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JOHN 3

John Series

The gospel of John was written so that we might understand who God is and might believe in Him. That's why John was written. That's why it takes on a whole different path of choosing what stories to be in there.

As the book is unfolding we already saw that Jesus is God, that Jesus is Creator, that Jesus is the one who is at work in our lives. We already see that. He's the author of light in chapter 1. We see how He meets individual people and He takes attention to their specific needs just like He takes attention to each one of our needs. In chapter 2 we saw that Jesus cares about the small things, even a miracle of there's not enough drink at the party they were having at the wedding so Jesus created wine out of water. He cares about the small things in our lives.

Now in John 3 He comes to the invitation so we'll understand how we can know this God personally. That's John 3. He doesn't wait till John 21, till we get to the end of the book. He gives us the invitation right in John 3 so we'll know about Jesus right from the beginning. It's a call to action for each one of us. We need to know what this salvation is all about.

When I was in Kenya, I had gone out on an evangelistic event. So I was speaking in an open air campaign with a microphone with these blasters out there and people would come. They would listen to the music first and then we're out in the open air and I was to give the presentation in hopes that people in the community would come to get to know Jesus. This was my first experience in Kenya. I had never been there before, so I really didn't know all what to expect, but I knew what my job was: preach the gospel, share the gospel with these people through a translator, and watch God work.

What I didn't realize was that the pastor who was my host he came after the worship and he gave the invitation first. I'm really used to the gospel message going out there and then the invitation following. But in this situation after the worship experience he stands up and he says, "We're going to have this guy come up and preach in just a moment. Before we do is there anybody here who wants to accept Jesus in their life?" And a woman raised her hand and she went up and they laid hands on her and prayed for her and she accepted Jesus that morning. Even before the sermon came about. What a great testimony of what God was doing in the midst of that.

That's what John is doing in this story. He's going to help us understand there's that message out there, a message that each one of us needs to respond to. We need to consider what it means to be one of Christ's followers, to know what it means to be part of the kingdom of God as

described in this passage. We need to know what it means to get saved. Different terminology is used in this passage.

John 3. Open your Bibles there to verse 1. *Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

Let's look at this man for a minute, Nicodemus. Who was he? It says in the passage in verse 1 that he was a member of the Jewish ruling council. There were six thousand Pharisees, but among those there were seventy chosen who were the Sanhedrin or the Jewish ruling council. It appears that he was one of those seventy. We also realize that he is a wealthy guy. And we realize that as we go through the gospel of John.

We're not told about Nicodemus' response here. In this passage we don't know how he responds to the gospel. The message is really for us each to respond personally to the gospel. We don't know how Nicodemus responds here, but we see later the fruit of that because when we go to John 19 we read about how he's there after the crucifixion to take Jesus off the cross and he brings with him all of this spices which cost a lot of money. So likely a wealthy guy.

In John 19:38 and following it says, *Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.* It's the same guy. Not a different Nicodemus. This is the same Nicodemus who *had visited Jesus at night.*

Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. That's overdoing it I think. If you're going to embalm a body, seventy-five pounds is a lot. But he just valued Jesus. He obviously had a lot of money or resources to provide this. Verse 40 — *Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen.*

We're going to see Nicodemus is also a guy who is going to be responding to Jesus after the crucifixion. He obviously had something happen in his heart as a result of this encounter with Jesus.

We also see in John 7 that Nicodemus defended Jesus. In John 7:45-52 it says this: *Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"*

"No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards replied.

"You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them."

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"

They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

I just want you to see here that Nicodemus is responding somehow. We don't see it in John 3, but we see that something happens in this man's heart as he is coming in contact with Jesus. Maybe he watched the cleansing of the temple that we talked about last week. Maybe as he watched that cleansing of the temple he said to himself, "It's about time. Somebody should have done that long ago," because of all of the stuff that had happened in the corruption of the priesthood that was distracting people's worship.

The Bible says earlier in John 2 that Jesus did other miracles. Maybe Nicodemus heard about those miracles, maybe he saw them, maybe he heard about a blind man getting his sight, maybe he heard about a lame man who could walk, and maybe he remembered the stories in Isaiah about the prophecies of what would happen when the Messiah came. No doubt he knew about John the Baptist and the testimony that someone else was coming.

