

Now, some people didn't take too kindly to the idea that their finest robes weren't worthy of the king, and so they began to make fun of the poor beggar man.

"Ha!" they said, "And look at the rags you are wearing!"

And they began to tease him and mock him... and then they spit on him, "There, that will help you clean your rags!" they said. The truth was, while the beggar's robes were torn and muddied, it didn't seem to be of his own doing - and somehow, their robes seemed all the shabbier in comparison.

They felt ashamed in his presence somehow, and they didn't like it. They didn't like it all.

Finally they had enough of this trouble-maker ruining their special day - he was the problem, after all, not them - and so they began to push and shove him. They wanted to remove him from their sight for good.

As they cruelly pushed him along, the young man looked into Nicodemus's eyes and asked,

"Do you believe in me?"

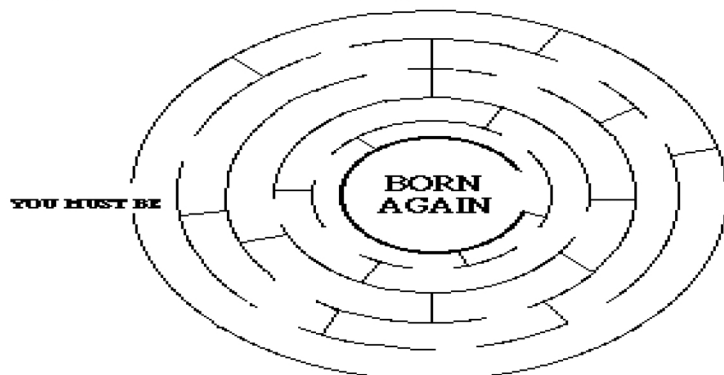
And something in Nicodemus's heart said,

"Yes."

Things got uglier and uglier, the crowd became angrier and angrier, until at last, they carried the beggar off and beat him to death.

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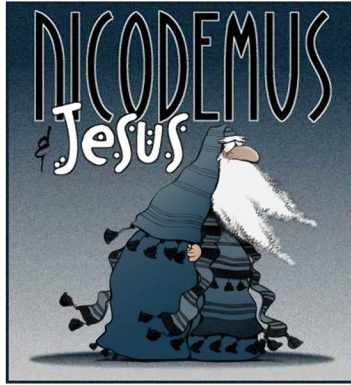
Jesus and Nicodemus



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By Paul Dallgas-Frey
Luke 3.1-8

A Story of Salvation

...continued

And then one day many years later there was another note on the door.

"The King is Having a Feast. At the sound of the trumpet, all will come."

Now, the King's palace was deep in the woods, and no one from Nicodemus's little village had ever been there before.

But there were stories.

There were stories of music and dancing, and laughing all night long, until you could hardly stand up. There were stories of food piled so high on great long tables that there was hardly anywhere left to eat. And tall, crystal glasses filled with sweet drinks that tingled your toes but never rotted your teeth no matter how much you drank (or gave you a stomach ache either!).

And there was a great fireplace. Every night by the flickering light of the fire, the King would tell stories like no one had ever heard before - amazing stories, and they always seemed to be just about you. And the endings were always just perfect, better than you could ever dream up yourself.



Well, at last the day came.

A trumpet was heard off in the distance.

But what do you wear to the King's palace?

Your absolutely finest, of course. And for everyone in this poor village, that was the robe they each had received all those years before.

Only some of those robes weren't so fine anymore. Some were worse than others - some MUCH worse.

Some people were ashamed at how shabby their robes had become, and dreaded the thought of having to appear before the King in practically rags.

Some others didn't care, just as long as there was free food. But Nicodemus had kept his robe cleaner than most. He tried his best.

Still, somehow it didn't seem to be enough.



The next morning, a path into the woods appeared. Everyone was sure there hadn't been one there before. And as the crowds pushed along it, foxes and squirrels and deer seemed to leap along beside them.

When they all arrived at the palace, they found that it was surrounded by a great wall made of the purest, whitest stone they had ever seen.

They crowded and pushed their way along the road that led up to the main gate - a magnificent gate, as high as twelve men, made entirely of gold.

But then, an astounding thing happened.

There was a poor beggar, in tattered rags, sitting near the gate.

"I am the King's son, listen to me!" the man said.

"The King loves you all so dearly, and his greatest desire is for you to come to his feast. But only those who are properly dressed can ever enter the King's palace. And look at you! But yet there is a way. Believe in me! Come in by me!"