Often in our childhood we have heard the repetition of John 3:16. Perhaps some of you spent time in Sunday school memorizing this verse. Yet when I sat with this text this week, I kept re-reading the word “might” in verse 17. “God did not send his son into the world to condemn us but in order that we ***might*** be saved.” Might be saved? I don’t know about you, but I feel like this one hits a little different than …God so loved the world…

Might indicates a core responsibility past God to us. But what does that mean?

We know to be true that John 3 shares the core identity of our Christian faith and yet as you’ve just heard the conversation with Nicodemus can leave you with question marks until you get to the familiar verse of your childhood.

So, naturally, we’re going to walk through it.

Let’s start with Nicodemus – who is this guy?

At the time, Israel was roman occupied and there was a small group of Sadducees and Pharisees that had limited power to rule – Nicodemus was a member of this little group of authority. Nicodemus and Jesus were an unlikely pair to be seen together. Remember, Jesus was actively upending roman law & order. So, Nicodemus goes to visit at night.

During his visit, Nicodemus has his world rocked.

When Jesus says, “I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it’s not possible to see God’s kingdom” that sends Nicodemus into a tailspin.

For him the Hebrew Bible teaching of the Israelites being gathered together and given a new life has happened already. They were just waiting on the Messiah – a king.

What Jesus shares that shakes Nicodemus is that new birth equals salvation - equals healing - and the way to new birth is through Jesus, the spirit and God.

This is the point where Nicodemus’ mind explodes, and Jesus draws him in with the wind. An invisible movement that no one can see – only feel, only hope for, and only believe in.

The wind blows where it wills and even the highest teacher of the land does not have to have all the answers to experience God. This teacher of Israel isn’t required to understand the things of heaven. In fact, Jesus says you won’t because you haven’t seen it.

Our salvation doesn’t become fulfilled because we understand all the mystery of our faith. To be saved is fulfilled when in spite of what we do not know we still choose to go with the wind.

There is a divine mystery to our faith that asks of us the same yes that God gives to us at birth. God says yes to our joy, our living, and our being with God forever.

This mystery does not ask of us to have every ounce of our faith, belief and understanding of God calculated or mastered – it’s quite the contrary.

We are to be masters of none. We are to be seekers, observers, listeners and believers in the wind of which we cannot see that will take us where God calls.

Perhaps, when, like Nicodemus, we feel that we have the power and authority to have mastered the biblical text or our faith, we might seek the wind.

For truly, I see in this text, that Jesus is testifying to the latter –

Life in the Spirit, is as if, it were the wind of God – we will never fully understand or know where it comes from or goes.

As long as we live, we are learning, seeing, and experiencing God in new ways – we do not have to have all the answers we simply have to stand in the wind, breathe in and out, and believe.

To be born anew, does not mean a passive waiting for God to save the world. Jesus models for us the wind. Throughout his ministry, Jesus has moments of uncertainty. The moments leading up to Jesus crucifixion is spent in prayer unsure of why God would place such a call on Jesus’ life.

Can you imagine what our world would be like if Christ had not gone with the wind?

To believe in Christ is to be saved and to be saved is to love one another as Christ loves us as God holds us and as the wind guides us.

May we go where the spirit calls us, act as the spirit guides us and love as Christ asks of us all of our days with a bold yes to the mystery of our faith and in the beauty of God’s love for each of us.

Amen.