

March 26

Title: The Uplifted Christ
Text: John 3:9-15

Take your Bibles, please, and turn with me to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John chapter 3. Our topic: The Uplifted Christ.

We are looking at the story of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a very important religious leader. He came to Jesus to check him out. To see if he was all that He claimed to be. So, Jesus and Nicodemus are having a little discussion concerning a person's salvation or new birth. And this discussion involved the following points. (1) First of all we looked at the NEED OF THE NEW BIRTH IN VS. 1 THRU 3. (2) Secondly, we looked at THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH IN Vs 4-8. Today, I want to come to (3) on your outline: THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH - VS. 9-15.

Let's stand for the reading

Now, we will be looking at verses 9-15. ~~But, I want to see the entire story. So, let's~~

of God's word
begin with Vs: 1.

(Read Vs. 1-15)

(Prayer)

^{3C}
(3) Now, beginning with Vs 9, we come to the necessity of the new birth. The question is why?

Why is the new birth so important? There are several things that I want you to see.

(1) Number one, in Vs 9 notice the anxiety of Nicodemus when he ask: "How can these things be?" He is anxious.

Nicodemus is like many people who upon hearing the testimony of a New believer in Christ and seeing their joy and their enthusiasm and peace and assurance, instead of wanting it for themselves, they get all hung up on the mechanics. HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE? I mean, "has this person talked himself into this religion? And the questions often deal with: ~~HOW CAN THIS POSSIBLE BE SO?~~ CAN THIS REALLY HAPPEN IN THIS DAY AND AGE?

So Nicodemus is Anxious

next
Now, please remember that Nicodemus was an educated man. He was a political leader in Israel. And he was a religious leader. Yet, he still did not understand. Just like many people today.

2D Per
(2E) So, beginning with Vs 10, we have the answer of Jesus. And this answer contains four things that are important for all of us to know.

(1E) Number one, in Vs 10, notice the expression of Jesus concerning Nicodemus' failure to understand. Jesus said to him: "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?"

This just amazed Jesus. Nicodemus failure to understand. And yet, he was "THE TEACHER."

Meaning:
That he was the number one gun as far as the Rabbi's were concerned. He was 'THE TEACHER' of Israel. This means that he knew the O.T. law. He knew the scriptures. He was a Pharisee. In the eyes of the people he was beyond reproach. And yet, this man did not understand the things of the Spirit of God.

And let me tell you. That teaches me something. And I hope it teaches you something. That no matter how educated you are, no matter how moral you may think yourself to be, and no matter how long you may have been a member of the church, yet, that does not help you to understand spiritual things. *That is why people church hope -*

That is often a mystery to people. Certainly, we would expect that some one with a good education would understand the simple things of God's Word. Do you remember what the Bible says in I Corinthians 2:14? It says that the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

In Hebrews 11:3, we read: "that through faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God." You see, you need faith and you need spiritual birth in order to understand the things of God.

So, I believe the point to Nicodemus was that if you don't understand this simple earthly illustration ^{of wind} I gave you, and this basic earthly thing of man coming to know what spiritual birth is all about, just like you are born physical so you are born spiritually. ^{IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT} Then how in the world are you going to understand heavenly things. And the heavenly things in the context deal with himself. That He is the one that came down from heaven. He is the one that must be lifted up. He is the uplifted one. He is the one that will bring eternal life to all people. How can we understand that, and understand Him, if we cannot understand the earthly thing ^{he shared} ~~with~~ him about the wind and being born of the spirit. So, he showed him that first things first. And then second thing followed.

^{O.K} (4) Now, the fourth thing I want you to see in Vs 13 concerning this answer of Jesus' is that Jesus pointed to his own coming down from heaven as the solution to Nicodemus' understanding. He said in Vs 13: "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the son of Man."

Now, dear friends, no one has ascended into heaven, except Jesus. He is the only one. So, when Jesus says: "he who came down from heaven is the one who is going to ascend", right here, He is predicting his own ascension into heaven. And he is also predicating his origin. And Nicodemus is sitting there listening to this teaching and wondering who Jesus is because of his miracles. And now Jesus is telling him: "Listen, Nicodemus, I came down from heaven. I am the one who understands heavenly things. You need to come to me, if you want to be saved." Dear friends, here is a clear statement concerning the deity of Jesus Christ.

