THE DIVINE TEACHER

**DATE: 7/15/2018 am**

**TEXT: John 3:1-21**

**INTRODUCTION**

We've been looking at the Gospel of John and how he's able to paint some very unique portraits of the Life of Christ

In chapter 1 we looked at John painting Him as the Word of God

In chapter 2 we saw him painting Him as the Son of Man

Now this great chapter (3) gives us a portrait of Jesus as

**… "THE DIVINE TEACHER"**

We must remember that when Jesus came to earth …

-- He came to teach men how to flee darkness and come to the light

-- He came to teach men how to flee death and to enter into life

In this chapter, we find Jesus carrying out His ministry as a Teacher

Here, He gets the opportunity to school a teacher, and He does it well!

However, Jesus also uses this passage to instruct us

As we take the time to look at these verses this morning,

… We see here a man who was at the pinnacle of success

He had it all … He was respected, he had money, power, position and all the things that are considered the trappings of a successful life

Yet, he lacked that one thing that would guarantee him eternal life

He lacked a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

This lack in the life of Nicodemus becomes the topic of Christ's lesson

In these verses, Jesus, The Divine Teacher explains salvation

And in the process, He explains it for anyone who will listen as well

Let's join Jesus, The Divine Teacher in His classroom

As we do, all I ask is that you allow the Lord to speak to your heart and then do as He says

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, you will at least hear how to do just that today

Nobody ever explained a truth like Jesus,

Let's listen in, as He Teaches Nicodemus this Great Truth about salvation

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, let's look at …

**I. THE "CONVERSATION" – vs. 1-13**

This narrative begins by telling us that a man came to visit Jesus

***"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:"***

First, we are introduced to …

**A. Nicodemus' 'Character' – v. 1**

The Bible spells out for us who Nicodemus is

We see 3 aspects of Nicodemus' Life here

**1.** ***"a ruler of the Jews"***

By telling us that Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews

It's telling us he is a member of the Ruling body of Israel

That ruling body was called the *Sanhedrin*

He was a judge, much like a member of the Supreme Court

As such, he was among the most powerful men in Israel

Matter-of-fact, later in this gospel we see him object to the unjust way the rest of his peers treated Jesus in one of their attempts to arrest Him

**John 7:50, 51 – *"Nicodemus saith unto them, …"* *"Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"***

**He was a Ruler**

**2.** He ***"was a … Pharisee"***

By telling us this we know that he is a member of one of the three political parties in Israel

And by that we understand that he's Religious

Therefore, he adhered to the strictest of religious and ethical standards

Not all Pharisees were hypocrites

Some actually did their best to live for the Lord in true holiness

It appears that Nicodemus was one of those

**He was Religious**

**3.** ***"The same came to Jesus"***

By this we see that he's Real / Genuine

Remember the Majority of the Sanhedrin saw Jesus as a Threat

His approach to Jesus indicates that He was Sincere in his search

Here was a man who wanted to know the Truth

He probably came by night … not out of Fear

(as some have suggested)

But so that he could have an uninterrupted conversation with Jesus

I don't mind it when someone who is asking questions is sincere and genuinely searching for the truth

Neither does the Lord!

**He was Real**

**Nicodemus' 'Character'**

Next, when it comes to this Conversation, we see …

**B. Nicodemus' 'Compliment'– v. 2**

***"The same came to Jesus … and said unto Him, 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"***

**1.** He Addressed Jesus with 'Respect'

Nicodemus calls Jesus ***“Rabbi”***

Despite Jesus being *"uneducated"*

He refers to Him as Teacher, and appears to hold Jesus in high regard

**2.** He Addresses Jesus with a 'Realization'

***"no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him"***

Nicodemus Realizes that Jesus can do what He does because God is with Him

It appears that Nicodemus at least understood that Jesus had been sent from God

And is, at least, wondering if this might not be the Promised Messiah

**3.** He Addresses Jesus with Human 'Reasoning'

***"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"***

Nicodemus stops short of making the assertion that Jesus is the Messiah

Nicodemus is giving Jesus honor and is displaying respect for the ability Jesus as shown (The miracles)

However, He stops short in his estimation of just who Jesus Really is

To Nicodemus, at that moment, Jesus is simply a teacher, or at best, a prophet

This is always the problem with Religion!

