

# Testimony Of Nicodemus

Presented By Pastor Scott Walters on 3/31/19

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Waunakee, WI

Another intriguing witness brought forward for testimony this Lent.

Nicodemus is an excellent representative of 21<sup>st</sup> century church members:

- A sympathetic character;
- Successful & self-confident;
- Leader in his community;
- Spiritually, open and curious;
- Yet at the same time, “a thinking person.”

Nicodemus is committed and curious enough to meet Jesus face to face; albeit in the dark of night.

Nicodemus is practical; he knows when it's best to “hedge his bets.”

Whatever faith Nicodemus has in Jesus, he is able to compartmentalize it at this point.

As one reads today's passage, I get the feeling that Jesus is getting impatient with Nicodemus. Old “Nick” isn't getting the metaphor of being born anew.

The impatience that Jesus toward Nicodemus has led others to read this passage as a command to a particular way of being Christian today – you must be born again.

As I read this scripture, I hear Jesus asking Nicodemus to let God work in his life – the entirety of his life.

In the 1930's the Nazi Party was on the rise in Germany.

The German Christians were accommodating the gospel to the racism and anti-Semitism of Nazi ideology.

In response to that, the Confessing Church in May of 1934 declared in what is now called, “The Barmen Declaration:”

*“As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so in the same way and with the same seriousness he is also God's mighty claim upon our whole life.”*

This invitation to be born again is **nonsensical**; Nicodemus was right; you can't reenter a womb and try it all over again.

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But it is also a **provocative** invitation: Jesus invites us to open our imaginations and reconsider our relationship with God.

The time to keep our faith compartmentalized is past, just as it was for those German Christians who could no longer tolerate how the Nazi's were treating Jews and blacks and Slavs and gays.

That's why Pastor Niemoller is remembered saying,

*"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—*

*Because I was not a socialist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—*

*Because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—*

*Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."*

You see, you don't have to surrender your intellect – God isn't identified with a particular political party.

God wants your faith to be the total you.