

Week 11 - December 9, 2020

Today's reflection looks at one of the most famous stories about Jesus from the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John, Chapter 3, Verses 1 - 2

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus at 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 are doing unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?"

Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, '**You must be born from above.**' The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, 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 answered and said to him, "*How can this happen?*"

Jesus answered and said to him, "You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand this? Amen, amen, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who 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 might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Reflection

Jesus speaks about the need for people to be reborn into the kingdom of Heaven. Nicodemus thinks this sounds silly, but Jesus clarifies that he doesn't want people to be born again physically. He wants them born again spiritually! We have to accept the Holy Spirit in our lives to remake us as holier and better people. Jesus references how Moses "**lifted up the serpent in the desert.**" This refers to how when the Israelites were being attacked by poisonous snakes, Moses lifted up a serpent on a pole at God's command and all who saw this were saved even if they had been bitten.

What do you think the story of Moses saving the Israelites with the snake has to do with Jesus' teaching about needed to be reborn? Why do you think Jesus brings it up?

The following words from this story are very famous: "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**"

What does this passage mean? Do you think this is good news or bad news?

This story begins with Nicodemus asking Jesus a question. If you could ask Jesus any question what would it be?

Think back to all of the reflections we've done this year. Which was your favorite and why?

What is one thing you've learned about Jesus and his teachings from doing this reflections this year? What is one thing you want to know more about?

Has reading scripture helped your relationship with Jesus? Have you had any benefits from these scripture readings?

Finally, pray from your heart, reflecting on what you have learned or gained from reading and reflecting on scripture this year.