

## **Faith in the Home**

### **Second Sunday of Lent, John 3:1-17 --"Born Again."**

What does it mean to be a "Born-Again Christian?" In our society, it has often been taken to describe someone who can recall the moment when they first believed in Jesus and their soul was then transformed and renewed. Often times Lutherans, much of whom were baptized as infants (often times in a Roman Catholic Church long before becoming Lutheran), are not categorized as "Born-Again Christians"; Why? Because someone who was baptized as a baby and then was raised in the Church does not often have a clear memory of when they started to believe in Jesus.

Contrary to how many in our nation define being "born again," the truth is that you cannot be a Christian without being "born again." In John 3, A Pharisee named Nicodemus meets Jesus secretly at night. Nicodemus confesses that he and other Pharisees know that Jesus is from God because of the miracles that He performed. Jesus then said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Of Course, human rational fills the mind of Nicodemus and he wonders how a man can be born again wondering if Jesus means that man is supposed to go back into his mother's womb. Jesus, obviously is speaking of spiritual things, but does include one physical component of His creation. That is water.

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jesus is referencing the spiritual rebirth, and is pointing to the rebirth that comes when we are baptized into His baptism. That rebirth happens when we are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, as Paul wrote in Romans. Furthermore, this why Peter in His letters wrote, "baptism now saves you." Going back to Paul, he wrote to the Philippians that, "Christ's mercies are new every day." Everyday in our baptisms we are reborn, renewed, restored in the blood of Jesus.

So, you are a "Born Again Christian," but not born again once, but every day in our one baptism in Christ. We have a clean slate in God as His children to learn, grow, and live joyfully. While we all have work to do, we can do so with the baggage of our prior sin completely removed as "far as the East is from the West." We are defined by God as His Children, and not by our sins and shortcomings. We are servants of the Kingdom of God, and not slaves in the kingdom of Satan. We have eternal life promised to us instead of an eternal damnation in Hell. Because of original sin that we were born in, the Gospel of Jesus gives us rebirth, and baptism is a means to that rebirth. As reborn

Christians it is to the Father's glory that we seek to be obedient to His Word, and even though we will fail in sin, we are still reborn, in Christ's perfect sacrifice where He took your place. Fear not you are born again. Fear not you are saved.

***So how do we teach and model things to our Children?***

1. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism to give a basic Biblical focused instruction to pastors and families in the church of what it means to live lives as Christians. It was meant to be read regularly. I invite and challenge you to read part of it once a day. It will remind you of what Christ's baptism does for you, along with Holy Communion. It will also let you know what His will is through the Commandments, along with helping you to confess your faith daily.

2. The Catechism is also a great tool to start teaching your children in the home. Please do not wait until confirmation age (typically Middle School) to have your children read this book. That was not the intent of it. If you don't have one let me know.

3. Not only is the Catechism a good resource, but reading stories from God's Word, the Bible, is crucial, along with keeping up on the practice of regular Sunday worship. These practices that I have listed are good because the world wants to distract you from who you are in God. But God's Word reminds us that we are His.

4. We are not called to be dunces. While the world may call us fools, and we should be glad to be a "fool for Christ." However, use your reason and rational, because we called to be reasonable people. But make sure you submit your reason to your faith. That will give you Godly wisdom for the world. God is greater than what our own limited understanding can fathom. Thank God, He revealed Himself through His Son.

5. Never forget, you are baptized, and with you, "God is well pleased."