



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

The Gospel of John Sermon Series

Supports Session 6: But Whoever Drinks

Sermon Title: “The One Who Knows Our Greatest Need” (John 3-4)

Connection to Session 6

Over the course of John 3-4, Jesus interacted with two individuals who could not be more different. In John 3, Jesus interacted with Nicodemus who was a religious leader. In John 4, Jesus had an interaction with a Samaritan woman who was known for her immorality. John 2:25 says that Jesus “knew what was in man.” In John 3 and 4, Jesus knew exactly what each of them needed. They were both lost, despite what they looked like on the outside.

Introduction/Opening

What is your greatest need? For many, they would answer that it might be wealth, a relationship, or provisions. However, Jesus knows our greatest need. In John 3-4, we are told about two people with whom Jesus interacted. These two individuals had incredibly different needs. However, Jesus sees what their greatest need is and pointed to Himself as the answer to their greatest need.

Outline

1. The Insider (3:1-15)

a) Nicodemus is described as a Pharisee who was “a ruler of the Jews” (v. 1). He would have been seen as a man who had it all together. People would have looked up to him because he would have been morally upright, having a position of power in the community. He would have been seen as one who was an “insider” when it comes to the Kingdom of God. If there was anyone who was certain to be in the Kingdom of God, it would be a man like Nicodemus.

b) Despite Nicodemus having it all together outwardly, Jesus knew he was lost. Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be “born again.” In other words, Jesus was telling Nicodemus that he was lost and dead. This would have been shocking to Nicodemus, but Jesus knew his greatest need.

c) Although Nicodemus was thought to be an “insider” when it comes to the Kingdom of God, Jesus graciously showed Nicodemus that he needed to be born again. He needed to believe in Jesus to have eternal life (v. 15).

d) Are we trusting in our good works and status to gain eternal life?

2. The Outsider (4:1-26)

a) The Samaritan woman at the well would be considered an “outsider” when compared to Nicodemus. Where Nicodemus would have been known for his morality, this woman was known for her immorality. Due to her nationality and her lifestyle, no one would have considered her a candidate for being in the Kingdom of God.

b) Jesus met this woman where she was and told her that her deepest thirsts and longings will not be met in the relationships of this world, but only in Him. He had come to give her “living water” (v. 10). This living water will cause her never to be thirsty again.

c) Do you think you are too far gone for Jesus to save? Is there someone we have written off when it comes to being a part of the Kingdom of God?

3. The One Who Knows Our Greatest Need (3:18-21)

a) Jesus knew what each one of these individuals needed. Nicodemus needed to be told that he was lost and dead, so Jesus met Him where he was and graciously pointed him to eternal life.

b) Jesus knew that the woman needed to be told that she was looking for her longings to be quenched in the wrong places. He knew she needed the living water that He alone could provide. Jesus told her that He has living water, something that would quench her thirst and fulfill that for which she was longing.

c) Both Nicodemus and the woman at the well needed Jesus. He was the only one who could meet their deepest need.

Conclusion

These two accounts show us that the gospel is for both the insider and the outsider; the one who thinks they are saved because of their works and the one who thinks they are too far beyond saving. The gospel shows us that we are not good enough to earn our salvation, as Jesus told Nicodemus. Nor are we too far gone when it comes to repentance, as Jesus demonstrated with the Samaritan woman. Jesus knows our greatest need, the gospel, no matter whether we are viewed as an “insider” or “outsider.”

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