

The Spirit Blows Where it Wills- Nigeria 2019

In these three nights I want to talk about probably the best known verse in Scripture, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." One of the reasons I want to talk about this verse over the next few days is because it is used to depict a false god. Not the God of Scripture, but a god they want to exist. They say God loved the world, but God loved everybody. That's not what Scripture says, which is why everyone must fear God because there is a day when Jesus Christ is coming. When He comes He will collect His faithful to heaven and He will take those who reject Him and cast them into an eternal hell. I want to make sure you understand John 3:16, because it's crucial to understand so you can know where you are. Whether God will say, 'Well done My good and faithful servant' when you stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ or He will say, 'Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness.' John 3:16 wasn't said with much context, but these next three nights I want to walk through it so we can understand what it means in the context of what Jesus would say. If you have a Bible, please turn to John 3. It starts with a man named Nicodemus. Verse 1, "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." The Pharisees were the learned men of Israel and Judah. They were the ones that studied the Scripture and memorized the Scripture. It was normal for them to memorize Genesis through Deuteronomy, they knew the Scripture. They knew them probably better than anyone that can hear my voice and Nicodemus wasn't just a Pharisee, he was one of the seventy that ruled Judah. He was one that was recognized by all the people as a great Pharisee. Verse 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."" Here's this great man who is supposed to know the Scripture so well and the Light of the world comes to Judah and he is afraid to be seen with Him. Think about that, he spent all his life studying the Word of God and the Word of God comes to him and instead of fearing God, he fears man. He has to come to Christ by night. This is who Jesus Christ said for God so loved the world. He won't walk in the light, he won't openly acknowledge the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, instead he sneaks in the darkness so no one sees and his position won't be affected because they were already plotting to kill Jesus Christ. He has a problem, he knows Jesus is from God so he says 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.' He knows the Scripture, he knows the Messiah is the one who can heal the lame, He can cause the blind to see, He can cause the deaf to hear, He has healed the sick. Nicodemus has seen all these things, but he is still more afraid of men than God. Jesus speaks to him where he is and He says to him in verse 3, "Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."" He is saying this is truth, it cannot be denied. He's emphasizing this is the reality of the world and unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. A crucial concept to understand is that everything in the world is ordered so we can understand God. The reason a man marries a woman is so we can understand Christ and the church. The reason a man is born from a father is so we can understand God the Father and God the Son. God ordered all things to point to who He is. God ordered all things to point to Himself. When you want to be able to feed yourself you go out and put a seed in the ground. You water that

seed and it breaks down and decays and then life comes from it and then you can live. That is the gospel of Jesus Christ. God ordered every bite you take to testify to who He is, of your need for someone to die so that you can have life. God ordered how a child is born so that you can understand what it means to be born again. Think about the birth of a child, one of the basic things is who labors in the birth of a child. How much effort is the child making to be born? It's not the baby that births itself, it's the mother who gives birth to the child. We do not cause our own salvation anymore than you caused your own birth. It is the work of God and not the work of man. It is a gift from God lest any man should boast. Don't boast about your salvation, don't boast about how wise you were to choose God, unless you are also willing to boast about how you chose your parents. God created the world to testify to who He is and what He does. Let's think about being born some more, how different is the baby before he is born than after he is born? He breathes, he has a heart beat, he has muscles and can walk, and he is completely different than he was in the womb. There is a vast difference between a baby in the womb and a child breathing before you. Do not minimize the difference in being not being born again and being born again. Don't minimize the difference in not having been born again and being born again. God has testified through the world what a huge difference it is and people want to say there is no difference if you're saved and caught in the same sins. That's what Nicodemus is saying, he studied the Scriptures, he knows them better than we do and Jesus' first thing He says to him is that he must be born again, you must be a different creature. If you walk down the street and you see a child, you can tell if he is from a poor family or a rich family. How much more can you tell a child of God from the child of the devil? God ordered the world so we can understand what He does. He did not look around and see someone giving birth and say He would use that as a picture of salvation. He said He wanted people to understand how significant salvation is so He will make this nine month process that has so many problems in it, that ends with great pain so we can understand how significant it is to be born again. Most assuredly I say to you, you must be born again. You must be born again. The process is so frequently painful. I've had at least three or four people that I know of, when preaching the gospel they wanted to kill themselves, they spent days struggling with wanting to kill themselves, but then God showed mercy on them. Being born again is frequently very painful because Jesus said you have to die to yourself, you have to lose your life in order to find it. There's no other way. So often the church thinks that you give a message, you call everyone to come forward and accept Jesus Christ and they minimize the pain of being born again. Most people, it's a process similar to being born again the first time, they are given a spirituality so their eyes are open and their ears hear so they can have a heart to hear who God is and they seek Him and struggle with who God is. Frequently they wrestle with it for months and years and one year they are given the peace that surpasses all understanding because they have actually been born again. It's hard to be born again, it means that your life will be completely different. The Pharisee Nicodemus didn't think that was necessary, he didn't say a word but Christ knows Nicodemus doesn't think it's necessary so Nicodemus in verse 4 says to Him, "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?" He doesn't understand the basic thing that I was saying you must understand. God put these physical things in front of us, like light, so that we can understand God is light and evil is darkness and evil will flee from before the light. He doesn't understand that God ordered the world to testify to who He was, do you? Do you see God as