I find that someone when they're coming to know Jesus Christ often has to pass through the truth several times in order to come to a place where they see it and they grab it. That seems to be what's happening to Nicodemus. He has this meeting with Jesus, but he also has these other experiences and now he comes to this place where he's ready to understand what does this mean? So he wants a personal, private meeting with Jesus. So he comes to Jesus at night.

In the passage as we continue on there are three verbal exchanges with Nicodemus and Jesus. Nicodemus speaks then Jesus, Nicodemus, Jesus, Nicodemus, Jesus. We're going to go through them and look through them.

The first one is in verse 2. *"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

Now notice Jesus' reply to that. *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*

Nicodemus says, "You are a great teacher." There are a lot of people today that believe in Jesus. They just believe that He was a great teacher, a great model for us, a great man, a good example. Jesus wants Nicodemus to realize that is not enough. In fact He's going to help Nicodemus realize that Jesus isn't just the one who was a good teacher, He wasn't just the one who did miracles, but He's the one who initiated a new birth inside of each person.

Notice verse 3 again. *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."* Born again doesn't mean turning over a new leaf. Born again means some kind of transformation that takes place inside of us. Man died spiritually. There's a spiritual death inside of us. How do you get that back? How do you get life? You are reborn. You are reborn through this personal relationship with God. God can change your life today.

Nicodemus is going to hear that message and he doesn't even argue with Jesus in the midst of this. He just asks a how question. That's where we go next. Go to verse 4 because this is the

second exchange. *“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”*

I have five children. Three of them biologically and two are adopted. They had biological births too. They didn’t come like space people, but they were adopted into our family. I was present at three births in my life. I’ll tell you, when that baby comes out he’s not going back in.

That’s what Nicodemus is thinking. He’s thinking physically. When someone’s old they can reenter into his mother’s womb, can he? How is this going to happen?

Jesus answers. *“Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. We’ll come back to those words in a minute, water and Spirit. **Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.**”*

There are two ways, two things you need if you’re going to be saved: *born of water and the Spirit.*

What is the water? Now for some people, the only thing I can think of that has to do with spirituality and water is baptism, so then they bring baptism into this passage. I don’t think this passage is saying anything about baptism. I don’t think Nicodemus knows about baptism. I don’t think this is about that. If we want to know what it means I think we go to the very next verse.

Look at verse 6 because I think that elaborates on verse 5. Verse 6 says, ***Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit.*** It must be that this water is a description of the amniotic water and you’re born out of water and also the Spirit. Or something like that. We wouldn’t normally say that, but maybe that’s what Nicodemus is saying or Jesus is saying to Nicodemus. Maybe that’s what they’re talking about.

But the important thing here isn’t the water. It’s the Spirit. In other words, it’s not just born of water but also by the Spirit. That’s what needs to be emphasized here, the Spirit part. There’s a spiritual birth that takes place. Jesus uses this common illustration about birth to help us understand what this is all about.

When my oldest son Josh was in the womb, I remember getting down next to my wife’s belly button and talking to him. I said, “This is your dad. When you come out we’re going to have a lot of fun. We’re going to play. But right now it’s bedtime. You need to stop kicking your mother because she needs to sleep. So go to sleep.” So I remember talking to my son in the womb while he was there.

But imagine the picture here. Imagine you’re talking to this baby just a few inches from life and you say, “Hey. When you get out of there this is going to be so great. You’re going to see trees and you’re going to play baseball and you’re going to have food, real food to eat, and you’re going to enjoy people, and Christmas is coming or this is going to be a great experience. When you come out of there, this is going to be great!”

And the baby replies, “Can I bring my umbilical cord? I really need my umbilical cord. That’s what gives me my nourishment. It’s really safe in here. I like the way I’m safe.”

“Nope. You’ve got to leave all that stuff.”

“Well, what’s it going to be like when I come out of there?”

“It’s going to be great!”

“I want to know what it’s like now.”

“You can’t know until you come out. You’ve got to come out in order to experience this.”

