



Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. John 3:3

Bible Study:

Read John 3:1-21. In this short, yet profoundly important text, Jesus explains the doctrine of **regeneration** to Nicodemus. This is quite interesting, because Nicodemus thought he was just coming to find out who this Jesus guy is. And Jesus' reply was in effect "With a sinful heart, you can't know the answer." So Jesus describes the process of the Holy Spirit doing a work in the soul of humans, enabling us to see our sinfulness and peril, and to behold the beauty of the Savior so that we can truly praise and worship him again.

The doctrine of regeneration is described throughout the Scriptures. The Old Testament describes it as circumcising and softening otherwise unholy and hardened hearts (Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:26). It is also portrayed as the act of God's writing his law on the human heart (Jer. 31:33). In the New Testament, it is represented as becoming a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), being brought from death to life (Rom. 6:13), being called out of darkness into God's wonderful light (1 Pet. 2:9), or being born again (John 3:3).

The gospel in the story:

In Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus summarizes the end result of regeneration in verse 16, which the Protestant reformer Martin Luther called "the gospel in miniature." Max Lucado wrote: "John 3:16, is a twenty-six word parade of hope: beginning with God, ending with Life, and urging us to do the same."

An unknown author put it this way:

"God"The greatest Lover
"so loved"The greatest Degree
"the world"The greatest Company
"that He gave"The greatest Act
"His only begotten Son"The greatest Gift
"that whosoever"The greatest Invitation
"believeth"The greatest Simplicity
"in Him"The greatest Person
"should not perish"The greatest Promise
"but"The greatest Difference
"have"The greatest Certainty
"everlasting life"The greatest Possession

Application:

Max Ludado sums it up well: This brief section of scripture is "solid enough to weather two thousand years of storms and questions. If you know nothing of the Bible, start here. If you know everything in the Bible, return here." As a family, take turns discussing how being born into God's family has changed your hearts and minds.