

Service for Week 23rd Feb -1st March

2026 Second Sunday in Lent By

Chaplain Andy



Our Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we mistakenly think sometimes of your kingdom in terms of the distant future- a time and a place yet to come- but you make it plain in the teaching of Jesus that it is already present and that you want each of us to commit ourselves to helping it grow here on earth.

Help us Lord to understand that you are at work in the world, teach us to faithfully offer our service and to see your will be done and your kingdom come in our lives.

Amen

Say to yourself - The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven

Amen

Bible Reading John 3:1-7

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he

cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

Holy words, Holy Wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Nicodemus was a member of the Pharisees, which at that time was a very strict Jewish religious and political party. Despite the Pharisees belief that Jesus was a false prophet and his miracles were just magic tricks Nicodemus had come to his own conclusion about Jesus. He had seen for himself Jesus perform miracles and had come to accept that Jesus really had God with him.

Pharisees wore distinctive clothing, white linen robes which included large tassels on the borders of their outer garments and phylacteries (black leather boxes containing scrolls with specific Torah verses) on their forehead and left arms. So, when Jesus answers Nicodemus he knows that he is a Pharisee.

Jesus is not only talking to Nicodemus but to the pharisees and all when he says I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they



are 'born again.' The use of this term Jesus used 'born again' has been taken by some Christian groups to make some people feel that unless you have had a dramatic experience of being 'born again' you are not really a Christian.

But a better translation from the Greek words is 'born from above' This does not always come about in a sudden dramatic way. But it involves an internal change of heart which can happen over a period of time. It is a spiritual reawakening which moves you into a new way of thinking and a new way of life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many years ago, I went with a Christian group away on holiday in Ireland. At the end of our time there a boy who I had got to know over the holiday said to me "I have noticed that something has changed for you over this week hasn't it?" I said to him yes "I have asked Jesus to come into my life to change me and to guide me."

Jesus said to Nicodemus "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." What does that mean? Well, this is not a physical birth but a spiritual one. The "Water" symbolizes the purifying work of repentance, and God's promise of forgiveness. There is also the link to the sacrament of baptism. The "Spirit" refers to the inner transformation that the person will go through. And the

"kingdom of God" that you enter and belong to is the community of believers living their lives the way that God wants us to live and living in the hope of eternal life after our time on this earth.

We know how God wants us to live in his kingdom from the prophets but mainly from the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus. The apostle Peter wrote that God has "caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ".

God describes this when he spoke through the prophet Ezekiel "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. 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. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born from above" "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." **Amen**

Our Closing Prayer

Loving Lord Jesus, help me to make a difference to those around me, to respond as best I can to those who need help and comfort and so play my part in your kingdom here and now.

Amen.

Prayer inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett