

March 20, 2011 “Your Off-Road King” John 3

I read a story this week of a young boy who owned a small, off-road motorcycle. Occasionally he would ride it on the highway, but the real adventure came when he went off-road into the woods; around the trees, down dark trails, and through weeds and bushes where there was a risk of losing control and falling. This was the adventure. This is what Jesus was talking about with Nicodemus late one night. Nicodemus was a highway kind of guy who wanted to hold on to the old ways and the safe lifestyle. Jesus, on the other hand is the Off-Road King Who teaches us that faith and risk are intertwined for the child of God.

The whole idea of being born again speaks about a new beginning, a new birth through faith in Jesus that brings us into God’s family. Our new birth to faith in Jesus Who died and rose for us might have been as a baby in Baptism or as a Baptized adult. This new birth, being born again of water and the Spirit leads to the risk of faith, the risk of a Christian life that goes off-road with Jesus, not always the safe old highway.

Like Nicodemus, visiting Jesus at night in John 3, we like to visit with Jesus in a safe place like Church or home rather than risking it at school, our job, or restaurant. Pray at McDonalds?? Well I never!! We like talking with Him, on our terms. Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit blowing in the wind to lead us off-road to new adventures of faith for Jesus. We like the quiet, safe highway. We like being behind the scenes like the etching of Rembrandt “The Descent From The Cross” with Nicodemus back in the shadows not holding on to our Lord in the light.

At best, our sinful nature likes the sameold-sameold child of God. Like we mentioned last week in our sermon, Satan doesn’t want us to think He’s around at all. We can get into our rut of faith that includes occasional worship, occasional prayer, occasional Bible Study, and rarely, if at all, any mention of Jesus to other people. This is the comfortable highway for a Christian to travel. This doesn’t cause Satan any grief at all.

Jesus speaks to Nic at Night and to each of us that it’s time for the adventure, time to go off-road and take a risk of faith. The Holy Spirit often leads us to dark, scary places with dark, scary people; your family? We risk slamming into a tree of trouble, a weed of worry, a bush of belligerence, or a trail of trials, but our Off-Road King, Jesus, will lead us through to the Sonshine of everlasting life.

Nicodemus, the highway guy was the first to hear the words of John 3:16. For God so loves you, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whoever trusts Him and follows Him through the off-road of faith and risk will have everlasting life. Jesus wants us to step out in faith, read a devotional every day, risk the off-road experience and share your faith out loud, invite someone to sit with you in church or Bible Study, reach out to make a difference in someone’s life by praying for them and with them. Risky business, huh?

Because God Is Good...All The Time He promises to ride with you. Trust Him and He’ll take the controls. Trust Him and hold on! The adventure is ahead! Amen..pastor matthews