

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?

So who's afraid of the dark? Anyone scared of the clowns on the shelf, the boogey man in the closet, or the monster under the bed? A lot of us have an intense fear of the dark when we're younger, but some of us continue to be afraid even when we enter into the pre-teen and teen years of our lives. Darkness is the absence of light. It can cause us major trouble in our lives. Have you ever woke up in the middle of the night and had to use the restroom? Suddenly, the house you knew so well has moved itself around. You run into the nightstand, stump your toe on the door facing, and miss that last step. It is so hard to find our way around when there is no light to guide our way. This is how each and every one of us were before Christ came into our lives. Our lives were full of darkness and it seemed like we were always bumping into things and getting into messes that hindered our lives. This is how Nicodemus was. This Pharisee who knew all the religious laws of the day knew he didn't have a peace about eternity. He had all the knowledge, but didn't know the MASTER. He came to Jesus by night to seek the TRUTH about eternity and learned that in order to have eternal life he must be "born again."

THE PHARISEE-(1-2)

Nicodemus was a member of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the religious elite during the time when Jesus walked the earth. They were constantly drawn to the law and following each commandment to the extreme. These people became so obsessed with keeping all the commandments that they missed Christ when He came to live on earth with them. The Pharisees also looked down upon all others who did not keep the laws and felt themselves to be superior to all others, especially the Gentiles. The Pharisees missed the TRUTH by focusing on themselves and their ability to keep the law. Nicodemus wasn't just any member of the Pharisees, he was a "ruler of the Jews." This meant that he was not only a member of the Pharisees, but also a member of the Sanhedrin. "The Sanhedrin was the religious and political governing body of Judea. Comprised of 71 members and presided over by the high priest, its self-perpetuating membership included priests, elders, and scribes."¹ In today's terms, the Sanhedrin would function similar to the Supreme Court of the United States. Nicodemus was SOMEBODY!

THE PROBLEM-(3-8)

The problem for Nicodemus was that he was searching for the TRUTH and could not find it in religion. He realized that this man, Jesus, was someone worth looking into. Even with all his knowledge and training, he came to Jesus for answers to those questions. He knew that Jesus was a great teacher because of all the great works He had performed and Nicodemus took notice. However, Jesus did not waste any time with Nicodemus. He went straight to the point. He told Nicodemus that if he was going to see the kingdom of God he would have to

¹ Madsen, Couch, Tardif, Lee, and Benedict. Serendipity "The Truth About the Afterlife," 55.

be born again. Born again? This completely shocked the man who was learned in the scripture. That was not logical! Everyone knew that someone could not re-enter into his or her mother's womb. Can you imagine the thoughts that must have been going through this educated man's brain? Jesus knew that Nicodemus would be floored by His remark and so He began explaining. He explained that in order to see the kingdom of God, Nicodemus must be born of the water and of the spirit. Nicodemus had already been physically born, but for him to enter God's kingdom, He would have to be spiritually born as well.

THE POINT-(10-18)

Jesus could not believe that Nicodemus, a teacher of the law, did not understand what He was saying. So Jesus turned to something Nicodemus would understand, The Old Testament. As Jesus was explaining His future, He used the analogy of Moses lifting the serpent up in the wilderness. Jesus always has a way of meeting us right where we are, whether physically, spiritually, or intellectually. Jesus then quoted the most familiar verse in the Bible, John 3:16! God had paid the highest price, giving up His one and only, unique and special Son to save the world. Jesus came for each and every one of us. He knew that there was no other way for us to be saved. Nicodemus was hearing the words of hope from the One who would supply His life to give it.

OUR PREDICAMENT-(19-21)

This then is our and Nicodemus' predicament. We must choose whether to follow light or darkness. Jesus Christ has come into the world and brought light to a very dark place. Now we must make a decision as to whether we want to continue to live in the darkness or live in the Light. Many people do not like to live in the light because then all of their evil deeds are exposed. It's just like cleaning your room. When the room is dark, you can't see all the dust, dirt, and grime that is on the floor, dresser, and TV. However, once you turn the light on, all that is made visible. That's how our life with Christ is. When we are far away from Christ, the sin and the filth in our lives are not as visible. When we decide to get close to Christ the light hurts at first because we are made aware of all our problems, but as we continue living in Him we find that our life gets much cleaner and we feel much better. We must live in the TRUTH in order to live in the light.

So maybe in this circumstance it would be okay to be afraid of the dark. We as Christians should desire to live in the light and should shy away from living in the darkness of sin. In order to receive eternal life we must be born again. Once we are saved, our lives should be lived in the light of Christ. So quit worrying about the boogey man, or that doll that sleeps on your sister's bed that you know is possessed, but continue to be afraid of your life in the darkness of sin.

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