

INTRO

As we enter into this new sermon series based on the Christian & Missionary Alliance movement's distinctives, what has been your experience/history with the denomination?
Do you have any prior knowledge of what the C&MA movement is?

If applicable, what other movements/denominations have you been a part of in the past?

IDEA 1

Brian suggested that there are two problems that Nicodemus needed to understand: **Our helpless situation:** When Jesus says you must be born again, He is speaking to a deep and insurmountable issue that affects all of us. We have a sin problem. **Our harmful strategies:** For Nicodemus - a Pharisee, entrance into God's Kingdom was solely about *obedience* to a teaching and observance of a tradition "I'll earn it, I'll re-form myself"

In a practical sense, how would you describe the sin problem?

Do you relate to the harmful tendencies/strategies of the Pharisees like Nicodemus?

How would you describe your own 'born-again' experience? Was it a more gradual or immediate *transformation*?

IDEA 2

Nicodemus thought that entrance into God's kingdom was about reformation, and Jesus was speaking of transformation. Reformation will never accomplish the work of transformation. We aren't going to reform our way into God's kingdom, for that, we need to be transformed.

How did Brian distinguish between the work of Reformation vs. Transformation?

What does it look like practically to live a life of reformation and transformation?

In what ways would you say Jesus has *transformed* your heart?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Live in the power of Holy Spirit

Even after we surrender to Jesus, it's easy to slip back into our old ways of living. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he reminds them that at one point, they understood the sacrifice of Jesus, that they believed and received Holy Spirit, but then they reverted back to old patterns and habits of personal effort.

As a group, meditate on this scripture:

Galatians 3:3-5 *"How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it? I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ."*

Once you have finished reflecting on this passage together, consider praying to Holy Spirit that he would fill all of you.

NEXT STEPS

Surrender to Jesus - Stop striving.

When we surrender to Jesus and ask to be born again, it is an admission that our efforts are not enough and never will be. We desperately need the words and work of Jesus.

The Gospel is this - when we believe in Jesus, it isn't just that our sin and shame are put on Him, but that His righteousness and glory, everything He deserves, is placed on us. Jesus made Himself sin so we could be righteous.

As you continue with this week, prayerfully consider what may be one certain thing you need to surrender to Jesus instead of striving. Think of a phrase or sentence that captures this and record this on a sticky note. In your daily rhythm of prayer use the sticky note as a reminder to surrender that one thing to Jesus' feet.