

John 3:9-21. the Conversation Concluded.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding Scripture and believing in the new birth, which is a gift of God's redeeming love.

Topics: "New Birth", "Redeeming Love"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer delivers a sermon on Nicodemus' ignorance of the Scriptures, emphasizing the necessity of a change of heart and the promise of a new birth found in Ezekiel. Despite being a master in Israel, Nicodemus lacked understanding, highlighting the importance of seeking knowledge through Scripture, guidance from ministers, and prayer for enlightenment. Jesus urges belief in the new birth, revealing the wonders of redeeming love and God's unconditional love for all who believe in Him, offering pardon and everlasting life. Mortimer challenges listeners to seek the light of salvation, warning against the consequences of loving darkness due to sinful deeds and the urgency to actively pursue a relationship with God.

Transcript

Nicodemus was very ignorant of the meaning of the Scriptures; he knew the words, but not the things spoken of. He had no idea that a change of heart was necessary. He ought to have known it, because he had often read the words of the prophet Ezekiel, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh," (that is, a soft, tender, feeling heart,) Ezek. 36:26. Now this promise of a new heart, refers to the blessing of the new birth.

Nicodemus was a master, or a teacher in Israel, yet he knew not these things. Are there not many things which we ought to know, and which yet we know not? We ought to seek to know the meaning of the Scriptures, inquiring of our minister or our pious friends, reading books they recommend, and, above all, comparing one part with another, while we entreat the Lord to open the eyes of our understandings, to behold the wondrous things in his law.

Jesus did not explain the new birth to Nicodemus; it could not be explained--it must be experienced to be understood; but he told him that he ought to believe in it; for he said, "We speak that we do know." By "we," He meant himself and the prophets, who all spoke of this new birth. How wrong it is in men not to believe heavenly messengers, especially the Son of God! "You receive not our witness." May it never be said of us, that we do not receive the witness of the Lord and his apostles! Nicodemus, however, was

willing to be instructed, so Jesus continued to teach him, in spite of his ignorance and unbelief, for He is a patient teacher; he will instruct the foolish and the slow of heart, if they will but listen to his words.

He began next to unfold the wonders of redeeming love. Nicodemus had often heard of the serpent of brass that Moses lifted up on a pole in the wilderness, in order that the Israelites that had been bitten by fiery serpents, might look, and live. This bronze serpent he declared to be a type of himself. He then spoke to Nicodemus of his Father's love to man. O that these words might sink deep into our hearts. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." What a gracious declaration! What a free salvation! "Whoever." No sinner is shut out, however horrible his sins; everyone who believes shall receive pardon and everlasting life.

What can be the reason that all men do not believe? This is the reason, "They love darkness," and why? "Because their deeds are evil." Every sinner's conscience bears witness to this truth. There are many who say they desire to be religious, who profess to lament that they cannot pray--that they cannot love God. Were they sincere in what they said, they would use the means of becoming religious; they would try to pray; they would read God's word, and seek the company of religious people. If one of you were to lose your precious sight, through an accident, you would not be satisfied by saying, "I wish my eyesight were restored; but I have no skill to restore it myself, and I cannot find my way to an eye doctor; I must therefore remain as I am." O no! you would prevail on some person to lead you to one who had already cured blind people, and then you would follow his directions, however irksome they might be.

Now if you desired to become truly religious, you would act in the same manner--you would use the means of grace--you would ask your pious friends to help you to find the way of life, and you would cry earnestly to God. What excuse shall we give to God at the last day, if we refuse to come to the light? Great will be our condemnation. Has God given us his only Son, and shall we refuse to come to him? Shall we remain unconcerned about him, and occupied with worldly trifles and cares, and then think to escape the just judgment of God? Whatever excuses we may make to ourselves now for such conduct, they will not be accepted at the day of account. The sin and folly of neglecting the way of salvation will then be openly seen, and all those who are condemned will have nothing to say in their own defense.

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