And what Jesus said to Nicodemus He is saying to all of us. If we want to truly understand God's purpose and will for this church, and for our lives, we must come to Jesus. We must start to operate our lives on Biblical principles. We must start to love one another. ~~And stop the gossip and arguments and dissensions that go on in this church.~~ ^{and christians,}

^{2D}
(3E) Then in Vs 14 Jesus uses an O.T. story to illustrate the necessity of the new birth. This

illustrates
~~example~~ comes from the book of Numbers. Would you take your Bibles, please, and turn to the Book of Numbers. In your O.T., it is: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. Numbers chapter 21 beginning at Vs ~~4~~. That is page 230 if you are using the correct translation. In Numbers 21:5 we have this O.T. ~~example~~ *example* which according to Jesus illustrates the necessity of the New Birth.

(Read Numbers 21:~~4~~-9)

That is quite a story. Almost like science fiction. But it is God's Word. And it is true. A miracle happened. Many people were bitten by snakes And people were dying. So, they put up a bronze snake on a pole. And if you were bitten all you had to do was look at that bronze snake....bang....you were healed...Tremendous...

And Jesus said to Nicodemus, "as Moses liften up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be liften up." *Joh 3:14 why? This illustrates 2 things*

(1) ~~EVN~~ First of all, I notice that the serpent is a picture of Christ. Now, why is the serpent on a pole a picture of Christ? *There are 4 reasons.*

(1) Number one, it remainds us of the cruse that was upon the whole world. The cruse that was on the world because of sin. And especially upon Satan.

~~Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 3. Genesis chapter 3 verse 15. Here we learn that the Lord put a cruse on the Serpent. Genesis 3:15..~~ *Do you remember what*

"I will put enmity between you (meaning the Serpent), and the woman (meaning Eve) and between your seed (meaning children of the Devil) and her seed (meaning the child of the woman), He (meaning a special child) shall bruise you on the head (meaning to kill the snake) and you (the snake) shall bruise him *(special child)* on the heel!"

And the point is, both things happened at the same time. It happened at the cross of Jesus Christ. At the cross Satan received a death blow. At the same time he felt he was gaining a victory because Christ was on the cross. But even today, Satan is a conquered victum. His sentence is already secured. He is a judged enemy. It is hopeless for Satan. He is finished.

And dear friends, all of that happened at the cross. Satan repreence that cruse. In Galations 3:13 Paul says, "Christ redeemed us from the cruse of the law, having become a curse for us."

(2) Now, secondly, I notice that Moses didn't take a dead snake and put it up on the pole. WHY? Because that wouldn't have been a fitting symbol.

50 They had a likeness to the snake. ~~They take it out of the~~ Now, why is that important? Because when Jesus came into the world, he came in the likness of sinful flesh... Jesus had no sin in him. But he came in the likeness of sinful flesh. And he was made a cruse for us. ~~In fact, that snake~~

In fact, that snake representing christ is a tremendous truth related to how far down Christ came to save you and me.

~~Christ~~ ^{Jesus} was humiliated. The king of kings, the Lord of Lords. The eternal God in human flesh. He was humiliated down to bearing all of our sin on himself. Bearing the whole cruse of Satan on himself when He died on that cross.

My God, why have you forsaken me

Also, the serpent was made of bronze. Why is that important? In the Bible bronze always represents divine judgement. It is a symbol of divine judgement. And that is very important to remember because Christ when he died on the cross was bearing all of the divine judgement. All the righteous wrath of God was placed on Jeus because of sin.

My God why have you forsaken me

You know, one thing that really thrills me as a believer....If you really got to know me, you would know that I don't deserve to be saved...That is right! I don't deserve to be saved. And I feel the same way about you. So don't spread any rumors....

But, if we really knew about one another, we would all agree that we really don't deserve to be saved. And we really don't.

Some ^{me} made this remark: "BOY, IF THAT IS THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT GOES TO THAT CHURCH THEN I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR DUME RELIGION."

And I said; "PRAISE GOD FOR OUR DUME RELIGION. That is one of the exciting things over at our church. No matter what you have done, Jesus still loves you and wants ~~you~~ ^{TO} and forgives you."

That is true about this church - By no way

Oh, friends, that is a testimony. Don't you ever let people use that hypocritely statement against you. THAT IS A TESTIMONY...⁰Hay, you are right. If you really got to know me, you would be shocked at what you found out.

