

JESUS ENCOUNTERS

JOURNEY WAYPOINTS

April 27–May 3, 2025

A stop along the journey to study, share, and support one another while we learn the way of Jesus.

This Week's Big Idea:

Nicodemus, a respected Pharisee, came to Jesus in the darkness of night, seeking answers and wrestling with faith. Through their encounter, Jesus revealed the necessity of spiritual rebirth, inviting Nicodemus—and all of us—to see the world through the lens of God's Kingdom.

Scripture and Study:

KEY TEXT: John 3:1-21; John 19:38-42 [Click here to access this week's scripture](#)

In John 3, Nicodemus, a respected leader who knows the Scriptures, but is struggling to see what God is doing, comes to see Jesus under cover of night. Jesus tells him, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". This spiritual rebirth, born of water and the Spirit, is not about human effort or religious status but about God's transformative power. The Spirit, like the wind, moves mysteriously, yet its effects are undeniable—producing a life that reflects God's countercultural ways: humility exalted, servanthood as greatness, and love that sacrifices all.

Nicodemus came at night, driven by something inside him that recognized the truth that God was doing something, but also held back by fear of what others might think. As a Pharisee and Sanhedrin member, he risked his reputation by seeking Jesus. Yet, Jesus met him where he was, loving him but not coddling him, and challenging his earthly perspective with a heavenly one.

Nicodemus' journey didn't end in the shadows. After Jesus' crucifixion, he stepped into the light, boldly assisting Joseph of Arimathea in preparing Jesus' body for burial with a costly gift of spices. This act of devotion, risking his standing, shows a transformed heart. Like Nicodemus, we are invited to encounter Jesus, allowing His Spirit to renew our minds and align our lives with His Kingdom. This encounter launches us into a life where God's love and power shine through us, transforming the world around us. Nicodemus began in darkness, bound by religious tradition and fear. His encounter with Jesus planted a seed of faith, but it took time to grow. He missed walking with Jesus during His ministry, yet his eventual boldness reveals the power of God's Spirit to change even the most hesitant heart. Nicodemus' story reminds us that no one is too entrenched or fearful to be renewed by Jesus' love.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Nicodemus' nighttime visit to Jesus reflect your own hesitations or questions about fully surrendering to Christ?
- What "earthly perspectives" (e.g., fear, pride, or tradition) cloud your ability to see and live from God's Kingdom perspective, and how can Jesus' words in John 3:5-8 help you seek spiritual renewal?
- Nicodemus moved from private curiosity to public devotion. How can you take a bold step of faith in your own life to share or live out your encounter with Jesus?

Apply It:

- This week, set aside time to reflect on a moment when fear, doubt, or tradition kept you from fully embracing Jesus' call. Pray and ask Jesus to renew your mind, revealing His Kingdom perspective in that situation, just as He spoke truth to Nicodemus.
- Choose a Scripture promise, such as Romans 12:2 ("Be transformed by the renewing of your mind") or Isaiah 55:9 ("As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways"). Journal how this verse speaks to your need for a new perspective.
- Now look for an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with someone!