Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

April 16, 2023
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



"Unless you are born again from above you cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Acts 4:23-31; Jn 3:1-8

Early in the Easter season, we go from the climactic final chapter of John’s Gospel back to Chapter 3, when Nicodemus, the brilliant Pharisee, came to Jesus under cover of night for fear of being seen with so controversial a figure. Nicodemus is drawn to Jesus because of the prophetic signs swirling around him. Though some of his brother Pharisees are deeply critical of this Galilean preacher and his claim of a special relationship with God, Nicodemus will become a secret supporter.

Their night-time encounter has double meaning. Nicodemus is still in the dark, but the truth of who Jesus is will slowly dawn in his inquiring mind. He is intimately familiar with the Law and the Prophets, yet still unable to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises they contain. His conversion will not be a matter of embracing some new ideas. He must learn to see the promise of the Scriptures again as a newborn learns to see for the first time. Nicodemus will need to be born again in the Spirit.

Evangelical Christians often speak of being born again, or of receiving a second baptism of the Holy Spirit. Physical birth and physical sight are not enough to ascend to faith. We must undergo a profound, consciousness-raising experience before we can see spiritually. Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must undergo this rebirth from above in order to see the Kingdom of God.

The rest of John’s Gospel is one long journey for Nicodemus and all those who will eventually grow in faith to the point that they are able to see the full meaning and reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

During these 50 days of the Easter season, we are among these seekers who must be reborn. It may take our whole lives, but it is the most important journey we will ever make.