

- In one sentence, Jesus completely **unraveled** the belief system that Nicodemus had built his life on and found his **identity** in. To follow Christ would mean to **deny** everything He had trusted in.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

- *Do I look to Jesus to improve my plans, or do I look to Jesus to call the shots?*

He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

- *What must I **lose**, to gain Christ?*
- Nicodemus stumbled over what Jesus said was the *door of entrance* to the Kingdom of God: **the work** of God's Spirit.
 - Are you prepared to lay down anything you might try to bring, to find favor with God, and trust entirely in His work on your behalf?

The entrance to the Kingdom is other than you know or think. Man may rise to high possibilities – mental, moral, self-development, self-improvement, self-restraint, refined egotism, or moral altruism. But to see the Kingdom of God, to perceive this not as an improvement upon our present state, but as the submission of heart, mind, and life to Him our Divine King: this can only be learned from Christ and needs even for its perception, the birth from above. – Edersheim



The Jesus Series: Encounter with Nicodemus **4.15.2018 || John 3:1-11**

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” ³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” ⁴ “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” ⁹ “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. ¹⁰ “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.

Pharisees in the day of Jesus

- The **separated** ones
 - Teachers of the law: **written** and **oral** (*Mishna*)
- Controlled Synagogues - Local meetings of worship & learning
 - Taught that the way to God was through **obedience**
 - Generally opposed Jesus because he did not accept their **interpretation** of the Law
- The largest & most influential religious party in Judaism
 - Served as the religious **authority**, exercising great **influence** over much of the Jews

Sanhedrin in the day of Jesus

- The highest ruling council of the Jews (*'Supreme Court'*)
 - Handled all **questions** of Jewish law
 - Included the **Chief priests**, Pharisees and the **Sadducees**
 - 70 members were **presided** over by the High Priest
- The **Sanhedrin** ruled the Jews under the watchful eye of the **Roman** Governor
 - They had considerable **autonomy**

Profile of Nicodemus

- An older man, probably of great **wealth**
- A teacher of the law, well **respected** among the Jews
- A man of great **influence**, probably **timid** by nature
- A very religious, **morally good** man

To this older, influential, respected, religious, upright, morally good teacher, Jesus said, *you will not see the Kingdom of God unless you are born again.*

Life Truth: Whether moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, no one will be saved without a **miraculous** work from above.

- Some will be lost in their self-gratifying pursuit of **pleasure**.
- Some will be lost in their self-reliant **religiosity**.

For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Romans 10:2-3

Profile of Christian Adults in the United States

- 83% of Americans claim a belief in a God
- 72% of Americans claim to be Christian
 - 93% say their religion is important to them
 - 84% say they attend church and pray
 - 55% give money to the church
 - 65% say they have spiritual peace
 - The majority of these adults **do not** believe...
 - the bible is the authoritative word of God
 - in a clear standard of right or wrong
 - that their beliefs should guide their decisions
 - The majority of these adults **do believe...**
 - good works will gain them Heaven

Observations and Questions about this Encounter with Nicodemus

- Nicodemus was **intrigued** by Jesus, **respected** him more than most, and **believed** He was from God. But He did not treasure Christ supremely or trust Him for righteousness.
 - *How would I characterize my attachment to Jesus?*