

PENINSULA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

*The teacher meets **The Teacher***

John 3:1-21

John 3:1-2, There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

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What did it mean to be a Pharisee?

- Legalism. They had strict rules for acceptance by God... really, by them
- They set themselves as superior to other people, not associating with them

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What did John the Baptist think of them?

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Matthew 3:7, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

- Not the type of greeting they were used to

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What did Jesus think of them?

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Luke 18:9-14, He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be

merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matt. 5:3)

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A man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus... came to Jesus by night

- He steps toward Christ with one foot, straddling the gap between tradition & faith
- He comes in secret, risking discovery, **drawn by a holy curiosity**
- My friend reading a Bible in his closet by flashlight

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Some of you had heard of Christ, but did not know Him

- At what point did you begin to think of finding out who He is?
- Did someone invite you? Or did you seek to find out on your own?

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John 6:44, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him”

- God initiates desire & curiosity about His Son

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Nicodemus’s curiosity leads him to enquire secretly
- Enquiry leads to knowledge & understanding (Matt. 7:7-8)

“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

- God’s presence is greater than opposition to Him (**Mark 5:1-20**)
- Live to be evidence of Him. He promised we could (**Acts 1:8**)
- Nicodemus came by himself, but he was not alone, “**we know**”

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John 19:38-39, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came

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Vs. 3, Jesus answered and said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you**, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

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Nicodemus offered what he saw as an affirming statement about who Jesus is

- Jesus’s response left him not knowing where he stood
- He had no idea what that meant
- So he replies with his only frame of reference

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Vs. 4, Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

- I suspect as soon as he said it he knew he was groping in the dark
- Jesus reaffirms they aren’t working from the same playbook

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Vs. 5-6, Jesus answered, “**Most assuredly, I say to you**, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

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Nic already knows Jesus is “come from God.”

- He’s realizing he’s completely out of his element...
- And now he knows **Jesus knows** he’s starting to realize it

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This is the second time Jesus has said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you**”

- Awakening to the enormity of who He is, “**Most assuredly**” carries some **Serious Weight!**

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Now that He has his attention, Jesus continues...

Vs. 7-8, “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (Which affirms Nic is out of his depth)

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So he just goes with complete honesty.

Vs. 9, Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

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He said the same thing Mary said when Gabriel told her she would miraculously give birth by both water and Spirit. (**Luke 1:34**, “How can this be?”)

- This doesn’t fit within my current frame of reference

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Vs. 10, Jesus gives Nicodemus a very plain assessment of his expertise

Jesus answered and said to him, “**Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?**”

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Vs. 11, For the third time He says, “**Most assuredly, I say to you**, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.”

- He is not speaking in His own behalf only
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Nic knew what he meant when he said, "we know."

- What did he think Jesus meant when He said, "We know"?
- Now "come from God" has more meaning (Jn. 10:30)

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Vs. 12-13, "If I have told you earthly things and **you do not believe**, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

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Jesus isn't challenging his understanding. **He's challenging him to believe.**

- Earthly belief **follows understanding** – Explain to me first
- Heavenly belief **follows what God said**, because He said it...
- Whether we understand it or not. (John 13:7)

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"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

- No one attains heavenly understanding apart from the One who came from there
- **Jesus**, who **occupies heaven & earth**, reveals heavenly things on earth
- Because **we believe who He is**, we believe **what He says**

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Vs. 14-15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (Num. 21:4-9)

- Jesus is speaking prophetically of His crucifixion

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Vs. 16-18, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to

condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. **He who believes in Him is not condemned**; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

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Our salvation faith is not in **what** we believe...

- It's in **Who we believe**

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We are not redeemed from the condemnation of our sin by what we know

- The Pharisees believed their adherence to superior knowledge set them apart
- Nicodemus is learning it is **our belief in who Jesus is...**
- **Who He is**, and **what He alone** can do in our behalf that rescues us

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Vs. 19-20, "And this is the condemnation, that **the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil. For **everyone practicing evil hates the light** and does not come to the light, **lest his deeds should be exposed.**"

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John 1:4-5, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

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Vs. 21, "But he who does the truth **comes to the light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

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We don't hear about Nicodemus again until he speaks up for Christ when the Jews are trying to arrest Him. (John 7:45-52)

- What do you think Nicodemus **thought about Jesus** now?
- What do you think he **thought about himself** now?
- **What sort of decision** was he faced with now?

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God IS relationship, and made us for relationship with Him.

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Genesis 1:26-27, Then God said, “**Let Us** make man in **Our image**, according to **Our likeness**; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So **God created man in His own image**; in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them**.

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Our sins separated us from relationship with God.

- *God didn't separate – We did*

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Jesus came to pay for our sins, and restore us to relationship with The Father

- **What decisions** do we face now?