

The Secret Disciples

John 19:38-42

Introduction

- Combing Colors
 - Blue plus Yellow = Green
 - Blue plus Red = Purple
 - Red plus Yellow = Orange
 - When you combine two separate colors they create a whole new color
 - When life and faith collide, they create new life
- Sermon Series: Jesus Christ: Friend or Foe
 - Jesus encountered many people in his life, especially in his final walk up the hill to the cross
 - With every encounter, there was a response
 - One such person that encountered Jesus was Nicodemus
- **John 19:38-42**
- Why is this story significant?
 - Because one of the most famous and most profound encounters Jesus ever had was in “secret”
 - Nicodemus is challenged between his role as a Jewish official (life) and his expression of faith.
 - Life and Faith collide
 - How will Nicodemus allow the “light of the truth” to guide his life?
- In Jesus, Life and Faith collide
 - This is the very reason why people have such a strong response to Jesus: both positive and negative.
 - The question we must ask ourselves, “Will we allow our life to collide with faith?”
- Joseph and Nicodemus are tied closely together

Joseph <i>Luke 23:50-51</i>	Nicodemus <i>John 3 & 7</i>
Member of Jewish Council	Man of the Pharisees
A good and righteous man	Acknowledged Jesus
Did not consent to council's actions	Questioned judicial process
Looking for the Kingdom of God	Entrance to the Kingdom of God

- Their decision to be friends of Jesus set them apart, in a dangerous way, from the council they served.
 - Secret disciples for fear of Jews
 - Nicodemus came to Jesus at night

- Day of Preparation close at hand which indicates burial took place in the evening

What happens in “secret” can be life altering and necessary if life and faith are to unite

- **John 3:1-3; 20-21**
 - Dialog with God
 - Challenged with the Truth
 - Remain in darkness or walk in the light
- This conversation alters Nicodemus' life to the point that Nicodemus feels compelled to take a stand for Jesus.
- Example of some Life altering conversations
 - Will you marry me?
 - Congratulations, you are pregnant!
 - We would like to offer you a job.
- When was the last time you had a life altering conversation with God?
- “Secret” conversations with God are necessary if life and faith are to unite.
 - Nicodemus had examined the evidence regarding Jesus' ministry and concluded that “no one can do these signs unless God is with him.”
 - Despite the opposition of the Jewish Council, Nicodemus' curiosity drew him to Jesus at night
 - Nicodemus exposed his heart to God's truth.
- The “secret” conversations that we have with God provide the opportunity for our life to be exposed to the light of God's truth. (**John 3:20-21**)
 - So that what is in our life might be clearly seen
 - Is how we are living our life a reflection of God's work?

Transformation Takes Time and May Seem Minimal

- Think of how Jesus' words in John 3:20-21 must have sat on Nicodemus.
 - I have all this power-a ruler of the Jews
 - My fellow colleagues believe that Jesus is just another washed up teacher who is seeking the attention of the crowds
 - But something inside of me says that this man is more than just another teacher. There's something about him that is authentic. There's something about him that is “Godlike.”
 - What responsibility do I have to Jesus? How does this faith impact my job as a ruler of the Jews?
- Questions surrounding Nicodemus' faith
 - Inevitably, just about anytime I've taught on John 3 the question gets posed: Did Nicodemus ever become “born again”? In other words, did Nicodemus get saved, or become a Christian?
 - It's a good question to ask, because Jesus is very clear as to how anyone can enter into heaven.
 - Plus, for a man as curious as Nicodemus, how could he just walk away from Jesus without being impacted by the Truth?

