

Blowing of the Spirit

John 3:1-17

“Have you been born again?” I find this one of those cringe questions that limit the Christian experience to a single, individualistic point in time and commentators note this is a question that has a very one-dimensional understanding of the concept, much like Nicodemus had.

“Have you been born again?” What does it mean for us in our time and place to engage in what the love God offers the whole world in new and fresh ways that are open to the blowing of the Spirit? What does it mean for us to look again at our world with fresh eyes and with God's eyes?

Like wind, the blowing of the spirit is uncontrollable and if we do not respond, then it will blow in other directions to move other people. How do we respond to this movement of the Spirit. Do we wrap our winter woollies tighter and complain about the messy leaves being blown from their neat piles scattering them across the lawn? Do we close our doors and windows to keep that dreadful wind out? Or do we enjoy it, play in it, respond to it?

Nicodemus would have had a lot. He was a leader of the Jews, a Pharisee. He had education and was probably fairly well off. He would have led a rather comfortable life. Yet something led to this conversation with an itinerant troublemaker from the wrong side of the tracks. At this stage Jesus did not have much of a reputation, but the cleansing of the temple had just happened, so that would not have recommended his teaching to many in authority. Still, something drew Nicodemus into this conversation where with touches of irony and humour he is rather effectively told he does not know much.

The conversation draws to its conclusion with one of the most well-known passages from this Gospel: God loves the world. This idea that God loves the world gives us our framework for how we interact with it and how we are also called to respond with love to this world.

Like Nicodemus, we also have much that we can give, but will we choose to do that? As we experience that fullness of life in the present, will we also share it with those in this community and enable them to know that they are also truly and deeply loved by God?

Where will the wind of the Spirit blow us at this time? How will we respond to its movement? Will we think that we do not have enough or will we be willing to take the risk to respond?