升过天。摩西在旷野怎样举蛇，人子也必照样被举起来，叫一切信他的都得永生。神爱世人，甚至将他的独生子赐给他们，叫一切信他的，不致灭亡，反得永生。因为神差他的儿子降世，不是要定世人的罪，乃是要叫世人因他得救。信他的人，不被定罪；不信的人，罪已经定了，因为他不信神独生子的名。光来到世间，世人因自己的行为是恶的，不爱光，倒爱黑暗，定他们的罪就是在此。凡作恶的便恨光，并不来就光，恐怕他的行为受责备。但行真理的必来就光，要显明他所行的是靠神而行。」"

约翰福音 3:1-21

序言

约2：23-25说耶稣行了很多的神迹，圣经上说许多人信了主耶稣。24节耶稣却说，不把自己交给他们。当时犹太人信耶稣，但耶稣担心他们因神迹所信是不够的。这里耶稣提到尼哥底母，这人和其他的犹太人有所不同。

一，尼哥底母其人

- 1, 法利赛人，在当时敬畏上帝的人，他们尊守律法分别为圣。不是谁都能成法利赛人，道德，行为的楷模。保罗也是。只是在耶稣时代，他们过分注重法律，过份保守，拒绝福音。
- 2, 犹太官
- 3, 以色列人的拉比，著名人士，高智商和情商，和有现代诺贝尔得主相似的名声。

二，进神国的条件：重生

夜里见耶稣，也许是白天耶稣太忙，或者尼哥底母不方便白天见耶稣。

也许尼哥底母和耶稣的地位相差太大。知名人士和工匠，高级知识分子和没有文化的，.....

经文："这人夜里来见耶稣，说：「拉比，我们知道你是由神那里来作师傅的；因为你所行的神迹，若没有神同在，无人能行。」耶稣回答说：「我实实在在地告诉你，人若不重生，就不能见神的国。」"

尼哥底母见耶稣时不是具居高临下的态度，只是陈述观察到的事实。约3：2-3。看见他有谦卑的心，受耶稣喜爱。尼哥底母有丰富的圣经知识和世界上的知识，但他需要改变他的思维方式，有正确的对神和生命的理解。缺乏是对上帝的真正的认识，认识上帝不是在于知识。尼哥底母有很好的知识和宗教概念。耶稣要扭转他的宗教思想。他和耶稣的对话似乎有点问不对题。

问题（笔者）：认识上帝不在知识在什么？我们常要求装备，门徒训练是不是知识？

尼哥底母问：「拉比，我们知道你是由 神那里来作师傅的；因为你所行的神迹，若没有 神同在，无人能行。」

耶稣回答：「我实实在在地告诉你，人若不重生，就不能见 神的国。」

尼哥底母觉得人已老了怎能再进母腹。耶稣的回答是从肉生的是属肉体的，从灵生的是属灵的。

耶稣强调，唯一得救的办法是得重生，只有重生才能进入神国，和遗传无关。耶稣来这世界，不是一个老师而是救主。

三, 重生的意义

重生是重新开始出生, 进入神的国

当我们受洗归主，称主为救主的时候，我们就进了神的国。

水和灵相连，水中可洗礼，洗净罪，和主同死同生，同复活。

当我们重生之时，我们接受了拯救。神的大能进入我们，和神的关系被修复。没有重生就不能理解神的教导，也不能理解天上的事。

四, 重生是三位一体神的作为。

1, 重生是从上头来的，从天上来的，不是从母腹。

2, 从三位一体来的重生, 是不受人体的限制, 因为十字架介除了这样的限制。

重生是神的作为, 并非人为。约2, 耶稣曾说, 你们摧毁圣殿, 我会在三日中重建圣殿。当耶稣完成了在十字架上的, 我们可以直接和神建立关系, 没有身体上的限制。不需要有实体的圣殿神的救赎是在重生时就开始了, 当人来十字架就开始了。摩西举蛇民21: 4-9。耶稣说有一天他也会被举起。把尼哥底母带到十架前。

问题（笔者）：在耶稣被钉十字架前，信神的人是如何得救重生的？

3, 也把尼哥底母带到神的面前，约3: 16。不管我们是如何的景况，也不是神欠我们，而是神爱我们。

4, 耶稣把我们的注意力转向圣灵

要人信神是何其不易, 耶稣是公元前二千年的人物, 祂说能救所有的人而自己却死在十字架上。

人不容易信。唯一就是靠圣灵的工作。

最后耶稣带尼哥底母进入圣灵。耶稣是救主，为了完成神的拯救计划，圣灵的工作使我们认识主，为罪为义为审判，重生是神决定。“你不要以为希奇。风随着意思吹，你听见风的响声，却不晓得从哪里来，往哪里去；凡从 圣 灵生的，也是如此”。

