

Victory over life's spiritual deceptions (John 3:1-21)

The tragedy of religion

John 3:1-10

Introduction: I believe I can safely say each of us have experienced tragedy in our life. You may be thinking; what does he mean by tragedy? Well; the definition is "An event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe:" for one it may be the breaking of a nail, for another it may be the death of a loved one. Tragedy can look different in all of our lives. Now I want to shift my introduction to a word getting thrown around haphazardly today and it is getting thrown around without any discussion or explanation, leaving you open to define it as you want. The word is religion. By definition religion is "A superhuman controlling power." The words tragedy and religion are two words that are linked in a very real way. Religion can develop you or it can destroy you. Today we begin taking a look at Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a very religious man, he was a model Jew. Nicodemus was a model Pharisee. Nicodemus knew the right words, the right songs, he had the tora memorized, he served through the synagogue, and he gave the right tithe. Nicodemus done it all and it all satisfied the status quo. Nicodemus was religious. After hearing Jesus and observing the cleansing of the temple, Nicodemus had a few questions. Jesus not only answered his questions he presented Nicodemus with a reality check; religion is not the same as redemption. Look with me this morning as we learn Jesus teaching on "The tragedy of religion."

I. The deception of belief can lead to tragedy V.v.1-2

A. Why do you believe what you believe?

Nicodemus was a leader and knew only what he had been taught by men.

B. What do you bring to Jesus? Suggestion or Submission.

Nicodemus brought to Jesus what he believed. Jesus was a teacher.

II. The deception of blindness can lead to tragedy V.v.3-8

A. Cannot see the kingdom of heaven without being born again.

Jesus words are not mixed!

B. Why the amazement of Salvation?

Why do we believe the good go to heaven and the bad go to hell?

III. The deception of bewilderment can lead to tragedy V.v.9-10

How can God be this way? Many today ask the same question.

Nicodemus had it all figured out! Many today feel the same way.

The Lord didn't bring confusion, He brought correction!

Conclusion: There is an attitude going around today that teaches many the belief of religion as a means of peace or war. It is taught that you decide how religion will play out in your life. This attitude is leading many people down a dead end road to tragedy. Religion, and I mean any religion is a road to spiritual tragedy, it is a deception of belief, a deception of blindness and a deception of bewilderment. One will lead to the other and the end will be separation from God for an eternity, in other words it will mean hell. If you are struggling with religion today, I have good news. Jesus is calling you to believe in Him. Don't bring to Him your suggestions for eternal life, instead come to Him in submission to His offer of eternal life. A new birth.