

Late Night with Jesus [John 2:23-3:15]

INTRODUCTION – 5 minutes

Greeting & Welcome: Dismissal of Children to TS & Words of Greeting

Context:

- 1) In this morning's Advent Reading (Matthew 1:18-25), we heard about the birth of Jesus Christ. It's a pretty remarkable story as we see God the Father's sovereignty in bringing about all of the details of people, place, and purpose. And, it is "from the Holy Spirit", that Mary is found to "be with child". And at the center of these dynamics, Jesus – Immanuel – God-With-Us – is born. And, this morning, we are going to look at another pretty remarkable birth in John's Gospel.
- 2) For several weeks now, we have been working our way through the Apostle John's gospel in a series called, "Believe & Live". Beginning in Chapter 3, John's narrative introduces us to the first encounter in a series of encounters between Jesus and various people with highly diverse backgrounds and needs, such as Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, a Gentile official, the man at the pool of Bethesda, and many more...
- 3) It appears that the Apostle John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to choose examples of individuals being drawn towards the person of Christ; that by considering their stories, we may become more fully convinced of the Jesus' true identity and the response that is available to each of us.
- 4) And so we arrive at this morning's Scripture passage (John 2:23-3:15) – [Pew Bible pxx].

- 5) So with that in mind... let's read:

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 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. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. [John 2:23-3:15] ESV]

Prayer of Transition:

- 1) Let's bow our heads for a moment before we start.
- 2) Would you bow your heads and simply repeat after me while I pray?
 - a) "Heavenly Father... Speak to our hearts... and change our lives". Amen."

MAIN BODY – Encouragement #1: Recognize the inglorious condition of your heart truthfully (10m):

My first encouragement is this: *Recognize the inglorious condition of your heart truthfully.*

- 1) In our text this morning, John moves us quickly from Jesus' first miraculous sign of changing the water into wine at the Wedding Feast in Cana to the prophetic sign of clearing the money-changers in the Jerusalem temple.
- 2) It's clear that his reputation is growing – that he's becoming “famous” – and perhaps we'd be tempted to see that as a good thing. In fact, we are told that as a result of these incidents, “*many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing*”. [Jn 2:23].
- 3) But what was the quality of that belief?
- 4) The Apostle John makes it clear that this kind of belief, one that is based simply upon the observation of signs is suspect... precarious... and falls short.
- 5) In a play on words we are told that Jesus did not “*entrust himself to them*” – those who appeared as “*believing in His name*”, or trusting Him, for that supposed trust was shallow and inadequate.
- 6) Why? (pause) Why didn't Jesus “*entrust himself to them*”?
- 7) John tells us in triplicate form.
 - a) “*...because he knew all people ... not some people; not most people; but all people...*
 - b) “*...and needed no one to bear witness about man, ... he holds the complete picture; depends on no one.*
 - c) “*...for he himself knew what was in man”.* (verse 25)... in entirety... without gaps... in and out...
- 8) In our modern culture, the inquiries and sciences investigating the nature of man have seemingly exploded. From biochemical research to genetic mapping to social science observations, the amount of data available to help us to “decode” humankind can feel impressive.
- 9) Yet, our studies - our “understanding” of ourselves - do not trump the insight that Jesus has on who we are.
 - a) He is eternal – having no beginning and no end. There has never been a time when He wasn't.
 - b) He is Creator – fashioning the world and, even man himself. He wrote the Owner's Manual.
 - c) He is omnipresent – observing every action each of us has ever taken – even those done in dark and private places. He was there when Adam and Eve fell.
 - d) He is providential – involved, as the Lord of life, in holding together all of life, even the sparrow's...
 - e) He is omniscient – knowing all things – even those tucked away in the recesses of our thoughts.
- 10) The Psalmist describes it like this in Chapter 33: “*The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds*”
- 11) It is this Jesus, the LORD of heaven, The Word who took on flesh and dwelt among us that sees past the veneer of our appearances and proclamations and who truly knows us as we are.
- 12) And with this great insight available, Jesus is not fooled by a temporary and passing excitement over signs.
- 13) As the Word, Jesus knows the true condition of the human heart.
 - a) Jeremiah prophesied: “*The heart is more deceitful than all else. And, is desperately sick; who can understand it?*” [Jer 17:9]. Who can understand it? Jesus can.

