

JESUS, THE MASTER SOUL-WINNER

(Part Two – Christ’s Dealing with Nicodemus)

TEXT: John 3:13-21

INTRODUCTION: If we would be effective “fishers of men,” we must follow Jesus (Matt. 4:19). In John’s gospel we see God’s love for the **individual**. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, Who goes after the one lost sheep. He testified of Himself, *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save **that** which was lost.”* In religion, men seek God; in Christianity, God seeks men.

First in chronological order of Christ’s in-depth dealing with sinners was **Nicodemus**. In the first eleven verses of John chapter three, Jesus emphasizes the need for the new birth from **God’s** standpoint. He doesn’t tell Nicodemus how to appropriate the new birth until the ranking Pharisee has admitted his ignorant unbelief (vv. 10-12). Then, beginning in verse 13, Jesus unfolds the **human side** of salvation which climaxes in that marvelous **16th verse** that promises everlasting life to the one that *“believeth”* in the *“only begotten Son.”*

OUTLINE: With religious people who manifest a spiritual hunger, we must insist on the **new birth**.

I. Win Men to Yourself First.

(vv. 1,2)

- A.** Have a testimony above reproach (*“thou art a teacher come from God”*)
- B.** Be willing to confront men in their unbelief (John 2:23-25).

II. Stress the Need for a Spiritual Rebirth.

(vv. 5-12)

- A.** One must understand the basics of salvation (vv. 3,6,11,12).
- B.** One must acknowledge his sinner-hood (v. 5).
- C.** One must admit his inability to save himself (vv. 6,7).

III. Emphasize the Deity of Christ.

(v. 13)

- A.** His incarnation (*“he that came down from heaven”*)
- B.** His Godhead (*“even the Son of man which is in heaven”*)

IV. Explain the Nature of Faith and Repentance.

(vv. 14-21)

- A.** Repentance (v. 14; Num. 21:7)
- B.** Faith

1. Looking to Christ
2. Depending on Christ (*"believeth in him"*)

CONCLUSION: There is so much we can learn from the Master's dealing with Nicodemus. His interaction with this "master of Israel" was on three progressive levels:

- 1) Face to face (vv. 2 and 3)
- 2) Mind to mind (vv. 4-8)
- 3) Heart to heart (vv. 9-21)

We, too, must insist on the absolute necessity of the **new birth** – especially with moral and religious people. Even as Jesus gave an implied **invitation** to "*come to the light*" in verse 20, let us close our witness by giving an opportunity to receive the gift of eternal life by **believing** in the "*only begotten Son of God.*" Although Nicodemus did not immediately receive Jesus as the Christ, the seed sown at this nocturnal encounter would eventually bare fruit. By the time of Christ's resurrection, he became an open follower (John 19:39).