But, you know, one of the exciting things about my faith in Christ is that all my sin, ^{were} ~~was~~ laid on Jesus.....I HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN.....I KNOW I DON'T

DESERVE IT....BUT, PRAISE GOD, I AM SAVED BY THE ^{GRACE} ~~GRACE~~ OF GOD. *And if you are a believer you have been forgiven and saved by the grace of God*

Amen - Great Truth - Aren't you glad you came to church, today

~~(46)~~ One finally thing that sort of struck me about this serpent. You see, all those people had to do was to look upon that serpent that was on that pole and they would be healed. That is all they had to do.

and Now, if we had been there we might have come up with a number of solution to handle the snake problem. Like: doctors or counselors. And many of us would have run to all kinds of people in order to get help. Some folks might have developed a crusade against snakes. There are people like that. Let's go fight the snakes. But, all they had to do in order to be healed was to do what the Lord told them to do. And that was to look upon the snake on the pole.

And dear friends, that is what God tells us to do if we want to be born spiritually. We need to look upon Jesus Christ. (And when we don't we will never understand the things of the Spirit.) *or be saved*

and I have a feeling that some people would have suggested in all sincerity that we give an offering. Perhaps that would help. Remember the offerings do not help. God does not delight in burnt offerings and scarifies. Look to Jesus and be saved. You can do all these things. But, Jesus wants you to look to him and be saved. That is security, brother. That is faith. That is trust. That is assurance.

Some of them would have looked to Moses and said: "Moses what are we going to do?" Don't look to Moses. Look at the serpent. That is all ;you have to do.

Some of them would have looked at their bites, and would have caused them to cry out: "How are we going to be healed?" Stop looking at yourself. Stop looking at your sins and turn to Jesus.

The song writers says: "Look unto Jesus and live." That is the requirement. And that is the answer for our life.

Now, come back to John chapter 3. John chapter 3 verse 14.

(2E) When Jesus said that the son of man must be lifted up like Moses lifted up the serpent, notice, secondly, concerning this O.T. example that this is an imperative. It is an imperative that Jesus die on the cross. No one will be saved without the cross of Jesus Christ. The bible tells us that all the sin of the world was laid on Jesus when he died on that cross.

^{4D}
~~(4E)~~ Finally, I notice in Vs 15 that there is an issue that all of us must face. And that is: we must look and believe. Vs 15 says: "that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." That is drawing our attention back to that O.T. example. If you looked to the Serpent and believed you would be healed or saved. But, if you didn't you would die. And many people died according to the bible.

And dear friends, the application is so clear. In order to be saved, in order to be born again, in order to see and enter the Kingdom of God, you must look to the cross of Jesus. You must believe that He died for all your sins. It is at the cross that we find our redemption. *It is at*

At The Cross where you are redeemed

Dr. A. J. Gordon was pastor of First Church in Boston, many years ago. One day he met a little boy out in front of the church. The boy was carrying a rusty bird cage with several little birds in the cage. Dr. Gordon ask: "Son, where did you get those birds?"

The boy answered: "I trapped them out in the field."

"What are you going to do with them," the preacher asked.

"I'm going to take them home and play with them."

"What will you do with them when you get through playing with them?" Dr. Gordon asked. "Oh," said the boy, "I guess I'll just feed them to an old cat we have around the house.

Then Dr. Gordon asked the boy how much he would take for the birds and the boy answered. "Mister, you don't want these birds. They're just little old field birds and they can't sing very well."

Dr. Gordon said, "I'll give you five dollars for the cage and the birds." "Great," said the boy. "You just have yourself a deal."

The exchange was made and the boy went whistling down the street. Dr. Gordon took the cage out behind his church and opened the door of the cage and turned the birds lose. And they went flying away into the sky singing as they went.

The next Sunday, Dr. Gordon took the empty bird cage to the pulpit to use as an illustration in his sermon. He told the congregation all about the little boy and what had happened to the birds. Then he said: "That little boy said that the birds could not sing very well. But, when I released them from the cage they went singing away, and it seemed that they were singing: "REDEEMED, REDEEMED, REDEEMED.

My dear friends, you and I were like those little birds. Satan had us in the cage of sin and was taking us to Hell. Then Jesus ^{was up lifted on} ~~went to~~ the cross and paid the price for our release. And he rose from the dead for our redemption. And when we look to Him in simple faith we, too, can

sing: REDEEMED – REDEEMED – I’VE BEEN REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.”

I close by saying that it will profit you nothing but sorrow and suffering if you gain the whole world and lose your soul. But, it will profit you everything in this life and the life to come ^{if} you

^{would} ~~will only~~ receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. I pray you will make that decision, right now.

Look upon the ^{Uplifted cross} ~~cross~~. Receive Jesus as your savior. ~~Then you can sing - Redeemed, Redeemed, by the Blood of the~~

Let's Close With Prayer

LAMB

you who have an ear let him hear what the Word of God says —

Hymn = Redeemed #521