

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 2/24/16

Growing In The Christian Life

Being Born Into God's Family

(Scripture Text: John 1: 1-16)

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

There is only one way of entrance into the family of God, and that is by being born into that family. The way of entrance into an earthly family is by physical birth, and the way of entrance into the heavenly family is by the miracle of a spiritual birth - a second birth, a birth from above - look up **John 3: 3-8**. **"Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." 4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."**

What a wonderful thing it is that poor sinning creatures such as we are can actually become children of the most High God! We can well understand the apostle John's sense of awe as he wrote **1 John 3: 1!**

1. But are we not already the children of God?

Are not all people, everywhere, God's children? Is not God the Father of all? In a creatorial sense He is our Father and we are His children - look up Malachi 2: 10 ¹⁰ **"Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?"** and Acts 17:28 **"For in him we live and move and have our being.'** As some of your own poets have said, **'We are his offspring.'**

In that God has created us, He is our Father; but when we turn to such verses as John 1: 12 and Galatians 3:26, **"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith"**, we discover that there is a far more intimate relationship into which we need to come, and into which we may come, where in a spiritual sense we know God as our loving heavenly Father. Christians are only the children of God because they have put their "faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 26). **This raises a very important question:-**

2. How do we become children of God?

We can only become children of God by the same process by which we become children of our earthly parents - that is, by birth - look at John 1: 13 - "children born". Nobody ever became a child without being born a child; and no one ever becomes a member of God's family without being born into that family. How, then, is one born into the family of God?

First: "not of natural descent". This means that the birth spoken of here is not the result of human generation; we do not inherit membership in the family of God. We inherit a great many things from our parents - their dispositions, temperaments, and perhaps their features; but there is one thing we do not inherit from them, and that is spiritual grace. Christian parents do not automatically produce Christian children.

- **Second: "nor of human decision"**. No one can make himself a child of God by any amount of self-determination or self-effort. No amount of decision or resolution on our part will make us members of God's family, for it is "not of human decision". Suppose I wanted to become a child of royalty. It would not be enough to say: "I'm tired of being a commoner, so I have made up my mind to become a member of the royal family!"
- **Third: "nor a husband's will"**. No man can make anyone a child of God. Good men and women can do a great many things to help us. How wonderful it is to have Christian parents and friends who are solicitous for our spiritual welfare! - but the most saintly man or woman cannot produce within us a spiritual re-birth. Only God can do that.

How then can I be born into God's family? - **verse 13 tells me. I must be "born of God"**. Only God can make me a child in His family; it is His work, and His work alone.

3. We are born into God's family by a supernatural act of God.

There are, however, two conditions which we must meet; in other words, God will make us His children - when? Verse 12 tells us. We must: (1) Receive the Lord Jesus; and (2) Believe in His name. Let us take the second of these first. What does it mean to "believe in His name"?

His name stands for His Person and His work. In **Matthew 1: 21** "**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**" and Hebrews 7: 25 we are told that first and foremost He is the Saviour of all those who trust Him and belong to Him. To believe in His name means to believe that He is all that He claims to be - the Saviour and the Lord of His people. But we do not only have to believe in His name to become children of God; we have to receive the Lord Jesus into our hearts and lives. What does this mean? It means to take Him, to accept Him and to welcome Him - look up **Revelation 3: 20** "**Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.**". How does a person become a child of God? By believing that the Lord Jesus Christ is able and willing to save him, and by receiving Him, the Saviour Himself, into his heart and life. When anyone believes and receives in this way, God constitutes him as His own child. He is born into His family.

If we are to grow up spiritually it is vitally important to make quite sure that we really have been born again (Psalm 87: 4-6), and that we have received eternal life (1 John 5: 12), for only then will it be possible for us to grow (1 Peter 2: 2 and 2 Peter 3: 18).

As a postscript to this study, look up the five evidences, or marks, of the truly born again man which John gives us in his First Epistle:-

- (1) Believing that Jesus is the Messiah (5: 1);
- (2) Living a life of right doing (2: 29);
- (3) Not habitually living in sin (3: 9 and 5: 18);
- (4) Loving one another (4: 7);
- (5) Overcoming temptations (5: 4).