“Sons And Daughters of God”

September 16, 2018

John 3:1-6

Please find with me the third chapter of John.

If you have any interest in how religious people think, you can always go to the Bible for examples. One such example is an Israeli teacher. Do you remember the name Nicode-mus? His name is found five times in the Bible and all five are found right here in the Gospel of John. Nicodemus was a member of a very strict, go-by-the-law sect of Judaism called the Pharisees; a devout Jew. And this Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a representative from the Great Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, was an Israeli teacher. And Nicodemus, having seen the LORD perform miracles, invites Jesus to a covert, night-time meeting. And here’s how he begins his conversation. *“Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”*

I’m of the opinion that Nicodemus was wondering if this Miracle-Worker was the Promised Jewish Messiah. He had observed a couple about Jesus, the same things that people all over the world know about Him. He’s a Teacher and He’s a Miracle-worker. *“Rabbi, we know that thou art* ***a teacher*** *come from God: for no man can do* ***these miracles that thou doest****, except God be with him.”*

As well, he might have read and maybe even taught this verse from the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 35:4 *“…your God will come … he will come and saveyou. (5) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. (6) Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: …”*; clearly a prediction that God would come to the Jews and perform miracles.

So, when Jesus gives His answer, it probably startled him. Here’s the LORD’s answer to a “wondering” Pharisee. John 3:3 *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

I’ve learned over the years that often religious people want to convince other people that *they’re* right and everyone else is wrong. They often, also, want to debate other religious people. Jesus, on the other hand, wants people to become alive and see His Kingdom. But I see Nicodemus as a sincere seeker. *“Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”*

So, Jesus simply tells him he needs to be born again. And Nicodemus, the teacher of Jewish religion, doesn’t get it. He doesn’t understand what Jesus is talking about. He even goes so far as to say “Do you mean I need to re-enter my mother’s womb and be born again?”

So, the LORD explains that anyone born of the flesh is flesh and whoever is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Isn’t that just like Jesus? He doesn’t say you have to be good to enter the kingdom of Heaven. He doesn’t say you have to be Jewish to enter the kingdom. He certainly doesn’t say you have to be religious to get into the Kingdom. Instead, He says every person born into the world is born of the flesh and is therefore, flesh. But those who are *born of the Spirit* are spirit and, as such, *they,* and they alone, will see the kingdom of God.

Here’s exactly how Jesus said it; verse six. John 3:6 *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”*

Today’s topic has to do with those who are “born of the Spirit.” I’ve titled today’s sermon “Sons and Daughters of God.” Shall we pray?

Now, please turn with me in your Bible to the eighth chapter of Romans and find the fifteenth verse. Romans 8:15 *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself [Himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: …*

Other than Jesus, the Apostle Paul is the only other person in the New Testament that has a lot to say about the Holy Spirit. And in Romans eight, Paul refers to Him no less than eighteen times. So, folks, please remember to consider the context when you read God’s Word. The context of this chapter is the Wonderful Person of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit of God and of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the One Who gets you into the Kingdom of God. Jesus says *“you must be born of the Spirit.”* And in describing those people who are born of the Spirit, Paul says “you have received the Spirit of sonship and not the spirit of bondage.” So, the Holy Spirit is also the One Who brings you the assurance of your being one of God’s children.

First, then, to be born again is to be given a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit. John 3:6 *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”*

How many times have you met people who are very religious and yet they will tell you in no uncertain terms that they don’t need to be saved or quote “born again”? They do lots of good works. They are upright and moral. They are very religious and often attend Church. But, they have an opinion of “born again.”

The following is a true story. One day a Pastor was speaking to a very prominent religious person in his town. Actually the man was a Professor of Philosophy. Let’s call him Professor Hamilton (that was not his real name). Pro-fessor Hamilton had high moral principles and did lots of quote “Christian” works for people. And he had often stated that he did not need to be regenerated “born again.”

And the Professor had become quite sick. So, the Pastor went to visit at his home. On that day he and the Pastor were engaged in conversation. And, as usual, Professor Hamilton had his dog right by his bed side. The Pastor asked him the dog’s name. “Oh, that’s Fido (the dog’s name really was Fido).” So, the Pastor asked him if that was his Christian name or his last name. “Oh, that’s just his name.”

