

An abridged form of this segment, which describes other aspects of The Inward Way found in Chapter Three of the Gospel of John, was presented to the congregation of the Creative Life Church in Hot Springs, AR, on Sunday, September 20, 2009. Your comments are welcome via email: creationspirit@gmail.com. Succeeding presentations regarding other aspects of The Inward Way will be made on the third Sunday of each month at the 10:30 AM service of the Creative Life Church, 229 Bayard Street, Hot Springs, AR. The public is invited. In addition, meetings of The Aristotle Group, formed for purposes of metaphysical exchange, are held on the third Saturday of each month from 10AM-noon at the same location. These meetings also are open to the public and participation is encouraged.

The Inward Way Out of the Night There Shall be Light



This first section of Chapter Three deals with the understanding that we all go through changes in our perspectives about Life. Some of us are much like Nicodemus, who symbolizes dealing with Scripture and Life out of ego consciousness. But Nicodemus also represents leadership—meaning, in this case, being open to new ways of thinking. He also is the symbol for a dimension of consciousness, although living by the letter of the law, is open to a higher order of Truth that can be safely entertained. The entire lengthy exchange that begins Chapter Three is about the higher order of inward guidance: the potential for seeing and demonstrating Life anew—through the eyes of intuition, insight and enlightenment. In our language that means seeing and dealing with Life metaphysically, understanding that spiritual demonstration is ordered by the awareness that activates it into being.

I will begin by referring you to a word that has great meaning for the context of spiritual discernment. The word is “night.” In the text “night” leads to the first exchange between the two main characters in this story it is said that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. Clearly, at least metaphorically so, Nicodemus comes to Jesus in the darkness of ignorance. When we apply the metaphorical meaning of Nicodemus to our own lives, it can be concluded that on some level Nicodemus represents the consciousness that seeks enlightenment. If we take our understanding of the various dimensions of spiritual consciousness just one step further, we come to see that Jesus represents the dimension of Truth, the voice of Christ. The voice of the Christ—the voice of inspiration—is the one whose job it is to provide insight and lead our conscious awareness out of ignorance, to the threshold of Truth for us.

If we pay close attention throughout these passages we will find the extraordinary means Jesus, the voice of the Christ, uses to lead Nicodemus, as yet unenlightened, exactly there—to the threshold of Truth. In these upcoming passages, we do not have the benefit

of Nicodemus affirming this formidable shift in spiritual meaning to be the case. That, too, is a very important statement about leadership. As leaders, we are responsible only for delivering. Deciphering the offerings is none of our business. That is entirely the responsibility of the receiver.

Before we get to the actual passages of Scripture, it is also important to reiterate—lest we lose our proper focus—that this story, like all Scriptural stories, is about demonstrating the voice of Truth heard inwardly. The stories or allegories are not about specific people and what they did or did not do. These sacred stories are about demonstrating each inspiration we discern through spiritual awareness. They are about living spiritually. Therefore, this first part of Chapter Three is not a story about Jesus and Nicodemus, but rather about how the Holy Spirit, as played by Jesus, guides us in the passing over from one level of being to another. Nicodemus merely represents one stage of that development in our own lives.

Here is the first exchange:

‘In all Truth I tell you,
no one can see the Kingdom of God
without being born from above.’ (3:3)

This is Jesus’ response to Nicodemus’ charge that Jesus must certainly be from God lest he could not perform the signs he had. And how does Jesus—the Way of the Holy Spirit personified—respond to this? By saying, metaphorically of course, that the Truth can be found if we give up the body of beliefs and opinions we have taken to be real in order to find that Truth is available only from the Kingdom of Truth: the voice of the Christ, heard inwardly. Truth is borne out of higher places, heard inwardly. We cannot see the Truth without first being willing to find and accept the Truth—birthed by that which comes from within, as inspiration. Within is thus another term for the Kingdom, the Kingdom where Truth resides: as the voice of our divinity.