- b) Matthew's gospel records that while Jesus is challenging Pharisees and instructing disciples, he declares, *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual imoorality, theft, false witness, slander..."* [Matthew 15:19]. Who sees the ultimate source of our behaviors? Jesus does.
- 14) If we are honest, we all have a tendency to deflect our responsibility for our own sinful hearts. If we are disobeying God and harming our fellow man, we like to look to someone or something else as being at fault. James challenged that kind of thinking when he wrote, *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone"* [James 1:13].
- 15) We have had a lot of new babies born here at RHC in the last year or two. I guarantee you that not one parent will have to take one minute of their time to teach their infants how to be selfish or want their own way. Simply letting their innate hearts emerge will be enough to release their "inner man".
- 16) Frankly, we like the temptations that tempt us - even if we deny it in public.
- 17) As the descendants of Adam and Eve, we have inherited the DNA of rebelliousness towards God.
- 18) King David declared, *"I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin my mother conceived me."* [Psalm 51:5]
- 19) The Apostle Paul wrote *"There is none righteous, not even one."* [Romans 3:10]
- 20) And, in our story today, Jesus... is... not... caught... off-guard or unaware.
- 21) *for he himself knew what was in man*". (verse 25)
- 22) How about you? Do you know what is "in man"?
- 23) OK... more specifically... how about... "In yourself"? What is the condition of your heart?
- 24) I'm not talking about what others may say about you based on what they see or think...
- 25) I'm talking about the thoughts, the attitudes, + the actions that occur when no one else is looking or aware?
- How nervous would you feel if I seized your laptop or smart phone, analyzed your Web surfing, and published what I found in the Boston Globe? OR
 - Would you feel uncomfortable if I secretly placed a surveillance camera in your home, recorded the interactions between you and others, and broadcast it on Medford local access cable for all to see? OR
 - What if I could tap into your brain and capture your thoughts – all of your thoughts - for publishing and playback on iTunes? [PAUSE]
- 26) Let me let you in on a **secret about our secrets**.... [Pause]
- 27) They are all known. They are not secret at all.
- 28) Oh, your secrets may be hidden from me; your secrets may even be hidden from you (our minds are wonderfully creative is creating self-delusion)...
- 29) But... they are most definitely not hidden from Jesus.
- He is always present... always listening... always watching... always knowing...
 - From eternity-past to eternity-future...
 - He was there when you were thought of... when you were conceived and born... when you woke up this morning... as you sit there listening to me... on the day that you take your final breath...
 - The condition of your heart has never been... will never be... and is not now hidden from him...
- 30) And so, we can be assured that Jesus knows that we are morally flawed with inglorious hearts but...
- 31) Despite that insight we are infinitely valuable to Him also... (Isn't that glorious?)
- 32) Transition:
- And so, if you ask Him in a spirit of humility, this truthful condition of your heart – not the self-deluded version that we tightly hold onto - can be revealed to you today in order that you can take action on my next encouragement as we look more carefully at Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus.

MAIN BODY – Encouragement #2: Understand your spiritual journey towards glory accurately (10m):

We should understand your spiritual journey towards glory accurately.

