

Life Group Leader Guide

Series: Believe and be Changed

Sermon: Born Again – When Good Isn't Good Enough

Text: John 3:1–21 | Date: 11/9/25

Central Idea: Jesus didn't come to make bad people good—He came to make dead people alive. Nicodemus was moral, religious, respected, and successful... and Jesus told him it wasn't enough. To enter the kingdom of God, we must be born again—transformed by the Spirit, not improved by our own effort.

Icebreaker

- Share about a time you tried really hard to fix something on your own, only to realize you needed help.

Scripture: Read **John 3:1–21** together.

1. Who needs Jesus?

Nicodemus was everything we consider “spiritually successful,” yet Jesus told him he needed to start over.

Questions:

- Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?
- What does Nicodemus believe about Jesus? Is it enough for salvation?
- Why can a person believe Jesus is from God but still not be saved?
- Why do moral, successful, and religious people sometimes struggle to accept their need for Jesus?

2. What do we need?

Jesus says we must be **born again** and that's something we can not do for ourselves. The wind illustrates the Spirit: powerful, unpredictable, and uncontrollable.

Questions:

- What does being “born again” mean in your own words?
- Why is that idea comforting for the broken but offensive to the proud?

- Where do you see yourself trying to maintain control instead of trusting the Holy Spirit?
- How do you see our culture acting like modern Pharisees—obsessed with outward appearance, rules, and moral superiority? How have you participated in that?

3. How does Jesus meet our need?

Jesus points Nicodemus to the cross: like Moses lifted up the serpent, Jesus would be lifted up to save sinners.

Questions:

- Read John 3:14–17. What do these verses tell us about God’s heart toward sinners?
- Why is the cross the only solution—not effort, religion, or self-improvement?
- What does it look like to “come into the light” instead of hiding in darkness?

Personal Application

- Are you more tempted to hide your sin in darkness, or bring it into the light?
- Do you ever fall back into a “Pharisee mindset,” trying to look righteous on the outside instead of letting Jesus change you on the inside?
- What area of your life needs the Spirit’s power—not just your effort?

Prayer Focus

- Pray for the humility to walk in the light.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to do what we cannot do ourselves.
- Pray for our church to be known for grace, not outward appearance.

Further Reading for This Week

Next Week’s Passage:

- **John 3:22–36** – John the Baptist declares that Jesus must increase and he must decrease.

Additional Scriptures to help us understand next week's message:

- **John 1:19–34** – John's testimony about who Jesus is
- **Malachi 3:1** – Prophecy about John the Baptist's ministry
- **Hosea 2:16-20** - Jesus as the bridegroom, John the best man, and us the bride
- **Matthew 11:2–11** – Jesus' affirmation of John the Baptist
- **Luke 3:15–18** – John announces the One greater than him
- **1 Peter 1:22–25** – New birth through the living Word of God
- **Psalms 103** – Exalt Jesus like John did while reading this Psalm