

First Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map
Pastor Roger W. Huffman

John 3:1-17
June 11, 2017

Revel in the radical revelations of John 3.

The more familiar a Bible passage and story the easier it is to miss just how radical (to human thinking) its revelation is. Here's a case in point. Nicodemus came curious without a clue how much he had to learn.

Let's take our seat with Nicodemus so God can reveal his radical realities to us again and we can celebrate this Festival of the Holy Trinity reveling in them.

Revel in the radical revelations of John 3.

❖ Radical law: unless you are born from above - you perish

Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born from above. ... Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

- Nicodemus, a Bible Scholar, didn't get this. Jesus reveals twice. *Amen. Amen.*
- Radical reality. Radical realization. All people are born bad, dead, lost to God
 - ♦ *every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood.* Gen. 8:21b
 - ♦ *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* Ps 51:5
 - ♦ He should have known. People still don't think we are all that bad!
- People are all born outside God's reign and will = perishing
 - ♦ This clueless Bible Scholar shows it is true of even the "good" people.
 - ♦ Only through the Spirit can anyone see/perceive the Living God.
 - ♦ We're so dead: only God can give rebirth to eternal life & work faith.

Why revel in this? It explains a lot. Only when I despair of me, will I see God.

❖ Radical good news: God's shocking love for all.

- It's common for groups to see themselves as the Creator God's people
 - ♦ Then see *others - the unlovable* to be of little or no concern to God
- *God so loved the world...* each and every human being
 - ♦ Not just Israel! Not just Americans! Not because any are good or better!
 - ♦ God's shocking love - he cares about all even as they despise him.
- God's shocking love: *that he gave his one and only Son*
 - ♦ God sent his greatest treasure - his best - to rescue the wretches
 - ♦ Sent to be *lifted up* - take on our shame/disgrace/punishment - the cross
 - Radical to a Pharisee. God's Son, the Messiah, lifted up **so low!**?
 - Many are still offended by the cross: How can I identify/trust **him**?

- Only God's all-out love for all people leaves no room to doubt. It's for me!
 - ♦ God works through this radical good news to create faith/new life
 - ♦ Everyone who lives relying on Jesus: *sees & is in God's kingdom*
 - ♦ He saves us from perishing: eternally separated from him, from all good

God's revealed reality about us and his saving love was radical to Nicodemus. So was his revelation about God himself.

❖ Radical God: 1 God - 3 Persons revealed.

- OT confession: *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.* Deut. 6:4
- Jesus came with revelation straight from God: The God who is One is...
 - ♦ *the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*
 - ♦ *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son*
 - **God** = the Father (relationship to the Son)
 - **the Son**, sent - separate - distinct, yet One
- Jesus' miracles demonstrate he is from God, revealing this reality
- The Triune God is totally devoted to reclaiming people for himself.
- Jesus reveals without explaining the Trinity - as God did at his Baptism
- The Eternal Living God shows he is real and incomprehensible.
 - ♦ Unlike all man-made gods who people can imagine.

This radical revelation leads God's people to stand in awe, reverence, and to endlessly revel to know the Living God - privileged to call him my God.

This radical revelation radically changed Nicodemus. 3 years later in bold devotion he buried Jesus after he was lifted up on the cross. No doubt still puzzled how can this be, but trusting in Jesus.

Let us...

Revel in the radical revelations of John 3.

...confessing this Holy God revealed faith together in the Athanasian Creed.