

# The Look of Faith

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** John 3:11-21

**Preached on:** Sunday, December 1, 2013

It is with great joy that I once again come before you to minister the word of God to you. So will you take your Bibles and turn to John's gospel, chapter 3 as we continue our verse-by-verse examination of this amazing, amazing gospel that helps us understand that Jesus, indeed, is the Son of God.

This morning we will be looking at verses 11-16 of John 3. So, follow along as I read our text, bearing in mind that I have entitled our discourse this morning "The Look of Faith." Beginning in verse 11, Jesus says this:

"11 'Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know and bear witness of that which we have seen, and you do not receive our witness. 12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: even the Son of Man. 14 As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.'"

Every time we encounter the words of our precious Savior we must take time to meditate upon them. In this text, we witness a remarkable encounter that Jesus had with the most prominent teacher and Pharisee of Israel in the first century, a man by the name of Nicodemus. As a representative of the nation of Israel as a whole, he believed that outward conformity to the written law and especially the oral law and traditions of men, was really the goal of life. So, every aspect of Judaism was regulated by ritual and by many oppressive laws that the Pharisees had laid upon the people. As a result, there was much religious pride, a false sense of security because ritual and legalism only produce an illusion of spirituality. Therefore, Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites, blind guides of the blind and you will recall in verses 1-11, Jesus exposed the utter folly of fastidious law keeping, the sheer impossibility of somehow earning divine favor through good works. The absolute stupidity of thinking that there is something that you can do in yourself through some works righteousness system to make you acceptable to a holy God. Therefore, he said in verse 3, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Salvation, as we have learned, is wholly an operation of sovereign grace. It is a work of the Spirit of God who Jesus likened to the wind that is sovereign in its actions. It is beyond man's control so, too, the Spirit. The wind is mysterious in its operations; it cannot be predicted; it cannot be summoned; it cannot be stopped. It is irresistible; it is inscrutable so, too, the Spirit. He says, "And you hear the sound of it," referring to the wind, "but do not know where it comes from and where it is going." In other words, its origin, its direction, its ultimate destination are all secret to men and likewise, the Spirit. So, Jesus says, "So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

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Jesus made it very clear that the natural man is a spiritual corpse. He is like a cadaver that must be given spiritual life, life that can only be granted by God himself, by the regenerating work of the Spirit of God. Now, this stunned Nicodemus. In fact, it angered him and Jesus knew that. He was, like many people today, a man that had a holier-than-thou attitude because of all the things that he does unlike other people, things that should make him, in his mind, acceptable to a holy God. So, he's incredulous when he hears Jesus saying these things and knowing the blackness of his blindness, Jesus reminded Nicodemus of the very truths with respect to being born again that were written in the Old Testament. A passage there in Ezekiel 36 that we studied last week, one that Nicodemus should have known and certainly he did know the passage but he did not apply it and so Jesus berated him for not knowing these truths.

Now, here in actually verses 11-21, Jesus is going to take another Old Testament passage to further explain God's work of redemption so Nicodemus could understand it and, by extension, all of Israel that sorely misunderstood and resented these great truths and I'm sure there are people within the sound of my voice today that will resent them as well. So, he speaks to all of us.

Now, bear in mind what began as a dialogue becomes a monologue. As Jesus presents this great discourse to confront Nicodemus' arrogance and ignorance and unbelief and he does this with yet a short yet profound discourse here in verses 11-21 and we're going to look at just verses 11-16 here today.

Today, I would like to outline it very simply for you. We're going to see: 1. the failure of faith; 2. the look of faith; and finally the promise of faith. What Jesus says here to Nicodemus applies to every man and every woman that intellectually believes that Jesus was a great teacher as Nicodemus believed, even one sent from God but people that refused to acknowledge that he was, indeed, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of sin, people that refused to admit that they are helpless sinners ruled by their lusts, slaves to their sin, unwitting slaves to Satan and his kingdom of darkness. Like most people today, the ancient Israelites, especially those there in the first century, did not understand that they were hopeless and helpless. They did not understand that they had violated the law of God and, therefore, they stood condemned under his righteous standard. They did not understand that they were bound for judgment. They did not understand what most people refuse to understand today and that is that because of our depraved nature, sinful man not only rejects these great truths with respect to the need to be born again, but he resents them. He resents them with a seething indignation. We all like to think that there is something that we can do that is meritorious before a holy God, enough that he would say, "Hey, you know what? I like that. You make the cut." But in reality, what Jesus is saying is that unless God does something, man will continue to shake his puny little fist in God's face all the way to hell. And even in hell, the word of God says that he will continue to blaspheme God for eternity in the flames of just wrath. My friends, this is why the gospel is such good news but this is also why it is so despised.

