

January 23, 2022

John 3:1-21

Jesus our Light

Seems like I have many questions this morning. To the young people, what was the most interesting thing you learned this year? Was it something that changed your life completely? Now for the rest of us, what was the most interesting thing you learned in school? Was it practical and could you use it in your daily life? This morning Nicodemus goes looking for answers. He suspects that there is more to life and he seeks out the person he feels has the answers. Jesus gives him an answer that changes his life. Today we would say Nicodemus got woke.

Most often when we are students we are taught a set curriculum. The things that the province thinks we all should know. This information should make us better people so we can function in society. We may even possibly contribute something great to our society. As students we learn what we are told to learn. Set curriculums are great because they lay the foundation of knowledge for us. They also should provide the inspiration to learn more.

There are many people out there who truly are inspired to learn more. I guess we could call them seekers. They learn what interests them and what they want to learn. This type of learning is self-directed by the individual. This type of self-directed learning requires a lot of self-motivation. When I was finished with university it was only then that I had the time to become a seeker. It has not stopped in thirty years. I

often think that to be a seeker you first need to be student. Some would say that you are always a student.

The story in the gospel this morning is about a seeker. His name was Nicodemus. Actually Nicodemus was his nickname. It means “innocent of blood”. It reflects the fact that Nicodemus was not part of the Sanhedrin’s plot to have Jesus killed. We really do not know his actual name. The imagery in this story is beautiful. John plays on the dark and light. Nicodemus is spiritually ignorant about the after- life and he is searching for answers. In short he is in the spiritual dark and he goes to Jesus for answers at night. This is all done in the darkness of night so he won’t be seen talking to Jesus. Nicodemus feared the authorities. At this point it seems Jesus had a reputation. Nicodemus knew he was in the spiritual darkness and he was seeking answers. Jesus enlightens him with His words. Jesus shines light on all of Nicodemus’s darkness.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus with a genuine request for answers. He opens up his heart to Jesus and is not disappointed with the answers he received. It takes Nicodemus a little bit of time to digest and understand what Jesus explains to him. Jesus reveals or enlightens Nicodemus with the way to enter God’s eternal kingdom. The words were simple. We must be “born again”. Only two words, but what do they actually mean. It is a birth from above brought about by water and the Spirit. The “water” that Jesus is talking about are the waters of baptism and the “spirit” is the Holy Spirit. The same elements that were present at Jesus’s baptism in the Jordan by John. This baptism or new birth is what joins us to Christ. In baptism we die to sin in the water and then we rise in Christ as we come out of the waters. That is some serious information to lay on Nicodemus.

This information that Jesus shared with Nicodemus would change his life forever. According to the oral tradition in the church, Nicodemus was baptised by St. Peter. Nicodemus was then removed from the Sanhedrin and later forced to leave Jerusalem. That was a small price to pay for faith and enlightenment. Nicodemus was a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

Let's play scotch tape bible study and tape John 8:12 at the end of this story. This gives the story a whole new perspective. "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." That short line seems to put it all into context.

I often think that it would not hurt if we took the story of Nicodemus to heart. We all should be searching, seeking and asking questions about our faith. The answers may completely astound us. They may change our lives and deepen our faith. They may make us more committed followers of Jesus Christ. This is what happened to Nicodemus this morning. He knew he had to ask Jesus some questions and the answers he got changed his life. The important thing was that he searched Jesus out in order to ask Him the questions he had. God bless, stay safe and warm Pastor D.