- 1) We are told that in the middle of the night, a man named Nicodemus approached Jesus.
 - a) His name is Greek meaning “Victory of the People”. It’s possible that he came from a wealthy and illustrious family.
 - b) For sure, we know that he was a Pharisee (and therefore a zealot for the law+ pure religion, as well as a believer in life-after-death at the end of the ages).
 - c) He was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jewish people. Not every Pharisee had this honor... he was like being a Senator in modern-day USA. We also know that he was a skilled theologian by reputation for John tells us that he was “the teacher of Israel”.
 - d) There were few Jews, if any, in the entire city whose religious credentials were more impressive.
 - e) We don’t know why he came at night. The Scripture isn’t clear on this matter. Perhaps he was busy with his day or perhaps he was embarrassed to be seen publicly with Jesus or perhaps he simply wanted a private audience to interrogate Jesus alone. It is known that for many ancient Jewish scholars nocturnal study and dialogue was a feature of their daily rhythm. Or perhaps John mentions night to signal to us that Nicodemus is in spiritual darkness but is coming towards light.
 - f) Whatever the reason, Nicodemus is successful in engaging Jesus in what sorta feels like a verbal “Tennis Match” of discussion back and forth.
- 2) Nicodemus starts with a fairly friendly soft “serve”: *“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him”* (vs 2).
 - a) In John’s gospel, Nicodemus is the first “seeker” and can serve as an example of one who is in pilgrimage toward a full and proper faith in Jesus but... has not yet arrived.
 - b) Jesus wasn’t a “Rabbi” – at least not in any official capacity.
 - c) But Nicodemus makes it clear that he (and others) are aware of his ministry already.
 - d) In fact, he makes a theologically correct conclusion with relatively strong conviction. The presence of signs – probably more than just changing-water-to-wine – is consistent with God’s favor and presence and... the mark of someone who was functioning as an agent of God’s revelation.
 - e) However, this declaration – while true – is insufficient.
 - f) For the divine actions undertaken by Jesus and witnessed by others were intended to reveal His character, **His** mission, and – ultimately - **His** glory.
 - g) Jesus, we know, was not simply an agent of God’s revelation. He IS God’s revelation. How do we know what God is like? We look to Jesus. For He is God-With-Us. Immanuel.
 - h) It is not that Nicodemus is guilty of a false faith or false belief. Rather, it is simply an inadequate faith. It is pointed in the right direction but it has not arrived at completion. And, Nicodemus doesn’t know it!
 - i) So, in a sense, Nicodemus exemplifies those who “believe” in Jesus, but with a faith so inadequate that Jesus did not entrust himself to them.
 - i) Personal Story: Volunteers at the NESM... engaged Hindu sailors with personal testimonies of Jesus effects on their lives... Hindu sailors eagerly hear and respond positively... Volunteers excited about “conversion” but... truth = they know something about Jesus – even respect him and his teachings but... will put him on their mantle – along with all the other gods and good luck charms they collect.

- 3) The response of Jesus is immediate, like a forehand slam (boom!) to the back corner of the Tennis Court.
- a) *“Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*
 - i) Any time you see a “Truly, truly...” it is a promise that something profound and worth hearing is about to be said.
 - b) John does not record any social pleasantries in Jesus’ response. Jesus doesn’t respond like:
 - i) *“Hey Nicodemus... I really appreciate your kind words. Thank you so much for noticing. It’s great to be welcomed into your club and given such a wonderful affirmation. Thank you soooo much!”*
 - c) Rather, Jesus looks beyond the surface and declares, *“...unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*
 - i) “Unless”.... There is a condition... Something that must occur... in order to connect to a result....
 - ii) “One”... each person.... meaning everyone...
 - iii) “Unless One..” → What? “is born again”
 - iv) There can be no preferred result... “seeing the kingdom of God” – the realization of God’s sovereign rule over everything; now begun through the birth of Christ and to be fully realized at the end of the ages.
 - v) To be a full participant in realizing this kingdom, one must be “born again”.
 - vi) The preferred result is absolutely dependent upon the stated condition.... There is no other way...
 - vii) To experience God’s salvation is not simply a matter of understanding or intellectual ascent, it is a matter of regeneration!
 - viii) It is not just **new “seeing”** but **new “being”!** (Repeat)
 - ix) *“You must be born again”*
 - x) And as we see in so many other encounters that John describes in his gospel, the immediate hearer, - in this case - Nicodemus, misunderstands.... And offers a weak volley back over the net to Jesus.
- 4) *Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”*
- a) Nicodemus is assuming that Jesus is referring to some kind of another physical birth by the phrase “born again”. But Jesus is referring to a birth of a different sort.
 - b) It is somewhat surprising that Nicodemus is so confused. Records show that the general concept of a “spiritual rebirth” was not uncommon in ancient Graeco-Roman days.
 - c) Jesus should expect that he could grasp the significance of the new birth from such a distinguished teacher of Scripture but.... the significance appears lost on Nicodemus.
 - d) And so, Jesus returns volley with an expansion and clarification of meaning.
- 5) *Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, (there’s the signal that something profound is about to be said), 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. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*
- a) Quite frankly, biblical scholars have written a ton of commentary on some of the specific phrasing found in this passage – particularly, the phrase “of water and the Spirit”. Time will not allow me to take a deep dive in the multitude of interpretations.
 - b) However, here is what we can clearly observe...

