

# “The Spirit Activated Life”

John 3:1-15  
June 9, 2019  
Pentecost Sunday  
Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

## THE BIG IDEA

Sunday’s message touched on the role the Holy Spirit plays in forming and shaping our character. We’re called by Christ to live a Spirit-activated life, a life where we’re born into significance. Nicodemus is introduced to this vision of the Christian life by Jesus. Nicodemus was successful and upright but Jesus shows that significance is living eternally and living it out now. We too are invited into significance of faith, purpose and righteousness through the work of Christ’s Spirit operating in us.

## GETTING STARTED

1. What are some terms you associate with the idea of being “born again?” Share and experience you’ve had with this, perhaps with other people. Positive or negative.

## LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, read **John 3: 1-15**

3. What does it say about Nicodemus and his questions that he met with Jesus in the night – see verse 1. Explain your interpretation of that.
4. List all the ways Nicodemus was “successful.” What according to Jesus might he be missing?
5. “What does born from above” mean?
6. Explain what it means to “see the kingdom of God.” Why is our understanding of perception so important in terms of gauging whether or not we’re living a life infused by the Spirit – IE – where we’re following His promptings.
7. Who is the Holy Spirit and what does the Spirit do?
8. Do you believe the Holy Spirit can transform our destiny and sense of righteousness?
9. Interact with the quotes below. Share your understanding of them and how they fit into your life.

**“Regeneration (the giving and work of the Spirit of God) is God’s act; conversion is ours. Regeneration is the implantation of a gracious principle; conversion is the exercise of that principle. Regeneration is never consciously known by us; conversion is thoroughly a process involving our consciousness. Regeneration is a single act, complete in itself and never repeated; conversion, as the beginning of holy living, is the commencement of a series, constant, endless and progressive” A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*.**

**“There are two ways for you to be your own savior, two ways for you to have everything in the universe center on you, two ways for you to be your own god, two ways to be self-centered. One is by being very bad, breaking all the rules, trampling on people, lying, cheating, killing, and harming people. The other way to be very self-centered, make everything turn on you, is to be very, very good and moral and keep all the rules so that everyone, you think, including God, has to honor you, bless you, and respect you. We all know both kinds of self-centeredness make the world a terrible place, because the self-centeredness that leads to bad living (where you’re harming people) makes the world a bad place, but the self-centeredness that is the basis for good living ... Good living self-centeredness says, “I’m going to like myself, and I’m going to make everybody, including God, bless me because I’m a good person and I’m a decent person. Everybody needs to recognize that. Therefore everyone needs to be born again.” You must be Born Again, Tim Keller**

### **LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”**

7. Explain how you may respond to either the quotes above or from something else gleaned from John 3: 1-15.

### **THE “EXTRA-MILE”**

8. Pay attention to what you find your own sense of identity in this week based on the insights of Keller above about being “born again.” Examine your thoughts, temptations and tendencies this week and what they might tell you about how you’re doing spiritually.

Consider how your perceptions are changing of God, other people and self are developing as a result of the Spirit of Christ at work in your life. Be mindful of whether or not they’re changing positively toward merciful, love, grace and righteousness in your life toward neighbor and self, and if they’re transforming your notion of the glory, goodness and care of God in Christ.