



Daily Reflections

September 14, 2020

Scripture

John 3:11-17

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“No one has gone up to heaven
except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.
And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish
but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.

Our Scripture Reflection

Nicodemus came to Jesus “at night”. In John’s Gospel “night” or “darkness” indicate the person has a lack of faith. Nicodemus is very skeptical but curious nonetheless about Jesus.

Nicodemus will receive several ear fulls of information from Jesus which will almost be an overload. But the most important piece of truth he receives will be about the life-saving/life giving mission of God’s only Son. It was out of profound love that God FREELY gave His Son not to condemn the world but to save it.

For someone raised up in the rigid, legalistic school of thought known as “Phariseeism”, words such as “give”, “freely”, “love”, were very difficult pills to swallow. Phariseeism was a transactional religious system: You follow the Commandments, ALL OF THEM, faithfully, and

God will reward you. Grace, mercy, unconditionality, had no place in their system. How sad it was that Nicodemus and his cohorts just could not stomach the thought of God's generosity.

Food for your Journey

People who are in early stage religion usually love the “two steps backward” quotes in the Bible. They seem to be drawn toward anything that's punitive, shame-based, exclusionary of “wrong” people, or anything that justifies the status quo, which just happens to be keeping them on top socially, economically and religiously. They start by thinking that's what religion is about — maintaining order and social control. They see God as a glorified Miss Manners.

Once you idealize power and being at the top, you tend to emphasize the almighty, all-powerful nature of God, who is made into the Great Policeman in the sky to keep us all under control (or at least everybody else under control!). Frankly, you are totally unprepared for Jesus. He is a scandal and a disappointment.

Now you see how revolutionary God's “new idea,” revealed in Jesus, really is. Suddenly we have a God who is anything but a police officer. This God finds grace for those who break the law and finds life and freedom among the lepers and the sinners who do not have good manners. This is now an upside down universe (Acts 17:6). I am sad to say most Christians have yet to participate in this Divine Revolution.

—Richard Rohr, “Changing Our Minds,” Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation for March 29, 2016,

A Prayer from the Heart

Heavenly Father, In a world where so many of our relationships are viewed as transactional, it boggles the mind to ponder Grace. But You are pure Grace and Your Son Jesus personified Grace. Open my heart completely to receive Your love and Your Grace and make me humble and generous enough to give them away. Amen