

Date: _____



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Signs on Believers' Highway, Lesson 36

Lesson Title: Nicodemus Wants to Believe

Take Home Point: Believe in Jesus and have eternal life.

Warm-Up:

A man sat on top of his house while floodwaters raged around him. He prayed that God would rescue him and believed it would happen. A short time later a boat came by and the occupants encouraged him to come with them but he said, "I believe in God; he will rescue me!" So they left. After a while another boat approached, but when they called to him he said, "I believe in God; he will rescue me," and he wouldn't leave the roof of his house. A short time later a helicopter hovered overhead and lowered a ladder, but he hollered out, "God will rescue me!" The waters continued to rise and eventually the man drowned. When he reached heaven he asked God, "I believed in you. Why didn't you rescue me?" God answered, "I sent two boats and a helicopter! What were you waiting for?!"

Read: John 3:1-21; Numbers 21:4-9

Observation (What happened?):

What did the Israelites have to do with the bronze snake in order to live?

How did Nicodemus respond to Jesus telling him that a person needed to be born again?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why was Nicodemus so surprised by what Jesus said to him?

Who do you think is the "we" to whom Jesus refers in John 3:11?

Insight:

Nicodemus is an interesting character. In today's account we find he is a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin. He is bright, articulate, steeped in Hebrew teaching, and absolutely dumbfounded by what this untrained "country boy from Galilee" was telling him. Something Jesus said or did must have sparked some curiosity, but Nicodemus probably came at night to avoid the crowds (and his peers) from seeing him speak to Jesus. He is so taken aback by what Jesus says that he is speechless, and there is no indication he tried to argue or bluster his way out of what clearly ran against all he was taught – how you live determines your place in God's eternal ranking. After two questions, he just listens. The words of Jesus certainly had effect, for we encounter this man again in John 7:50, when he tries in vain to calm the Sanhedrin in their wrath against Jesus, and again in John 19:39, when he joins Joseph of Arimathea in taking the body from the cross and giving it a burial. He is one of my favorite Bible characters – he represents those believers who are quiet but firm in their faith, having come to Jesus in uncertainty and doubt and leaving with assurance that he spoke the truth of God.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How have you looked to Jesus this week to save you from your sin?

Name three ways the world saw the light of Jesus in you this past week.

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