

Series:

A MAN OF THE PHARISEES

JOHN 3

Text: John 3:1

John 3:1

¹ *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*

Introduction:

We see here that Lord had a personal encounter with a man named Nicodemus.

Nicodemus was a man of power, wealth, and influence. He seemed to be on top of the world. By the standards of society, Nicodemus had it all; he had reached the pinnacle of success.

But, with all that he had achieved and acquired there was emptiness in his life. He knew that something was missing. This encounter with Jesus would open his eyes to the wonderful and gracious offer of salvation. In their conversation Jesus shares the truths of being born again.

The fundamental truths that the Lord shared with Nicodemus reveal how sinners are saved and cleansed by the saving power of Christ.

Note:

1. The Condition of Nicodemus

In the life of Nicodemus we can see a resemblance to many in our day.

Notice:

A. He Was a Religious Man

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. The Pharisees were devoutly religious.

No doubt he had spent years studying the Scriptures and living according to the Law.

As a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus held a position of authority in the synagogue. He knew religious traditions and how they were to be carried out, but sadly he had never met the Christ of the Scriptures.

We see Jesus in His person in the gospels, but all of the Bible points to Him.

Nicodemus may have been religious, but he wasn't saved. All the religion in the world can never provide salvation. You could study the Bible and even quote it word for word, but if you have never been saved all

you will have is knowledge of God, not a relationship. Being involved in church services and activities are good, but they cannot save!

Not only was he a religious man but:

B. He Was a Respected Man

John 3:1

¹ There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

John 3:10

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

There is little doubt Nicodemus would've been a man who was admired and respected. Jesus referred to him as a master of Israel, or a teacher. Nicodemus must've been an educated man with a lot of influence on those around him. He was likely envied by many who would love to have the opportunity to serve in the position he held.

Nicodemus would've been a fine, outstanding citizen among the Jews. He lived a life that was admired and respected by those who knew him, but even that couldn't bring salvation. There are many today who live a good, moral life. They abide by the laws of the land, work hard and refrain from an immoral lifestyle; they

are good to help with social causes and issues, but they are lost in sin because they have never trusted Christ. Simply living a respectable life will never bring salvation or acceptance to God.

Note not only was he a religious and respected man but also:

C. He Was a Restless Man

John 3:2

² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Nicodemus had it all as man would think, but there was something within his heart that wouldn't let him rest. He knew what the Bible said; he knew how to live a moral life, but yet there was a void in his heart. We find that he came to Jesus by night to enquire of Him. He came with respect for the Lord, desiring to learn more of Him.

- The Spirit of God was working in the heart of Nicodemus. This wasn't just curiosity, this was conviction! I remember when the Lord was dealing with me. I could find no rest within my soul. I had heard of Christ, but I hadn't

surrendered my heart to Him. I lived in fear of death.

- Many today are like Nicodemus. They have found success in this world, but they are miserable in their souls. If you constantly find yourself thinking of what will happen when you die, or wondering if you have made the necessary preparations to stand before God, it is likely the Spirit is dealing with you as He did Nicodemus. Thank God for the convicting power of the Spirit!

Note not only was he a religious, respected, and a restless man but also:

D. He Was a Reluctant Man

John 3:4

⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

John 3:9

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

We will deal with the words of Jesus in a moment, but we find that Nicodemus had trouble with the words of Jesus. The Lord had laid out the plan of salvation, but

Nicodemus couldn't yet believe. It is likely that his education and the influence of the Pharisees clouded his vision. They wanted to work their way in, thinking they could live good enough to merit heaven. The Lamb of God had shared the truth of salvation, and yet Nicodemus was reluctant to believe.

How many have heard the gospel but are reluctant to receive it?

Note not only The Condition of Nicodemus but also:

2. THE CONVERSATION OF THE LORD

Not the words of the Lord:

A. The Must of Salvation

John 3:3

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5

⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

there is only one way to enter into the Kingdom of God. A man must be born again. The word except is an

imperative revealing “there are no other options;” Jesus is the only way! We must be born again. The word must is also an imperative which means “to be absolutely necessary.” He was telling Nicodemus that if he wanted to be forgiven of sin and acceptable to God, he must be born again!

Note not only the “Must of Salvation” but also:

B. The Mark of Salvation

John 3:6-7

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit. The Lord makes a change within the heart, old things have passed away and all things become new. There will be a noticeable difference in the lives of those who are born again.

Notice also:

C. The Miracle of Salvation

John 3:8

⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus was an educated Pharisee but he couldn't grasp the truths of salvation. It is beyond our ability to grasp all the Jesus has done for us and continues to do in us. I have been saved for 30 years and I still haven't figured out all I've received.

The Lord gives a simple illustration: The wind blows where it wishes; we hear the sound of the wind and can even see its effects, but we cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with our salvation. We feel the conviction of the Spirit and we visibly see the effects of a changed life, and yet we have no idea all that the Spirit is doing in our lives or where He is leading us.

There is no way to fully grasp all we have in Jesus. Much of what we've received is a mystery, but it is wonderful nonetheless! We are not expected to understand it all, just believe. Rejoice that you are forgiven and acceptable to Him!

We see not only the Condition of Nicodemus and the Conversation of the Lord but lastly:

3. THE CONFIDENCE OF SALVATION

John 3:13-15

¹³ And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

In these closing verses the Lord provides assurance for those who believe. I want to consider a couple aspects regarding our confidence in salvation.

Notice:

A. The Provision of the Saviour

John 3:13-14

¹³ And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

The Lord wanted Nicodemus to realize all of his education and upright living were not the source of salvation. It is impossible for man to ascend into

heaven of himself. This is prior to the crucifixion and sacrifice that Jesus would make, but He shares the gospel message with Nicodemus. The Son of God left the glories of heaven and came as a servant to mankind, robed in flesh, to offer Himself as the only Sacrifice that could atone for sin.

Just as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness to provide for those who were bitten by the venomous snakes to be made whole, Jesus had to be lifted up for those who had been poisoned by sin to be made whole. Were it not for the death and resurrection of our Lord, there would be no hope for us to ever be saved. Jesus secured the means of our salvation as He died upon the cross. We have the hope of eternal life because He rose again. Salvation is in Christ and Christ alone!

Notice not only the provision of the Saviour but also:

B. The Promise for the Sinner

John 3:15

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Everyone couldn't have the position that Nicodemus held, but that wasn't what was required. It isn't about who we are; it is all about what Jesus has done! Jesus makes a promise that all can receive, whosoever can

come to the Lord and receive salvation if they will only by faith believe. He came that all people might be saved. Jesus came for you! If you have never trusted in Him, He stands waiting for you to come. He wants you to come, just as you, are in faith. If you can believe that Jesus has the power to save, He will save you today!

Close:

I remember a time when I was like Nicodemus. I have never held a prominent place in society, but I was lost and reluctant to receive Christ. But I found out all I had to do was respond in faith and Jesus met me there. All He wanted was for me to come unto Him. He did the saving; I was just the recipient.

Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.