
Sermon Notes

September 6, 2020

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

God is For Us: Regeneration John 3:1-8, Ezekiel 36:25-27

HOW????

- ❖ How can a person who is spiritually dead and whose mind is naturally hardwired against God answer a call to enter into fellowship with Christ?
- ❖ How does God take us from the spiritually dead condition in which all of us are born and create new spiritual life within us?

Born Again

- ❖ Jesus' "takeaway" for Nicodemus
 - v. 3, unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God
 - v.7 you **MUST** be born again
- ❖ **WHAT** does it mean to be "born again"?
 - the term, "born again" is a vitally important description of what takes place in the life of a believer as God brings him/her to saving faith and adopts them into His family
 - born from above

- ❖ **HOW** are we born again?
 - how involved were you and how much control did you have over your own birth?
 - you have just as much control over your spiritual birth
 - Jesus spells out how we are born again in vv. 5-6
 - *born of water and the Spirit*
 - does water play any important role in the rites of Judaism?
 - ♦ yes, in its purification rituals
 - ♦ to enter God's kingdom we must be purified from the pollution of sin and born of the Spirit
 - "Nicodemus, how can you be the teacher of Israel and not understand this?" (vv. 9-10)
 - ♦ what OT teaching is Nicodemus overlooking?
 - ♦ where in the OT do we find an intersection between water and the Spirit?
- ❖ Ezekiel 36:25-27
 - the new birth involves two inseparable actions
 - purification (depicted by the sprinkling of water)
 - renovation (depicted by the way our heart of stone is replaced with a heart of flesh that is controlled by the Spirit)
 - the new birth does not involve "patching up" the old
 - our totally depraved condition cannot be fixed up or improved upon

- God gives us a new spirit with a new disposition that desires new things (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- ❖ Being born from above is completely the work of the Holy Spirit
 - v. 6, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*
 - that which comes out of the natural man can only produce that which is natural to man
 - that which comes forth from God produces only that which is characteristic of God
 - The new birth is a permanent thing that produces a permanent change in the life of an individual
- ❖ The new birth is mysterious in character

A Passive Process

- ❖ We know nothing about the kingdom of God nor do we enter into it because we willed or decided to do so
- ❖ The Holy Spirit begets and bears when and where He pleases
 - we do not control the wind
 - we do not control the Spirit
- ❖ Understanding that we are passive in the process of being born again will fuel our praise and worship of God for the riches of His grace and mercy toward us
- ❖ Unless the Holy Spirit grants new birth, we remain dead in our trespasses and sins, unable and unwilling to what the gospel demands

Personal Application

1. Are you born again? Do you have the life of God within you?
2. The privilege of entering into God's kingdom rests entirely on the Holy Spirit's decision and action. How does knowing this increase rather than diminish your praise and worship of God?
3. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27. With the pictures God gives us in these verses in mind, remember what your life was like when it was controlled by your heart of stone. What differences have come about in your life since God gave you a heart of flesh and put His Spirit within you?