Here is where we see Nicodemus’ level of consciousness pointing out to us our own fixation on the letter of the word. He says: “How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back to the womb again and be born?” Physically, this is not possible. Thus, this is a clue that Scriptural reference is not about physical life, but about spiritual meaning. Of course, metaphorically speaking, being born again is entirely possible. The womb can be seen as the symbol for that deep inner space from which new Life—spiritual meaning—comes. It is from within the womb of Life that the new birth of Truth is born into Being, our Being. Nicodemus’ response highlights how we ourselves sometimes feel when a newfound Truth rears its head to replace some insufficient understanding of spiritual Life. We don’t think this for long, but a thought akin to “How is this possible?” shows up initially, until we become completely comfortable with trusting Truth, instead of trusting our ego conscious ways.

To continue:

“In all Truth I tell you,
no one can enter the Kingdom of God
without being born through water and Spirit;
what is born of human nature is human;
what is born of the Spirit is spirit.
Do not be surprised when I say;
You must be born from above.
the wind blows as it pleases;
you can hear its sound,
but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.
So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (3:5-8)

In these few sentences we are being told yet again that when we live by the ways of our ego nature that is precisely what we will reap. But if we want to live spiritually—through the endless source of Wisdom, the Christ—then we must understand that we are reborn only by realizing our unexpressed capacities of spiritual awareness. Spiritually speaking, the constant flow of spiritual awareness is the river on which we travel. Our trusty guide is none other than the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is something we inherently come to know by its resonance, by its sound, like the wind. We know neither where it comes from nor where it is going; yet we know its delicious presence, and are honor bound to adhere its path for us. Our commitment to travel on the winds of Truth is the purpose and means of living by the Spirit. Surrendering to the act of hearing and expressing the Spirit—resonating with it—is our responsibility as beings of Spirit.

Let’s continue in Scripture now, and learn how the symbolic representation of the Holy Spirit speaks to us. The Holy Spirit begins with, “In all Truth I tell you,” meaning “from that place of Truth it is said,” and on it comes:

‘In all Truth I tell you,
we speak only about what we know
and witness only to what we have seen
and yet you people reject our evidence.
If you do not believe me
when I speak about earthly things,
how will you believe me
when I speak to you about heavenly things?
No one has gone up to heaven
except the one who came down from heaven,
the Son of man;
as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert,
so must the Son of man be lifted up
so that everyone who believes may have eternal Life in him.’ (3:11-15)

From whence I come—Truth—says the Holy Spirit, I can only speak Truth, yet we refuse to give credence to such evidence. In effect, we have dismissed God’s Word, the voice of inspiration and wisdom, as Truth. Yet this voice is the very evidence I, the Christ

Spirit, provides. If we would only accept that there is another way of seeing Life—another perspective that brings Truth rather than illusion to Life—then we would also be able to hear the Truth about Heaven, the heavenly Kingdom of God.

We do not strive in this Life to go *to* Heaven. When we allow ourselves to see Life from the perspective of Truth that resides in the Kingdom of Heaven, we bring it down from—demonstrate it—*as* Heaven. We take our process of spiritual discernment from our head to our hearts. We commit to spiritual discernment with all we are, not just with our thoughts. The reference to Moses lifting the serpent in the desert speaks to the need for us to lift up that which binds us to the temptation to remain in the desert-like existence of illusion, the ego's way. Indeed, each inspiration made aware is to be fulfilled, so it may serve as the example to follow.

“For this is how God loved the world:
he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal Life.
For God sent his only Son into the world
not to judge the world,
but that through him the world would be saved.
No one who believes in him will be judged;
but whoever does not believe is judged already,
because the person does not believe
in the Name of God's only Son.
And the judgment is this:
though the light has come into the world
people have preferred
darkness to light
because their deeds were evil.
And indeed, everybody who does wrong
hates the light and avoids it,
to prevent his actions from being shown up;
but whoever does the Truth
comes out into the light,
so that what he is doing may plainly appear as done in God.” (3:17-21)

