

There's Something Different About Nicodemus

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[0 : 00] And we'll be in chapter 3 shortly, actually probably getting into chapter 2 just a touch before that. It's probably the most popular passage of scripture that involves him.

But if you read Matthew and if you read Mark and if you read the Gospel of Luke, you would never know this man existed. It's only John that records the three or at least three separate instances where he had interaction with or directly or indirectly with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I would say just based upon his position that he's likely an older man, much older than Jesus Christ was. Christ was about 30 at this time in John chapter 3.

But Nicodemus, I can't prove this from the Word of God, but being in his position, I'm certain that he's a much older man with experience. And I hate to build a message off of a thing I can't prove from the Bible, so I don't want to go too far on that.

But would you consider with me the possibility of his age being much above Jesus and his experience and his position as we study then his character?

[1 : 32] So let's first consider a little bit about this man Jesus. Because he has made quite a name for himself. And he did it in the most holy and revered place in all of Israel.

He did it at the temple. Now we know in Cana of Galilee, he performed his first public miracle that begins chapter number 2. And that's all the way up to the north. But as the Passover is nigh at hand, Jesus Christ comes down to Jerusalem to where everybody is attending and showing up. And he does something that just sparks some outrage, but also some interest. And in chapter number 2, verse 13, the Bible reads that the Jews' Passover was at hand.

And Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple.

And the sheep and the oxen and poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence, make not my father's house and house of merchandise.

[2 : 41] And so the Lord Jesus Christ, he made a name for himself quickly and got the attention of many. And he quickly also collected a following by doing many public miracles there.

In verse 23, it reads that when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover in the feast day, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. So he didn't just show up to observe the law. He showed up to make himself known. And he's being very public about this. Quite a scene in throwing out them that sat at the changers, what do you call it, the sacrifices there that they could buy, the sheep, oxen, and so forth.

Quite a scene that he brought upon himself. And as a result, a following. And also know now Nicodemus is present. And Nicodemus is listening.

And Nicodemus is observing the works and the healings. And he sees the following of Jesus. Look over at chapter 4 and verse 1 to understand this.

[3 : 49] 4-1, When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples, he left Judea, he got out of town, and departed again, went back north to Galilee.

And so why did he do it? Because he heard that the Pharisees are catching wind of this and they are going to be not very happy about what's going on. Nicodemus is one of those Pharisees. Nicodemus sees the following. He's observing the miracles, but he cannot ignore that there is something different about Jesus Christ. He cannot ignore that what's taking place, he believes, is real.

It's very real and it's special. And he's intrigued. And when Jesus came to town, to Jerusalem, he left quite the impression. And never mind what others say, Nicodemus is determined, I want to speak to him.

I want to talk to him directly, one-on-one. I want to know what's going on here. And he desires to hear him for himself. And so this is where we're first introduced to Nicodemus in chapter 3 of John. [5 : 04] And so now, if you'll bear with me, I want to read this entire interaction. It's the question and answer and then it's a discourse by the Lord Jesus that goes all the way down to verse 21.

So let's read this so that we can take it all in and understand what's being done here. John chapter 3, verse 1. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

So I don't think he's a young man at all. The same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit.

[6 : 09] Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

[7 : 11] For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. Nicodemus, from the very beginning in verse 2, came to Jesus.

He came to Jesus by night. He came to what I believe is a much younger man, which is absolutely unheard of in this culture. He did not come to this man to corner him.

He did not come to threaten him. He came rather from his own mouth to admit that he recognized that he has come from God. In verse number 2 he says, We know that thou art a teacher come from God.

[8 : 20] No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him. Nicodemus recognized his work, and that it was from God. Now when he says that the same came to Jesus, could I draw your attention back to the last verse we read in verse 21, where the Lord said to him, He that doeth truth cometh to the light.

And Nicodemus came to the light that night. He came to the Lord Jesus Christ. Where are the other Pharisees at? Why aren't they coming to the light?

Why aren't they coming to speak with Jesus, to hear his word? The first thing I want to say about Nicodemus this morning in a character study is that this reveals his humility.

This is a wise and established ruler of the Jews. A man with power, a man with position, a man with prominence, with clout.

And he wasn't ashamed to seek out Jesus Christ. Now some would argue, Oh, he came at night time. He was ashamed. He was scared to be seen with him. But I'll say, Well, where are the others then?

