

CLEARING THE FOG

BELIEFS MATTER

"CLEARING THE FOG" WEEK 8 NOTES JULY 9

KEY THOUGHTS

- Who am I? I am fearfully and wonderfully made, yet dramatically broken. Yet there is another aspect which makes us US.
- The gnawing question: What is this inner, unsettled nudging in me? There has to be more. That sense that there is more to life than just here.
- The writer of Ecclesiastes (likely Solomon, or at least someone with his experiences), talked about how in all things in life, this too will pass.
- Then he wrote these accurate words which tell us another thing which makes us US:
- Ecclesiastes 3:11 – He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has set eternity in man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.
- Augustine echoes those thoughts: You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.
- Blaise Pascal, falsely quoted saying that we're created with a God-shaped vacuum, actually said it this way: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."
- Centuries after Solomon, another searching man is noted in John 3: Nicodemus.
- v.2: He came to Jesus at night. While we're not sure exactly why, it's typically viewed that either he was too ashamed, as a religious leader, to be asking questions of another. Or, perhaps he simply wanted undistracted time alone with the Master. Regardless, he came. He was drawn. He recognized there must be more.
- v.3: Jesus shocked Nicodemus with a theological statement that would have upended any Jew of the day. It wasn't their Jewishness by birth that would save them. Salvation only came by Rebirth! This would have been a crisis of belief for Nicodemus. Like all of us, that's a good thing to go through!
- v.4-6: Jesus explained in further detail that we must be born of the Spirit. HOW?
- v.7-8: This happens only by God's working, for only He can do it.
- John 6:41-44 – unless God draws us, we'll never so much as have an interest in Jesus. Do we actually believe this? Can't I just come to Jesus whenever I wish?
- Isaiah 55:6 reminds us that the Lord can't always be found, nor does He always seem near.

SCRIPTURES

- Ecclesiastes 3:11
- John 3:1-8
- John 6:41-44
- Isaiah 55:6

Practical & Reflection

- What moments have I had where Jesus challenged what I believe? Do I recognize that for my faith to grow, it will have to be challenged?
- Do I typically respond to Jesus positively when I am made aware that He is nudging me?