

Lent Devotional March 13, 2019

SCRIPTURE

John 2:23-3:15

^{2:23} When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone. ^{3:1} Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by 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 do apart from the presence of God.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, 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 Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

DEVOTIONAL

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When did you last have one of those nights when you couldn't sleep because questions were buzzing around in your mind? Were you thinking about work or family life? Or were your questions about God and faith?

I have always been a sympathetic reader of the story of Nicodemus. I have never believed that Nicodemus went to visit Jesus by night just so he could hide in the shadows. Instead, I like to assume that his questions were just so important that they couldn't wait till the morning to be asked. Why spend a sleepless night mulling over such big questions of life and faith when Jesus could be approached right there and then?

Do we sometimes hold back our searching questions for no reason? If we trust and believe in the presence of the Spirit, we can approach God at any time.

Do we sometimes forget our enthusiasm to learn something new? Have we forgotten the first flush of faith, when we were excited to be always learning?

The adventure of faith that Nicodemus embarked on that dark night, with Jesus, is the same adventure that lies before us each color-filled day. So seize the day—the moment. For God, in mystery, is in all our questions and wondering.

PRAYER

God of surprises,
You bless us by your presence
Even in the dark places.

You dwell with us,
And live in our deepest questions.
You inspire new discoveries
In all who have open hearts and minds.

God, you are our eternal home—
In you, we are already found.
Keep us faithful and full of faith,
For you have much to teach us, Day by day.
Amen.