

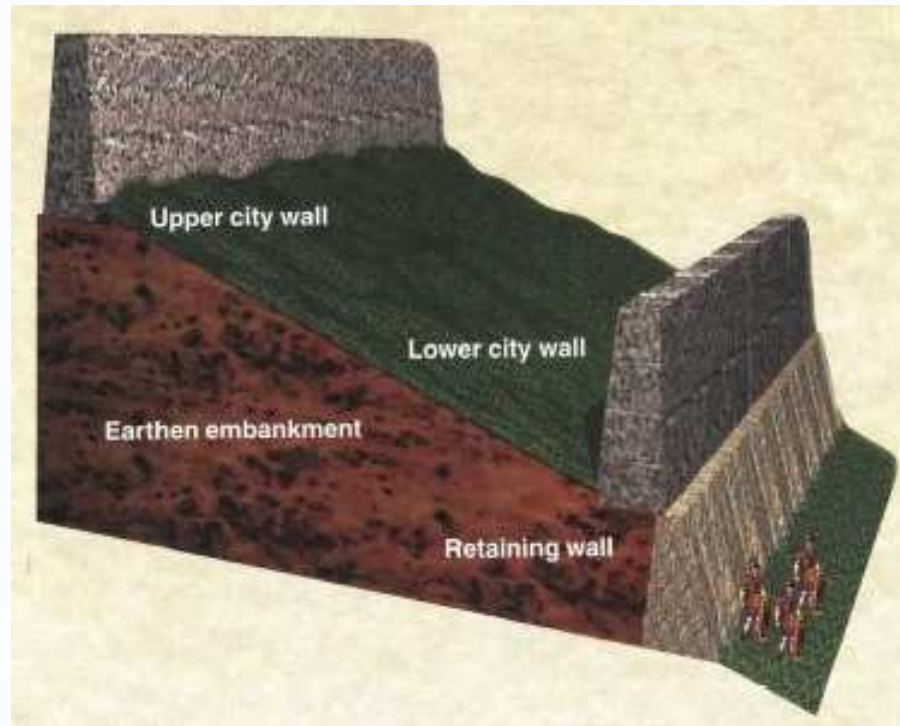
A person wearing a bright yellow hooded raincoat is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the right. The background is a dark, textured surface with faint, scattered light spots, resembling a night sky or a dark wall. The overall mood is contemplative and mysterious.

WHEN GOD
DOESN'T **MAKE** SENSE

John 3:4-9

When God Doesn't Make Sense

- **Joshua 6:1 NIV**, Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.



When God Doesn't Make Sense

- **Joshua 6:2-5 NIV**, 2 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.”

When God Doesn't Make Sense

- **Exodus 14:13-14 ESV**, 13 And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”
- How do you respond when the events of life don't make sense or when God doesn't make sense?
 - What He allows in the life of His children
 - When world events seem confusing
 - When what you have been taught, believed doesn't seem to be working out in your life

When God Doesn't Make Sense

- This is where a man named Nicodemus finds himself this morning
 - He came to Jesus at night with some important to him questions
 - Jesus gave him the right answer to the question he should be asking, **John 3:3 NIV**, Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”
 - Pretend you are hearing this from Jesus’ lips the first time
 - Nicodemus responds like we would, “Jesus, this doesn’t make any earthly sense!!!”

Scripture

- **John 3:4-9 NIV**, 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” 9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

When God Doesn't Make Sense

- What do we do when God doesn't make sense to our human experience?
- How are we to respond when life as a Christian doesn't work out like we thought?
- Where should my mind be when our experience is something, I never imagined having to go through?

When God Doesn't Make Sense

- We have been taught **Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV**, 8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. 9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
 - But shouldn't it make sense to us, so we have something to hold onto during these times and know how to live and make decisions?
 - Couldn't God just open the door just a smidge so I can see what's going on?
 - What can we learn from Nicodemus this morning?
- Three words; attitude, attention, and acceptance

The first word is attitude

- Did you pick up Nicodemus' attitude
 - **Vs. 4 MSG, 4** “How can anyone,” said Nicodemus, “be born who has already been born and grown up? You can't re-enter your mother's womb and be born again. What are you saying with this 'born-from-above' talk?”
 - It is just meaningless chatter Jesus; do you really know what you are talking about?
 - It's much the same when you just throw a scripture at someone struggling then walk away

