

January 26, 2014

Lesson 16: Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it

chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'



Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

“The Light has
come into the
world...”

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The Big Story Truth: God’s gift of Jesus- who lived and died and rose for us- means that our eternal life begins right now! God has provided life through the cross!

About This Scripture Passage: This passage contains one of the most familiar verses of the whole Bible, “For God so loved the world...” It also contains some of the most often quoted, “You must be born again....” Both verses have found uses to encourage and give good news. Both have also been misquoted and misused in Christian history. So before jumping into those verses, its necessary for us to step back and look at the context of this whole story. Nicodemus is a religious leader who comes to Jesus at night. John uses images like light and darkness, day and night to talk about the difference between the fullness of God, knowing the Good News, and separation from God. The fact that Nicodemus comes at night is both being secretive and reveals that he does not yet understand what Jesus is all about. He is “in the dark” literally as well as figuratively. He doesn’t understand what Jesus says about being born *anotnen*. The word meaning both “again” and also “from above.” He is so caught up in the how of the rebirth that he misses who it is that is sitting right in front of him. New and forever life in God is given, provided in Jesus... the one who in love has been given for the whole world which is all those separated from God.



Making the Connection: Nicodemus represents all of humanity. John's gospel describes the whole world as being in darkness. When Jesus shows up, the light comes. The question is what happens when we are encountered by the light. The light exposes all of us. Those who love/do evil will hate the light. But to others walking in darkness, the light is welcome! How good it is to be in the light after a long night of darkness! Kids are often frightened of darkness. They instinctively know that things can hide in the dark. While the younger ones may not be able to fully grasp the metaphor, they probably will know the good feeling of having a light in a dark place and can hear that being close to Jesus is like that!

Where in the World Are We?

Jesus is still in Jerusalem in this story.

Remember that in our story for last week he made a big scene in the temple!

For Your Reflection:

Remember a time when you were in unusual darkness. What would a light have meant to you in that time and place? How is the good news of Jesus coming into the world like that light to you this week?