So, said the Pastor “Can I call him Fido Hamilton?” “Absolutely not!” said the Professor. “But he lives in your family” responded the Pastor. “Why don’t you call him Fido Hamilton?”

At that moment, one of Professor Hamilton’s daughters entered the room. The Pastor then asked “Is your daughter referred to as Miss Hamilton?” “Well, of course,” responded Professor Hamilton. “Then, why can’t I call your dog “Fido Hamilton?” The Professor laughed.

The Pastor then proceeded as follows. “Do you see what I am getting at? Your daughter was *born* into your family and she carries *your* name because you have communicated *your* lifeto her. Your dog might be an intelligent dog, a well-behaved dog, and altogether a most remarkable dog; but the question is not, ‘Is he a good or a bad dog?’ It is merely, ‘Is he a dog?’ He doesn’t need to be bad to be disqualified from being a member of your family; he only needs to be a dog.”

And, said the Pastor to Professor Hamilton, *“it’s the exact same way with your relationship to God. The issue isn’t whether or not you do good things or if you are a good man. It’s a matter of whether or not you’ve been given life by being born again by God Himself.”* Professor Hamilton saw exactly what the Pastor was saying and that day received Christ as his Savior and was born again. [Found on [www.articles.ochristian.com](http://www.articles.ochristian.com) “The Eternal Purpose” by Watchman Nee].

First, to be born again is to be given a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit.

Second, those who receive the Holy Spirit are delivered from the bondage of fear; verse fifteen. Romans 8:15 *“****For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;*** *but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”*

Folks, those who have received the Holy Spirit are delivered from the one thing Satan seems to have the market on; fear, which Paul tells us is a spirit of bondage.

Let me show you what I mean. Paul says this in Hebrews 2:14 *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

There are lots of quote “fears” that we human beings encounter in this world. But at the top of the list might just be this one; “the fear of dying.” And, according to the Bible, it’s a work of Satan himself. You see, Satan is the one who engineered death way back in the beginning of the world. And, as long as there is sin, there is death. And Satan has used this threat of death to keep souls in bondage, often for a person’s entire lifetime.

God, on the other hand, is the Only One Who can deliver a soul from that bondage of the fear of dying. How? By sending His Holy Spirit to indwell us.

Folks, the Spirit is not the spirit of bondage again to fear. God didn’t save you to get you to be further afraid of Him. Rather, those who are saved are delivered from that form of bondage. A genuine Christian is the only one who has no fear of dying.

Christians are justified; clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Romans 5:1 *“Therefore being justified [made righteous] by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: …”*

Christians are sanctified; made holy and made Saints. Ephesians 1:1 *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: …”*

Christians are forgiven; Colossians 2:13 *“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; …”*

Christians are complete in Christ; Colossians 2:10 *“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: …”*

And Christians have been delivered from fear. Psalm 34:4 says *“I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”*

A Christian has no reason to fear dying. So, the question, “Are you afraid of dying?” If so, then you be honest enough with yourself to ask if you truly been saved. And if you haven’t yet been saved, the Holy Spirit is not yet living within you. Folks, if the LORD is dealing with you about being saved, it might just be by letting you see that you are not yet saved. How do you know? Because you are still in the bondage of being afraid to die.

You see bondage is slavery. Bondage to fear is letting fear keep you as its slave. But what does God say about a Christian and death?

I Corinthians 15:51 *“Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) in a moment, in the twink-ling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*(54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,* ***Death is swallowed up in victory****. (55) O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”*

Philippians 1:21 *“For to me to live is Christ, and* ***to die is gain****.”*

John 11:25 *“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me,* ***though he were dead, yet shall he live:*** *(26) and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”*

There are many things that should legitimately concern you as a Christian. But dying is not one of them. The fear of dying is not of the LORD. Satan is and has always been the author of the fear of dying.

