

Born of Water and the Spirit

Rev. Michael Angel

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Text: John 3:5 (ESV)

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

Introduction

Brothers and sisters, have you ever felt like something was missing in your life—like you're searching for purpose, peace, or a deeper connection with God?

Maybe you go to church, you pray, you try to be a good person... but deep down, there's a hunger that just won't go away.

That's exactly where Nicodemus found himself.

He was a respected teacher of Israel—a Pharisee, a leader, a man who knew the Bible very well.

But one night, under the cover of darkness, he came to Jesus with a burning question: "How can I see the kingdom of God?"

And Jesus gave him an answer that shocked him—and still challenges us today.

The Necessity of the New Birth

Jesus didn't say, "Just try harder."

He didn't say, "Follow more rules."

He said, "Unless one is born again... he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Notice: Jesus didn't say "might not" or "probably won't."
He said "cannot."

This isn't optional. This isn't one path among many. This is the only way.

Why? Because the kingdom of God isn't a place you earn—it's a life you receive.

And you can't enter it by your own effort, your heritage, your morality, or your religious resume.

You must be born into it.

What Does "Born of Water and the Spirit" Mean?

Some have wondered: Is Jesus talking about baptism?

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Is He referring to physical birth? Let's look closely.

In the context of John's Gospel and the Old Testament, "water" often symbolizes cleansing and new life (Ezekiel 36:25–27; Titus 3:5).

"The Spirit" is the very breath of God—the One who gives life (John 6:63).

So when Jesus says "born of water and the Spirit," He's describing one new birth with two aspects:

Cleansing (water): Our sins washed away.

Empowerment (Spirit): A new heart, a new nature, a new life from above.

This isn't about a ritual—it's about regeneration.

It's God doing a miracle in your soul.

As Titus 3:5 says, "He saved us... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

You Can't Make this Birth yourself

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Nicodemus asked, “How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb?”

He was thinking physically.

But Jesus was speaking spiritually.

You can’t climb back into your mother’s womb—and you can’t manufacture spiritual life on your own.

The wind blows where it wishes... and so it is with everyone born of the Spirit (John 3:8).

This birth is God’s work—from start to finish.

That means:

- It’s not about your goodness.
- It’s not about your knowledge.
- It’s about God’s grace awakening your dead heart to new life in Christ.

The Invitation

So what must you do?

First—acknowledge your need.

Like Nicodemus, come honestly before Jesus.

Admit that religion without becoming completely new is empty.

Second—repent and believe.

Turn from your sin and trust in Jesus alone—not your works, not your church attendance, **but His finished work on the cross.**

Third—receive the Spirit.

Ask God to give you new life.

Cry out, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit inside me” (Psalm 51:10).

Conclusion

My dear Friend, Jesus didn’t come to make bad people good.

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He came to make dead people alive.

You may have been born once—of the flesh—but have you been born again—of water and the Spirit?

Don't leave here tonight without answering that question.

The kingdom of God is open—but only to those who are born from above.

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, thank You for not leaving us in our sin and spiritual deadness.

For those here who have never experienced this new birth, I pray right now that You would open their eyes, soften their hearts, and draw them to Yourself.

Wash them clean.

Breathe Your Spirit into them. And for those of us who know You—remind us daily that our life is hidden with Christ in God.

In Jesus' name, Amen.