

WHAT'S NEXT? OPPORTUNITIES IN TRANSITION, WEEK 5

Scripture used: John 3:1-3 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued his 6-week sermon series "What's Next?" with another sermon diving into "the middle passage"—that difficult period between an ending and a new beginning. He used the example of Jesus fielding an earnest inquiry from the erudite elder and Pharisee, Nicodemus. In this Scripture, Jesus exhorts Nicodemus to be "born again", a contrarian directive to someone of rank and status who is prudently and meticulously weighing his options.

KEY POINTS

The Big Idea: Navigating transition well is a part of life and faith.

- 1) In the middle of August, we are facing many transitions. Some of us are leaving home to go to college. Others have graduated and, unable to find employment or desirous to save money, are moving back with parents. Some are facing a big birthday, with anxiety around a perceived lack of accomplishments (in marriage, children, or career). How we navigate & handle these transitions is a game-changer.
- 2) An additional transition is between our private life and a celebrated public life. This gives birth to issues of identity and meaning. What am I hungry for? What am I trying to prove? What am I worshipping?
- 3) Nicodemus is a rational and thoughtful person. He calls Jesus "Rabbi", acknowledges that he is God's envoy, and comes with miraculous signs. Jesus responds with a personal invitation. He uses a metaphor for a new cycle of life, a new season. Pastor Hurmon used the story of Bill Hybels, the founder of Willow Creek Church in Illinois. Pastor Bill talked about finding quiet reflection as his life slowed down; and some of his fears and feelings of grief and loss gave way to a quiet serenity as to what's next.

Are you letting God write the story of your new beginning? After surrendering to God, are you full of joyful anticipation as to what's next?

- 1) **Step 1: Redemption** Have you accepted to be born again, and make room for healing and restoration? This is a skill to develop after struggling with brokenness.
- 2) **Step 2: Revelation** Do you have the ability to see what others don't perceive? A gift of observation to "see" the kingdom, connect seemingly unrelated things, and make sense of it all? A gift to pause, reflect, and quietly engage to hear the whisper?
- 3) **Step 3: Redemption and Revelation together** Pastor Hurmon used the story of Eleanor Roosevelt, a devout Christian, who was completely brokenhearted when she discovered FDR's illicit affair with her trusted friend Lucy Mercer in September 1918. Eleanor has subsumed her existence and purpose to her famous & intensely ambitious husband (he was planning to become President of the United States since his teenage years). Beyond despair, she discovered her true independent self: as a huge influencer and difference maker for progress, equity, and social justice in the world. This is the kind of eternal leap we are called to.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Hear Nicodemus' question and Jesus' response. Have you heard an invitation to a new season in your life? How will you navigate the passage to this new season?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - In all the "static" and busyness of life, it can be hard to hear the whisper that sends us on a new journey, or understand that a serious setback can be a platform to be born again.

- 3) **DO** For this week find your favorite chair, whether at home, at work, or even at a park, and sit for 15 minutes to 1) Read a portion of scripture, 2) Pray - talk to God, 3) Reflect on the scripture and listen to what God says. Come to church AND go to lunch in local eateries with friends and family. Take advantage of our new location to explore new opportunities.