

Too Together For Jesus?

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ²He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." ³In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."⁴"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" ⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The 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? ¹¹I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:1-17 (NIV)

We need to make room for:

What Nicodemus represents about the human condition.

Who Jesus really is:

Fully God and fully man

Our atonement sacrifice

What our response needs to be:

acknowledge that our efforts will not work

be open to a new way of knowing God

confess our need for Jesus as Savior

Small Group Questions

1. In many of the stories, Jesus seems to deal with people who are broken (the woman at the well, the blind man, the boy who was demon possessed, etc.) In this case, he deals with a successful and well respected leader. Why is this so rare in our culture?
2. Jesus seems to deal straightforwardly with Nicodemus. Why was that? Why does he answer him with such challenging language? (vs. 10)
3. Nicodemus takes his shots! Others would have simply turned and walked away but Nicodemus wrestled with "how can this be?" (vs. 9) Share at least one area where you feel God is challenging you and you're tempted to give up, but you want to learn what He is trying to say.
4. There's a warning here for all of us who think we have this all figured out. The metaphor of the Holy Spirit and the wind is a "mystery." Share one area of your journey which is a challenge for you and somewhat "mysterious." Read Eph.1:3-10. How does this overlap with what we just studied?
5. We are often looking for "experiences" and "feelings." In fact, feelings follow faith which is based on truth. Why is this important for us in our journey today?