The first word is attitude

- I think Nicodemus was offended by Jesus' remark of "being born again"
 - Are you telling me Jesus I am not already in the Kingdom of God and there is something else that must happen?
 - I am a Jew from the bloodline of Abraham, and this gets me into God's Kingdom
 - I am a Pharisee highly trained in Old Testament Law from Moses
 - I am highly trained in the traditions of wise elders before me
 - I am seated in the position of authority and make judgements on how to apply the Law

The first word is attitude

- It probably sounded like Paul giving an account of his life before salvation
 - **Philippians 3:4b-6 NIV**, 4 If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

The first word is attitude

- You hear it in Job's accusative attitude toward God in his question, "*What Did I Do to Deserve This?*"
 - **Job 30:18-21 NIV**, 18 In his great power God becomes like clothing to me; he binds me like the neck of my garment. (*shakes me like a dog*) 19 He throws me into the mud, and I am reduced to dust and ashes. 20 "I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me. 21 You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me.
 - **Job 30:25-26 NIV**, 25 Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? 26 Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness.

The first word is attitude

- Attitude - We must remember who we are but mostly who God is when we approach Him
- We must remember we are never alone unless we put ourselves there
 - Others have walked this path and understand
 - There are times we just need to be still and know God

The second word is attention

- God never addressed Job until He got Job's attention
 - **Job 38:1-4 NIV**, Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: 2 "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand."
 - **Job 38:16-18 NIV**, 16 "Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? 18 Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this."

The second word is attention

- God is not being mean to Job, but He must get Job's attitude focused before He can respond to him, and so Job will listen
- This is what Jesus is doing to Nicodemus
 - **Vs. 5-6 ESV**, 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly (*pay attention Nick this is really important, and you need to hear it and you can't with that attitude*), I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'"

The second word is attention

- “unless one is born of water and the Spirit”
 - Nicodemus you should understand this perfectly
 - There was a man Nicodemus that came and prepared the way for the Kingdom of God that you Pharisees rejected
 - **Matthew 3:11 NIV**, 11 “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - It’s not just Gentiles that need repentance, publicans, harlots, lowly sinners that need repentance, but you Nicodemus

The second word is attention

- “unless one is born of water and the Spirit”
 - **Isaiah 6:1-6 NIV**, In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

The second word is attention

- “unless one is born of water and the Spirit”
 - **Isaiah 6:1-6 NIV**, 5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”
 - Remember Nicodemus when Elijah prophesied what God would do in the heart of His people

The second word is attention

- “unless one is born of water and the Spirit”
 - **Ezekiel 36:25-28 NIV**, 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols (*water of repentance*). 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.”

The second word is attention

- “God has already told you all of this Nicodemus so, “7 Do not marvel (*be surprised*) that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”
- Flesh only gives birth to fleshly things, but the Spirit gives birth to God’s things

The third word is Acceptance

- **Job 40:1-5 NIV**, The Lord said to Job: 2 “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!” 3 Then Job answered the Lord: 4 “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. 5 I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more.”
 - Hear Job say, “Who am I that I should challenge what Almighty God has allowed into my life”

The third word is Acceptance

- Look at Nicodemus' last question, "How can this be?"
- He is no longer arguing with Jesus but seeking wisdom from God
- There are some things I must accept by faith when my heart is doubting, hurting, confused
 - God knows, understands, and is working
 - In my finiteness I will never fully understand what God is allowing or doing in my life so I will stop fighting Him
 - Nothing about my relationship with God is meaningless or worthless and He will bring something good out of it

The third word is Acceptance

- I accept by faith that
 - God will provide everything I will need to live through this to His glory
 - At the end He will restore what the locust have eaten
 - It's not the power of positive thinking, but the power of positive believing
 - I will simply praise Him that I am not in this alone and seek His presence in my life even when His voice is still
 - To God be the glory and never me

When God doesn't make sense

- Andrew Murray said it like this
 - In Time of Trouble Say:
 - First, He brought me here; it is by His will I am in this strait place: in that fact I will rest.
 - Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace to behave as His child.
 - Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

When God doesn't make sense

- Andrew Murray said it like this
 - In Time of Trouble Say:
 - Last, In His good time He can bring me out again – how and when He knows.
 - Let me say I am here,
 - (1) By God's appointment.
 - (2) In his keeping.
 - (3) Under His training.
 - (4) For His time.

A person wearing a bright yellow raincoat with the hood up, looking upwards and to the right. The background is dark and textured, resembling a night sky with faint stars or a starry field. The text is overlaid on the image.

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John 3:4-9