- c) Jesus uses two approaches to further teaching Nicodemus – theology and meteorology.
- i) Theology:
- (1) Jesus' expresses surprise at Nicodemus difficulty. He obviously thinks that Nicodemus has knowledge he should be drawing upon to understand the new birth – that source would be the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament.
 - (2) For example, Ezekiel 36:25-27 points to a birth that is associated with both water and Spirit; a time when the Messiah will introduce a new experience of cleansing. *“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean”* is followed by *“I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees”*.
 - (3) That day, that the prophets pointed to, is now present because... the Messiah, Jesus Christ is now present. New spiritual life from God is accessed through personal trust in Jesus himself as the ONE-COME-FROM-GOD.
 - (4) As a student of the Scriptures, Nicodemus had every opportunity to know this.
 - (5) But he didn't. At least, not yet.
 - (6) For this new birth, this regeneration, this new life is not generated from the natural; from the flesh. Rather, it is generated from the supernatural; from the Spirit. For like generates like. It is not a case of simply turning over a new leaf. It is have a completely new nature restored. And that is the work of the Spirit of God – the giver of life.
 - (7) But how does this happen?
- ii) Weather:
- (1) Jesus offers a Word-Picture from Meteorology by comparing the move of the Spirit in bringing about new life to the blowing of the wind. It is in part a mystery to us.
 - (2) Like the wind, the spirit is not visible to the naked eye.
 - (3) But like the wind, you can see and hear the **effects** of the spirit.
 - (4) In fact, the only way to perceive the presence of the wind and of the spirit is by its effects.
 - (5) Furthermore, in the Gospel it is “hearing” and not “seeing” the Word that is the prerequisite for new birth and entering the dominion of God.
 - (6) If “seeing” was a prerequisite for faith, what hope would any of us – so far removed from the time that Jesus walked the earth – have for reconciliation with God? No, “hearing” and then responding to what we've heard is our hope.
 - (7) Despite these truths, there is still mystery in precisely how this works but here is what we do know.
- d) *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*
- i) The fact is, according to Jesus, that the truth of regeneration, spiritual renewal, rebirth, born again... is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. It is by the powerful operation of the Spirit alone that one can experience salvation.
 - ii) New birth is a supernatural occurrence. It is not something that can be accomplished by human effort. Although salvation was planned and originated by the Father and actually accomplished by the Son, it is the Holy Spirit who applies it to the life of the believer.
 - iii) One cannot decide to be or work one's way into being born again any more than one decided to be physically born or achieved physical birth.
 - iv) This supernatural work of God that involves a RADICAL change of nature. And the effect is NEW Life! It is, in fact, a miracle.... Just as new life was fashioned through the Spirit of God in the beginning of Genesis, so new life is fashioned from our inglorious hearts.
 - v) This should not surprise us... But it does...