[9 : 31] Where are the others at coming to seek out Jesus Christ? There's something in Nicodemus that isn't in the other Pharisees. They would have never come to Jesus and admit that he's sent from God.

It takes a degree of humility for Nicodemus to seek out Jesus Christ and to spend time sitting with him, hearing his word. He's a man of humility.

You know what might be missing today? In a generation of believers that have been around for a while and have perhaps been saved a long time, you know what might be missing in some of you? Is that same spirit of humility. Because it's easy to look at the young people or the new believers and say, Oh, our kids today, they have no respect at all and just feel like, it's easy to point a finger at other people.

It's easy to expect a younger believer who obviously doesn't have things figured out and obviously hasn't gained too many victories and has worldliness all over them. It's easy to see and assume they should be coming to the altar.

[10 : 36] They should be crying out to God for help. They should be seeking the word of God and they should be seeking counsel and advice of the scriptures. But why is it rare to see older believers bowing the knee on the altar?

Why is it a rarity for an older Christian to respond to the word of God? I've been around for a while. I've been in church all of my life.

I'm not making this up and pointing fingers at anybody in this church at all. I'm stating this from some experience of being around local churches and knowing that it is not the older generation that moves and that responds and that sets the tone for the church when it comes to responding to the word of God being preached.

It's the younger believers. It's the ones that are newly saved. Their hearts are wide open. Anything you say, God, I'll do. I'll respond to. Why is it rare for older Christians to attend the altar?

They used to come to the altar. There was a day in their life when they responded to whatever God said whenever he said it. And then the older and the more they're around, it's just things seem to change.

[11 : 50] But we can learn from Nicodemus, you're never too old to come to Jesus Christ. You're never too old. All it takes is humility. It is not meet or suitable for the younger Christians or generation in a church to be the ones that set the temperature of the church for how we respond to the word of God.

That is not meet. That is not correct. It's for the older generation to set the example how to display humility before the Lord. I believe that's the duty of mature believers is to display that humility and that obedience.

We can learn from Nicodemus from his own humility, you're never too old to come to Jesus Christ. This meeting, this first meeting here in John chapter 3, it begins with his intrigue, wants to see what he's about, wants to hear from him.

And it quickly turns to inquiry. In verse 4, you see how he says, how can a man, he's asking now questions to what Jesus has spoken to him. He says, how can a man be born when he is old? And it's obvious when Jesus says a man must be born again, that just does not connect with Nicodemus at all. He's a ruler. He knows the word of God.

[13 : 07] He knows the law of Moses. He believes that book. But what Jesus is saying just does not make sense. I've never heard anything like this before. What you're saying, how is that possible is his question.

He says it again in verse 9, how can these things be? I see him sitting on the edge of his seat, like, mulling over, chewing on the words, hearing them intently, and then just sitting back and saying, how is this, what are you talking about?

How is this even possible, the things that you're saying to me? We learn from Nicodemus, this educated, this studied ruler. He's hearing from Jesus, things he's never heard before.

He's hearing concepts that he cannot grasp. He's acknowledging Jesus as a teacher, come from God. And he's listening intently, but he's obviously confused.

And so it's in this introduction to Nicodemus, we learn that he's not only a man of humility, but he's also a man, I'll say, of vulnerability. A man that doesn't understand, so he asks.

[14:18] A younger man. A man he doesn't even know. He's been around and established for so long, but I'm hearing some things I've never heard or understood, and I'm admitting my ignorance to you.

Unlike Nicodemus' contemporaries, filled with pride, these men accused Jesus of having a devil. They're the same men that accused him of blasphemy, declaring that he ought to be killed. They're the same men that said, he deceiveth the people, when they're speaking of Jesus Christ. Look over at chapter number 5, and verse 18, when Jesus spoke some things, and he worked some works among them.

This is how they responded to this. verse 5, 18, therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God.

That was the response of Nicodemus' contemporaries to his teaching and to his work. They responded in anger and violence. Look at chapter 7, and verse 1.

[15:33] John 7, verse 1, After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee, up to the north, back where he was from, for he would not walk in Jewry, that's down south, in Jerusalem, in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Nicodemus shows up in John chapter 3 with what looks like an open heart and an open and honest mind, and he displays what I'm calling vulnerability.

