

JOHN WK6- "Special Sauce"

Intro:

-OPENING/CONNECTION: What's your favorite special sauce? (Mine is...)

-we like special sauce for 2 reasons:

1. What it is: unique combination of ingredients that tastes good

2. What it does: elevates flavor of whatever it's on. You can go without it but you don't get the FULL experience

-Spiritually, there is a "special sauce" that each and every one of us need to experience the fullness and richness in this life (and the life to come: v.15-16)

-there's a moment in scripture, in Jesus' life, where he explains this special sauce to someone who seemed to have it all together:

-John 3:1-6

Message

-If you're a little confused reading that passage, it's understandable, because Nicodemus was a Jewish religious leader, one of the most educated people at the time, a teacher of God's law, and yet he didn't understand what Jesus, God's son, was explaining to him.

-As we saw in ch. 2, Jesus' ministry began with a miracle and him shaking things up at the temple (literally).

-This caused a stir with the Pharisees and religious leaders. This man came speaking against all their rules, regulations and routines, yet claimed to be the Son of the God they serve?

-With the miracles Jesus had performed, Nicodemus was convinced he was from God, but still was confused and had questions.

-He came to Jesus at night, he couldn't be seen with him because of how controversial Jesus was, and how much the other Pharisees and

religious leaders hated him. This part of the story alone says so much, but we'll look at that later.

-Jesus' response, as always, seems a little odd. "Unless you're born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God".

-If you're a Christian you've likely heard this term and gotten somewhat desensitized to it. But if you're new to church or like Nicodemus and this term literally has never been said before, you're likely confused.

-Just think about that, "born again". It sounds wild + crazy, Nicodemus' response is valid and logical! v.4

- Jesus corrects Nicodemus that being born again isn't physical, it's spiritual

v.6- "the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life"

-Despite being a teacher of the law and extremely educated, Nicodemus still didn't understand what Jesus was saying. WHY?

-He didn't have what Jesus is trying to reveal: the "special sauce"

-So what is "the special sauce?"

What the "special sauce" is: Being born again

-That's great, but what does it mean to be born again and how do we get it?

-Jesus goes on to reveal that to Nicodemus:

-v.13-17

-"No one has ever gone to Heaven and returned. But the son of man has come down from Heaven"- Jesus claiming to be the son of man (many meanings, but known to be from prophecies pointing to the Messiah), Jesus claiming to be the son of God

-v.15:"everyone who believes in him (Jesus) will have eternal life"

-v.16” everyone who believes in him will NOT perish but have eternal life”

-Ultimately, here Jesus is claiming to be the son of God and that he’s the only one who will ever come to Earth after being in Heaven

-We have to trust his word by FAITH

-by believing in him we have eternal life and are “born again”.

We are born again by believing

-this doesn’t just mean believing Jesus really lived and died, it’s greater than that

-the greek word used here is: pisteuó

-1. To consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust.

-2. To entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence.

-Believing in Jesus means fully entrusting ourselves to his guidance and care

-it means we believe he WAS + IS the son of God, that yes he really lived and died, but also we believe what he said and taught because he is God! This means:

-his teachings are true

-his words are the way

-his path is perfect

-Jesus wants Nicodemus and all of us to understand that the “special sauce” to this life is being “born again”, which is simply believing, fully trusting and confidently surrendering to Jesus, what he did and said.

Transition: That’s not all Jesus shared with Nicodemus. because like I said earlier, we love “special sauce” not just because of what it is, but because of what it does, it elevates the flavor and experience.

-so in v.18 Jesus' attention turns from being born again, to what being born again looks like and does:

-v.18-21: "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. **19** And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. **20** All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. **21** But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

-Here Jesus is telling Nicodemus and telling us, that being born again, this "special sauce", brings us into the light.

-What the "special sauce" does: Brings us into the light

-The way John sets this all up is incredibly interesting and I don't believe it's an accident

-when did Nicodemus come to Jesus? v.2-"after dark"

-Yes John was just telling us when Nicodemus came to Jesus, and there were reasons for it, but could this also be John foreshadowing and using Jesus' imagery throughout the story?

-The dark represents our life apart from Christ, who John introduces as the light of life in chapter 1

-Despite having all this knowledge about God and his law, Nicodemus still fails to fully entrust himself to Jesus and his words and truly be "born again"

-Being born again means clinging to Jesus and walking in his ways- "The light"

-this is the special sauce to our life and especially our spiritual life. Being born again which brings us into the light.

-being brought into the light elevates our experience

-I don't mean this in a "prosperity gospel" kind of way, but in the way that we live as we were always made to- in the light, following Jesus

-There's so much beauty in this life that without Christ, we can't see, we walk in spiritual darkness (illustration: tell a story about a time you couldn't see in the dark, how hopeless and scary it can be)

-being "born again" is this special sauce that turns the light on and illuminates the world (specifically the spiritual world- kingdom of God)

-we walk isolated, alone, damaging ourselves and others

-but when we are "born again" when we follow Jesus and believe in him, FULLY entrusting ourselves to him and what he says

-we walk in life as we were made to,. It won't always be perfect, but we will walk in a peace and confidence in God and who he's made us to be

-this will affect and likely heal, impact and touch others, because by walking in the light others will take notice- v.21

Altar

-So often we walk around like Nicodemus, we believe in God, we believe in Jesus, because of things we've seen.

-But we fail to believe his words, we fail to believe that everything that he was, is and said is true and trustworthy

-So often we walk around like Nicodemus, we know all the right things, we know all the books of the Bible, we know how to do church, we know all of these things about Jesus but we aren't walking with Jesus ourselves

-We aren't truly "born again" and fully surrendered to him

-We know Jesus but Jesus doesn't know us

-Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. **22** On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' **23** But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

-I don't share this to scare you, but to make you think: **am I TRULY walking in the light and following Jesus?**

-Tonight I want you to ask yourself in which way you might be like

Nicodemus:

-Do you believe in God, do you believe in Jesus, because of things you've seen or hear, but **you fail to believe his words, you struggle to believe that everything that he was, is and said is true and trustworthy?**

-Are you like Nicodemus and you know all of the right things to say, you know tons about the Bible and God's word and law, **but you struggle to really walk in the light and follow Jesus?**

-**Maybe you're not like Nicodemus at all, you don't even know much about God, Jesus and their words,** you don't understand the law and don't fully believe in God

-Wherever you are there is hope for you, because just like Jesus told Nicodemus, all you have to do to be **born again is believe**

-not Just believe Jesus is who he said he was

-But believe that all he said is true, that in faith we entrust ourselves to him

-As you humbly seek, Jesus will reveal himself to you