e) Redemption Story (A Friend):

f) [PAUSE]

g) For Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”

i) Today, you might be sitting there asking yourself the very same question.

ii) It’s possible that this is the first time anyone has every discussed the idea of being “born again” in your presence.

iii) Or, like Nicodemus, you may have been exposed to biblical teaching while growing up or attending church or listening to Christian radio. You’ve had the opportunity by being exposed to truth...

b) *Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”*

c) Can you hear the irony in Jesus’ voice as he responded to Nicodemus.

i) It should be obvious to him that all life, including new spiritual life comes from God, and that what is humanly impossible is nonetheless quite possible and even commonplace with God.

ii) And here, Jesus makes it clear that He has the authority to proclaim such matters.

iii) And, as we will learn. it is for the hearer to receive and respond.

iv) Up until this point, Jesus has been talking about really very basic spiritual truths found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures - so basic that they have analogies to earthly things – like human birth and the wind.

v) If there is difficulty in grasping those basics truths, then how will Nicodemus grasp what John is about to point us towards - the deeper mysteries of God's purpose in sending Christ into the world for the salvation of man.

vi) Again, it will require a help external and more powerful than what can simply be generated from within.... Nicodemus, and each of us, is dependent upon help that is outside of our own abilities.

6) Transition:

a) And here is that one central... core... life-changing truth – for Nicodemus and for us – to hear, receive and respond to...

MAIN BODY – Encouragement #3: Believe + therefore live by looking to glory of Jesus humbly (10m):

We should believe and therefore live by looking to the glory of Jesus humbly.

- 1) The Apostle John tells us that *“No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. [John 2:23-3:151 ESV]*
 - a) Anyone even remotely familiar with the Old Testament would have recognized the story of the bronze snake. Found in Numbers 21:4-9, we are told that the nation of Israel is the wilderness. In great impatience, they continue their bitter complaining and ingratitude towards God who had lead them out of slavery in Egypt. As a consequence for their rebellious heart, a plague of snakes were released amongst the people. To be bitten was certain death. Just in time, the people admit their sin. Moses intercedes in prayer to God. And God, in His mercy, fashions a process for saving people. Moses is instructed to make a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. Anytime an Israelite is bitten and death is approaching, they are to look up at the bronze serpent - and live. [PAUSE]
 - b) Sound familiar?
 - c) John lets us know that the Son of Man, Jesus, must be lifted up – just like that bronze serpent.
 - d) And we know that he was lifted up... on a Roman cross... for all to see...
 - e) One author puts it this way:
 - i) *“The Son of Man, the visible historical Jesus, must be lifted up on a cross and die in public for all to see as a dangerous disturber of the public peace... The death of the son of man is not, properly understood, a mere spectacle on the plane of history; **it is the place of faith**, the place where [people] are enabled to apprehend the eternal realm of the kingdom of the Spirit of God, and where they are therefore enabled to enter into eternal life. They look – and live.” [Hoskyns, Fourth Gospel]*
 - f) To be rescued from certain death – a rightful and just punishment for a rebellious heart towards God – one must look up to Jesus – lifted up – lifted up on a cross in fulfillment of that deserved just punishment. To look with a heart of contrition and repentance... to believe that that act of mercy... is a work that can only be accomplished by faith as initiated, activated, and empowered by the Spirit of God. This act is so fundamentally life-changing that it is like a heart transplant – out with the old; in with the new. Body, mind, and spirit recreated as God originally intended man to be.
 - g) Call it “born again” or “saved” or “spiritually reborn” or “converted” or whatever other term you’ve heard, it is so fundamental to the Christian identity that to not pass through this experience is to not be Christian at all. Faith in Jesus, apart from the cross, is an insufficient and inadequate faith and has NO power to save.
 - h) I like how Bruce Milne puts it: *“Regeneration also makes clear the radical difference between Christians and non-Christians. We are either one or the other, born again, or dead in sins; we have come to the light, or are still in darkness; we are saved from condemnation, or under condemnation. There is no middle ground. We may not necessarily recall the details of our regeneration. That is not the primary issue, which is that we are now living in constant dependence on Jesus Christ as our living Lord and Saviour and growing in our spiritual life, which is God’s ever-renewed gift.” [Bruce Milne, p79-80]*
- 2) Transition: The Tennis Game is “over”. Game – set – match...

