

Sermon Series: Life in His Name
Sermon Title: In Search of Life
Text: John 3:1-21

Discussion Questions:

Not including people from the Bible - what person, living or dead, would you most want to sit down with, one-on-one, for one hour?

- Why this person?
- What would you most want to learn from them?
- What do you think the chances are that you might come away disappointed?

Not including Jesus - what person in the Bible would you most want to sit down with, one-on-one, for one hour?

- Why this person?
- What would you most want to learn from them?
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OK - now you get the opportunity to sit down one-on-one with Jesus.

- What about Jesus would you be most curious or interested to see or learn?
- What are some questions you would ask Him?
- What do you think the chances are that you might come away disappointed?

Examination:

- Read **John 2:23—John 3:8**.
 - What do you think it means (Jn 2:24) that Jesus “knew” all people - and that He “knew what was in each person”?
 - Do you think Jesus knew how Nicodemus thought and felt when they met?
 - Why do you think Jesus would have taken the time to meet with Nicodemus (let’s just call him Nic)? In what ways might Nic have differed from the crowds in whom Jesus did not trust?
 - Not only was Nic a Pharisee - but he was a member of the Jewish Ruling council. Based on what we know from the Gospels, how would these things have KEPT Nic from even the THOUGHT of wanting to spend time with Jesus?
 - Why do you think Nic met Jesus at night - and not during the day?
 - Does the night have any symbolic or spiritual meaning? What do you think this might be? Do you think Nic is in a state of spiritual darkness like the other religious leaders of his time? Why or why not?
 - What three important statements does Nic make about Jesus (v. 2)?
- Read **Mark 3:22**.
 - These teachers of the law would have likely been friends or acquaintances of Nic - who witnessed the very same miracles and signs that Nic mentions in v. 2, and yet they come to a VERY DIFFERENT conclusion. Why do you think that was?
 - To whom does Nic attribute the miracles of Jesus (v. 2), and might this explain why Jesus is willing to “entrust Himself” to him?

- The fact that Nic recognizes the connection between Jesus and God (vs. connecting Jesus to Satan) opens the door wide for Jesus to teach him about the kingdom of God. But Jesus' statement in verse 3 seems to come out of left field. Was Jesus answering a question Nic was asking? Do you think Nic even WANTED to see the kingdom of God?
- Read **Luke 17:20-21** & **Romans 14:17**. What is the nature of the kingdom of God—and does this help us understand what Jesus meant by being born again?
 - Why do you think Nic misinterpreted Jesus' words? Why does he fail to understand (v. 4)?
 - What is necessary to enter the kingdom of God (vv. 5-6)? What does 'water' refer to? What does 'Spirit' refer to? How are they related?
 - How did a person become a Jew—a member of God's people? Is this relevant to Nic and his puzzlement?
 - In verse 6, Jesus states that "...the Spirit gives birth to spirit." Why do you think one is an upper case "S", and the other a lower case "s"? What are these two spirits, and how are they related?
 - What does wind stand for (v. 8)? Given the context of this passage should the wind be interpreted in both a physical and a spiritual way?
 - How does Nic react (v. 9)?
- Read **John 3:10-21**.
 - Jesus seems very surprised that Nic doesn't understand what is being said in this conversation (v. 10). What, exactly, is Nic failing to grasp?
 - Who are the "we" and the "you people" that Jesus is referring to (v. 11)?
 - What are the "earthly things" Jesus is referring to - as well as the "heavenly things" (12)?
 - Jesus isn't just talking about "heavenly things" - but a heavenly place ("gone into" and "came from" - v. 13). How clearly does this indicate Jesus' divinity?
 - Read **Numbers 21:4-9**. Jesus is clearly referring to this account (v. 14) - and using it to point to His own life. How? How is it that "looking" brought about physical life - and "believing" brings about eternal life (v. 15)?
 - **John 3:16** is truly one of the most cherished and well-known verses in the entire Bible. Remember that Jesus uttered these words under the cover of darkness to a man who was seeking truth. What is it about these words that must have impacted Nic that night as he heard them?
 - When Jesus talks about "the world" (vv. 16-17), who is He talking about?
 - How does Jesus "save" us? What does it mean to "believe"? How does this relate with the account of the serpent in the wilderness - where people who looked upon the snake were saved from sure death?
 - How might what Jesus states in verses 19-21 - about darkness and light - relate to the fact that Nic came to Jesus at night?
 - Read **John 7:45-52**. Do you think what Jesus said to Nic about "coming into the light" made an impact on him? If so, how?

Application:

What if the conversation that Jesus had with Nic is *exactly* how a conversation between you and Jesus would go... Would you be disappointed? Would it change your life? How?