controlling all things for His own glory? That's who God is and that's His creation. Nicodemus, all he could think of was the physical things around him so he says, 'A full grown man is going to crawl up in his mother's womb?' Because Christ is talking about spiritual realities that cannot be seen by those who are carnal, those who are flesh because he deceived himself and he was sure he was a child of God. Why would he have to be born again, he was born a Jew and why would Jesus say that doesn't matter? Especially the children that are here, it doesn't matter if your parents are the most faithful Christians in the world, that will not save you. The only thing that saves you is you have to be born again. Nicodemus thought he was fine because he was a Jew, don't think you are fine because you are in a Christian village. A Christian village is just called that because there is some form of righteousness there, not because everybody there is a Christian, only those who have been born again. So Jesus continues in verse 5, "Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." To understand this verse, I think you need to have the knowledge Nicodemus did of the Old Testament. Remember this is a time where John the Baptist is going around baptizing people with the baptism of repentance, their sins are being confessed and washed away and Christ said that's not enough. That's not enough. Ezekiel 36:25, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." The picture of water in the Bible is this picture of being washed, having your sins removed, is a picture of the gospel going forth and cleansing the nation. He said this has to happen to you, you have to turn from your sin, you have to become clean. We want to skip that step, we want to say we made a profession of faith so therefore I'm saved. You could control your salvation no more than you could control your first birth. Jesus Christ said through Ezekiel that He will cleanse you with water, but He will also do something else. He won't just turn you from sin, He will do what He says in verse 26, " I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." People turn from their sin all the time, they get caught stealing at work, they get fired, they're embarrassed and they never steal again and that has nothing to do with salvation. The fact that you stop sinning because you were caught might have nothing to do with salvation. People turn from their sins all the time because they are caught, because they are embarrassed, because God in His great infinite mercy turned them and constrained their sin. But that is not enough, you must be born again and it is the work of God, He will put His Spirit within you, He will take the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. This is the work of God, He saves who He chooses to save and He damns who He chooses to damn. It says in verse 27, "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." God says He will put His Spirit within you and cause you to walk in His statutes and you will do them. This is what it means to be born again, you don't just turn from sin because of the effects of sin in the world. God is very merciful, not only are the wages of sin death, there's prices to pay in this world. Many people turn from their sin because of the prices to pay in this world, but they don't have a new heart and they don't have a Spirit, a Holy Spirit, that causes them to walk in the commandments of God. That's what's required to be born again, you have to be turned from your sin and you have to be given the Spirit of Christ. If not, you will not enter the kingdom of God. I want to explain what it means to not enter the kingdom of God. Psalm 110 is a Psalm of David where David is testifying that there will be a greater King David to come, that there will be One who he calls my Lord. Peter quotes this in Acts 2, so this happened

when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, there are promises that Christ will rule the nations. Verse 2 says He will rule in the midst of His enemies and verse 3 says, "Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them." Ezekiel 36 says His law will be written on our hearts. Psalm 110 says we will willingly follow Him. They are talking about the same thing, they are talking about the effects of being born again. Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power and the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning. The sign of the people of God, those who have been born again, born again by the Holy Spirit, is that they are a holy people. Then He describes what He does to everyone else. Remember, all the words of Scripture were dictated by Christ, He is the Word of God and these are His words. When David is writing this, he is inspired by Christ. He uses the Holy Spirit, He uses angels, but they are His thoughts and He talks about the great blessing of being part of the kingdom of God and then He talks about what happens to everyone else. To those who are not of His kingdom, Psalm 110:5, "The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath." The first song that we had in this program was about the second coming of Christ, this is what He does at His second coming. He says at His first coming that He did not come with the sword, the next time He promises that He will come with the sword and He will fill the valleys with dead bodies for everyone who is not in His kingdom. Are you born again? Everyone who is not born again will receive this punishment. Not just this, their resurrected bodies with their soul will experience eternal death in the Lake of Fire where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. Don't be like Nicodemus, trusting in the fact that you know the Scriptures, trusting in the fact that everyone looks up to you as being holy. Jesus Christ is saying he has no part in the kingdom of heaven. Make sure you are not deceiving yourself, only those allowed in the kingdom are those who are born by water and the Spirit. When David says that he loves the law of God, that is a heart of flesh. Do you just do it because you're afraid you will get caught if you break God's rules? Are you a volunteer in the day of judgement? Jesus Christ continues in verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." You can make every effort you want to be saved, but you can't do it. Flesh cannot beget spirit, it cannot happen, it doesn't matter what work you do because no work is enough. If you did every single perfect thing right, it's just your duty, it won't pay for the smallest sin. Flesh cannot save you. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. If the Holy Spirit causes you to be born again, you can't bear flesh again, you can't change and go back to what you were before. What is spirit can only beget spirit. Those who appear to be working in the Spirit that start working in the flesh, they were always doing it in the flesh because if God chose to show mercy to you, you cannot overpower the will of God. If He takes the heart of stone out of your flesh and gives you a heart of flesh, you can't turn it back to a heart of stone anymore than you can crawl back into your mother's womb. Verse 7, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" Everybody in Israel was saying they were the children of God, God has to save us, we're His people, we're the apple of His eye. They forget all the places where God says He is going to pour out His wrath on Israel and they trusted in their mother's womb. They say since their mother and father were Jews they were fine so when Christ said that's not how it works, Nicodemus marvels. We find out later Nicodemus is saved when he goes and collects Jesus Christ's body from the cross, when he is not hiding anymore that he supports Jesus Christ, he understood what it meant to be born again. No longer was he trusting in his parents' belief or his parents' genes, instead he was trusting in

