

# FROM DEATH TO LIFE WEEK 1

## Born from Above

John 3:1-17 / Romans 4:1-5, 14-17

## BIG IDEA

Spiritual life is not something we control or construct. It is something we receive. Jesus did not come to help us manage our faith better, He came to give us new birth.

## I. The Road We Think We're Walking

### Key Image: The Familiar Road

- A steady path.
- Predictable rhythms.
- Confident movement.
- Everything looks right on the outside.

### The Disruptive Question

“Where is this road actually taking me?”

Walking forward and being alive are not always the same thing.

### Reflection Questions:

- Where does your faith feel steady but possibly unfinished?
- Have you confused movement with life?

## II. The Encounter: A Good Man in the Dark

John 3:1-2

### Who Is Nicodemus?

- A Pharisee.
- A respected teacher.
- A sincere seeker.

- A religious insider.

## **Why “Night” Matters**

In John’s Gospel:

- Darkness often symbolizes partial understanding.
- Night represents hesitation, uncertainty, or guarded belief.

Nicodemus is not hostile, he is cautious.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Where might you be approaching Jesus “at night”: sincerely, but carefully?
- What parts of your faith remain private or guarded?

# **III. The Disruption: “You Must Be Born from Above”**

**John 3:3-8**

Nicodemus asks:

“What do I need to do?”

Jesus answers:

“What needs to happen to you.”

## **The Core Shift**

- Not behavior modification.
- Not improved religious effort.
- Not better theology.

But new birth.

## **Flesh and Spirit**

- “What is born of flesh is flesh...”
- Spiritual life cannot be manufactured through human effort.

## **The Wind (Pneuma)**

- The Spirit is not controlled.
- The Spirit is experienced.
- New life is received, not engineered.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Are you trying to manage your spiritual life instead of receiving it?
- Where are you resisting the uncontrollable work of the Spirit?

## **IV. The Heart of the Gospel: God Moves First**

**John 3:16-17**

“For God so loved the world...”

**Important Observations:**

- God’s love is directed at the world, not just the worthy.
- Jesus came to save, not condemn.
- Salvation in John is life (zoe), not merely forgiveness.

Spiritual life begins not with our effort, but with God’s initiative.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Do you relate to God more as manager or receiver?
- Do you live as if God’s love must be earned?

## **V. Romans 4- The Surprise of Grace**

**Romans 4:1-5, 14-17**

**Abraham’s Example**

- Righteousness credited through trust.
- Faith before achievement.
- Promise before performance.

**The Order Matters**

We often think:

Obedience → Life

Paul and Jesus say:

Life → Obedience

Obedience flows from life; it does not create life.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Where might you have flipped this order?
- Are you trying to produce what can only be received?

## VI. The Nicodemus Inside Us

You can:

- Grow up in church.
- Serve faithfully.
- Know theology.
- Teach others.

And slowly begin to equate spiritual life with spiritual control.

### What Spiritual Control Looks Like

- Having all the answers.
- Avoiding visible struggle.
- Managing doubts privately.
- Protecting reputation.
- Confusing activity with vitality.

Control can make you look mature. It just can't make you alive.

### The Subtle Shift

We move from:

- Depending on the Spirit  
to
- Depending on our understanding of the Spirit.

We're still walking. We just aren't receiving.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Where are you mistaking consistency for communion?
- Have you equated maturity with needing God less?

## VII. The Invitation

Jesus' words are not condemnation.

They are invitation.

“You must be born from above.”

Not because you failed. But because you were never meant to create life on your own.

New birth is not only the beginning of faith. It is the posture of faith.

## VIII. The Road Ahead

This is only the beginning.

- Week 1: A religious insider searching in the dark.
- Week 2: A weary outsider offered living water.
- Week 3: A man learning to see.
- Week 4: A grave that does not have the final word.

Jesus doesn't wait for Easter to start bringing people to life.

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

Consider praying this week:

“Spirit of God, make me new again.”

Not:

- Help me manage better.
- Help me appear stronger.
- Help me look more mature.

But: Make me alive.