

The **Good News** that John Wrote

***...that you may believe that
Jesus is the Christ, the Son of
God, and that believing you
may have life in his name.***

John 20.31

Life in the Spirit

Objectives of the Class

- To behold in our hearts the glory of Christ
- To participate more deeply in life in the Spirit
- To become more conformed to His image

Overview

John 3:1-21

Prayer Before Reading Scripture

Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered all sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the light of our souls and bodies, and to You we give glory together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all holy, good, and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Watch
John 3:1-21

Study

John 3:1-21

Objectives of the Class

- To behold in our hearts the glory of Christ
- To participate more deeply in life in the Spirit
- To become more conformed to His image

John 3.1 There was a Jewish leader named Nicodemus, who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. (GNB)

John 3.1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. (RSV)

1. How does this verse contrast with John 2.23-25?
2. Who were the Pharisees?

John 3.2 One night he went to Jesus and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him.”
(GNB)

John 3.2 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.” (RSV)

1. Why did he come at night?
2. To whom does “we” refer?
3. How does Nicodemus’ heart differ from other Jewish leaders?

John 3.3 Jesus answered, “I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again.” (GNB)

John 3.3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (RSV)

1. What question did Nicodemus ask?
2. What does “Amen, amen” mean?
3. What is “the Kingdom of God”?
4. What ambiguity is in the Greek word (ἀνωθεν) here translated as “again” (GNB) or “anew” (RSV)?
5. What does it mean to be “born from above”? See 1 John 2.29-3.9.
6. If we are born of the Spirit of God and are His children, we will grow into the likeness of God. How can we tell if we are in His likeness? See Galatians 5.18-26 and 1 Corinthians 13.1-13.

The Kingdom of God

- It is at hand
 - Matt. 3:2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
- It is within us
 - Luke 17:21 nor will they say, ‘Lo, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”
- It is also future
 - Mark 14:25 Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

The Kingdom of God

- It is worth everything:
 - Matt. 13:44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
 - Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,
- We pray for its coming
 - Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Kingdom of God

- Working to bring it to pass will be rewarded:
 - Luke 18:29-30 And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no man who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”
 - Matt. 5:10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Kingdom of God

- Christ delivered us from the kingdom of the evil one
 - Col. 1:13 He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
- We serve as mediators between people and God:
 - Rev. 1:6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The Kingdom of God

- We have to have the right attitude to enter it
 - Matt. 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Matt. 18:3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Kingdom of God

- Matt. 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Matt. 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.
- Matt. 7:21 “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
- Matt. 18:3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Matt. 19:24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God

- Luke 9:62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”
- John 3:3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
- Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- 1Cor. 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

The Kingdom of God

- Gal 5. 19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- Eph. 5:5 Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 2Pet 1.10-11 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Stop here for this Sunday!

John 3.3 Jesus answered, “I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again.” (GNB)

John 3.3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (RSV)

John 3.4 “How can a grown man be born again?” Nicodemus asked. “He certainly cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time!” (GNB)

John 3.4 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?” (RSV)

1. What is Nicodemus’ question an expression of?
2. What was Nicodemus lacking to understand Jesus?

John 3:5 “I am telling you the truth,” replied Jesus, “that no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. (GNB)

John 3.5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (RSV)

1. What does “born of water and the Spirit” mean?

John 3.6 A person is born physically of human parents, but is born spiritually of the Spirit. (GNB)

John 3.6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (RSV)

1. What is the difference between how the GNB and RSV translated this verse?
2. See 1 Corinthians 15:50
3. Questions to be answered on the next slides...

Colossians 2.11-12

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Titus 3.4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Our Baptism: Joined to Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection



As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Traditional Eastern Orthodox Christian Hymn
Sung in place of the Thrice-Holy Hymn
on the Feasts of the Lord.

Don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin.

Rom 6.1-7

Our Baptism: Joined to Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection



As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Traditional Eastern Orthodox Christian Hymn
Sung in place of the Thrice-Holy Hymn
on the Feasts of the Lord.

For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Rom 6.8-11

Sacrament of Baptism: Prayer of Chrismation

Blessed are You, Lord God Almighty, Fountain of Blessings, Sun of Righteousness, Who made to shine forth for those in darkness a light of salvation through the manifestation of Your Only-Begotten Son and our God, granting unto us, though we are unworthy, blessed **cleansing in Holy Water, and divine sanctification in the Life; effecting Anointing**; Who now also has been well-pleased to **regenerate** this Your servant newly **illuminated through Water and Spirit**, giving him (her) forgiveness of his (her) voluntary and involuntary sins:

Sacrament of Baptism: Prayer of Chrismation

Do You Yourself, Sovereign Master, Compassionate King of All, bestow upon him (her) also the Seal of Your omnipotent and adorable Holy Spirit, and the Communion of the Holy Body and Most Precious Blood of Your Christ; keep him (her) in Your sanctification; confirm him (her) in the Orthodox Faith; deliver him (her) from the Evil One and all his devices; preserve his (her) soul, through Your saving fear, in purity and righteousness, that in every work and word, being acceptable before You, he (she) may become a child and heir of Your heavenly Kingdom.

