

THE CHOSEN

Season One Episodes 7

Nicodemus Meets Jesus



This episode starts with a thousand year flashback to Moses. Jesus continues to call His followers, forging a core group of people. He will prepare for fantastic works ahead. These disciples have various backgrounds, and many personal issues; but they are prepared to follow their kind, brilliant, miracle-working rabbi anywhere He goes. Jesus talks to Nicodemus.

The desire to be on top is like an electromagnetic force. And it can seize any one of us, like a thumbtack sucked up by a magnet. So then, think about what it would take to reverse that mighty pull once you'd been seized. What would cause you to willingly give it up, walk away from the money, and lay down the power?

Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, to sit and talk and learn—and hide. John's Gospel doesn't specify that the meeting took place in the dark to keep his fellow Pharisees from seeing it, but Jesus's words implied as much. Until you're willing to step out of the dark and into the light, you're not with me. So what is the force that can create such a change in person? Remember that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea have a prominent role later on...but Nicodemus isn't the only one who is full of questions.

Jesus didn't see Matthew sitting at his collection booth and think, Oh perfect. I don't have an aggressive numbers guy yet. He wasn't rounding out his team based on their resumes, core competencies, and Myers-Briggs results. In fact, their prior accomplishments were effectively useless, as evidenced by the five thousand folks served fish by the fishermen who had nothing to do with the catch. Jesus didn't need ability. He required availability. Matthew was not chosen based on what he could do. He was called because of what he was willing to give up, which was everything. He chose to take Jesus at His word: "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39). Matthew's world as he understood it was torn apart. And Nicodemus? He heard the same words as Matthew: "Follow Me." In this version of the story, Nicodemus KNOWS that God resides in Jesus. Nicodemus IS a man of God. Yet his choice is so different from Matthew's.

Characters

Jesus, Nicodemus, Matthew, Mary Magdalene

Scriptural References

John 3:1-21 (Jesus teaches Nicodemus)

Matthew 9: 9-13 (Jesus calls Matthew)

Numbers 21:4-9 (Moses and the bronze snake)

Luke 18:18-23 & Luke 19:1-10 (Two contrasting invitations)

Discussion Questions

- 1). What is your favorite conversation that Jesus has had with a character thus far in the Series?
- 2). Amidst criticism for building the bronze serpent, Moses said, "I have learned to do what He says without questioning." What does this tell us about faith?
- 3). Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born again. Outside of the re-forging grace of baptism, have you had an experience where God made his presence clear, came over you, and gave you something that resembles new life?
- 4). Did it surprise you how quickly Matthew agreed to follow Jesus? Did it surprise you how Nicodemus, though he fell to his knees with Faith in Jesus the Messiah, struggled to follow him? What causes led to Matthew and Nicodemus responding so differently to Jesus's invitation?
- 5). What did you think of Peter's reaction to Jesus calling Matthew? If you're brutally honest, do you identify more with pre-Jesus Matthew or disciple Matthew?

Quotable Quotes

(Jesus to Nicodemus) "If I have told you of earthly things, and you do not believe, how can I tell you heavenly things?"

(Matthew) "My whole world, everything I thought I knew, what if its wrong?"

Jesus: "Get used to different."

(Nicodemus) "My whole life I have wondered if I would see this day."

Season One Episode 8

Season Finale

The woman at the well



This finale episode from Season 1 also begins with a flashback, this time to Jacob's Well. Fast forward to Simon's house for a miraculous visit. Then Jesus and his students leave Capernaum while under pressure from religious and Roman authorities. The apostles drawing together, still confused, yet anxious for the Kingdom to come. Jesus makes a surprise stop at Jacob's Well for an important encounter. And with this encounter, His "career" finally becomes public.

The adulterous woman...The bleeding woman...The Samaritan woman at the well. When the world chose to abuse, alienate, or brutally judge these woman, Jesus chose to rescue, restore, and redeem them. To ascribe them value. Because Jesus makes us what we're not.

The disciples underwent a massive recalibration. Everything they thought they knew about how to live turned upside down. The new kingdom order would be to put others first, to love when people hate, to pray for those who persecute, to lead by serving, to give when it costs, to trust in God's provision no matter how glaring the lack, and to die in order to live. Jesus changed everything, and sharing His love, life, and purpose with all people, including the least of these—especially the least of these—became the disciples' sole mission.

Do you wonder if the Pharisees rang the doorbell? Did they stand on the corner whispering? Did they grumble loudly pretending Jesus couldn't hear them from three feet away? Did they come with a set of questions but change their course when they saw who Jesus was sitting with? Do you wonder if anyone at the table was offended by their question, or if they were so used to being hated and judged that they just didn't care? And what about the woman at the well? "I who speak to you am He." Until that moment, Jesus had only implied His true identity: The actual words—the announcement of God's arrival on Earth—were whispered to the one no one wanted. He knew she'd be there. He knew her name...and her pain...and her need. She was, in fact, the reason He came, because from the well of Christ's immense and indiscriminate mercy flows His mission: To rescue and redeem the lost.

Scriptural Reference

Matthew 9:9-13, 8:14-15
Luke 4:38-39

Mark 2:13-17 (Jesus eats with sinners)
John 4:1-42 (The story of the Woman at the Well)

Characters

Jesus, Nicodemus, Simon Peter, Mary Magdalene, Andrew, Eden, Simon's Mother-in-law, Samaritan Woman

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Jesus mentions several times that he's not trying to bring people 'easy', nor is he here to deliver them from their oppressive government. What is Jesus' purpose in coming and in bringing His disciples to follow him?
- 2) Do some self-reflection, has there ever been a time in your life where you were as excited about Jesus as the woman at the well was? How can we bring back some of that excitement?
- 3) Who were the first told about Jesus' birth? Who did He first tell about His ministry? What was their social status?
- 4) Following Jesus can create turmoil in your life and especially in your relationships. Nicodemus, Matthew, and Peter all encountered adversity after beginning to follow Christ. Do any of their stories resonate with you?
- 5). What do you think about Jesus's decision to eat with tax collectors and sinners?
- 6). Jesus took his lumps, so to speak, from the Samaritan woman. Jesus let the Samaritan woman express her anger and frustration, and that approach worked out. Are we called to endure hostility from groups who have been mistreated by?
- 7). Has there ever been a time in your life where you were as excited about Jesus as the woman at the well was? How can we bring back some of that excitement?
- 8). At the end of the episode, Jesus said he did not want food because he was nourished by doing the will of the Father. What does this reveal about the heart of Jesus?
- 9). Obedience at the risk of ridicule and opposition from others, or that threatens our usual way of life seems impossible. Discuss the different ways people (Simon, Eden, Matthew, Nicodemus, etc.) reacted to Jesus' directions, the directions of family, and from peers. How is this true in our own lives?
- 10). Jesus mentions several times that he's not trying to make his followers lives 'easy', nor is he here to deliver them from their oppressive government. What is Jesus' purpose in coming and in bringing His disciples to follow him?
- 11). What was significant about Jesus choosing to talk to a Samaritan woman? How can you model that today?
- 12). Do some self-reflection, has there ever been a time in your life where you were as excited about Jesus as the woman at the well was? How can we bring back some of that excitement?
- 13). What kind of statement was Jesus making by choosing to announce Himself to an outcast who was both a Samaritan and a woman?
- 14). How was Jesus different than every other person she'd come across? How was she expecting to be treated by Him?

Quotable Quotes

(Jesus) "Listen, if we are going to have a question and answer session every time, we do something you are not used to , this is going to be a very annoying time together for all of us."

(Jacob) "We didn't choose him, he chose us."

(Eden to Simon Peter) "Thank you."(Simon Peter) "For what?" (Eden) "For following Him."

(Samaritan woman) "I'm going to tell everyone!"(Jesus) "I was counting on it."(Simon) "You told her who You are? So does that mean ...?"

(Jesus) "It means we're going to stay here for a couple days. It's been a long time of sowing, but the fields are ripe for harvest."(Simon) "And so it's time?"(Jesus) "Let's go."
(Simon) YES!

(Samaritan woman) "I am rejected by others." (Jesus:) "I know. But not by the Messiah

(Jesus to Eden) "You saw it first, you know?... What I see in Simon, you were the first person to notice when no one else did. That connects us." But I see you. "

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