That’s the illustration that Jesus is using. How neat it is for us as we become Christians and we get to know who Jesus is that we leave that inner womb and we come into this whole new life. Amazing things happen at birth. The baby was being fed through his belly button, through the umbilical cord, and he was breathing through that. The oxygen came through that. But when the birth takes place and the first breath happens, things happen in the body and that shuts off. The lungs that were filled with fluid, the baby starts to breathe through those lungs. New things start happening in that baby’s life.

When you become saved, when you become a part of the kingdom Jesus says it’s a new life, it’s a new spiritual birth. Amazing things happen. You see God in a whole new way. You see life in a new way. Jesus is trying to communicate that message to Nicodemus using this illustration about birth. Now many of you know that because many of you have made that commitment to Jesus. You look around at life and you say, “Wow. I never knew life could be this way.” Now you understand what that’s all about.

After giving the illustration about life through birth, He talks about the Spirit a little bit more. I want to read those verses again to you and then amplify them. Verses 7-8 say, “*You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*”

So the idea here is the Spirit and wind are similar. How are they similar? It’s amazing. Jesus always uses picture words to describe anything. These illustrations then bring it to life for us. The Spirit and wind. You can’t really see what’s going on in the wind, but you can see the result of it. The same thing’s true when someone gets saved. You see the results in their lives.

A couple weeks ago I was fishing with my grandsons and my granddaughter and we were on the side of this small lake. We’re in southern California and it’s a bright sunny day. No wind. It’s very calm.

All of a sudden, across the lake I saw wind coming. Partway between the lake and me there was this big umbrella over a table, heavy umbrella, and that wind just picked that umbrella out and threw it right in the lake. I knew that wind was coming to me really quick. And so as soon as it hit me it was like a cyclone with all this dust. All the kids were getting this dust all over them.

And then it went away and it was perfectly calm again. Where did that wind come from? I have no idea. In southern California crazy things happen even with the wind.

But the amazing thing is the same thing happens with the Holy Spirit. You don't know what He's going to do. He's like a wind that blows, but you see the evidence of it. When I travel on the airplane, you look out the window and everything looks great. But inside the plane you go over some wind and you feel it. You're shaken. It's turbulence. The wind is there even though you can't see it.

The same thing is happening in our own lives. You see the evidence in a person's life. Their life starts to look different. Different things happen in their lives because they've accepted Jesus Christ into their lives. You see the evidence going on in their heart.

One of the fun things for me is that I work for people. I like to help them in their lives. In particular I like to work with children. Some time ago I was working with a thirteen year old boy who was rather anxious. In his anxiety he would every few minutes go around and check the house and make sure it was locked. He was very concerned about things. He came to me with his parents because he wanted a change. He believed this was captivating his life and he needed some help. I like to do that with young people, so I spent some time with him and I gave him some ideas about anxiety and measuring it and go home.

The second week he was doing better and I said, "Okay. I want to help you understand something. Are you a Christian?"

He says, "Yes."

I said, "Oh good," because whenever I'm working with a Christian there's a lot more resources.

I drew a heart on a piece of paper and I said, "One of the things inside your heart is the Holy Spirit. Let me show you that in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 where it says your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Did you know that?" And he did because he's a Christian. He grew up in a Christian home. So he knew that, but his opinion of the Holy Spirit was just over there dormant. It was sitting over there somewhere. It wasn't really active in his life as he was imagining this. I wanted to say, "Look. I want you to understand what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit has fruit. Do you know that the first three parts of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 are emotions? Those are Holy Spirit filled emotions. Love, joy, and peace."

I said, "Do you know that the Holy Spirit isn't just sitting on the side. The Holy Spirit is in your heart and He's actively moving around. He's doing stuff inside. In fact, He actually changes stuff. You feel anxiety and that pit in your stomach (that's what he said), God can bring peace to that. He actually physically does things in your body."

This guy was just tickled by this whole idea that he could have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit would do something inside of him. I think we need to get away from the idea the Holy Spirit is just an idea. He's actually somebody who lives inside of us, who wants to do work in us. He equips us, He helps us, He energizes us, He gives us the power to do what we need to do. In this case for this young man to have peace in his life. And so over the weeks I was able to watch God work in this person's life. I saw the evidence of the Spirit of God in this thirteen year old.

