



The Freedom to Say YES

Text: John 3:1-19

Overview: If God is the One who initiates our salvation, and if God so loved the whole world that He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for our sins, and if God's desire is that everyone would experience His saving work in their lives, then why is it that some people never enter into the life of salvation? Why do some people put their faith in Christ and others do not? Is faith a choice or a gift? Or is it both?

From the very beginning of the biblical narrative we are reminded of humanity's God-given capacity to say yes and no. We were created in the image of God and given the freedom to say yes to the things that God says yes to and no to the things that God says no to. But we were also given the freedom to do the opposite – to say no to the things that God says yes to and yes to the things that God says no to. Faith is our yes response to God. And that yes response is more than a moment of faith. It is a life of faith. We are invited not only to accept Christ but also to abide in Him. And as we abide in Christ, we walk in the overwhelming security of God's salvation.

Resources: Check out <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/john> for more information on the book of John.

WELCOME: Please stop to WELCOME any new members to the group and have others introduce themselves to those coming for the first time. Give them a bit of history of the group. This is very important in helping people belong from the first meeting.

DISCUSSION:

A. Getting Warmed Up

- **SHARING YOUR STORY** - As mentioned last week, since our study will be on salvation, this would be a great time to take 10-15 mins. per week to hear each other's stories of starting our relationship with Jesus. Like any relationship we have, our relationship with Jesus is one that has evolved. It is ongoing so it isn't always tidy or with a conclusion. It ebbs and flows like any relationship but hopefully we can see the places where we are growing.

B. Digging In

- Read John 3:1-19 aloud.



- Who was Nicodemus? Why did he visit Jesus? (v1-2)
- What does Jesus mean when he says you must be born again? (v3)
- What does it mean to be born of water and Spirit? (v5)
- What does it mean to believe? (v16-18)

C. Bringing It Home

- God says YES to everyone but not everyone says YES to God. Was there a time in your life where you knew God was asking you to say YES to him, but you struggled with accepting this relationship? What were the circumstances around that? If you changed your mind, why did you?
- God's YES was costly. In John 16:16, Jesus says that he was willing to make the sacrifice like a mother in childbirth so that we could experience the abundant life not just eternal life. What is the abundant life?
- Nicodemus' life was radically changed. (John 19:38-40) What was the first thing you noticed about yourself when you said YES to Christ? Was there something that stood out as a change in behavior or attitude that seemed immediate? (Not everyone experiences this but it can be a marker for someone to see that the change could only come from God and not because of something they did.) Or were the changes in your life a more gradual process and noticed by you over time?
- How do you see yourself as moving toward a life that is in the YES position for Jesus?

Closing Prayer: Pray for those who shared their story this week. Pray for the group as everyone continues to move toward a life that is in the YES position. Pray for those in our church who may be seeking the Lord like Nicodemus.

-Would you be willing to share your story next week?

-Baptism at Night of Worship is Feb. 13th at 7p. Maybe someone in your group is ready to take this next step. Why not attend this night together and meet up in the lobby?

-The Love Your Neighbor Drive started this week. We are collecting baby supplies for a local pregnancy center and will be putting together layettes for the infants in the homes where our groups meet in early March.