

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It is here in **John 3:3** that the words 'born again' are first used. Nowhere except when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus here, does Jesus ever use this phrase. To anyone looking from the outside in on Christianity, this scripture is as strange to them, as it was when Nicodemus first heard Christ speak it. Exactly what does it mean to be 'born again'? Later in **John 3**, Nicodemus asks Jesus this very question. Is Jesus asking for man to reenter his mothers' womb, absolutely not! Actually, a more literal translation of 'born again' is 'born from above'. When you are practicing in a choir or a band, often the leader will say, "Take it from the top." This is what Jesus was telling Nicodemus, "Start living your life today, as if you were starting all over again, or starting from the beginning." Far too often, people pray the sinner's prayer, and then they go on living exactly the same way that they were before they prayed. In order to better understand this principal, consider the caterpillar. When the caterpillar changes into the butterfly through metamorphosis, it goes from basically being a worm with legs, and is transformed into a beautiful and vibrant creature which is no longer limited to the planet below. The same is true for you and me, unless a change takes place when we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and to be our Lord and Savior, then all we have really done is successfully repeat a group of words.

I believe that this is exactly what the Apostle Paul was talking about in **Philippians 2:12, So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.** I have heard so many ministers over the years share on this scripture, and often their views greatly oppose the other. We know from scripture that we cannot attain salvation through works or even our own righteousness. So what in the world is Paul talking about? I would like to ask you to consider looking at this verse this way, "Work on your salvation with fear and trembling." I am convinced that he is talking about the attitude of your heart. I know that some people in the church believe in 'grace' only, and are convinced that the Law was nailed to the cross with Christ. If that were true, why does Jesus tell us in **Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.** So if your response to salvation is, "I said the prayer, and now I don't have to worry about any of this again"; then you may need to seriously look at the condition of your heart, which may very well be a true reflection of where you are going to spend your eternity; because, like Paul on the road to Damascus, once you meet Christ, your life changes! I would even go so far as to say, "No change, no Christ!" My concern here, is that the church has watered down the blood of Jesus to the point, where we want to make it as easy as possible for people to be saved; but the fact is, unless you repent or stop living the way you did prior to praying that prayer, then nothing has changed. I can think of nothing more terrifying, than for a person who thought they were saved, to one day stand before Christ and to hear those words spoken in **Matthew 7:23, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'** I exhort you today, to work on your salvation with fear and trembling!!