They stop short in their approach to Jesus Christ

The Religious say that Jesus is necessary,

 But they always have to add something

You have to be baptize, or confirmed, or be a church member, or take communion, or it could be any of a thousand other things to get to heaven

Faith alone in Jesus is never enough for the Religious

If someone's system of belief stops short of receiving Jesus Christ as the sole means of their salvation,

Then they have no salvation!

It is Jesus, plus nothing, minus nothing

It is Jesus and Jesus alone that saves the soul from sin

**C. Jesus' 'Challenge' – v. 3**

This one of the Greatest statement in all of the Bible

***"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"***

Jesus ignores the compliments and the pious platitudes

And goes right to the need of Nicodemus's heart

Jesus tells Nicodemus that his religion isn't sufficient to save his soul

He tells Nicodemus that he must experience the "New Birth"

Being the Divine Teacher, …

Jesus used a very familiar illustration to clarify His Truth

*Birth* is a universal experience

Everyone has been through it

After all, that's how we all got here

However, there is something different about this Birth to which Jesus is referring

**1.** The 'Nature' of The New Birth

The word ***"again”*** means *from a higher or greater place*

It refers to something that only comes from God

That is the Nature of the New Birth

Man cannot accomplish it

It is a work of God and Him alone!

**2.** The 'Necessity' of The New Birth

The word ***"except”*** is an *imperative*

It literally means that a person has no other choice when it comes to their soul's salvation

You either come God's way or you don't experience God's salvation

In other words, it's Jesus or nothing!

**Acts 4:12 – *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"***

**D. Nicodemus' 'Confusion' – v. 4**

***"Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"***

People who are not saved have a Natural World View

Nicodemus, like so many others, confuse the things of God with those of the flesh

He thought that Jesus was referring to a return to his mother's womb

A thing that would be an absolute impossibility

There are so many who just don't understand the plan of salvation

When someone tries to think about it in human terms,

It makes absolutely no sense to them

It is a something that is spiritually discerned and unless the Spirit of God awakens the mind to the Truth of God's plan,

There won't be understanding and, ultimately, no salvation

That's why Jesus stresses the need for the Father's draw to the Truth

**John 6:44 – *"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"***

**John 6:65 – *"And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father"***

Conscience and Creation **– Romans 1:19,20**

**John 12:32 – *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me"***

**E. Jesus' 'Clarification' – vs. 5 – 13 …**

In an effort to clear things up for Nicodemus

Jesus proceeds to explain the manner of the "New Birth" in detail

First, look at …

**1.** The *Instruments* of the New Birth – **v. 5**

***"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"***

**a. *"Born of water"***

There are some differences among Theologians as to what the Water here refers to

-- Some say it represents Baptism

Impossible, for this would add works to grace

-- Some say it's the Word of God

**Ephesians 5:26 – *"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,"***

The Bible is often compares to Water

-- It is the Word of God that regenerates and quickens the heart of the sinner

-- It is the Word of God that makes him acutely aware of His need for Christ

-- It is the Word of God that brings about the conviction of sin and the possibility of faith

**Romans 10:17 – *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"***

That is why Bible centered, Gospel preaching is so necessary

**I Corinthians 1:21 – *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"***

-- Some say it's the Natural Birth

I believe the context of this conversation lends it self to this

Jesus is saying, you have to be Born Naturally before you can be Born Again (Spiritually)

No Natural Birth, there'll be No Spiritual Birth

**b. *"born of the Spirit"***

If someone is to be Saved, there is a process involved (Let me explain)

After conviction comes and the heart of the sinner is made aware of their Condition before a Holy God

The sinner then has a decision to make

When / If the sinner turns to Jesus for salvation,

… The Spirit of God enters the New Believer and they now have Eternal Life

**2.** The *Imperative* of the New Birth – **v. 6**

***"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"***

There is a change produces by the action of the New Birth

When a sinner is saved, he literally becomes a “New Creation” in Christ

**II Corinthians 5:17 –** ***"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"***

It is this “New Creature” that is fitted for Heaven

The redeemed life has been readied for glory,

While the Natural man is suited only for the world

**3.** The *Imagery* of the New Birth – **v. 8**

***"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"***

Jesus uses the image of the wind to describe the action of the Holy Spirit

His movements, like those of the wind, cannot be predicted or anticipated

Like the wind, the movement of the Spirit is invisible, but powerful!

