

Conversations With Jesus
Nicodemus
John 3:1-16

Today's conversation features a man who is as good as they come in Scripture.
You would like to have this man as your neighbor.
You would respect this man.
You would be impressed by this man.
You might even be inclined to vote for this man if he were running for public office.
He is a good man and yet.... He is as lost as anybody that Jesus ever talked to.

Here's the flow of this conversation in three words: **Evidence, Belief, Life**

Evidence.

People saw miraculous signs and believed in Jesus. John 2:23

Evidently, Nicodemus was one of the people who saw Jesus and the miraculous signs. In fact, Nicodemus was so impressed by the signs that he sought out a private conversation with Jesus...

He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." John 3:2 (NIV)

That's a positive statement but that's not a statement of faith. It's not like Nicodemus professes belief in Jesus and asks for forgiveness of sin and the gift of salvation.

Nicodemus needs a transformation that is so comprehensive, so life-changing, so life-giving that the best analogy is a new birth. Nicodemus is among the best of the best and he not only needs forgiveness, *he needs a new life.*

Jesus tells Nicodemus that he needs to be "born again." This is initially confusing to Nicodemus, so Jesus takes him back to the Old Testament for clarity.

I will sprinkle clean **water** on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And ***I will put my Spirit in you*** and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.... You will be my people and I will be your God.
Ezekiel 36:25-28

Based on Ezekiel, it is apparent that when Jesus spoke of water AND spirit in John 3:5, He was not speaking of two things but one thing: Born again. At the moment of salvation, when you are born again, you experience two things:

1. Your sins are forgiven – (symbolized by water purification)
2. You receive the Holy Spirit

The cleansing from sin is followed by the gift of new life.
The gift of the Holy Spirit is to enable or to empower God's people to live like God's people.

I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws, Ez 36:27