

Close Encounters at the Cross

Kaumakapili Lenten Study Series
Week 2, Wednesday, March 15, 2017
6:00-7:00p.m.

1. Welcome:

Introduction: Over the next several weeks of this Lenten season, we have been following the theme of “Close Encounters at the Cross” highlighting people whose lives Jesus transformed.

Our discussion and reflections tonight will be shared before the dialogue presentation to give us an understanding or a vision as to what God had in mind and why these people were a part of the Jesus’s encounter to the Cross.

Tonight’s Gospel lessons will be presented in a dialogue form with Jesus as he encounters Nicodemus on His journey to the cross.

2. Opening Prayer

3. Heluhelu Haipule (Scripture Readings):

a. Genesis 12:1-4a (p. 9)

- i. Why do you suppose God chose Abram?
- ii. What are God’s promises to Abram?
- iii. What was God’s intention or purpose to have Abram take Lot along with him?

b. Psalm 121 (p. 536)

- i. In this scripture, what 3 roles is God to us all?
- ii. What practical steps can you take to “lift your eyes” everyday?

c. Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 (979-980)

- i. Discuss how we all are heirs to Abraham’s inheritance of God’s grace.
- ii. What is David’s message to us?

DRAMATIC READING

Close Encounters at the Cross: *Nicodemus*

Adapted from John 3:1-17

[Each week a script will be provided for the Gospel lesson, concerning those whom Jesus met.]

Narrator): At this time, Israel's Roman occupiers have given a small group of Sadducees and Pharisees limited powers to rule, and Nicodemus is one of the Pharisees. He is a man with some clout among his people and holds a seat on the ruling council known as the Sanhedrin. Surprisingly Nicodemus is among those who seeks out Jesus for His teaching. It appears that he believes more about Jesus than he wants others to know, so he comes at night.

Nicodemus Teacher, some of us have been talking. You are obviously a teacher who has come from God. The signs you are doing are proof that God is with you.

Jesus : I tell you the truth: only someone who experiences birth for a second time[a] can *hope to* see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus: *I am a grown man.* How can someone be born again when he is old *like me*? Am I to crawl back into my mother's womb for a second birth? *That's impossible!*

Jesus: I tell you the truth, if someone does not experience water and Spirit birth, there's no chance he will make it into God's kingdom. *Like from like.* Whatever is born from flesh is flesh; whatever is born from Spirit is spirit. Don't be shocked by my words, *but I tell you the truth.* Even you, *an educated and respected man among your people,* must be reborn *by the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.* The wind blows all around us as if it has a will of its own; we *feel and* hear it, but we do not understand where it has come from or where it will end up. Life in the Spirit is as if it were the wind of God.

Nicodemus: I still do not understand how this can be.

Jesus: Your responsibility is to instruct Israel *in matters of faith,* but you do not comprehend *the necessity of life in the Spirit?* I tell you the truth: we speak about the things we know, and we give evidence about the things we have seen, and you choose to reject *the truth of* our witness. If you do not believe when I talk to you about ordinary, earthly realities, then heavenly realities will certainly elude you. No one has ever journeyed to heaven above except the One who has come down from heaven—the Son of Man, who is of heaven. Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. In the same way, the Son of Man must be lifted up; then all those who believe in Him will experience everlasting life.

Narrator: For God expressed His love for the world in this way: He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not face everlasting destruction, but will have everlasting life. Here's the point. God didn't send His Son into the world to judge it; instead, He is here to rescue a world *headed toward certain destruction*.

4. Group Reflections:

- a. Do you think Nicodemus became a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?

5. Hīmeni: “*I KU‘U NANA I KE KE‘A LA‘A*”
(*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

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6. Closing Mana‘o/Prayer:

Jo-An/Kahu Scott