It's unheard of for a man in his position. It's certainly not the way his contemporaries responded to the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Jesus, what he said in chapter 3, in verse 10, when Nicodemus asked him, how can these things be?

And the Lord Jesus Christ, to his face, says, art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things? And I can't help but feel like there was some slap, there was some poking in that statement, you're a master of Israel, a ruler of the Jews, you sit in Moses' seat of judgment, declaring the law and the truth to God's people, and you don't even know what I'm talking about.

Did Nicodemus stand up and storm out and say, don't you ever talk to me like that? No. He sat and heard his words.

[17:07] Do you realize if Nicodemus would have taken, if his pride would have gotten the best of him, that we would never have heard these words of Moses lifting up the serpent, and for God so loved the world that he gave?

That came after that statement. Nicodemus took it. No, I don't know these things. He's vulnerable. A learned, powerful man enabled himself to come and sit at the feet of Jesus and be vulnerable and be open and to hear his word.

Look at chapter 9 just to give you a contrast of the way his associates responded. Chapter 9 is where Jesus heals this one that was blind from his birth.

And when he comes around, these guys start grilling him with questions and they revile him and he just doesn't get it. He knows for certain, he's assured of one thing, I was blind and now I see.

And the man that did it, you can say whatever you want to about him, he gave me my sight. So if he's not of God, then I don't know who is. It's kind of the angle he takes.

[18:20] And he says in verse 32, Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind? If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

Look at their answer. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Get out of here.

But not Nicodemus. Nicodemus didn't respond in any kind of rage. He took that and agreed. And he shows his humility and he shows his vulnerability.

And I think this is an attribute of our society and maybe even in our church that has gone by the wayside. Being vulnerable. Being open and honest. Admitting, I don't know everything.

I've been around, but I am not the Holy Spirit. And my opinion is just mine. It is not the gospel truth. Nicodemus could have came into this situation far different.

[19:24] He could have came in throwing his weight around, letting Jesus know who he was. He didn't do any of that. He admitted right away, you're from God. I want to hear what you have to say.

And he didn't understand what he said. And he admitted his ignorance. Men that have gained position rarely are known to admit their ignorance.

They're rarely known to admit when they have faults. Because sadly, and I can understand this, it's wrong, it's pride, and it's inside of me. It's easier or feels better to save face and to uphold your reputation than it is to feel like you're looked down upon or you don't have answers.

Recently, I was on the phone with my mother and she asked a question about a topic that I had brought up. And she asked a question about it and we discussed it and she said, I'm just trying to understand.

And I remember thinking on this that other people I know would not have reacted in that way. They would not have said that I'm trying to understand.

[20 : 34] They would say, I have the gray hair. I have the experience. You come to me for answers. I don't come to you. And I just, I remember thinking that.

I wasn't schooling my mother in any way. We were just having a conversation. But I appreciated her just acknowledging there's things I don't understand. She's been saved a long, long time around the Bible longer than most people ever.

Look at John chapter 12. Here might be a reason why it's hard for some to stoop and to be vulnerable when they gain position or when they get some experience on them and some age.

In John chapter 12, verse 42 and 43, the Bible says, nevertheless, among the chief rulers, that's what Nicodemus was, among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

Just like John chapter 9 and the man that received his sight. Why? For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. That could be why some have trouble being honest and being open and admitting their faults or just acknowledging they don't know or giving an answer that's wrong rather than admitting, I don't know.

[22 : 04] Maybe it's because they love that position and love the praise that comes with it. But Nicodemus, this is a character study of a man, a wise and educated, a powerful man and we're seeing that he's not afraid to stoop.

He's humble and he's not afraid to be open and vulnerable and admit, I don't know what I'm talking about and come to the right place to the Lord Jesus Christ to receive the truth.

Flip over now to John chapter 7. The next time that we're introduced to Nicodemus, he's at work.

And he's with the chief priests and he's with the Pharisees and he's conducting the business of ruling, of governing the people according to the law of Moses.

It's this group of men that met and had a council and they oversaw the affairs of the nation of Israel. And one thing that must be dealt with in their mind was this man, Jesus.

None of them can deny that he's gained a following, that he's a powerful preacher and he's a young man and where did he come from and they're arguing about some of this and some are believing that he is the Christ and yet none of these powerful men have declared that he is the Christ.