Just who is this Son of God? Truth, inspiration, is the Son of God. God—inspiration—gives or sends the only offering it can—Truth—so we can live Truth instead of what is not Truth. It is by living Truth that we are saved from error. It is by living Truth that we need no judgment. By surrendering to our awareness of Truth, we learn to live it eternally. When we fail to follow Truth and instead follow our own ways, we are judging ourselves to be separate from God—the Truth. Man—meaning here each of the inspirational offerings of Life—is divine idea birthed out of the womb of Truth. Those who refrain from Truth shun it as the way for them, so their choice will remain in hiding. Those who abide only Truth, however, give loving testimony of their dedication to Truth as an example for others.

Jesus' ministry in Judaea.

The explanations about Jesus' ministry in Judaea are absolutely extraordinary in the metaphysical realm. Once again, we take note of location. Judaea, or Judea as we speak of it, is symbolic of praise to Jehovah. It is the key to the mental attitude or perspective in which the Christ consciousness is opened up as praise to the Lord, the Law of Order. Actually, we *are* praising the Lord—the voice of divine order—by demonstrating the Christ we hear inwardly. This identifies man with the Christ and leads to greater expression of divine power, Truth.

In this section of Chapter Three, there is talk of baptism, both in Judea and in Aenon, near Salim, where it is said that there is plenty of water. You will remember also, that baptism represents cleansing, just as water often does. Water also refers to living by our emotions, often out of control by virtue of our focus on emotions rather than inward Truth. In John's case water represents the intellectual concept of Truth rather than the Spiritual order of it. Salim represents purification. Although purification is related to the intellectual and natural or outer, for our purposes it actually is more closely related with spiritual life and peace. I speak of Judea and Salim only to point out that settings are those locations, dimensions or faculties of thought where we also entertain such cleansings—rising to new forms of understanding, moving from the emotional and intellectual to the spiritual, the metaphysical.

By using the bride-bridegroom couplet, John—the metaphor representing that which points to enlightenment—is insisting that being married to God's way—Truth revealed through the Holy Spirit, the Christ—is the way we are to commit. By committing to the voice of Holy Spirit, one is wedded to demonstrating that same Holy Spirit. With this appreciation comes the understanding that we must lessen our hold on old ways if we are to walk in the new. Thus we have the declaration of Truth that one who comes from Truth is above all other tradition, including, or especially, the illusions of ego consciousness.

Further, John says that the new covenant is so strange to most of us that we are unable to fathom it. Yet, when we avail ourselves of that potential we are attesting to Truth as the path we are to travel, to demonstrate. When committing to this spiritual way we are enlivened with enthusiasm for Truth without reserve. In closing, it is declared that we who follow the higher road will have Life eternal, while those who do not will not even know what real Life is about. They cannot, will not, see Life for the Truth it is: spiritual awareness activated. However, God waits—inspiration is eternally present, waiting only our awareness of the Truth it holds—knowing that sooner or later our unawareness, too, shall pass. So we see here a subtle affirmation of the continuance of Passover in our lives. As we live spiritually, time and again we pass over from ignorance to Truth.

Here it is said that John was put into prison. This seems like this has a physical meaning, yet how do we look to it from a metaphysical foundation? We look at it metaphysically by not answering the question directly, but by sending it right back to the inquisitor,

suggesting our continuing work of going inward for Truth. So let me ask you this: How can the term “imprison” relate to what we sometimes do with our thoughts? When our views—our opinions, perceptions, and beliefs—are so hardened we imprison ourselves with them; we leave little or no room for another perspective to enter. We lock ourselves in a dimension of thought that leaves no room for escape.

The view John represents seems to be taking a somewhat broader stance on the issue of real Truth. This says to me that he opened the cell door to a better way of viewing Truth and Life. Before John’s consciousness came to the hardened belief that was sure to imprison him, he came to understand things from a different perspective, even though it was not his place to deliver the goods, so to speak. Let us thus be encouraged to open up any cell doors that may have imprisoned us, that we may be free at last. Enjoy your freedom!