

## A Good Teacher

Scripture Readings – Romans 4:1 – 5 & John 3:1 – 17

6/19/22

Fathers' Day

I think one of the primary roles of a father is to be a good teacher for his children. One of the major problems we have today is the lack of a father's guidance and teaching. In 2020, research showed that 19.5 million children, that is more than 1 out of 4 children, do not live with a father in the home. I find that statistic amazing and saddening! How about you.

Every child needs a father! Every child needs a good teacher!

Many of us can recall the name of a good teacher who provided us with solid foundations in this or that school subject. I would like to hear the names of at least three good teachers and the subject they taught that you had in school - (pause)

But can we recall the name of a person who was a good teacher in the subject of life? Can I hear at least three names of a person who was a good teacher of life for you – (pause)

Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Council and a Pharisee in the temple, pays a night visit to Jesus. Nicodemus pays a night visit so he could meet with Jesus in secret.

In John 3:1 – 17, Nicodemus states this to Jesus – *Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God because no one could do these miraculous signs unless God is with him.*

Nicodemus came at night because he was searching for answers or light in the dark places of his life. Nicodemus knows that Jesus is a good teacher and from God because of all he has heard and seen. Nicodemus wants to avoid being judged by his colleagues since this was a time when many were very bitter towards Jesus. Nicodemus wants answers to his questions but he wants them in secret.

Nicodemus is impressed by Jesus and the signs he has done. Nicodemus is a believer in Jesus but maybe at a low level. And his request has moved Jesus, not to answer his question, but to ask a question of Nicodemus. Jesus says back to Nicodemus – *To understand all I have done, one must be born again before he can see the reign of God. Are you born again Nicodemus?* Jesus has moved from Nicodemus' question to a more important subject – Salvation.

What is this new life Jesus is speaking about? Is it like a brand new baby discovering the world again? In those days and perhaps in today's society, where you come from determines who you are and where you are going. Jesus was clear that to be born again is to be connected or born from God above. Nicodemus is puzzled by Jesus' question and the first thing that comes into his mind is a physical or natural response, not a spiritual response. Nicodemus replies – *How is it possible for an adult to be born again? It is impossible to enter the mother's womb for a second time and be born again!*

Nicodemus answer is the response I have heard so many times when I was a teacher in a math classroom. I cannot tell you how many times I ask a question of the class and the response I got was not 'on task'. And the response baffled me and I scratched my head. For two years I was a grader for the Calculus AP Exam and the PSSA Test, there were so many responses on the open ended questions on those test that were so out in left field that I often laughed at them. As a grader of those exams we were told that if a student writes more than two paragraphs of an explanation of the problem – they were wrong and do not give them a point. Also I have to share that there were a lot of pictures drawn in the answer booklet and comments put in the answer booklet about the test that always made me laugh. The exam taker seemed to not like me for some reason! Often the pictures they would draw on the exams were hurtful!

Nicodemus answer to Jesus question did not make him laugh or get angry, his answer caused Jesus to say – *Nicodemus, you are teacher of God's word, and you should understand these things. It is all in scripture. Why can't you see it?*

Why can't Nicodemus see it? Why can't we see it at times?

To be born again is to born of the water and the spirit. It is baptism. And today, on this Fathers' Day, let each of us remember your baptism. Remember the day your pledge your faith to the good teacher, Jesus Christ. (Pause) (Share my baptism story)

If you have not been baptized, we should talk! Please speak with after today's service or speak to me sometime soon.

In baptism the human spirit, not the flesh, changes in eternal ways. This was the answer Nicodemus was seeking. This was the light in his darkness that Nicodemus had been seeking, whether he knew it or not.

In baptism the human spirit, not the flesh, changes in eternal ways. Is this the answer you seek? Is this was the light in your darkness that you have been seeking, whether you knew it or not?

One of the most quoted Bible verses is our scripture reading from the Gospel of John – John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son; so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* This passage speaks of God's love for us and how we will never perish and have eternal life if we believe in Jesus. God's love is open and available to all. God gave his only Son to show us the magnitude of his love. This is the kind of love that is mutual and full of God's grace. God's grace sent Jesus into the world not to judge it but to save it because salvation was the very mission of Jesus. Salvation was the very mission of Jesus!

Salvation is being saved and delivered from sin through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that in his passage from Romans 4:1 – 5.

We are justified by faith alone. We are made righteous by faith alone. We are not justified or made righteous by any works – it is by faith in Jesus Christ.

Being justified by faith is knowing your relationship with God. Knowing your relationship with God has no room for us to boast because justification is not about our work.

Abraham was saved not because of what he went on to do but just because he believed God's word and promise – PERIOD! Abraham's faith through his obedience to God made it easier for him to believe that God would do what He said He would do. Faith was revealed when Abraham waited for God's timing and not his own timing.

David always reassured his people that their faith in God is all they needed as they traveled through life. No matter what life brings, we are to put our confidence in God and be under his protection and care.

We are saved not because of what we will go on to do but just because we believe God's word and promise – PERIOD! Our faith through our obedience to God makes it easier for us to believe that God would do what He said He would do. Faith is revealed when we waited for God's timing and not our own timing.

We must always reassure the people that their faith in God is all they need as they traveled through life. No matter what life brings, we are to put our confidence in God and be under his protection and care.

Let us pray:

May we all have fond memories of our father. May we honor him today by remember his good teachings.

Go now in the peace of God knowing the light of God will be in all your dark places. Go now in the peace knowing the light of Christ will be in all your dark places. Share peace, joy, and love in Christ's name – AMEN.