[23 : 22] Therefore, something has to be done and some decisions have to be made of whether we should be allowing the people to follow him or whether we should be getting rid of him.

And so, John chapter 7, when Nicodemus' arrogant associates were quick to condemn Jesus, I want to show you that he himself took a different approach.

We'll start in verse 40 and read to the end of the chapter. John 7 verse 40, Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth, this is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ.

But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? That's where Jesus was from, Nazareth. Hath not the scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was?

And so, there was a division among the people because of him. A side note is, there's only a division among the people because they're ignorant of the word of God and they're ignorant of the truth, I should say.

[24 : 30] He was born in Bethlehem. They could have known that. That was public knowledge. But their ignorance created division. Verse 44, Some of them would have taken him, but no man laid hands on him.

Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees and they said unto them, Why have you not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them, the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. You see the division of the priests and the Pharisees, how they've elevated themselves to whatever they think or whatever their position is, that's the truth.

And the people that knoweth not the law are cursed. If I could also, side note, actually it's the people that know the law are cursed. That's according to the Bible. If you know the law, you know you're guilty, you're under a curse.

But anyway, verse 50, Nicodemus saith unto them, he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them, being one of them, he's there, sitting at work, doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?

[25 : 44] They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look out of Galilee. You can rise with no prophet. Every man went into his own house. What do we see here of Nicodemus?

I think Nicodemus as a character study, I see he's a man of integrity. Because he posed to his associates that were condemning Jesus, he posed, what does the word of God say?

Our law is what governs us. Not our emotions. Not our opinions. What does the law say?

That's what we govern ourselves by. The Pharisees and the priests were threatened by this man Jesus. He had gained quite a following. He was bold.

Like, never man spake like this man. Like, he spake not as the scribes. This guy has something special about him. It's threatening them. They're offended by him.

[26 : 44] And Nicodemus wasn't threatened at all. He says, if it's true and if it's of God, then he's delighted for it. He wasn't about to bend the holy law because some of his friends were intimidated or felt offended.

How shallow of them. We're feeling threatened, so we're going to ignore the scriptures and go handle this situation our own way? How self-serving they were.

And yet, not Nicodemus. He shows himself to be a man of integrity. He'll place the truth and he'll place what's right above his feelings no matter what the outcome.

He'll even speak up to these men, these powerful men as they deride him and say, art thou also of God? You one of his family members? Is that your brother? Is it? And he's saying, what's the law say?

What's the book say? That's how we operate. Nicodemus wanted to operate according to the word of God. He's a man of integrity.

[27 : 52] When situations get touchy or emotions get lifted up and elevated and there's a division as there is right here, the question is, so then what does the Bible say?

What does God say about the situation? Let's seek to the book of the Lord. And operating with that kind of integrity is one of the best feelings you'll ever feel as a Christian is to decide what is right because that's where I want to stand.

Not as, what do the people think? Not, what are our emotions and which way is this situation turning and who's going to get upset? But as, what does the word of God say?

choosing to do right because you know it's right, especially if it makes you look bad or especially if it costs you something, especially if there's some adverse effect that's going to fall on you.

There's no substitute for doing right. And God honors that choice. God absolutely honors that child of God that will go to His word and say, Lord, I just want to do what you say regardless of how it makes me look, regardless of if I find myself to be guilty.

[29 : 06] I want to do what's right. That stuff pleases God. He doesn't miss that stuff at all and I think it makes you stronger when you operate with integrity. I wonder, does anybody even know what I'm talking about this morning?

Do you even know what it is to be faced with a choice where there's what's right and then there's what's easy or there's what's going to make you look better or feel better?

When you have to make that choice, that division comes before you. Do I do what the Bible says just because that's what God wants me to do or do I find a way around that because that's what we like to do?

Is there any integrity left in the people of God today? Is anybody determined in their heart, I'm going to follow the word of God no matter what the outcome, no matter how powerful and how large the crowd or how important the people are, no matter how great the division is, doth our law judge any man before him?

You guys are willing to go around the word of God? I'm not. And Nicodemus shows his integrity. It's very much easier to go with the crowd, very much easy to give in to their wishes.

[30 : 30] But Nicodemus showed his integrity. He showed that the word of God is what governs his actions. Now flip to the end of John now to chapter 19. This will be the final place that we hear of Nicodemus.

