

Pastor Randy's short devotion for Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>:

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ (John 3:5)

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the San Hedrin, the ruling council of the Jews. Nicodemus loved God and sought to build his relationship with God through sacrifices in the Temple, serving his neighbors, giving to the poor, spending time in prayer and praise to God. One day as Nicodemus was in the Temple, getting ready to leave after he had spent time in prayer and worship, and he heard a ruckus in the Outer Court. Jesus had made a whip, opened the pens of the sheep and the oxen and chased them out, flipped over the tables of the money changers. Then Jesus declared, “Get these things out of here. Stop making my Father's house into a marketplace.”

When questioned about his authority to cleanse the Temple by the Chief Priests, Jesus declared, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Jesus' actions and words confused Nicodemus. He thought he was secure in his relationship with God, through his words and deeds. Then Jesus tells him, he must be born from above, what is flesh is flesh and what is Spirit is spirit.

As we listen to the rest of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus makes it clear, who creates the foundation of your relationship with God. God is the actor; Jesus ascended and descended. God loves. God gives his Son Jesus. Jesus is lifted up. Jesus is raised up. In your baptism, you are born of water and the Spirit. God creates the foundation of his relationship with you, God loves you.