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So, seeing these things in the heart of Nicodemus, Jesus addresses: 1. the failure of faith. Notice verse 11, “Truly, truly I say to you, we speak that which we know and bear witness of that which we have seen and you do not receive our witness.” Let’s look at this closely: the term “we” here refers to not only what Jesus is saying but the testimony of John the Baptist and his disciples that Nicodemus was now fully aware of along with what Jesus is saying and his disciples. Remember, they had been around enough that these leaders, they’re hearing all of this. They are hearing this gospel message and this is a stark contrast to the “we” that Nicodemus used in verse 2 referring to his fellow Pharisees and to the Sanhedrin and so forth. So, Jesus is making a contrast between what you and your people say and what I and my people are saying. Here he even uses the plural “you” in the original language in addressing Nicodemus because this is referring to the nation of Israel that Nicodemus is representing.

So, Jesus speaks forthrightly and with authority. He says, “We speak that which we know and bear witness of that which we have seen and you do not receive our witness.” My friends, will you notice that there is not one hint that Jesus is suggesting here, “You know, Nicodemus, why don’t you and your fellow Pharisees, the Sanhedrin, why don’t we get together and let’s have a conversation? Why don’t we have a dialogue? Let’s have a debate here all in an effort to find mutual respect and common ground.” We don’t see any of that.

My friends, we can no more convince a man to be saved through compelling arguments than we can raise a man from the dead. It is a work of the Spirit of God. Remember, Jesus has already said, “You must be born again.” It’s a statement of fact. It’s not even an invitation and how does that happen? Well, he was going to go on to say that, “You must believe in me the Lord Jesus Christ.” Well, how can a man believe? Well, it’s by the gift of faith. Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God not a result of works that no one should boast for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus.” And we know, according to Romans 10:17, “Faith comes by,” what? It comes “by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ,” not the word of man, not the word of Rabbis, the word of Christ, the word of Yeshua, the Messiah. So, in other words, he’s saying it comes here through the word of the Lord Jesus Christ that you reject.

As a footnote: this should be a very great comfort to us when it comes to evangelism. You know, sometimes I will hear people say, “Well, you know, I just don’t know what to say to people.” Really? My friends, all you have to do is let them hear the word of Christ. Point them to the word. Let them read. Let them hear what Jesus says. Open up the word to them. Let them read John 3. Unleash the gospel on people. And when that happens, the Spirit of God and its irresistible wind will blow upon those that he has sovereignly ordained to save and they will believe and by the word and by the Spirit, God will accomplish his purposes in his people. This is what the Scriptures so clearly teach. The word of God will either harden or soften a heart. Remember, once again, it is God not man that is the author of regeneration and in ways that are beyond our ability to fathom, we know according to Scripture, that the Holy Spirit will use his word to change the

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desires of the human will so that it will freely and voluntarily choose to believe in Christ and be saved.

So, Jesus says “we speak that which we know.” In other words, “What we know about regeneration, the very thing that you resent and by implication here, the very thing that you obviously don’t know and don’t like.” And he says as well, “and we bear witness of that which we have seen. We have seen the transforming power of the Spirit through his word. We have seen the results of the new birth,” and haven’t we all seen that? We’ve seen that in our lives; we’ve seen that in the lives of others. It is an amazing thing to behold when the Spirit of God causes someone to be born again and they become a new creation in Christ. The old things pass away and the new things come. They actually become more like Christ little by little.