That's what he's saying here. The wind and the Spirit are similar in that they are you can see the evidence of it in what's going on inside.

Verse 9: *"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. He's probably aware of the emptiness inside of him. He was a very religious guy. There are people who are moral. There are people who are religious. They try to do the right things, but they're still empty on the inside. Nicodemus knew something was missing. He wanted that, so Jesus says to him in verse 10, "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things?"*

Here's a guy, a respected religious leader, someone who had been around God for a long time, but he didn't have the stuff in the middle. He didn't have the important stuff inside of his heart.

Verse 11: *Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."*

Nicodemus was a religious guy. He knew everything about the Bible and the Old Testament and so Jesus says, "Let me remind you of a story from the Old Testament." That's why He talks about this *just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.*

There's a similarity between the snake being lifted up and Jesus. Maybe we forgot. We're not like Pharisees. We don't have all of this in our head. Maybe we've forgotten this story so let's just look back at this story for a moment in Numbers 21:4-9. *They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom.* These are the Israelites wandering around in the Old Testament.

But the people grew impatient on the way (that was their problem); they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" As is in family life many times, they complained about three things: the leadership, the living conditions, and the food.

Verse 6: *Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.*

The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

I can imagine people saying, “What do I have to do? I want to do something to get rid of this problem. I know I’ve sinned against God. What do I have to do? I’ll repent. I’ll do many good things. I want a shot. Or give me a drink. Or what do I have to do?”

The answer is no. Just look at the snake up on the pole, the brass snake just look at it. That’s all you have to do. “Okay. I’ll send my wife out there. Honey, go look at it.” No, no, no. You can’t send anyone out there. You have to look at it yourself. Each one of us must make that individual decision to look at the snake on the pole, which is described in verse 15 of John, so *that anyone who believes may have eternal life in him*. That’s the solution. Look at the snake on the pole from the Old Testament is like what we need to do and that’s just look at Jesus, receive Him into our lives, understand what that looks like.

Having shared all those fifteen verses, now Jesus summarizes this gospel message in verse 16. *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

So notice the believing is not just mental ascent. This is a commitment, looking at the pole, I believe in that. There are some people who say, “I believe in a parachute.” I can look at a parachute all day and say, “Wow. I believe in that parachute can hold me up.” I don’t know why some people jump out of planes in parachutes. I just never would do that. But if you could look at it you would believe in it. I believe in parachutes. We’re not talking about that kind of belief.

We’re talking about strapping it on, pulling the cord, falling out of a plane, and trusting yourself to that parachute. That’s what he’s talking about when he’s talking about being a believer here. He says *whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life*. Whoever. That’s anybody. You can’t say, “When he wrote that he wasn’t thinking about me because he didn’t know about me, how bad I am.” No. Every person. *Whoever*, he says, *believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*.

Let’s go into verse 17. *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

This is really interesting because some people really believe or they feel like, “Every time I go to church I feel condemned.” Believe me. Jesus did not come to condemn anybody. He comes with the hope. We’re already condemned. That’s just a realization. We come there and we might come to church and realize, “Man, I’m in trouble.” But that’s not because of Jesus. Jesus is the one that’s the hope. He’s providing that hope for us. It’s not a message about punishment and condemnation; it’s a message about hope and deliverance.

Verse 18: *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.*

Don’t tell me about the pole out there. It makes me feel condemned. That’s the foolishness in this. We’re already bitten by snakes. We’re already dying. The solution is the hope in Jesus Christ. Looking at Him and understanding who He is. He rescues people. We’re like victims of snake bites. We need to look at the pole. We need to look at Jesus Christ and what He’s saying to

us. We're condemned already. The question is, will we do it. Will we make a decision and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Or will we remain condemned in our lives.

Here's the reason. Some people like being condemned. I know that seems really strange. Some people just like it there. They don't want to change. They want to stay inside the womb. It's too safe there. Change is difficult. It's so hard for them to make the change.

