



THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN YOUR LIFE

What do you celebrate as the most important event in your life? Young sweethearts celebrate the day they first met or when they agreed to go steady. Married couples consider their wedding anniversary as a special day to commemorate throughout the years of their marriage. Some of us – especially men – have a difficult time remembering these special days. Often, we need to be reminded by those with better memories (women, generally) of how significant they are.

There is one day, though, that we never forget – our birthdays. Many people celebrate their birthdays with family and friends by having parties, going out to dinner, receiving birthday cards and gifts. Your date of birth is one of the most important piece of information that you are required to remember and share with government agencies, business entities, and other organizations that need to verify your identity. In almost every situation that requires personal data from you, your birthday (along with your name) is the most important information that you will need to provide.

It is ironic that the most important event in your life that you need to remember is the day on which you are not really able to recall anything. The day you were born, regardless of how important it is to you now, is not a time that you can recollect. You have to rely on your parents to tell you what your birthday was really like. In spite of this, many of us celebrate our birthdays year after year (some people, at great expense), making it truly the most important day of our lives.

But today, I want to challenge you to think about the truly most important event in your life. It is really not the day you were born. According to Jesus, the most important day in your life is the day you are born again. Christ said that if this day has not come to your life, you are not going to spend eternity with God.

One evening, Nicodemus, a high-ranking religious leader in Jerusalem, came to see Jesus about His teaching and miracles. Jesus understood why Nicodemus was not willing to risk his sterling reputation within Jewish society by visiting with someone like Jesus during the daytime. So, Christ did not waste time on social niceties.

Taking the direct approach, Jesus spoke to him bluntly: *“I assure you, Nicodemus, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God.”*

Nicodemus was flabbergasted. No one has ever talked to him like this. He wondered if Jesus knew about his church position and how he had scrupulously obeyed all the Mosaic rules. How could he be far from the Kingdom after a lifetime of obedience to the law? What did Jesus mean? How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?

Jesus replied, *“The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. So don’t be surprised at my statement that you must be born again.” (John 3:3-7)*

I wonder if you are just like Nicodemus? Do you equate church-going and compliance with religious rules with righteousness? Do you know what “born again” means? Whatever it means, Jesus said that if you are not born again, you don’t make it to heaven. So, it’s very important that you understand correctly what it means. Not only that, it’s very important that you experience it. According to Christ, where you spend eternity will depend on whether or not you are born again.

What did Jesus tell Nicodemus about being born again? Here are His words: *“As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so I, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on a pole, so that everyone who believes in me will have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.” (John 3:14-18)*

Please note the following important points from the explanation of Jesus to Nicodemus:

First: Only the Holy Spirit can give you new life. Spiritual rebirth is His work. Human work and effort in this important experience is explicitly excluded by Jesus. You need the Holy Spirit to be born again.

Second: It is by believing in Jesus that we receive the Holy Spirit. We are born again when we believe in Jesus. **(1 John 5:1)** The Holy Spirit gives us a new life because of our faith in Jesus Christ. **(Gal. 3:2-3)**

Third: Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ *“will not perish but have eternal life.”* This is God’s chosen way of saving sinful humankind. *“He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit.” (Titus 3:5)*

Salvation is God’s free gift to undeserving sinners. We do not earn it. We simply receive it by faith. **(Eph. 2:8-9)** You don’t have to go to church or join a church to be born again. In fact, you can do it anywhere, anytime. It’s within easy reach. It’s actually so simple and easy that people can’t believe it.

But many people still wonder if they are really born again. They are not sure. How does a person who has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord know that he’s born again?

The Bible says that we know we have experienced the new birth when we turn to God from our sins (*repentance*). **(Acts 2:37-38)** We don’t try to overcome our sins and then turn to God. Instead, we change our mind (*repent* - to change one’s mind) about God and our sins.

We change the way we see God as being judgmental – who is after us to punish us. Instead, we see God as our loving Heavenly Father, who seeks sinners because He has already forgiven them. And instead of viewing our sins as law-connected transgressions, we now realize that when we sin, we break the heart of our gracious God.

Without this change of mind and turning to God, there is no transformation of lives. Repentance happens as a result of the sinner’s realization that he is loved by God and that he has been restored to a right relationship with God because of his faith in the finished work of Christ. We need spiritual rebirth before we can repent. And it is impossible for people who are not born again to repent.

What this means is that those who become Christians also become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! **(2 Cor. 5:17)** The born-again person has a new spirit that is controlled by the Holy Spirit, who put it inside him. While he still battles with his sinful cravings and worldly thought-patterns, he is no longer controlled by his sinful nature. **(Rom. 8:9-11)**

If you have not experienced the most important event in your life, you really have nothing to celebrate. You face an eternity of separation from the God who loves you and who gave His only Son to save you and give you everlasting life. But it’s not too late. You can still do something about your situation – something unbelievably simple and easy.

Believe in your heart that Jesus rose from the dead and declare with your mouth that He is Lord. That’s all you do to receive Jesus, salvation, the Holy Spirit and the new birth. If you are not sure that you have been born again and saved, you don’t have to put it off. You can do it right now. Then you can start celebrating every day the most important event in your life – forever and ever.