



SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe

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Thursday, September 22, 2022

Scripture: John 3:9-12

TITLE: The Game of Life

My family loves board games. We like the classics like Monopoly and Clue to the modern hits like Ticket to Ride and Sushi Go. But if you play enough board games, you come to find that people can play these games differently. Little nuances to complete overhauls of the rules of game. I've even found out I've been playing a game completely wrong.

Well, Jesus came to tell the world they've been playing life with the wrong rule book. What did Jesus say? Listen to his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:9-12.

Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Over the past 8 verse, Jesus has shocked Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee – a conservative, Jewish zealot who had been playing the game of religion perfectly. He was a model example of a legalist. And Jesus said, "If you want to inherit the kingdom of God – If you want to get into heaven, you must be born again. You must be born of water and of the Spirit." And what's where we pick it up here in verses 9-12.

Nicodemus says, "What? Come again? You are not making any sense. You mean, all this religious activity is meaningless? Have I been playing by the wrong rule book?"

Jesus says, "Nic, you are the teacher of Israel. You know the Scriptures better than anyone. You are the teacher of Israel. When people want to know how to play the game of life, they come to you. But you don't get it!"

Jesus then continues by saying, "we bear witness to what we know and have seen but you reject the message." There's some debate as to whether Jesus is referring to the Trinity or the disciples. It doesn't really matter. Jesus is God in the flesh. He's been with the Father and the Spirit for all eternity. People have tried to build a stairway to heaven. They've tried to build ladders to heaven but they've only found the chutes that take them farther away from God.

Jesus has seen it all because He created it all and has witnessed it all. Now he came to earth and is proving Himself and His message but few are believing. Not even Nicodemus who was the authority on the Scriptures. So Jesus says, "You've been playing the game wrong. You can't win it by your rules. You must be born again."

Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to disrupt our own ways of doing life and playing God. Jesus has thrown out our rule book and given us a pathway to victory if we choose to accept it.

So here's my challenge for you today: throw away your rule book and play by His rule book. If you're not a Christian, ask yourself if your way of life is working for you. Are you moving closer to God or farther away. Be honest. Consider Jesus' generous offer.

If you are a Christian, have you been rewriting the rule book? Are you trying to add extra rules for that salvation insurance? If so, erase your rules. Jesus' pathway to victory is best.

I don't know about you but I like this game much better than my own. Jesus offers us all a pathway to victory and spiritual rebirth all for free.