That's why (verse 19) *this is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.*

Jesus offers light. Some people really love darkness. And it may not be evil like you killed somebody, but just in their own lives they're stuck where they are in the darkness in their life and they don't make the statement that I want to accept Jesus Christ.

The passage is describing here God's rescue plan for the world. If a person was drowning over there and you threw him a rope, would it be okay for them to say, "Quit putting Christianity on me," as they're drowning? No. But that's what people sometimes say. We look at someone and we see them drowning and we say, "Let me tell you about Jesus," and they say, "Would you quit pushing Jesus on me?" It's like they're getting the rope and saying, "Get the rope away." Some people have a hard time with it. They're just not at that place where they're ready to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

But when you realize Jesus is the solution, He's the light, you say, "Give me the rope. I want it! Where's the light? I want to go there." How can I be born again is the question.

It's a very powerful thing that's happening in Nicodemus' life. So the invitation is presented to us, an invitation for each one of us to know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, to recognize He's the rescuer, He's the one that opens up this world so we can understand and see things in a whole different way.

Verse 22: *After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. (This was before John was put in prison.)*

Verse 25: *An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." In other words, look, he's developing quite a following and he's not one of us baptists.*

Amazing things are going on. It's a denominational thing. The whole statement that's being made here is, "John, what are you going to do about this? His church is getting bigger than your church."

I love John's response. Verse 27: *To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less."*

That statement *He must become greater; I must become less* is great plaque words to put on a plaque in your house. But it really needs to be written on each one of our hearts that God is the most important thing, that I want to serve Him one hundred percent. I want Him to get bigger in my life. I want me to shrink in my life.

The best self-help program in the world is that statement there. Let Jesus increase; let me decrease. It's great for self esteem development. Let Jesus increase; let me decrease. This is great material here that we're reading.

Verse 31. Let's finish reading this chapter today. *The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.*

Verse 36, the last verse here is the summary statement. A summary of salvation, a summary of the passage with Nicodemus. He says in verse 36, *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.*

Is it because God is angry with them because they didn't receive? No. It's because they're already bitten by the snake and there's this problem of sin that we have that God says, "I want to rescue you from that. I want to give you the answer if you'll just receive the answer, then you'll have the solution. You'll have Jesus Christ."

We ask Jesus Christ to come into our lives, that we're making a very important commitment. We're making a decision that changes our lives. It's not a matter of just praying a little prayer and wearing a badge that says I'm a Christian. We're talking about radical change. Because when you ask Jesus Christ to come into your life it changes your whole outlook. You see life differently now. Life becomes this whole new adventure, dimension of what He's doing in life. It's powerful.

If you've never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that's what this passage is talking about. I want to extend that invitation to you today. Some of you are here in this worship service, others will be listening to this via the internet because we publish these on the internet or somebody will send them the mp3 about this. I want you to know wherever you're

listening to this that you can make a commitment today to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and it will open up this whole new life for you. But it will also deal with the problem that you have, the sin problem.

If you want to accept Jesus Christ today, right now, then this is what you want to do. You want to come before God and you want to say, “God, I’m a sinner. I recognize that I have a problem. I’ve been bitten by the snake. My life is a mess. I’m living in darkness. I need the light. That’s what I need in my life. Lord, I recognize the problem. I recognize that you are the solution, with Jesus Christ being the Savior, and I want that solution. So I ask you now to come and live inside of me. I ask you to come and live, take residence inside of my heart. Come and live in my heart, Lord. That’s what I want you to do inside of me.”

That’s a decision that every one of us must make for ourselves. Our parents can’t make it for us. Our friends can’t make it for us. We each of us come to that decision and make a decision for ourselves to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and our Savior. When we do, it changes who we are. Would you consider that today?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for what you’re doing in our lives. We know that you know each one of us by name. You know each one of us. You know the hairs on our head. You know everything about each one of us and you love us so deeply. You know the messes that we’ve created and you know the problems that we have. And yet you love us so deeply and you’ve sent a sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So thank you for what you’ve done for us. We ask, Lord, that you speak to each one of our hearts. We give ourselves to you now. In Jesus’ name, amen.