Evangelist-Daniel Ruegg Email-epaphras11@earthlink.net Web site-mariettarenochurchofchrist.org

 **Meeting Times**

 Sunday Bible Study-9:30 am Sunday Morning Worship-10:30 am Sunday Evening Worship-6:30 pm Wednesday Bible Study-7:00 pm

Weekend VBS is **August 3rd and 4th**



**Nicodemus and the Rich Young Ruler**

(Jn. 3:1-21; Mt. 19:16-26; Mk. 10:17-30; Lk. 18:18-30)

Daniel Ruegg

We have two separate accounts of two completely different individuals who came with questions seeking answers from Jesus and struggled to accept His response. While it must be noted that both Nicodemus and the young ruler are totally different people who met Jesus at completely different moments, there are amazingly a striking number of similarities that existed between the two:

1. **Both Were Rulers of the Jews**

“*Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,” (Jn. 3:1)*

*“A ruler questioned Him,” (Lk. 18:18)*

1. **Both Acknowledged Jesus As A Good Teacher**

*“Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him,” (Jn. 3:2)*

*“A man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mk. 10:17)*

**3.Both Resisted His Teaching**

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old?...How can these things be?” (Jn. 3:3-4, 9)*

*“If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property,” (Mt. 19:21-22)*

Both being affiliated with the class of rulers who predominantly rejected Jesus’ claims of spiritual authority (*“Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, ‘You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion,” Lk. 23:13-14*) both Nicodemus and the young man were willing to stand on their own honest personal conclusions as to the credentials of Jesus as a spiritual teacher and resisted the pressure of conformity among their peers. Additionally, to the credit of their character, both Nicodemus and the young man were admirably serving God with their abilities in ways they could have easily been tempted to use in a more self serving capacity. Impressively, the young man was resisting all forms of temptation that are commonly present with young men and great wealth, as he asserts he had been keeping the moral commandments of God all throughout his youth and was using his wealth to the glory of God. “*Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.’ And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth,’” (Lk. 18:20-21).* Nicodemus was using the wisdom and learning he had achieved in a most selfless and serving manner, teaching Israel to know God (*Jn. 3:10*). Yet, ironically, both found them crippled with an inability to follow the teachings of the One they both hailed as the sole great Teacher of God by two varieties of wealth: one by the wealth of knowledge and the other by the wealth of worldly possessions. How quickly the Master forced Nicodemus to change his assured manner, “Teacher, we know,” to “I do not know; I cannot understand,” as his wealth of knowledge became a hindrance to accepting his own misunderstandings about the nature of the Kingdom. The rich young ruler likewise was shaken from his confident “I have kept” to an implied “I cannot keep. Farewell,” as his wealth of material possessions was too great to follow the Lord’s conditions to eternal life. Never underestimate these two great potential stumbling blocks to faithfully following the teachings of the Savior and let us always be seeking God’s wealth of deeper spiritual knowledge and an eternal inheritance reserved in Heaven. The power of the spiritual rebirth Jesus spoke of with Nicodemus is the only thing which can truly overcome these barriers to an obedient walk with the Good Teacher as we are forced to learn everything again with new eyes and redirect our hearts towards new desires. “The things that are impossible with people are possible with God,” (Lk. 18:27).