

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." 3Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." 4Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' 8The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 11"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. 12If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

She was delighted with a day at the beach at Huntington until a friend told her of Caribbean beaches blazing white, waters deep, deep blue. From that moment she wanted more.

He was thrilled by a day of skiing at Boston Mills, until a friend talked of Vail.

Once upon a time shopping at Westgate was a great adventure, until a friend returned with treasures from New York City.

A new taste, a steeper roller coaster, a more daring sound, what was good enough suddenly seems ordinary. If there is more to be had, I want it.

Maybe that is what brought Nicodemus to Jesus. He sensed there was something more here.

He was a Pharisee, a leader of the Jews.

He believed in God, worshipped God, knew the scriptures, obeyed God's law. Had Jesus never come along, maybe he would have been perfectly satisfied. Or maybe not. But seeing the signs that Jesus did got him to wondering.

Am I missing out on something here?

You see a friend tomorrow. She tells of a packed church, all sorts of energy and excitement. You wonder: am I missing out?

You attend a revival. A speaker shouts of a close walk with the Lord, a moment of being born again, experiences that have never been yours. You wonder: Am I missing out on something here?

Another speaks of prayer. He is aglow with energy. His prayer life is so different from yours. You wonder.

A wondering Nicodemus came by night to Jesus. Jesus told him, "No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

Nicodemus said to Jesus, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born? "

That is the question, "How can anyone be born after having grown old?"

There comes a time when life seems like it is just to be lived out. Things may not be right, but we are used to them now. Maybe if we could start all over..... but we can't.

But Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Like the wind.

I can't start the wind. I cannot stop the wind. The wind happens to me.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

I wish I could buy a ticket to the place called peace and inner assurance. I wish I could sign up for the land of faith where there is never any doubt. I wish I could take a flight to the land where temptation is only a misty memory. But like the wind, peace comes and goes, and faith rises and recedes like the tides, and temptations may calm one moment and roar like a hurricane the next. Through it all I will depend on what God can do through the Holy Spirit.

O, there are always some out there who claim that they have the spirit in their back pocket, and the next thing I know, they are facing the same struggles as I. St. Paul says he experienced God's power in his own weakness.

But Jesus did not leave Nicodemus with the blowing wind of the Spirit as the only hope. No, he pointed Nicodemus in a different direction altogether: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever 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 may not perish but may have eternal life.”

In this world where we are blown from joy to sorrow, from confidence to uncertainty, there is one assurance: In Jesus death on the cross and being raised from the dead, God gives us our eternal life. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

What Jesus has done does not depend on your mood, or excitement, what Jesus has won for you, given to you, will not depend on your understanding nor your goodness. Believe in him for in him is eternal life - your eternal life.

Some go hopping church to church looking for something more than Jesus. Others are in a panic that their neighbors have something they do not. Still others are trying this and trying that hoping to feel more deeply.

Nicodemus came to the right place, to Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. You who believe in him will not perish but have eternal life. You can count on him.