圣灵光照下我们知道自己是罪人，没有圣灵的工作，我们不能得救。

"然而，我将真情告诉你们，我去是与你们有益的；我若不去，保惠师就不到你们这里来；我若去，就差他来。他既来了，就要叫世人为罪、为义、为审判，自己责备自己。为罪，是因他们不信我；为义，是因我往父那里去，你们就不再见我；为审判，是因这世界的王受了审判。"

约翰福音 16:7-11

总结

寻找就得着，耶稣不会太忙，如你生命中有遭遇，请你来到神的面前。如你很顺利也请你来到神面前。因为没有一个人世上的成功能比得上天国。

Reborn, dialogues b/w Jesus and Nicodemus

Pastor Peter Tian

John 3:1-21

John C2 recorded Jesus's first sign, yet He demonstrated many miracles

People believed His name because of the many signs. In John 2:24 Jesus would not entrust Himself to them, for He knew all men. He knew their hearts, their trust was built on signs, superficial, not everlasting.

But Nicodemus, he was different. In what way?

Who is Nicodemus?

A Pharisee. So don't automatically consider a Pharisee as a hypocrite

Greek culture influenced Israelites, they knew Greek but didn't understand Hebrew. Even Bible NT was written in Greek, so their many thoughts were influenced by the Greek culture. Then Pharisees determined to separate themselves from the Greek culture, they intended to keep the Hebrew culture pure

At the highest, the number of Pharisees were over 6000, good moral examples, role models. Same reason apostle Paul was one of them. Unfortunately, they were overly conservative, rejected the Gospel. Therefore Jesus criticized them

Nicodemus was a council member. One of the 70.

C3:10 indicated he was a famous rabbi. Highly educated. One of the most famous. Respectful, high EQ and IQ

He came to Jesus at night: Jesus was too busy, or possibly inconvenient to see Him during the day. He respected Jesus. With great difference in their status: the visited was an unknown carpenter, w/o formal education, yet he called Him, Rabbi, with humble heart. Nicodemus was with full knowledge of OT and worldly wisdoms, but he needed real understanding of God and true life. Needed renewal of his mind. Jesus directly told him "none can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again". Jesus came to this world, not as a teacher, but a savior
Identity and past experiences would not help you to build relationship with God, without being reborn. Without reborn, none can enter the kingdom of God. God is in control, has authority over us.

When we reborn, the moment of receiving salvation, God's power enters us. The restoration of our relationship with God.

W/o reborn, we can't understand his teaching. We couldn't understand Heavenly things

Born of water and spirit is the reborn of the spirit, not from flesh. Even you could enter into your mother's womb the second time, the birth were still from the flesh.

Water and HS meant the same thing. Water also meant baptism, willing to repent, to express my desire to follow the lead of the HS

To be reborn is the work of triune God, but how?

1)eye to heaven, to be reborn from above

2)bring his personal limitation to the cross of Jesus. John C2, "destroyed the temple, I would rebuild in 3 days."After He accomplished what He did on the Cross, we can build relationships directly with Jesus, no need of the actual temple. The reborn only happens when people come to the cross, look up the cross.

Moses in numbers 21 lifted up the snake in the desert. The venomous snake bit Israelites who sinned and disbelieved. Those got bitten, if looked up at the bronze snake, would be healed.

3)turned his eyes to the love of God. John 3:16 God do love the world... He is not obligated to care people, yet the mighty God love people including those who rejected Him. To the degree of send His only son. He came to the world to die, is not because He owed us anything. But He desired so

4)turned his eyes to HS. Big gap between God's love and human beliefs

How to believe Jesus is our Savior? It's incredibly hard. This savior lived 2000 years ago. He said to save all yet could not save himself. This loving God the Father, not only send his one and only Son to accomplish the salvation plan, He also send the HS, to help us to see the truth. 3:7-8 it is the work of the spirit that a person could let down his pride to admit himself as a sinner. And say Amen! Under the enlightenment of HS, we realized Jesus as our own savior

In summary. Jesus knows us the most, He is willing to help us, never reject anyone who comes to seek him w/ a sincere heart. Accept and guide us to build a relationship with God. Go through hardship or on top of your life, in whatever stages of your life, come to Jesus, he walks with you to meet your true need