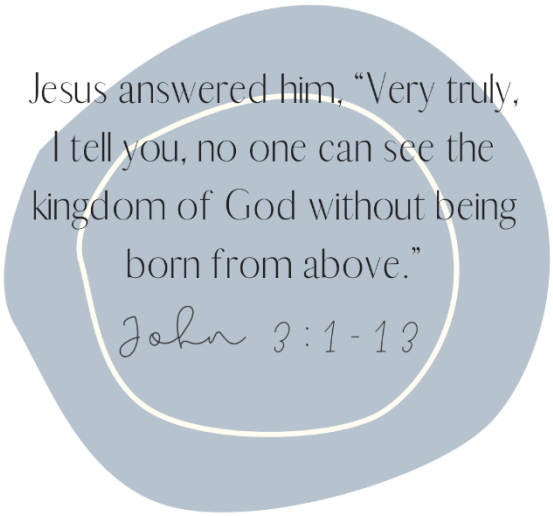
March 12, 2021 Lenten Devotional
John 3:1-13 - "Nicodemus Visits Jesus"
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Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. -John 3:1-13

Reflection

Usually, when I'm reflecting on a Bible story, I can just regurgitate some simple concept that a pastor or youth leader taught in a small group. Unfortunately, there are no little notes in the margins of my Bible for this one. Luckily, it seems that Nicodemus is just as confused as me here.

The first thing Jesus explains is that you should be baptized to get into heaven. Cool. Got it. I can understand the material ritual of baptism. Pour water on baby, boom, baby clean. What I did not expect from this passage comes after this. In my Bible, Jesus says, "You hear [the wind's] sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." I sure do relate to that. I'm in college. I don't know how I got here, and I have no clue what comes after this. I'm sure Jesus didn't have my specific situation in mind when he said this, but that's the nice thing about the Bible: no matter where you are or what you think you're doing, some part of it is going to apply to you. The same thing applies to God. What I actually think Jesus is saying here is that, like the wind, the Holy Spirit is constantly blowing around us. God is always going to be right there with you, no matter how confusing life gets.

Jesus makes it clear that it can be difficult to wrap our heads around the heavenly, the abstract, and the unseen. What really matters, in the uncertainty of college, Covid, and Lent, is that we are one in the Spirit, and thank God for the simplicity of that.