

Sermon
Rev. Lang Yang

“From Where Come the Wind?”

The Holy Trinity
St. Paul Lutheran Church – Caro, MI
5-31-15

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

John 3:8 "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it come from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "This is the Word of God" (Cross Reference – Psalm 135:7, Ecclesiastes 1:6; 11:5, Ezekiel 37:9, John 3:7, 9)

Illustration “Born again” (Show pictures chaplain visiting hospital patient)



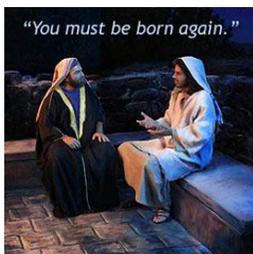
Dear friend in Christ Jesus, there was once a lady in the hospital and she was very troubled about a visit she had from a hospital chaplain. He had asked her if she had been "saved" or if she had ever been "born again." This lady a devout Christian who would rarely miss worship. She read her Bible, taught a Sunday School class and had been active in her church her entire life. The man’s question puzzled her. She couldn’t recall a particular event in her life where she truly had a "born again experience."

She grew up in the church and as far back as she could remember she had always been a person of faith. (Show born again what does it mean?)

"BORN AGAIN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

There are numerous churches who make it a common practice to talk about their "born again" experiences. Many encourage it. In fact, for some it is a rite of passage. But, for those of us who are Lutheran, it is not part of our tradition. Quite honestly, it has been my experience that we don’t even attempt to understand it.

I. Nicodemus didn’t understand either. (Show Jesus and Nicodemus)



The idea of a spiritual rebirth was completely foreign to his understanding of the faith. All he knew was to play by the rules, be faithful and observe his religious laws. Of course he misunderstood what Jesus meant. Jesus wasn’t talking

about a physical rebirth. He was speaking of a spiritual rebirth. Instead of logical answers, Jesus gives him a mystery. One must be born of the "water and the spirit." And then, Jesus goes on to say, "Don't get all excited about this, because it is not something you can explain." (Show John 3:21)



So if Jesus said its not something we can explain or something we should worry about, why is it so important to some to know the exact hour and place they were "born again" or "saved?" Jesus doesn't focus on experiences. Jesus focuses on our fruit. After Jesus says "that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16), he goes on to say that "But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that

what he has done has been done through God." (John 3:21) It seems to me that "believing" and "deeds" are inseparable. (Show Lang Yang- NJROTC)



When I was in high school, I was in the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC). I was the cadet commander in my unit and I was chosen as one of the cadet along with other cadet all over the United States to participate in the Mini Officer Cadet School in Maryland at the United States Naval Academy. While we were there, there is a course that we learn to sail. When I sail that boat I could feel the power of the wind against my face, watching

the wind fill the sail, moving across the water with no sound of an engine. Every time I sail I am truly amazed because I am being moved by something I can't see nor explain. If you've ever sailed you know the wind can change directions at any moment. What may seem like a predictable course can be changed in an instant. Like Jesus said, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (Show Acts 2:2)



The Bible is full of references to the wind. In the creation story, God moved the wind (or spirit) over the waters and created something out of nothing. (Genesis 1) When God created Adam, he "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."(Genesis 2:7) In Ezekiel, (Chapter 37), God "caused breath" to enter the dry bones and give them new life. Jesus is baptized by the Holy Spirit and thus commissioned to begin his ministry. (Matthew 3:13-17) At Pentecost there

was "a sound that came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind." (Acts 2:2)

- II. Jesus is saying that the process of being born again is not something to be explained, nor do you know just how and when it happens. God creates faith when and where he wills it. (Show Holy Spirit)



Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed the Holy Spirit is at work creating faith in the hearts of people. By using the metaphor of the wind Jesus says it just comes out of nowhere. The new life Jesus promises doesn't compute with the structured world of Nicodemus. Therefore Nicodemus is skeptical of the whole concept. "How can this be?" he asks. How can this be? It can't, especially when we are unwilling to be sensitive to the creative spirit

of God who can shape, form, move, intervene and transform us at anytime from any direction. Rebirth, newness or change can come in a variety of ways.

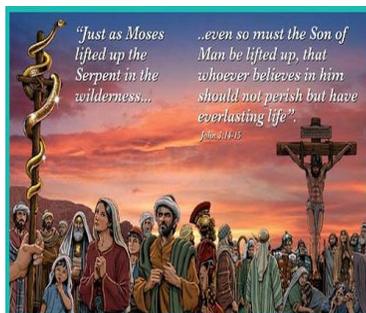
Recently I worked hard all week long on a sermon. (Show eye)



My thought didn't go anywhere when I pray that God would give me the wisdom. A little while later while I was doing something else it came to my mind what I need to do to finish the sermon. This is like a scale fallen of my eyes that I could see clearly what I need to do to proclaim God's Word. (Show band aid)



To be willing to be born anew means that we preserve a place for the mysterious in our lives, and that we live with soft souls which are willing to be changed. For me, to be changed, means to be healed. Have you ever noticed that a band aid has holes in it? The bandage compresses the wound to stop the bleeding, but air needs to get through to heal. (Show John 3:14-15)



As Jesus is teaching Nicodemus he includes a reference to Moses. *"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up."* (John 3:14) God instructed Moses to make a seraph (a serpent of bronze) and place it on a pole as an antidote to snake bites. The serpent with the power of God to heal for anyone who looked at it. In the same way Jesus had to be placed on the cross to heal us. How that happens is

a mystery. But by believing in Jesus we believe in the power of healing and forgiveness through his grace and mercy of love. It is not something we can do for ourselves. It is a gift, one which like the wind, blows new life into us and

consequently makes us "born again."

III. We are "born again" (Show trusting in Jesus)



when we put our trust in Jesus instead of our own resources. We are "born again" when we are open to the possibility that the spirit of God can come into our lives at any moment. We are "born again" when we believe in Jesus as the source of our Savior. We are "born again" when instead of fearing the wind we embrace it and allow ourselves to be moved by it. (Storm around a farm house)



A young man applied for a job as a farmhand. When the farmer asked for his qualifications, he said, "I can sleep when the wind blows." The farmer look puzzle, but the farmer liked the young man, and hired him. A few days later, the farmer and his wife were awakened in the night by a violent storm. They quickly began to check things out to see if all was secure. They found that the shutters of the

farmhouse had been securely fastened. A good supply of logs had been set next to the fireplace. The young man slept soundly. The farmer and his wife then inspected their property. They found that the farm tools had been placed in the storage shed, safe from the elements. The tractor has been moved into the garage. The barn was properly locked. Even the animals were calm. All was well. The farmer then understood the meaning of the young man's words, "I can sleep when the wind blows." Because the farmhand did his work loyally and faithfully when the skies were clear, he was prepared for the storm when it broke. So when the wind blew, he was not afraid. He could sleep in peace.

The lady in the hospital could sleep in peace too. She wasn't afraid. She didn't have to respond to the man's question as to whether or not she was "born again." Through her faithfulness over the years she was prepared to face whatever storm she faced. The wind of God had directed and moved her life in the past and it would continue to give her new life in the present. Unfortunately we all will face trial and errors in our life. (Show look to the cross)



When the storm hit us the hardest, we can look to the cross what Christ has done for us. He has taken away our sin by suffering on the cross for our transgression and inequity. You can feel at peace that you are in good hand, knowing that your sin has been paid for by the Precious blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No matter from where comes the wind, you are safe forever in Christ. Amen

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.