II Corinthians 5:1 *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan,* ***earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven****: …”*

You see, death is a bully. A bully is someone who wants you to be afraid of him. If there is one thing a bully wants to do; it’s to control you; to control your thoughts. So, the sooner you see death for what it is, a psychological bully, the sooner you will be able to confront it with the truth.

I have this word of comfort to those of you who are afraid of dying. Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. And, at the moment you are saved by God’s grace through simple faith, God, the Holy Spirit enters your spirit. And He is the One Who can remove that fear.

First, to be born again is to be given a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit.

Second, those who receive the Holy Spirit are delivered from the bondage of fear.

Third, those who receive the Holy Spirit are full-fledged children of God. And the Holy Spirit tells them so. Romans 8:15 *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but* ***ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.******The Spirit itself [Himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*** *…”*

Paul tells us that Christians have received the Spirit of Sonship. That means we are “full-fledged” sons and daughters of God. Can you see why we teach that the Holy Spirit is the Only One Who can deliver you from the fear of dying? He bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

One of the deepest needs of the human heart is to know God as a Father, personally; as your personal Heavenly Father. And the Person who best knows how to bring that experience into reality for the Christian is the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture is very clear about who you are now that you are saved.

John 1:12 *“But as many as received him,* ***to them gave He power to become the sons of God****, even to them that believe on his name: …”*

At the moment of spiritual birth, you enter the family of God.

I John 3:2 *“Beloved* ***now are we the Sons of God****.”*

Romans 8:14 *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,* ***they are the sons of God****.”*

Galatians 4:4 *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (5) To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (6) And because* ***ye are sons****, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*

And do you see what a child of God does? He cries “Abba” to God. “Abba” has no other translation in any language in the world except “Daddy” or “Dad.” And Who is it that enables you to cry out to God as your Daddy? The Indwelling Spirit of God.

If there is One Person we need more than anyone in the world, it’s the Person of God. And we need Him to be living within us if we are ever going to live well as human beings. God has sent His Spirit to dwell within the Christian. And one of His purposes as He deals with you is that you find and enjoy the assurance of your salvation.

So, how? How does the Holy Spirit do this? How does He speak to your spirit and reveal to you that you are a son or a daughter of God? One primary way; the Bible. Paul says He bears witness; He speaks; He gives testimony to your spirit that you are God’s. You see, the Holy Spirit is a Revealer. He’s God’s Revealer to your spirit. He’s the Spirit of Truth. It is the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit to bring the reality of the things of God to your heart and mind.

He is all about the Truth. There is no one more con-cerned about the Truth than the Holy Spirit. His daily goal; His constant goal; His goal today, is to get the Word of God into your heart and life. So, how does the Holy Spirit work in the life of a Christian to testify to them that you are one of God’s children? He speaks through the pages of the Book you are holding in your hand. So, listen to the voice of the Spirit as He speaks to you through the Scripture.

First, to be born again is to be given a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit.

Second, those who receive the Holy Spirit are delivered from the bondage of fear.

Third, those who receive the Holy Spirit are full-fledged children of God. And the Holy Spirit tells them so.

Last, let me conclude with this. Where do you find your identity? My identity is who I am. But my identity is not found in who I am apart from the LORD. And who am I? I am a child of God. I became a child of God the moment I placed my faith in the Eternal Son of God, Who has fully paid for my sins.

Father’s Blessing – John Paul Jackson; died February 18, 2015

http://www.sozojosiahcenter.org/know-your-identity-and-purpose-as-a-child-of-god/

God has created you with a spirit and His Spirit is right now dwelling within your spirit. And you, Christian, are being led by the Spirit. You see, God speaks directly to you through the words in your Bible. Those of you who don’t have time for His Word will not and cannot walk in the assurance that Paul speaks about here, the assurance that you are a child of God.

So, here’s the prayer for this week. “Holy Spirit, I’m listening to Your voice. I completely surrender the rights to myself to You. Speak to me. And I will follow Your ways. Teach me Your Word.”

I can’t imagine the Holy Spirit being anything but ready to head your cry.

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 719 “Children of the Heavenly Father”