



Monday, March 9, 2020

## The Courage to Grow

by Scott Stoner

*Courage: mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.*

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

The story of Nicodemus coming to talk to Jesus at night (John 3:1-17) was read and reflected upon in many churches yesterday for the Second Sunday in Lent. We are told that Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a leader of the Jews. He had no doubt heard of Jesus and his teachings, and for some reason, on this particular night, he decides to seek Jesus out to speak with him face to face.

We know that Nicodemus comes under cover of darkness, most likely because he is clearly moving out of his comfort zone in coming to talk with Jesus. After all, he is known as a leader of the Jews and so what could he possibly have to learn from someone like Jesus? As it turns out, a great deal. Jesus tells him that anyone who wants to experience the kingdom of God must be born again. This leads to a back-and-forth conversation in which Nicodemus learns that Jesus is speaking of a spiritual rebirth, a birth that is “of water and Spirit.”

In yesterday’s reflection, Teddy Brooks quoted the definition of courage found in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (see above). Clearly Nicodemus demonstrated courage in coming to Jesus because he had “the mental and moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.”

Our theme for this second week in Lent will be the courage to grow, especially by moving out of our comfort zones. We will reflect on the various ways in which God might be calling us, like Nicodemus, to move out of our comfort zones in order to be born anew.

**Making It Personal:** Read the story of Nicodemus coming to talk with Jesus, found in John 3:1-17. What speaks to you in this story about courage? What do you think of the dictionary definition of courage? Is there anything from your life experience that you would add to that definition?