

“God’s Love (makes it possible)”

John 3:1-17

3/1/2026

**(Show Visit of Nicodemus - John La Farge Slide)**

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. <sup>6</sup> Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.

<sup>7</sup> Don't be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.'

<sup>8</sup> God's Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It's the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said, "How are these things possible?"

– John 3:7-9

How is the seemingly impossible – possible?  
Jesus tells us how...

But first, a word from our Sponsor...

**(Show Visit of Nicodemus – Bible Study Slide)**

Did I mention

that we are having Bible study on Wednesday nights?

Last Wednesday we looked at

Genesis Chapter One

Genesis Chapter Two

And I think lots of those there

saw something they never saw before

**(Show Visit of Nicodemus – close up Slide)**

This morning’s passage from John begins...

<sup>1</sup> There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a Jewish leader. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could do these miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him."

In the Gospel of John,

Words and details are important

If think that we remember that the Gospel of John begins,

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.

– John 1:1

How do most English translations of Genesis begin?

(In the beginning...)

Coincidence?

**(Show Nicodemus - Henry Ossawa Tanner Slide)**

It is a **significant detail** that Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night

Nicodemus was a Primary Chief of the Pharisees,

And he couldn’t come and talk with Jesus

and he couldn’t have this conversation with him

in the middle of the day and in front of the crowds

But there is also the deeper detail that is here in John

<sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night...

Last Wednesday, one of the things we noticed

Was that God created light on the first day

And also on the **fourth** day

And maybe there are two different kinds of light...

The first day of creation light

and the sun and moon and stars kind of light

Since John is so closely connected and in tune with Genesis,

Could there be a deeper meaning to Nicodemus

Coming to Jesus while it was night – still in darkness

The Greek word here is νύξ

And can mean either night or midnight

**Or** spiritual or intellectual darkness

If you are interested in learning stuff like this, well,

Come and join us at 7:00 Wednesday night

Or come early with a sandwich

And **that** was our word from our Sponsor this morning

Back to the story...

*(Show Visit of Nicodemus - John La Farge Slide)*

<sup>9</sup> *Nicodemus said, "How are these things possible?"*

Jesus is saying things

that to this wise, experienced, learned, Chief of the Pharisees  
sound like they're impossible

Grown adults entering their mother's womb for a second time  
and being born again

Can we go back into our mother's womb?

No

When Jesus is talking about being born anew, being born again,  
Jesus is talking about something entirely different  
than what Nicodemus is comprehending

How did John introduce the story?

<sup>2</sup> *He came to Jesus at night...*

How is someone who is blind to the Kingdom of God

Able to see it?

Able to comprehend it?

Jesus takes another run at it

By using imagery that this scholar of the Bible knows well.

*(Show Moses and Serpent – Tissot Slide)*

<sup>14</sup> *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up* <sup>15</sup> *so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.* <sup>16</sup> *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life.* <sup>17</sup> *God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.*

– John 3:14-17

Nicodemus knew the story of how God, through Moses,

Saved the Israelites in the wilderness

from poisonous snake bites with a bronze serpent on a pole

On the face of it,

By what we know of people dying from snake venom,

That makes no sense

But the Israelites who looked at the bronze serpent lived and didn't die

*(Show Visit of Nicodemus - John La Farge Slide)*

As Nicodemus sticks with Jesus

and tries harder to listen and comprehend,

Something changes for him

Don't forget that when Jesus' dead body hung on the cross,

It was Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea

who took down his body and buried him

Not any of the twelve disciples

And before that, as they were plotting the arrest of Jesus,

Nicodemus asked questions

As though he could have been Jesus' defense attorney

<sup>51</sup> *"Our Law doesn't judge someone without first hearing him and learning what he is doing, does it?"*

– John 7:51

And here, earlier in the Gospel of John, at night,

we have Nicodemus A Pharisee,

Someone who lived every aspect of his life

Trying to please God by keeping **every one** of the 613 Laws

That God gave to Moses

He attended the synagogue all the time.

He not only followed the Law

He based his **entire life** on the Law

Today he would be someone who  
Would be in church every Sunday  
Would tithe his finances  
Would be faithful in his daily devotional prayer  
Would study the Bible  
Would be active in the community in positive ways

Yet still perhaps something was missing for Nicodemus  
Perhaps there was an aching emptiness in his heart

*Rabbi Jesus, what can you teach me or show me?*

***(Show Nicodemus Contemporary Slide)***

If you know someone who is asking these questions,  
That Nicodemus is asking  
Or maybe even if it is you  
You are in good company

How is someone who doesn't know the joy of salvation from God  
How is someone who is blind to the Kingdom of God  
Able to see it?  
Able to comprehend it?

It's not just about living one's life  
according to the Commandments  
It's not just about checking off boxes on the list of righteous living  
It's more than just going through the motions

So, how is it possible?

It's only through the love that God has for us.  
It is through a close, personal relationship with Jesus,  
That, in turn, becomes something deeper and life-changing

*<sup>16</sup> God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.*

How is someone who doesn't know the joy of salvation from God  
How is someone who is blind to the Kingdom of God  
Able to see it?  
Able to comprehend it?

*Jesus to Calvary did go;  
His love for sinners to show.  
What he did there brought hope from despair  
O how he loves you; O how he love me;  
O how he loves you and me!*

What makes the seemingly impossible possible?

God's love for us  
God's sacrificial love for you  
Makes it possible

*O how he loves you,  
O how he loves me  
O how he loves everyone in the world*

(Joys and Concerns / Pastoral Prayer)