Jesus Christ. Don't trust in your pastor, don't trust in your mother, you must trust in Jesus Christ and don't marvel when I say this is the work of God and not your work. You're not participating, no one seeks God unless God draws them to Himself. No one would seek the One they are in rebellion to unless God gives them a glimpse of His greatness and majesty. When we preach the Word, and I don't mean just standing in front of people preaching the Word, I mean when you are witnessing to your neighbor, you need to teach them to fear God. That's a glimpse of the glory of God when we see how great He is, when we see He is the explanation for everything in the world. He's why we have rulers, He's why we have earth, He's why farms work, He's why we have fathers and sons, He's why there are husbands and wives. God has left a testimony of Himself throughout the whole world. They need to understand that God. You need to understand that that is who God is, He does all things for His glory and if He was sitting here begging you to just seek Him, just seek Him please, then you're the one with glory and not Him. Verse 8, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." God created the wind so that we can understand how much we control the Holy Spirit. If you think that God has to accept you because you prayed a prayer, then you better be able to demonstrate that you can control the wind, that you know where it came from and where it's going. God created the world so that we could understand who He is and in Greek the word translated Spirit is the same as the word for wind. God blows His Spirit where He wills and not because you want to be saved. If it's about you, you get the glory. It's about God because He did all things for His glory which means when those valleys are filled with dead bodies, He chose not to send His Spirit to every one of those people because He is glorified by pouring out His wrath because of their sin. The only response we can have to this God is not to think we can manipulate Him, all we can do is fall down before Him and worship Him. Jesus Christ said He came to the earth to gather a people that will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. You need to know who God is, you need to understand the extent of His power, you need to understand the extent of your weakness so you can truly fall down before Him and worship Him in Spirit and in truth. When we don't have the right view of who God is, we don't worship God. When we exalt ourselves, our worship becomes about ourselves and not about God. What Christians need to do is have a bigger view of who God is and a true view of who they are. That is the most humbling thing in existence, to know there is no one who can stop God's will, there is nothing you can do except what God causes you to do. Only when we recognize our absolute helplessness can we truly be meek. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the kingdom of God, they shall inherit the earth. The bigger view we have of God, the more correct view we have of God, the more we pray with zeal, the more we destroy our sin with zeal, the more we desire to do God's work and to build His kingdom rather than our own. Understand who the God of the Scriptures is because that's where righteousness, peace, and joy are. As we conclude tonight I want to turn to John 6:29. They're coming to Jesus saying, 'How can we earn the kingdom of God? What works may we do for God? In verse 29 He answered, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled." That's what you must do, you must believe in Jesus Christ. Even though it is the Holy Spirit that saves and there is nothing you can do except He chooses to show mercy to you, everyone has a duty to believe. Everyone has a duty to seek who God is, to believe in the God of the Scriptures. Make sure tonight you believe in the God of

the Scriptures. The sin of mankind from the beginning is that they wanted God to be made after their image rather than to accept that we have been made in the image of God. It is He who made us and not we ourselves. It's as much for the second birth as it is for the first so your duty is to cry out for this God, to believe in this God for there is no other name under heaven by which you can be saved. Make sure you know what that means. It doesn't mean you just say the name of Jesus Christ and this is a magic incantation that causes you to be saved. Jesus Christ is not a witch doctor. When He says only by His name can you be saved, it's only by knowing who He is, what He has done, that's the only way you can be saved. Make sure you know this Christ for it is your only hope. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. If you don't know Christ, seek Him in the Scriptures because all of them speak of Him.

Let me pray. Oh Lord God, I pray that everyone here gets a better understanding of who You have declared Yourself to be. How we are nothing in Your hand, as David said we are but worms, we are but dust and no dust can control God. You took dust in the first place and blew Your Spirit in us. You gave us air so that we can breath. This is what You do when You save, You take a dead body, You breath on us and we live. Lord, I pray anybody here that does not know You, and I have no doubt there are many here that do not know You, open their eyes to see Your glory, open their eyes to see Your majesty, open their eyes so they see how holy You are, open their understanding so they see how filthy they are, and may Your Spirit blow so that they can be born again, so that can receive Your Spirit and enter Your kingdom. For those of us who do know You, who do have Your Spirit, give us the strength to die to ourself, give us the strength to put the old man to death so whatever we say, whatever we do, whatever we eat or drink, every single thing we do is for Your glory. Increase our meekness Lord. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.