

Series: The Gospel of John

Day 3: Believe: God loved you so much, that you were born again and have eternal life

Prayer

Let us pray:

Oh, Heavenly Father, I confess that we do not always see your glory and loving grace towards us. For some of us, we are so used to the Gospel message that we no longer hear it. Others hear but they do not understand.

Oh Lord, use this flawed presentation of Your powerful message and in my weakness, show Your great power and let someone experience the process of being born again, from the Spirit and so become Your child.

Only You can do it, please do it today.
Amen

Introduction

We are busy with 21 messages from the Gospel of John. We lingered a bit longer on the first verses of chapter one. Today we will start from where we left off in chapter one, step into chapter two and three and close off in chapter one again, because these passages all link together.

The previous two days

In the previous two days we saw that God gives **signs and miracles**.

The reason:

- so that you can **believe Jesus is the Christ**
- so that **you can have life**.

and that is the reason why the Gospel of John was written.

We saw in day one that Jesus is God's final and decisive message for you.

We saw **the being of the Word is God himself**

Then we learned the **Word's relationship with God:**

He is **with God**, and second person in the trinity

The Word's relationship with the world:

He is their creator, yes, also your Creator

In Him there is **eternal life for you**

This life is the Light and the darkness cannot overcome it.

This is the amazing message we got from the first two days. We almost want to say its enough we don't have to read the rest of the Gospel...but yet

But yet...

But yet we see in the next verse in chapter 1 this strange message. It says:

*10He was in the world, and the world was made through him,
yet the world did not know him.*

*11He came to his own,
and his own people did not receive him. (John 1:10-11)*

How can this happen with this incredible message? How can there be people who don't recognise him and don't accept Him? They are in the darkness and don't understand the message, they don't recognise Jesus. How does this happen?

Chapter two

Let's take a step into Chapter 2 and we follow this line. John said He tells us about signs and miracles so that we may believe and here in Chapter 2 the water was turned into wine and then we read in verse 11:

*11This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee,
and manifested his glory.*

And his disciples believed in him. (John 2:11)

Did you see? It is the same way John want us to understand who Jesus is. He did a miracle and changed water into wine, and when the disciples saw that, they came to faith in Him. And then there was the cleansing of the temple in the second part of the chapter which ended like this:

21But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

He said thie temple can be destroyed, but He will rebuild it in three days, and with that He meant His body.

*22When therefore he was raised from the dead,
his disciples remembered that he had said this,
and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

Again, see and believe. Then this Chapter ends with these strange words:

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many *believed* in his name when they saw the *signs* that he was doing.

24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

And so, we read about people who look like they came to faith because of the miracles, but it is not true faith. It ties up with the passage we read in chapter one of people who didn't accept him, people who saw the light but they did not accept him

And then chapter three helps us to see how it happens.

Chapter 3

Nicodemus was a pharisee and a scribe, that means he understood his Bible a lot better than you and me. And he goes to Jesus and says: If I see these signs You must be from God. So He is an example of one of these people who saw these signs but did not believe, because look what Jesus said to him:

3 Jesus answered him, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is *born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God.”***

He said to Nicodemus: You know your Bible, but you don't see me in this Gospel. You must be born again.

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*?”***

5 Jesus answered, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is *born of water and the Spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.***

So that means if he is not born again, he can't see and if He is not born through the Spirit he can't enter the Kingdom of God. And then He tells him how it happens:

8 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.*

We see the same in 1 Peter 1:23: *since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (1 Peter 1:23).*

The Word that became flesh, the imperishable seed, the living everlasting word of God.

In the first part of the chapter He discussed what being born again means and that it comes from Him. Now this message is changing and He speaks about himself:

9Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

...

14And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15that whoever believes in him

may have eternal life. (John 3:9, 14-15)

So, the message in John says, we must see and believe that Jesus is the son of God and have life. Here he shows what needs to happen before that: *so must the Son of Man be lifted up* in the same way Moses lifted the serpent. It is important to understand what was meant with this passage, because this is the background John gives us so that we may believe. So we turn to Numbers 21:5-9

5And the people spoke against God and against Moses,

"Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food."

This is the Manna that rained from heaven they were talking about. They loathed it as worthless food!

6Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people,

and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

7And the people came to Moses and said,

"We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you.

Pray to the Lord, that he takes away the serpents from us."

So, Moses prayed for the people.

The Lord brought the people to a point where they realised, they needed to pray in this situation.

8And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole,

and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

9So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

We need to see five important things in this passage:

The first one is, **the Lord sent** these snakes. The people sinned and the Lord sends snakes to bring them back to repentance.

The second thing is He did not stop the snakes, they got bitten. The outcome, the salvation he brought, was for people who were already busy dying, who was bitten by the snakes.

