This week I would like to reflect with you about “Nicodemites”. So I’m sure you’re asking, “What is a Nicodemite”. In the 16th century John Calvin referred to those who sympathized with a vision for reform of the church but were hesitant to be publicly identified as believers, as Nicodemites. I often wonder if there is a tiny bit of Nicodemite in many of us. We live in a culture where it is not popular to be an active Christian, especially when we are discussing politics, religion, public education, government policies or even social justice. Let me try to put the entire idea into perspective. Nicodemus approached Jesus in the middle of the night. Nicodemus was part of the Jewish establishment. He knew that Jesus was from God but he also was aware that Jesus could be a political problem and a threat to the establishment. Nicodemus was on a spiritual journey but he didn’t want to be caught by his friends or colleagues. They may have thought him to be weird or extreme in his thinking. Nicodemus comes out of the darkness and meets with Jesus. Jesus tells him that he must be “born from above”. This is a spiritual concept. It means to believe in Jesus, not only with our minds but with our hearts and actions as well.

God will often invite us to move from where we are comfortable into moments of enlightenment and new insight. But this means that we need to move from where we are, both intellectually and spiritually. You see, the point is that some people prefer to function in darkness where their attitudes and actions are not exposed. Nicodemus was ready to experience the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6). But he was also deeply aware of the potential consequences of being aligned with the mission of Jesus Christ. In John’s gospel “believing and doing are inseparable” (v 21). Nicodemus spends most of his life in the shadows of his faith journey. It’s not until the end of the gospel story that Nicodemus appears to help Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus.

There are moments in each one of our lives that we feel a little bit like Nicodemus and we’re not sure where it’s appropriate to talk about our faith. We are unclear if our spiritual journey connects with all other parts of our lives. Some of us would even say that it’s “difficult” to discern when to include our morals and ethics and values into the conversation about all other issues in our lives. It’s **difficult** to love our neighbour. It’s **difficult** to feed the poor and clothe those living on the street. It’s **difficult** to assure that all have affordable housing. It is most certainly **difficult** to speak boldly against human trafficking, but it is exactly these things that God is calling us to boldly pray for, act on, and be intentional about seeking social justice for all. “**Difficult**” does not mean that we avoid these things but rather that we prayerfully engage to make this world a better place and to invite “thy kingdom come”.

“Something to pray about.”

Blessings

Stephen