

CRIBB<S>NOTE – FEBRUARY 17, 2008

Many of us live with so much gunk in our lives it is hard to believe how much God really loves us. Yet, we muddle along in an effort to overcome any nagging feelings that may cause us to perform below par. Our souls are operating on less than a full tank of confidence and inspiration. Too often, it takes every bit of energy we can muster just to complete the most meager task. We sometimes feel like giving up, pulling up the sheets, and going back to sleep. The gunk is blocking our path.

We are designed to confront both real and imagined obstacles that get in the way of our ability to live up to our potential. Built into our spiritual DNA are the necessary components to overcome disappointment, gossip, and those sluggish moments that make every step an insurmountable climb over high hurdles. To borrow the current mantra in a highly charged political environment, “YES, WE CAN!” “Si, se puede!”

On the night of Nicodemus’ secret visit to Jesus, there was something pushing and rubbing against the depths of the priest’s conscious. Steeped in the laws, history, and theology of his faith, Nicodemus was far from satisfied with himself and his relationship with God. The tugging became too great for him to go on as he had. His very person was disturbed and he needed comfort that could only come from the rabbi without credentials.

Nicodemus needed to know if Jesus was truly the One who had been promised by the prophets of old. He had witnessed the ‘signs’ that Jesus performed and was more than mildly curious about the source of his power. Nicodemus wanted confirmation; he asked the pertinent questions. But, there remained blockage. He was not able to fully comprehend Jesus’ response.

Many of us share Nicodemus’ frustration. We can become captives of our quest to the point where we are unable to realize our own resolve. External matters take precedence and cause us to miss the profound yet simple solution that resides within us. God’s love anticipates our desire to be fully united in right relationship with the divine. We have been given an unbroken bond that connects us with God, but there is something that makes us doubt the extent of God’s love for us. Nicodemus articulated our concern. He embodied our fears.

How can we accept God’s love when we have not accepted our love for ourselves? This is not an egotistical affection based on inflated impressions. We have the ability to love ourselves beyond measure, but we hold back. Instead, too often, we hoard experiences that justify our reasons to minimize our joy, happiness, and peace. We stand in the way of receiving God’s love for us.

So, Jesus tells Nicodemus, “You must be born from above.” That was very strange talk and Nicodemus did not understand it. He immediately interpreted what Jesus said as a physical re-birth through his mother’s womb. He missed the point entirely. But, we cannot judge him harshly. Many of us still miss point even as we are judgmental.

God’s love is to be accepted, received, respected, and shared. Those are the components that make it possible to live up to our potential. We cannot substitute our harden attitudes that reduce our powerful presence with a selfish consumption of exclusive godly love doses. We have to give our love away with abandon. We are vessels from which loves flows freely with an endless supply of forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus shows us how to accomplish our purpose of reflecting God’s love with every breath, step, and encounter. His message to Nicodemus was know how you have been formed and don’t be afraid to live your life fully alive with gratitude to the One who gives us life. God loves the world. God loves you! Go and live with the confidence there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God.