

# HOW'S YOUR HEART?

## Week Three

### SERMON RECAP

This weekend we concluded our series *How's Your Heart* with Pastor Mike Breaux. Mike taught from **John Chapter 3** about the transformative power of Jesus, focusing on his late-night encounter with Nicodemus, a prominent and intellectual religious leader. Despite Nicodemus' high status and adherence to strict religious rules, Jesus addressed his underlying restlessness by stating that one must be “born again”—or experience a spiritual rebirth from above—to enter the Kingdom of God. This conversation highlights that true faith is not about religious performance or legalism but about a heart transformation facilitated by the Holy Spirit.

Nicodemus' spiritual journey went from a secret, skeptical seeker to a public defender and devoted follower. After hearing Jesus' profound message of God's love in **John 3:16**, Nicodemus eventually moves from questioning Jesus in the shadows to openly defending him before the religious council and ultimately providing a costly, honorable burial for Jesus after the crucifixion.

### GET STARTED

- **If you could spend one year of your life in any city in the world and money was not an object, where would you live and why?**

### TAKE IT IN

- **What encouraged and/or challenged you from the message this week? Why?**

### TALK IT OVER

**Read John 3:1-21; John 7:45-52; John 19:38-42**

- It's interesting that Jesus immediately moved past small talk and surface-level questions with Nicodemus to address the deeper issue of a “new birth” and the destination of Nicodemus' soul. **How does Jesus' approach to Nicodemus challenge our typical methods of sharing faith? What can you learn from Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus that you could apply to your own relationships/conversations with non-believers?**
- The Pharisees were pious, rule-keepers and they were proud of their performance based approach to their faith. But, they also laid heavy burdens and expectations on the people, making their lives miserable. Discuss how rule-keeping and performance-based rituals can lead to weariness, and contrast that with the concept of being “born from above” **What are the differences between “religion” and the “relationship” Jesus describes?**
- The development of Nicodemus from a doubter to a defender to a devoted follower is a beautiful narrative sewn into the Gospel of John. **How does the progression of Nicodemus'**

**journey from John 3 to John 19 parallel your own spiritual journey? And, how does this progression help you understand a friend or family member who may just be starting on their spiritual journey? How can you help them move from one stage to another?**

- Sometimes people are skeptical of the faith because they have emotional pain from their past. Others are skeptical or build walls because they're involved in an immoral lifestyle and don't want to be challenged or asked to change. **In what ways might "intellectual walls" be used to protect a wounded heart? When you encounter someone who has walls built and shows no interest in the faith, how can you help break down the walls to have real conversations about faith?**

## **LIVE IT OUT**

Sometimes we avoid spiritual conversations because we feel we lack Biblical knowledge and we're concerned we can't answer challenging questions. Other times we avoid spiritual conversations because we're concerned about coming across too strongly in our beliefs. **Discuss ways we can overcome these concerns and be more open with people who need to hear about Jesus. What are some events and opportunities you could invite your non-believing friends and family to attend at Northside?**

**Memory Verse:** *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."* John 3:16-17