Theophany Canon 2 Ode 9 Troparion 2

King who has no beginning, you anoint our mortal nature, making it perfect by living in union with the Spirit. With the pure streams, you cleaned from it the dark stain of our evil deeds and defeated the proud force. Now you transfer it to life that has no end.

No class next week!
We will have a special
Theophany class
on January 5

John 3.7-8 Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again. The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (GNB)

John 3.7-8 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’ The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.” (RSV)

1. What is the difference between ‘you’ in ‘said to you’ and ‘You must be born anew’?
εἰπόν σοι, δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν
2. What is the significance of the Greek word here translated as “wind” (τὸ πνεῦμα)?

John 3.9-10 “How can this be?” asked Nicodemus. Jesus answered, “You are a great teacher in Israel, and you don’t know this? (GNB)

John 3.9-10 Nicodemus said to him, “How can this be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this? (RSV)

1. What does Jesus imply here about how teachers should be?

John 3.11 I am telling you the truth: we speak of what we know and report what we have seen, yet none of you is willing to accept our message. (GNB)

John 3.11 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. (RSV)

1. What is Christ referring to? What does He know and what Has he seen?
2. Why “we” instead of “I”?
3. Who does not receive Christ’s testimony?

John 3.12 You do not believe me when I tell you about the things of this world; how will you ever believe me, then, when I tell you about the things of heaven? (GNB)

John 3.12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (RSV)

1. Who is “you”?
2. What things of this world is He referring to?
3. What are the things of heaven?

John 3.13 And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from heaven.” (GNB)

John 3.13 No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. (RSV)

1. What messianic title appears here?
2. Why does Jesus talk about “ascending” and “descending”?

John 3.14-15 As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.
(GNB)

John 3.14-15 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.” (RSV)

1. The story of the bronze snake occurs in Numbers 21.4-9.
2. What is Jesus referring to when He says, “the Son of Man must be lifted up”?

John 3.16 For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. (GNB)

John 3.16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (RSV)

1. How much does God love the world?

Prayer Before Reading Scripture

Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered all sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the light of our souls and bodies, and to You we give glory together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all holy, good, and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

What Does this Section Tell Us About Judgement and the Sentence?

1. Christ comes twice into the world. Why did He come the first time? **Jhn 3.17.**
2. What happens when Christ comes the second time? **Jhn 5.22-27**
3. What type of response to Christ results in already being judged? **Jhn 3.18-20; Jhn 3.36.**

What Does this Section Tell Us About Salvation?

1. What is the Light referred to in Jhn 3.20? See 1 Jhn 1.5-10.
2. What responses to Christ lead to salvation? Jhn 3.21; Jhn 3.36

What Does this Section Tell Us About Jesus Christ?

1. How can we be certain about what Jesus says? **Jhn 3.31; 3.34; 3.11;**
2. Of what earthly things did Jesus talk about with Nicodemus? **Jhn 3.12.**
3. What event recorded in the Old Testament prefigured Christ's death on a cross? **Jhn 3.14; Numbers 21.4-8**

What Does this Section Tell Us About God the Father?

1. What is the Father's attitude toward His Son? **Jhn 3.35**.
2. What does it mean that the Father has "put everything in the power" of the Son? **Jhn 3.35**?
3. Does God care if some people are lost? **2 Peter 3.9**.
4. What does the Divine Liturgy tell us about what God has done to save us?
5. What does **Jhn 3.16** tell us about the Father? How much does He love us? How much does the Son love the Father and love us?

How Then Should We Live?

1. 1 John 3.16-18
2. 2 Corinthians 5.14-15
3. Jhn 3.25-30

Re-Read

John 1:29-34

Watch and Apply

John 1:29-34

Achieving the Objectives of the Class

- To behold in our hearts the glory of Christ
 - What did you observe that revealed to you the glory of Christ?
- To participate more deeply in life in the Spirit
 - What did you learn that can help you to participate more deeply in the life of the Spirit?
- To become more conformed to His likeness
 - What did you observe in Christ that you need to conform to?