

Lent Day 12: Sunday, March 5

John 3:1-17

FEAR AND REBIRTH

“He came to Jesus at night...”

Nicodemus meets with Jesus because of the miracles; he gives credit to Jesus stating he knows Jesus to be “a teacher from God, for no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him (v. 2). But there is an interesting thought here: he came to Jesus at night. We might infer that he was interested and also afraid. Fear kept Nicodemus from meeting with Jesus in the daylight. John continually utilizes a motif of darkness and light—walking in the light, be in the light, etc. —and juxtaposes it with darkness: the darkness of night that Nicodemus comes to Jesus.

It begs the question: “What makes you afraid to come to Jesus?” Fear is like a hole in the heart that prevents it from being filled with the love of Jesus. Fear keeps you from embracing the new life Jesus has for you. What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of Jesus asking you to give up more than you are willing to sacrifice?

Jesus does ask some crazy things of us, like being born again. It is an incredulous statement for people who are not followers of Christ. It sounds as ridiculous to non-believers as it did to Nicodemus.

If physical rebirth is impossible, is spiritual renewal any more feasible? Jesus shifts the kingdom of God away from what we do to what God is doing. The wind blows wherever it pleases, you hear the sound but cannot tell where it came from, and so it is with everyone born of the Spirit. Jesus is stating that redemption, new birth, or rebirth is a work of the Spirit, not of what we do. God so loved the world that God sent his Son not to condemn, but to save.

Prayer:

Our Father, may we fully embrace the love that sends the Son, that gives us rebirth of the Spirit, and overcome our fear this day and every day. Amen.