

Character Study Series

This morning...

Nicodemus

Questions

What is the context or setting for their “story”?

How did God interact with this person?

What principles did the people apply in their lives?

What was their understanding about Jesus?

What can we I learn from their experiences

to deepen our relationship with the Lord?

Encourage us to serve the Lord more?

Nicodemus

Believed in God, studied diligently, sought to live for God (was a Pharisee)

Saw/heard about Jesus and went to see Him

Checked out the facts

Came to faith in Jesus*

Defended Jesus in public

Worshipped Jesus

* speaker's opinion

Sanhedrin

Local council – court of justice – 71 men

16 ¶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.

17 And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. Nu 11:16-17 (ESV)

Sanhedrin - 2

Supreme legal and religious authority

- Civil matters – “supreme court”
- Beth-din = “judgement chamber”

Meetings:

- Hall of hewn stone
- Home of high priest
- Outside temple complex

Sanhedrin - Composition

High priests (Caiaphas)

Elders

Scribes

Pharisees

Sadducees

Pharisees (Nicodemus)

- ✓ commands in the oral traditions preserved by the rabbis are inspired and authoritative
- ✓ free will as well as God's sovereignty
- ✓ hierarchy of angels and demons
- ✓ After life - rewards and retribution after death
- ✓ resurrection of the dead
- ✓ emphasized teachings that were related to ethical behaviour

Nicodemus Talks With Jesus (John 3 (ESV))

- 1-2 Now 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.”
- 3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
- 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?”

5-8 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, 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. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

10-12 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Who's the Teacher?

- Something special about Jesus
- Refers to Jesus as Rabbi
- Humility, willing to be the student
- Decision – Who is Jesus?

What about His teaching?

- Checks it out

Wisdom from Above

need wisdom to understand (seek wisdom)

‘You must be born again.’

To see the kingdom of God,

one must be born of God

Proof - reflect God’s character in our lives

24 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.

25 ¶ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Ezek 36:25-27 (ESV)

Nicodemus at the Council – John 7

37-39 ¶ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”

45-49 ¶ The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

50-52 Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

Risky Business

Galilee – backwards hick town

Deuteronomy 1:16 – everyone gets their hearing

Possible expulsion from synagogue and community

2 Ki 14:25 – a prophet from Galilee 😊

Jesus Burial – John 19

John 19:38 ¶ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was 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 away his body.

39 Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.

40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Learning from Nicodemus

Study the scriptures – always more to be learned

Check out the facts – find out for yourself

Wisdom from above - guidance from the Holy Spirit

Hear O Israel

1 ¶ “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Most Importantly...

"The most important one," answered Jesus,
"is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God,
the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as
yourself.' There is no commandment greater
than these."

Mark 12:29-31 (NIV)

Relationship not Religion

More Learning from Nicodemus

Believe

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

God desires relationships
rules and regulations are form of religion
(trying to work your way to God)

Worship

Learning from Nicodemus

Spread the good news

And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Col 3:17)

And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. (Col 1:18)

Homework

Follow Jesus...

keep pressing onward...

grow in your love for the LORD