



## SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS for Sunday, October 22, 2023

**Series:** Tales of a Life Transformed

**Sermon Title:** “Tell Me a Story”

**Pastor:** Pastor Bryan Eckelmann

**Primary Text:** John 3:1-10, 16-21; John 7:50-52; John 19:38 – 42

### Theme/concept

If you or I feel led to share about our faith in Christ today, how can we be most effective? Today’s world cares little that we can (or cannot) prove the claims of Christianity; Evangelism that confrontationally tries to win an argument often embitters more than persuades the hearer! Most people, no matter what they believe, are happy to hear a story. The tale of a life transformed can, and often does, powerfully persuade! If you listen closely you can almost hear friends and acquaintances saying, “Go ahead....Tell me a story!”

### Icebreaker (for groups)

Relate a time when someone freely, and perhaps spontaneously, shared their story with you. How did it make an impact on your life?

### Reflections on the sermon:

How did the story of Nicodemus meeting Jesus resonate with you? Did you see or hear something new?

### Scripture Passage:

John 3:1-10, 16-21 (NIV) **Jesus Teaches Nicodemus**

**3** Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.<sup>[a]</sup>”

<sup>4</sup> “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit<sup>[b]</sup> gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You<sup>[c]</sup> must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The 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.”<sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup> “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. <sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

John 7:50-52

<sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, <sup>51</sup> “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

<sup>52</sup> They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

John 19: 38-42 The Burial of Jesus

<sup>38</sup> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. <sup>39</sup> He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>40</sup> Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. <sup>41</sup> At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup> Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

### **Reviewing the Scripture:**

1. What details do we find in John 3:1-2 regarding an interview with Jesus? Is the time of day significant?
2. In verse 3 what is Jesus’ response to the interviewer? What qualifications did the Lord give for seeing the kingdom of God?

3. How did Nicodemus react and respond to Jesus' words in verse 4? What did Nicodemus think the Lord Jesus meant?
  
4. What is required to enter the kingdom of God according to Jesus' teaching in verses 5-7? Feel free to put into your own words.
  
5. How did Jesus compare the wind to the Spirit in John 3:8 during this conversation?
  
6. Why should this Jewish Pharisee have understood what Jesus said, according to verses 9-10? What can we infer?

**Going Deeper:**

1. Summarize or put into your own words the meaning of John 3:16. Why did God send His Son into the world according to verse 17?
  
2. How does the person who lives by faith respond to the light in John 3:19-21?
  
3. What is the result of believing in the Son of Man in verses 15 and 18?
  
4. Why are spiritual truths often hard to understand? What spiritual words and truths did Jesus use in His conversation that Nicodemus would have known through his Old Testament studies? God is not done with Nicodemus yet....

5. In John 7:50-52 we read again of the Pharisee Nicodemus. What is the setting here and how did Nicodemus speak in this passage? Is he attempting to tell a story here for those who would listen?
  
6. We read of Nicodemus once more in John 19:38 – 42. What are the details here regarding his concern for Jesus, the Savior, and perhaps his growing faith in the Messiah?
  
7. When have you revealed your faith in Christ, either by your words or actions? Have you recently shared your story in conversation with someone? How did it take place?
  
8. To whom do you desire to reveal openly that you are a disciple of Jesus? We are encouraged to write down our own story of transformation and to become ready to share that story with others. We want to feel comfortable in sharing our stories in our small group settings, as well.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

We praise you for your faithfulness in our lives. Thank you for providing your only Son to be our Savior and Redeemer. Help us, Lord, to be encouraged to share our stories of transformation with others, and help us to be good listeners, as Jesus was. Give us willing hearts to express our faith through our words and our actions. Lord, we want to “hold” others’ stories with honor and respect.

In Jesus’ name, -Amen-