

Trinity Sunday 5/27/18  
John 3:1-17 B

DO NOT MARVEL THAT I SAID TO YOU, "YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN".

Here's the question for you this Sunday: Do you want to see the kingdom of God?

Now, when I say that I am not talking about the kingdom of God's power. That's the kingdom where God rules and reigns by His almighty power. I'm not talking about that one because you already see that one every day. In fact, you live in it every day. The sun comes in the morning and sets in the evening. It rains upon the just and the unjust. Or, maybe I should say, it sometimes rains. Here, you have food, shelter, and clothing. God does this for all people in His kingdom of power, whether they believe in Him; fear, love, and trust in Him above all things or not. God does this for all people out of His Fatherly goodness and mercy.

On this MEMORIAL DAY weekend, we are once again reminded of God's goodness and mercy. On Memorial Day, we remember those who have paid the last full measure of devotion in military service, so that you and I can barbecue, go to the lake, golf, or take a nap in our Lazy Boy. The freedoms we enjoy are 1<sup>st</sup> Article gifts, in God's kingdom of power.

When I ask you do you want to see the kingdom of God, I mean the kingdom of His grace and the kingdom of His glory.

The Kingdom of grace is Christ's Church on earth, where He reigns with His grace -- forgiving us of our sins, comforting and cheering, encouraging and strengthening us through His means of grace. And, in God's kingdom of grace, we let our light shine; that is, we live a holy life that glorifies God and serves our neighbor.

And, in His kingdom of glory, you will live with God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for all eternity in a resurrected and glorified body. With angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven, you will worship God forever and ever, without end.

So, I ask you: Do you want to see the kingdom of God's grace and glory? If you do, Jesus says you must be BORN AGAIN.

Born again. No, not as in enter into your mother's womb and come out. No, Nicodemus, that's not what we mean by being "born again". Besides, what good would it do? For you see, some things just don't change.

I don't mean to brag and boast this morning, but – remember what Babe said, "It ain't braggin' if you can do it" -- I belong to a select club, we few, we happy, few who were born in the Williams County Sheriff's office. Well, actually, when I was born, it wasn't the county sheriff's office. In my little town, we had two hospitals, the Catholic hospital and the Good Samaritan hospital, where my mom's Aunt Esther was the charge nurse of the maternity ward. So, there I was born, with Aunt Esther attending. And in the course of time, the two hospitals merged into one, and what was the Good Samaritan hospital was converted into the Law Enforcement Center, and what was the maternity room – maybe because it was the largest or something like that – became the county sheriff's office.

You could have been born in a hospital, at home on the farm, or in the car along side the road. A doctor could have attended your birth, or a midwife, or a police officer, or Aunt Esther. It doesn't really matter where or who attended your birth because we were all born into the world in the exact same way. Jesus tells you what that is, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh". You were born of the flesh, which means you were born

sinful and unclean. And as one born sinful and unclean, you were born dead in your trespasses and sins, a child of disobedience, a child of wrath, and an enemy of God. You were born outside God Kingdom of grace and glory.

And as one born into that condition, you do the things of your flesh. And 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” (Ga 5:19-21). This is what you, born of the flesh, do. And it shows that you are outside of God’s kingdom of grace and glory.

So, do you want to see that kingdom? You cannot see it; you cannot enter it in your birth according to the flesh. You must be born of Water and the Spirit. Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” “Water and the Spirit” that means HOLY BAPTISM. In and through Baptism, there is God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – making you His own child. He turns you into someone whose citizenship is in His kingdom of grace and His kingdom of glory.

Here’s how He does it. At the Font, he joins you to Jesus Christ. There, you are lifted up with Jesus. There, you are crucified with Jesus. There, you die with Jesus. There, you are buried with Jesus, and, there, you rise to a new life in Jesus. There, you are born again. For Holy Baptism is a “washing of regeneration and a renewal of the Holy Spirit,” as it says in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Titus.

In that new birth of water and the Spirit, you are joined you to Jesus Christ. You are joined to all He has done for you. You are joined to Him lifted up upon that cross, dying for all your sins for you and rising to life

again, in triumph over sin and in victory over death, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. Baptized into Jesus, that is your triumph and that is your victory. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. You enter God's kingdom of grace and glory.

New in Christ, you have a new heart, a new will, a new mind. You believe His holy word. You long for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word that we may grow in your faith and trust and love of Jesus. You come to the Lord's Table to be fed His very life-giving body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and the strength to live the new life that you live in Christ Jesus.

New in Christ, you live a holy life according to that Word of God. This is why we learn the 10 Commandments. Like the headlights of your car guide you the darkness, the 10 Commandments guide us in living a holy life.

Yes, because you have entered the kingdom of God's grace when you were born again of water and the Spirit, you will enter the kingdom of glory. If you should die before the day, the great day, Jesus comes again in all His glory, we will commit your body to the ground from which it came and your soul will enter heaven.

And we are comforted and cheered at the words of Jesus, "for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out" (Jn 5:28-29). On that day Jesus comes in all His glory, your body will be raised from the dust of the earth and reunited with your soul. And body and soul together, you will look at God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and live with Him in His kingdom for all eternity.

So, I ask you: Do you want to see the kingdom of glory? The Good News for you, Dear Child of God, is that you will. For in the new birth of water and the Spirit, you have entered the kingdom of God's Grace and

God will raise you into His kingdom of Glory. All this is yours because you've been born again.