



October 22-23, 2022

Ice Breaker Questions

- Today's text contains one of THE most well known bible verses - John 3:16.
 - Do you remember where or when you first encountered and/or memorized this verse?
 - Did this verse influence your decision for salvation?
 - In what settings have you seen John 3:16 displayed? On TV, in restaurants, at events, etc

Understand Their Story

As we talk through John 3:1-21 today, we'll break it up into 2 sections: the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus (verses 1-15), and Jesus' teaching on salvation (verses 16-21).

1. While Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus is a very familiar story to people who have been in the church for a while, their dialogue contains some obscure imagery and ideas. Read John 3:1-15 slowly and highlight which phrases or ideas might be confusing for someone encountering this passage for the first time. How would you explain...
 - a. Being born again
 - b. Being born of water and the spirit
 - c. That being born of the Spirit is like the wind blowing
 - d. Other ideas which might be confusing for people?
2. Read John 3:16-21. Why don't people obtain eternal life according to these verses?
 - a. Do verses 19-21 "ring true" in your own experience? How / where do you see people loving or being drawn to the darkness more than the light?

Connect to His Story.

3. John 3:5 is a reference to Ezekiel 36:24-28. Read these verses and answer the following questions:
 - a. Who is the one "acting" in Ezekiel 36:24-28?
 - b. What sorts of things happen when a person is born 'of the water and the Spirit' in Ezekiel 36:24-28?
 - i. How do these verses influence the way you think about sharing the gospel with people? What is God's role in salvation? What is your role in sharing the gospel?
4. Jesus says that the Son of Man must be lifted up just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (v 10-15). Read Numbers 21:4-9 to understand what event Jesus was referring to:
 - a. What is the parallel being drawn between Jesus and the snake? What do they both represent?

Apply to Our Story

John 3:1-21 describes how someone gains eternal life. They are born again (verse 3), they are cleansed from sin, given a new heart which is soft towards God and desires to obey, and receive the Spirit (verse 5), when they believe in the Son who was lifted up (verses 14-15). While it is unlikely that people turned their back and ignored the snake that Moses lifted up in the wilderness, many people turn their backs and ignore the salvation offered by Jesus.

- List all the reasons (as many as you can think of!) why people refuse to look to Jesus for salvation.
- With these specific objections in mind, pray for the wind of the Spirit to blow in the hearts and lives of people and draw them out of the darkness and into the light.

Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus was lifted up on the cross for our salvation!*
- *Pray in Confession: Are there areas in your life which need to be exposed to the light? If so, confess these privately to the LORD. Consider if you need to confess this to a trusted friend or to members of your community group.*
- *Pray in Supplication that God would send His Spirit into the hearts of the people you love.*

God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 3:1-21

The Theology of Work commentary on this text notes:

“During his discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus says that those born from above will “come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God” ([John 3:21](#))....This has important ethical implications for work. If we are conducting all our work openly, we have a powerful tool for remaining faithful to the ethics of God's kingdom. But if we find ourselves hiding or obscuring our work, it is often a strong indication that we are following an unethical path....

It is important to understand that the metaphor of walking in the light is not a one-size-fits-all rule. Confidentiality and secrecy can have a proper place in work, as in personnel matters, online privacy or trade secrets. But even if we deal with information that should not be made public, we seldom need to act in complete darkness. If we are hiding our actions from others in our departments or from people with a legitimate interest, or if we would be ashamed to see them reported in the news, then we may have a good indication that we are acting unethically.”¹

- What strategies do you implement in your everyday “work” (at home, in your family, neighbourhood or community, at the location you work or volunteer) in order to be transparent and ‘above board’ with people?
- Are you willing to share an experience where you or someone you know hid or obscured something and it was later discovered? What did you learn from this experience?

¹ <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/john/jesus-hand-in-all-things-john-31-36>