And I believe in this case we get another glimpse of his character. In chapter 19, this is where he's attending to the body of Jesus Christ after his crucifixion.

And so there's a man, Joseph, that was a disciple of Jesus, a secret disciple. And he gets involved. All the gospel writers mentioned Joseph, but only John lets us know that Nicodemus was also involved.

Verse 38, After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight.

[31 : 40] Then took they the body of Jesus and wound it in linen clothes with the spices as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never a man yet laid.

There laid they, Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day, the sepulcher was nigh at hand. I think it's very likely that Nicodemus had seen Jesus the previous night.

I think it's likely that he sat in his seat with the others and he heard accusations being brought against Jesus where their witnesses did not agree. I think Nicodemus probably witnessed Jesus being smitten contrary to the law by the command of the high priest.

I wonder if that's the case if he sat there and the high priest commanded him to be smitten contrary to the law if Nicodemus turned and looked and thought, what is going on here?

This is not right. That's the way he displayed himself. He carried himself earlier but now it's the high priest and he's not allowed to revile the high priest. And as I believe he sat there and witnessed these things, what he felt, what he thought is not recorded in the scripture.

[32 : 55] But what is known about Nicodemus in connection to the crucifixion of Christ is that he made a choice to display personal respect and honor for this teacher that he knew came from God.

He was not a dog. He deserved better treatment than the vengeance and the despite that was displayed by his Jewish brethren. His colleagues were concerned that this body be secured in the tomb and sealed and soldiers placed there so that his disciples couldn't come and steal him away and say he was alive.

But Nicodemus, he had a different concern about the body of Jesus. He felt he's worthy of a proper burial, of a respectable and some appropriate care.

And we must take note that Nicodemus did not show up empty handed to retrieve and bury the body of Jesus.

It said in verse 39, there came also Nicodemus which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes. Would you notice about a hundred pound weight.

[34 : 15] A hundred pound weight. For a burial of one body, this is an enormous amount of spices. Would you consider back in chapter 12, flip back to this and just get a point of reference.

Chapter 12 and verses 2 and 3, there they made him a supper and Martha served but Lazarus was one that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard very costly and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

And the disciples get a little contrary with this scene and in Matthew's gospel they say why or to what purpose is this waste? Even, I mean, consider the spices and colognes that you use today a squirt or two or three but consider the food bottle if you poured that out upon your feet because they stink what a waste just a little bit would do the job and they look at this pound of this precious ointment being a waste but then let's consider what Nicodemus brought to bury the body.

He was not embalming him this was something different and it was a fragrant thing. It was spices and aloes. Nicodemus' mixture was an absurd amount of spices to anoint one body.

[35 : 59] It's insane to me but not to him not to that man. I'm taking the whole hundred pounds to anoint the body of Jesus.

Nicodemus' heart within him it yearned it wouldn't rest satisfied until he did something.

Some people say that he loved him much to pour all that upon him. Others say oh he felt great guilt for not standing up for him and maybe it was both.

Maybe he felt guilty maybe he was ashamed maybe he loved him maybe it was all of the above. But what we learn about Nicodemus is when it comes to something like this that's important to him he wasn't stingy and he didn't hold anything back and I could just say by way of character he was a man of charity.

It's clearly displayed by this final mention of him in scripture. If one pound of precious ointment was considered a waste for this man to bring a hundred pounds it's insane but no not to the heart of Nicodemus who'd give anything.

[37 : 20] Money is no option to him it didn't matter. The cost didn't even come into his it didn't enter his mind of what it would set him back or how long it took him to afford that or save that.

This is going on Jesus Christ. This is good enough for me to know that it's going to be used for his burial to anoint the Savior. He was a man of charity.

There's something different about Nicodemus. He was a man of humility a man of vulnerability a man of integrity and a man of charity and these virtues were not demonstrated by any of the men that were his associates his contemporaries the Pharisees the priests and the scribes.

Was he a believer? Was he a secret follower of Jesus Christ? A disciple of him? The Bible doesn't say that exactly but it does record these virtues and it records them for an example.

It records them for our learning. And so this morning Christian as a character study of one man in the Bible. A man that I don't doubt was an older man that had gained some position over the years, had worked his way into a place and yet still displayed humility.

