

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Holy Trinity Sunday – May 26, 2024

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’”

–John 3:5-6–

Light and darkness. These two contrasting themes have intrigued me over the years as I continue to read through God’s Word. In the coming weeks, you may find that I will revisit these themes in our weekly devotions. In our Gospel reading for Holy Trinity Sunday, we have this passage from John, chapter 3. Nicodemus is a member of the council, a Pharisee. But there’s something about Jesus that piques his interest. And so Nicodemus goes to find Jesus, but he does so at night, in the dark. The darkness can hide Nicodemus from the other members of the council. The darkness can serve as a veil of protection for Nicodemus. It is ironic that it is in the darkness, that Nicodemus receives the light of Christ in their conversation.

Nicodemus assumes that one must do something to inherit eternal life. Jesus explains patiently to Nicodemus how one must go through a conversion and be born again. One must be born of water and the Spirit. In other words, anyone (man, woman, infant, child, elderly) must be born of water and Spirit. Why? Because we have all been born into sin. We have inherited the sin from Adam and Eve. This is what we call original sin. And we can’t do anything ourselves to get rid of that. But God can and he does. He uses the water of Holy Baptism to wash us clean, and he gives us the gift of his Holy Spirit to have faith in what he is doing. Jesus explains to Nicodemus (and to us) that baptism is necessary for salvation. This is the way that God brings children into his family, through baptism.

Jesus further explains to Nicodemus that this conversion is not something we can do on our own. We cannot do anything to inherit eternal life. This conversion through baptism is God’s work, and it is his alone. God works through his word of promise. It is God who calls us, gathers us, and enlightens us through the gift of his Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Gracious, heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Thank you for calling me and claiming me as your own child through the gift of baptism. Help me to focus on your will for my life. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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