The third point we need to see is, He instructed Moses to put a snake on the pole. It is not like when they moved out of Egypt and took the blood of a lamb and put it on the pole and said: Look there is the lamb of God!, no he said: Take the subject of the curse, the snake and put it on the pole. And so, Moses made a copper snake.

The fourth thing so see was that the solution for them, to get healed, was that they had to believe in the way Moses explained to them. They had to look up.

And lastly we must see, that if they believed and looked up, they would live.

If we now compare this to John 3 again:

*14 And as Moses lifted up **the serpent** in the wilderness,*

*so must **the Son of Man be lifted up,***

*15 that **whoever believes in him***

may have eternal life.

So this passage told us that Moses put the snake on the pole in the desert and in the same way the Son of Man needs to be lifted up. The cursed was put on the pole, so that all who believes in Him may have eternal life.

We read the same message in Isaiah 45:22

22 "Turn to me and be saved,

all the ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other. (Is 45:22)

So, He says: Look to me if you are dying, come to Me, just look up, so that you may be saved, everyone on earth, because I am God there is no other - I am the only solution for you!

And this brings us to probably the most popular verse in the Bible and it is so well known that we don't even hear it anymore, but if we have the background of the Gospel of John and the snake on the pole in Numbers, then this verse opens up again for us:

16 *"For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him
should not perish
but have eternal life*

This verse corresponds closely to what we saw in Numbers: He is the one who sent the snakes, but He loved the world so much. Yes, the world, they who are sinners and is busy perishing, the ones who are dying, those who are already bitten and affected by the snake. It is them He loved so much. His love overflowed that He gave his only Son. The cursed, the snake on the pole. He who is cursed in our place. We should have carried the curse, but now He, the cursed, hang on the cross. Why? So that those who believe in Him, will have eternal life. Oh, what a gospel and the source of it is God's love. We read the same in Ephesians 2:4-5:

4But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (Eph 2:4-5)

Chapter one

Let's go back to chapter one so that we can conclude the story. Remember we saw:

*10He was in the world, and the world was made through him,
yet the world did not know him.*

*11He came to his own,
and his own people did not receive him.*

So why did his own people not receive Him?

They were not born again children of God

But to us there is a glorious message:

*12But to all
who did receive him,
who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God,*

*13who
were born,
not of blood
nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man,*

but of God. (John 1:12-13)

The world did not know Him and did not receive Him. But some did. They looked up and believed and they became children of God. Not by the blood or will of man, they were born through God, they were born again when they looked up and saw His glory and saw that salvation comes only from Him. And so can you.

And then only we understand verse 14:

*14 And **the Word** became **flesh***

*and **dwelt among us,***

*and **we have seen his glory,***

glory as of the only Son from the Father,

full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

*16 **For from his fullness***

we have all received, grace upon grace. (John 1:16)

The Word became flesh. He became the cursed and came to live among us, we who were dying. He came to us. We saw His glory, we looked up at the cross and we saw the biggest display of Gods glory in history. The glory He has as the only Son of the Father.

The Father's love was in Him, full of grace and truth and Jesus was so filled with love and grace, that from His fullness, we, people who were dying, received grace upon grace.

You who are listening here, look up to the cross see that He died for you, see that he was buried, see that He was resurrected, see that He sits at the right hand of God, see that He is coming again.

Look and believe, and you are born again, and you will live eternally with Him.

Conclusion

Let us conclude:

He came to his own, and yet his own people did not receive him

Signs were given, so that you see glory, so that you believe...

But not all are true believers

The wind blows where it wishes, so it is, with everyone who is born of the Spirit

So we see the solution is: The Son of Man must be lifted up,

that whoever believes in him may have eternal life

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...

that whoever believes in him have eternal life

So, why did *His own people did not receive him?*

They were not *born again children of God*

All who were born of God, received grace, believed and became children of God

We have seen his glory, and received grace upon grace

So our theme for today:

Believe:

God loved you so much,

that you were born again

and have eternal life

Reflection

Today's passage is again filled with so many things to learn of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Take some time and read the passages again and write down what you learned. What have you learned about the world, man and yourself?

Thanksgiving

When you reflect what you wrote down, what thoughts of gratitude is the Holy Spirit stirring up in your heart? Where to does it want to overflow? Write down one, very specific, thing that you are going to do differently during today.

Prayer

I will start with a short prayer and when I say Amen, you can continue praying as the Spirit guides you:

O almighty God, we have now seen Your glory.

Lord, if there is anyone busy dying that is listening now, let him or her look up to You. Let them see Your glory. Let them believe, because Lord only You can do it, please do it now...

We look up, O God, and we see grace upon grace overflowing towards us. We believe Lord! We will live forever in Your glorious presence. Thank you for loving us so much.

Amen