[38 : 45] Was not afraid of what others may have thought about him and was not ashamed to come to Jesus Christ and to sit and admit what he doesn't know and where he falls short and to be vulnerable.

What a beautiful thing to see in this man. A thing that's probably missing in a lot of Christians that get up in years and get up in experience is that humility.

They had it when they were young in the Lord but they just don't feel it anymore. I can't speak for anybody but myself. I cannot speak for how you feel and what you think but I know the feelings that come across me.

If I'm sitting in a pew and the word of God goes out and something seems to rattle me, or something just even small seems to just prick me, immediately I think you can't go forward.

Don't you move. The people are going to think you're this or the people are going to think you're that. And I've by the grace of God I rebel against that in me. I put that down because I think then so be it.

[39 : 53] Let them think that I'm not this. Let them think I got issues too. I don't care. I've learned to put it away because that's one thing I did when I was younger. I moved up to the front of the church because I didn't want a long walk and a lot of people to distract or discourage me from responding when the Lord dealt with my heart.

And so I moved up to what was the second pew in my old church because it was just going to be like three steps. And it's not that hard to just slip out and hit the altar. I know what it's like though to feel that pressure or it's not God.

I promise you it's not the Holy Spirit of God telling you don't move. What will people do? What will they think? What will your husband think? What will your wife think? What will your kids think? It's not the Lord telling you that. I think you could maybe just deduce a little bit and figure out who it is. But Nicodemus shows us that he's not going to be that guy. He'll come to Jesus. He'll humble himself. He'll be vulnerable. We see his integrity that he's going to put the word of God first.

Regardless of who thinks what, regardless of the emotions, he's going to let the scriptures declare what's right and how he's going to operate. That's what he believed. Where are the believers that decide that if it's right, that's the way I'm going to live?

[41 : 14] I'm not going to give myself an out. I'm not looking for a way to get around the word of God. I'm looking for a way to submit to it. I want to be cleaner. I want to be holier.

I want to be what God wants me to be. Are you here this morning to submit yourself to the word of God? And finally, the charity, the giving, it didn't matter what it was, he just gave.

I want to say this, I'm really thankful for your giving last Sunday. I think it's a testament. I told a few other people that I've been in touch with and they asked how did it go and I told them and several of

them just said, wow, your little church, you gave that much?

And I just said, praise the Lord. Just the Lord puts it in your heart to do it and you respond with charity. That is absolutely charity because you're getting nothing back from me.

I can't give you anything to say, way to go. It's going to come from God. If you get any rewards for that on the other side, which you will, but it's your charity that God is pleased with.

[42 : 18] to see that your money and to see that your possessions don't have a hold of your heart, but that Jesus Christ is above all of that and you can give it to him any day of the week.

And so Nicodemus shows us that. This character study, the man had some character, some things in him that ought to be in every one of us, from the youngest to the oldest. Let's pray together.

Lord, as we dismiss this morning, I want to say thank you for giving us this insight and giving us this example in the Bible, one that we can really quickly overlook and not really, not see it.

And yet God, it's there. What a great example, a man of this position to humble himself, to admit where he falls short. Lord, instill that in all of us.

I mentioned how I try to fight against that tendency to be afraid of what others think or to resist your Holy Spirit and grieve you. And Lord, I know that just talking about it makes me feel guilty, like I'm showing off, I'm going to be guilty now.

[43 : 23] And God, I don't want that. I want to be open. I want to be right with you. Lord, I pray that that's the condition of the hearts of my brothers and sisters here. I pray that you'd rebuke us for our pride and that you'd reveal how Jesus Christ is meek and lowly.

Lord, rebuke us for where we have the fear of man and reveal to us how Jesus Christ didn't do that. but he was open and willing and he was our example.

God, may these characters and these virtues be in us and in your people as you grow us and may we determine to be found faithful in all these categories. I want to say thank you for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for also for what we were able to give and for the blessing that you've been to our brother in Utah and for the vehicle and for just how quickly all of that came to pass. We see your hand and we're thankful to be part of it.

Thank you for using us to meet a need and I pray that you'll just put a joy inside of every heart that gave and a realization that it was right and that it's worth it whenever we give to you and may you use our brother there in Utah to further the work that you have for him to do.

[44 : 32] I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. With that we're going to dismiss. Thank you for being here. God bless you all. Have a great week. It's going to warm up so enjoy it.