- Conclusion regarding Nicodemus: 3 passages reveal transformation or might offer evidence of being “born again” they might offer some applications for us as well.
 - Curiosity
 - this is what brought Nicodemus to Jesus in the first place
 - “**you are a teacher from God, for you could not do these signs unless God was with you**” (John 3:2; ESV)
 - Interest to go deeper
 - Listen and Learn
 - **John 7:40-52**
 - Listening and learning
 - Sounds like Nicodemus is speaking from personal experience
 - Jesus’ words impact Nicodemus to the point that he was willing to risk his reputation.
 - Something has occurred in Nicodemus’ life between John 3 and 7
 - Honor
 - Took the body of the crucified Jesus and gave him a proper burial fit for a king (John 19:38-42)
 - Again putting his reputation at risk
 - Faith in Jesus
 - Think about the progression of faith that occurs in Nicodemus’ life between John 3, 7, and 19- something happened where life and faith collided
- Transformation takes time and may seem minimal
 - Nicodemus didn’t fit in with the Jewish Council. He was set apart because he walked into the light
 - He wrestled with his life, and his faith- If Jesus really is the Son of God, then how does that impact my life?
 - Yet, Nicodemus doesn’t fit into our normal protocol of “born again”
 - Where is the sinner’s prayer?
 - Does he ever come before an alter and repent of his sins?
 - We need to know that he did all these “things” that will convince us that he made a profession of faith!
 - I sometimes have a hard time telling that my kids have grown
 - I’m around them all the time
 - They look the same each day
 - I’m very familiar with them
 - BUT, every once in awhile they will come down the stairs for school and have pants on that somehow have become shorts. Or, they will stand beside a kid that is younger than them, and I’ll think, “Wow, they have grown!”. Or, they will point to a baby picture in our house and say, “Was that me?”
 - The truth is, my kids are constantly growing right before my eyes, whether I recognize it or not.

- I can't tell you whether Nicodemus went home after talking with Jesus on John 3, knelt beside of his bed, repented of his sins, and asked Jesus to come into his heart.
 - However, I can tell you that God had to be working inside of Nicodemus before Nicodemus even came to Jesus in John 3.
 - He had looked at the evidence and concluded that Jesus was from God, while his colleagues could not accept this reality.
 - Nicodemus speaks from personal experience in John 7 as one who has listened and learned from Jesus
 - Nicodemus takes a stand for Jesus, sets himself apart from his colleagues.
 - And while other disciples denied, betrayed, and scattered when Jesus was crucified, Nicodemus was there to pick up his friend's body, and honor him with the proper burial a king deserved!
 - Nicodemus' transformation takes time, so much so, that we often miss the profound impact that Jesus had on his life.
 - It's quite possible that Nicodemus had more faith than any of the other disciples!
- Transformation takes time, and may seem minimal
 - Lesson from Nicodemus for our own transformation: listen, learn, and then respond to the truth.
 - Ask the question: "How does my faith in Jesus impact the way I live my life?"
 - But don't stop by just examining yourself.
 - We need to apply this same concept in the grace that we show toward others
 - We may find that we want people to conform, or prescribe to certain expressions of faith before accepting that God really has worked in their life.
 - However, it may be that God is working in their heart in ways that we cannot see!
 - I don't know whether you are aware of it, but Christians have a bad habit of judging other people.
 - Consider what Nicodemus says, "**Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?**" **John 7:51 ESV**
 - Listen to other people's life-stories
 - Get to know them
 - It's quite possible that in conversation with them that it might become a "life altering" experience! And not just for them, but quite possibly for you too!
 - Transformation takes time, and may seem minimal-BUT at the end of the day it's still growth!

Honor Jesus by Living for Him

- Review **John 19:38-42**
 - Joseph and Nicodemus would have had the means and authority to bury Jesus
 - Jewish council members communicate with Pilate
 - Money- 75lbs worth of myrrh and aloes
 - A new tomb
 - Does Nicodemus fit the description of Jesus' commandment in **John 15:12-15**
 - Love as I have loved you- honored Jesus
 - Lay down his life for his friend- risked his reputation
 - A friend does what Jesus commands- allowed his life to be exposed to the light of truth
 - Jesus makes known all that he has known from his Father to his friends- listened and learned from Jesus
- How have you honored Jesus with your life?
 - If Jesus really is the Son of God, what does that mean for your life?
 - Easter is not the destination. If it were, then we would just wait until next year to celebrate Easter again.
 - The world celebrates Easter as a holiday, Christians should celebrate Easter everyday of their life!
 - Easter gives direction for how we should live our lives.
 - We honor Jesus when our life and faith unite.

Conclusion

- Secret conversations with God are necessary if faith and life are going to unite.
- Transformation takes time, so listen and learn
- Honor Jesus by living for him
 - Our faith should cause us to question our life
 - Our faith should draw our life closer to God
 - Our faith should inspire us to live for more than ourselves
- A friend of Jesus lives a faithful life!