**Growth Group Bible Study**

“Encountering Jesus”

The “Must” that Matters Most

Lesson 2

January 14, 2018

**Reading** John 3:1-16

**Opening Questions**

1. Who do you think is more likely to become a Christian, a rich or religious person or a poor, non-religious person? What judgments do we make as to whom we think will be open to the gospel?

2. Have you ever thought, “that person will never come to Jesus!” and they did? Do you think anyone ever thought that about you (and why would they have thought that)?

3. Did you ever believe that your religious acts or religion or “good works” would get you to heaven? What changed your mind?

4. In what ways do you hear the phrase “born again” used in our culture today?

**Study**

1. What do we know about Nicodemus from John 3:1-2; 7:45-52; 19:38-40? What is the significance of that background in His approach to God and His word?

2. Why do you think he came to Jesus “at night”? (note John 19:39 also calls attention to this)

3. Read Matt. 23:1-12, 33. How does what Jesus says about the Pharisees fit with His willing dialog with Nicodemus? What does Jesus’ welcoming Nicodemus tell us about what Jesus is looking for in people coming to Him?

4. How does what Paul writes about Himself in Phil. 3:1-8 fit with Jesus’ dialog with Nicodemus and what it takes to be “born again”?

5. What do vv5-8 tell us about what’s involved in someone being “born again”? (cf. Ezekiel 36:24-28; John 6:63)

6. In vv10-16, what do we learn as to how a person is “born again” (including through whom)? cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12

7. How does Numbers 21:4-9 (referred to in John 3:14) fit with being “born again” through Jesus?

8. As you look at John 3:16, what does it tell us about the following:

 a. Where does the possibility of being “born again” come from?

 b. Why does God come in Jesus to provide the way to be “born again”?

 c. For whom is the possibility of being “born again” given?

 d. Who initiated this “rescue operation?”

 e. Who does “whoever” refer to?

 f. What is the requirement for being “born again”?

 g. What happens to those who aren’t “born again”? (cf. vv18-20, 36)

9. How would you explain to someone the “lessons from this encounter” below?

 a. Jesus is accessible to all

 b. We need relationship (with God), not religion nor “good works”

 c. God makes a new creation, not just improving the old (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17)

 d. God comes in grace and mercy (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; Eph. 2:8-9)

 e. We too “must” be born again

**Application**

1. How can we explain to people the real meaning of being “born again” in a culture that has co-opted the phrase?

2. Whom can we pray for tonight that you most long for to be “born again”?