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (5 minutes):

1) Final Exhortation:

- a) Main Point: **“Our inglorious hearts are recreated by God’s Spirit when we look in faith to the glorious cross of Christ – and live!”**
- b) Our ‘spiritual journey’ is defined by Jesus – who He is, where He has come from, + what He has done.
 - i) The Spirit is the ONE who can help us recognize the true condition of our hearts.
 - ii) It is Jesus’ sinless life... His living words... His merciful deeds... that allows us to accurately calibrate where we are in our spiritual journey towards reconciliation with God, the Father.
 - iii) It is to His death on a cross and subsequent resurrection in power that we look to for salvation
- c) What about Nicodemus? How does this story end?
 - i) This episode is not the last we hear about Nicodemus in John’s gospel for this encounter with Jesus was not without fruit – Nicodemus’ spiritual journey continued.
 - ii) In John 7, although there is no personal testimony of faith in Christ, we do see him cautiously defending Jesus before the Sanhedrin when they were enraged at Christ’s proclamation of Himself at the “living water”.
 - iii) By John 19, we see him at the crucifixion (where Jesus was “lifted up”). Along with Joseph of Arimathea, he assisted in taking down the crucified body of Jesus from the cross, embalming him with reverence, and laying him in a tomb.
 - iv) After this, we don’t hear much more about him.
 - v) But he certainly appears to have experienced the new birth that Jesus and he discussed – growing from a secret night-time visitor to a cautious defender in a hostile assembly to a bold witness in the very public crucifixion of Jesus.
- d) What is YOUR STORY?
 - i) What is the true condition of your heart?
 - ii) Have you been “born again”?
 - iii) Have you looked to the cross of Christ?
- e) Thief on the Cross: Luke 23 – Two Criminals – Put to death besides Jesus – right and left...
 - i) Surrounded – Soldiers/Lots/Garments; Rulers/Scoffing; Others/Mocking
 - ii) Criminal #1: “Are not the Christ? Save yourself and us!”
 - iii) Criminal #2: Rebuked him –
 - (1) Inglorious heart - “For we are receiving the due reward of our deeds,
 - (2) Looked to Jesus (literally hanging on the cross):
 - (a) “but this man has done nothing wrong”
 - (b) “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”
 - iv) Jesus: Salvation – “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise”

2) Invitation to Respond:

- a) Next week, Tanner will continue in the Gospel of John...
 - i) John 3:16+ → The motivation behind such a gracious act of God towards each one of us.
- b) As I invite our “Worship Team” to rejoin me on the platform...
 - i) My prayer is that you will have a conversation with God like Nicodemus had... and that as a result, you will be moved to be made right with him.
 - (1) Confess – inglorious heart
 - (2) Ask – move of the Spirit upon your heart to breathe new life
 - (3) Look – to the cross – AND LIVE!

3) Transition – Through the “Closing Prayer”: Let us Pray: *Heavenly Father, ...*

4) Benediction (after Offering):

a) Last Reminders/Announcements:

b) Scripture Prayer: Psalm 105:1-5 (paraphrased):

i)

ii) ¹ Oh [let us] give thanks to the LORD; [and] call upon his name;
[and] make known his deeds among the peoples!

² [Redemption Hill Church, Let us] sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!

³ [This week, let us] glory in his holy name;

[**Listen People**], let the hearts of those who seek the LORD - **rejoice!**

⁴ Seek the LORD and his strength;
seek his presence continually!

⁵ [And, finally], remember the wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered...

iii) PAUSE – Go and have a great week as we love and serve in the name of Immanuel – God-With-Us!