Small Group Questions
“Done with Religion”
John 3:1-15

Previous message summary: Last week we saw Jesus get angry about what was happening in the temple. The place that was designated for worship and prayer had been turned into a place of trade. The people who had come to worship and pray were met with the obstacles of exchanging money and the sights and sounds of a cattle auction. Jesus was angry because that activity was preventing people from doing the thing that the temple was intended to foster—a relationship with God. When questioned about his authority to drive out the animals and moneychangers, Jesus responded by redefining the temple and speaking about his death, burial and resurrection.

What we learned: We are now the temple of God purchased with the blood of Christ. We have access to God 24 hours a day, seven days a week and through prayer and worship. Since God’s Spirit dwells within us, we need to be faithful to honor God in all we do and clean out the things that do not honor or glorify him.

Introduction

1. Before you became a Christian, were you pro-religion, neutral, or anti-religion? Did the idea of religion and being religious excite you before you came to Christ? How about after coming to Christ?
   a. At that time, did you feel you knew everything you needed to know?
   b. What made you open to hearing the Gospel and inviting Christ to be your Savior?
   c. When you think about how you came to Christ, does it influence how you reach out to others with the Gospel message?

Discussion Questions

Read John 3:1-15

2. In this passage, we see that Nicodemus wants to check out Jesus. What do we know about Nicodemus from this passage? Why did he want to visit Jesus?
   a. What does the fact that he was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews tells us specifically about Nicodemus? Was he a religious man? Did he know Old Testament Scripture? Did he obey the Law?
   b. Why did Nicodemus come to visit Jesus at night?
   c. What does Nicodemus already know about Jesus? What had Jesus been doing that made Nicodemus curious?

3. What is Jesus’ message to Nicodemus in verse 3? Does Jesus address a question that Nicodemus has asked, or does he already know what Nicodemus needs to hear?
   a. When Nicodemus hears that he must be born again, what does he think Jesus is talking about? What did it take for a gentile to become part of God’s people?
   b. Why doesn’t Nicodemus understand? Does Nicodemus think that new birth applies to him? Why or why not?
   c. Have you ever met someone who thinks Jesus and his message do not apply to them?
d. What kinds of things do people wrongly trust in, for salvation? What is Jesus’ message for them?

   a. Read Numbers 21:4-9. What is going on in this Old Testament story?
   b. What parallel does Jesus make by using this story? Do you think that Nicodemus understood what Jesus was telling him? Why or why not?
   c. Is there any evidence that Nicodemus becomes a Christian after this encounter? When do we see that Nicodemus fully realizes who Jesus is and what he came to do? Read John 19:38-40.

5. Is it possible to see the Kingdom of God without being born again? Read John 3:3, 5 & 7. What is the requirement for “seeing” and “entering” the kingdom of God?
   a. What must all “good” people do in order to enter the kingdom?
   b. What must all “religious” people do in order to enter the kingdom?
   c. What must all “bad” people do in order to enter the kingdom?
   d. All people must be born again! This is the message of the New Testament. Read Romans 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:14-16; Matthew 16:24.

6. Is Jesus’ message to Nicodemus relevant to you and your life? Have you been born again?
   a. Have you shared this message of re-birth with others so they can enter the kingdom of God?
   b. What can you do in your small group to spread the message that people “must be born again” to people you come into contact with?

**Challenge:** All Christians rely upon the blood of Jesus for entrance into the kingdom of God. It’s not church attendance, or the amount of money given to religious organizations, or being good that qualifies us for the kingdom. We only qualify based on the blood of Jesus and believing in him.

**Action:** Take inventory of your spiritual life. Maybe you have been trusting the wrong things to get you into the kingdom. Make a commitment to trust solely in the blood of Christ and nothing else.

**Next Steps:**

- I am thankful that salvation is not about what I have done, but what has been done for me.
- I don’t want my life to be all about religion, but about a relationship.
- I will put my hope and trust in Jesus rather than in __________________________.