When He passes by, He touches whom He will and His presence is easily seen!

**THE "CONVERSATION"**

**II. THE "COMMENTARY" – vs. 9-17**

It seems that Nicodemus still doesn't understand what Jesus is teaching

Look in **vs. 9-13** with me …

Then in an effort to clear things up for this confused man,

Jesus goes on to explain things to Nicodemus in a fashion he would be familiar with

**A. A 'Shadow' from the Past – v. 14**

***"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:"***

In **Num. 21:4-9** we find the people of Israel complaining

God sends poison snakes among them to deal with it

The people pleaded with Moses for help

God tells Moses to make a snake of brass and put it on a pole and lift it up, those who look will live

The snake represents sin

Jesus died on the cross to pay our sin debt

The whole world has been bitten by the snake of sin

Men are dying and dropping off into Hell

Just like that snake, whoever looks to Jesus by faith will live

The great hymn – Look and Live

**B. The 'Simple' Plan of Salvation – vs. 15**

Jesus tells Nicodemus that the key to receiving salvation is as simple as believing …

***"That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"***

Religion tries to make it difficult for men to be made right with God

There are always rules to follow and steps to complete

Then, just when you think you have arrived, you always find that you have omitted some step or the other

Religion makes it impossible for men to be saved

Jesus, on the other hand, makes it so simple that little children, old people, people with limited intelligence, people who can't add or subtract, or even write their own name can be saved by the grace of God

**C. The 'Sacrifice' for Sin – v. 16 …**

Jesus tells Nicodemus that God's love for humanity was so great that He willingly gave up His only begotten Son to die that sinners might be saved

This has reference to the brutal death Jesus suffered on our behalf

A death so horrible and so cruel that He was marred beyond comprehension

**Isaiah 52:14 – *"As many were astonished at you; so His appearance was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men:"***

**D. The 'Sure' Provision – v. 16**

***"Whosoever"*** is anyone and everyone

When the Lord made His plan of salvation,

He determined to exclude no one!

God has flung the doors of grace wide open

And beckons all who will to come to Him and be saved

Saved from their sins and from an eternity in Hell

**E. The 'Solemn' Promise – v. 17**

***"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved"***

But this invitation isn't going to last forever

The day is coming when He will close the door

And opportunities like this may not be as available

**THE "CONVERSATION"**

**THE "COMMENTARY"**

**III. THE "CONDEMNATION" – vs. 18-21**

Jesus closes with a word for those who refuse to come to Him for their salvation

He gives the sinner a warning of where they are and what they can except as a result of their refusal to come

First, He describes …

**A. Their 'Present' State – v. 18**

***"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"***

According to this verse, the Bible plainly says that the sinner is already condemned

***"The wages of sin is death"***

You see, the state of the sinner is separation from God

God cautions that they will spend eternity in Hell, forever separated from Him and His glory if they don't do something about it

**Psalm 9:17 – *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"***

In other words, even though you are here today, if you are lost, in the mind of God, it is as if you were already in Hell (Not that He wants you there)

There is no other recourse for you but to run to Jesus for your soul's salvation

**B. A 'Persistent' State – vs. 19-21 …**

The sinner has no one to blame for his situation but himself

After all, Jesus has already done everything in …

… His power to save your soul

He died for you, paid your sin debt, rose from the dead to give your life, prays for you at the Father's throne, sends His Spirit to give you light and to draw you to Himself

If you are lost today, either you have never heard this Truth

Or you have already heard before and have chosen to go your own way

Please don't do that

The day will come when there will be no more time and no more opportunities

Come to Jesus while there is still hope and while the Spirit of God is still calling you to come

**CONCLUSION**

If we have learned nothing else from the Divine Teacher this morning,

I think it is plain to see that God loves sinners and has done everything to provide for their salvation

He has done everything possible to draw you to Himself, except using force

Why not make this the day when the sacrifice of Jesus becomes relevant in your life?

Why not make this the day of your salvation?

Jesus loves you, He died for you and if you will come to Him in simple, childlike faith,

He will save your soul and cleanse you from the penalty of sin

If in your heart that is what you want …

Why not make it a reality today?

**THE "CONVERSATION"**

**THE "COMMENTARY"**

**THE "CONDEMNATION"**