So, he says, “we bear witness of that which we have seen,” but then he says this, “and you do not receive our witness.” An amazing statement. Beloved, don’t miss this because here is the failure of faith, here is why most people do not believe in Christ, here is why people will perish in their sins: because they do not receive the witness of Christ. They will not receive the word of God and this is why Jesus berated Nicodemus earlier as you will recall, because of his ignorance of these spiritual realities that were so clear in Ezekiel 36. Now, please understand, the reason why unsaved people are so exceedingly ignorant of spiritual truth, the reason why they refuse to place their faith in Christ, is because they refuse to receive the witness of God concerning these things: the need to be born again, the need for God to do something that we cannot do. They reject it, they resent it, they will distort the word of God because it absolutely flies in the face of our rabid determination to somehow be the master of our own destiny.

My friend, you will never come to faith in Christ unless you first believe what God says. Faith is the taproot of understanding that bears the fruit of belief. Augustine said, “Seek not to understand that you might believe but believe that you might understand.” Again, if I can put it this way: it’s not a lack of intellect or understanding that prevents a man from being born again, that is not the issue, it is a lack of faith in what God says. They simply refuse to receive his witness.

And his unbelief, therefore, makes him vulnerable to spiritual myths. We see this all the time. Paul talked about this in 2 Timothy 4:3, remember there he says, “They will not endure sound doctrine.” It’s another way of saying, “They will not receive our testimony. They won’t receive that. They don’t like that.” He says, “But wanting to have their ears tickled,” in other words, because they love the more new and fashionable ideas, they love the pseudo-scholarship and the armchair theology. What will they do? They will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. In other words, they’ll find teachers and preachers that will tell them what they want to hear, that will tell them the things that will somehow appeal to their lusts and in effect what they’re saying is, “I will be the measure of what is true not God.”

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So, Paul says, “they will accumulate teachers in accordance to their own desires,” and then he says, “and they will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” It’s very fascinating. In the original language, when he says “they will turn away their ears from the truth,” that is in the active voice which means it will be a conscious, deliberate choice. They hear the truth, they do not like that, they turn and they go in a different direction. They consciously do that and then when they do that, it says, “they will turn aside to myths,” which is in the passive voice. Very different. Then what happens is the myths take them over without them realizing it.

Beloved, how else could anybody possibly believe that you could give some money to the church and then God is going to make you wealthy? And people by the millions believe that nonsense. How could you possibly be so naïve as to believe that there is some secret Bible code that could help unlock your ways of investing so that you could become wealthy? How can you possibly believe those things? The answer is simple: you have heard the truth, you do not like that so you turn in a different direction and then the myths take you over. That’s what happened with the ancient Jews and many people to this day. Again, how else can people possibly believe the Benny Hinn’s, the Joyce Meyers, the Creflo Dollars, Joel Osteen, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormonism, all of these cults and even the pagan religions? How can they believe that? The answer is: they will not receive our witness, as Jesus said, especially with respect to the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, this is the failure of faith.

Jesus went on to say in verse 12, “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” The earthly things, what’s that? Well, specifically, things pertaining to both the need for and the reality of the new birth, the new birth that takes place in the sphere of men’s experience on earth which, by the way, is the immediate subject of the conversation. So, if you’re not going to believe these earthly things that I’m telling you about the new birth, how on earth are you going to believe the heavenly things? The earthly things are so self-evident. Anybody that is honest can look at their own life and acknowledge their sin and their inability to please a holy God and somehow save themselves but somehow they can convince themselves that they can really do that.

If you refuse to believe these earthly things, how can you possibly believe the heavenly things? In other words, the greater, deeper mysteries of Scripture. How are you going to believe the origin and the imputation of sin? You’re not going to be able to believe the doctrines of grace and election and calling and the atoning work of Christ. You’re not going to understand your union with Christ and all that that means. You are not going to understand justification whereby God declares you righteous based upon the imputed righteousness of Christ that hides you in him. You’re not going to understand any of those types of things. You’re not going to understand the mystery of the church age and the kingdom and all of these great and glorious things. In effect, Jesus is saying, “If you do not receive our witness concerning your basic need for the new birth, you will have no capacity to understand the glorious heavenly truths that can only be built upon the foundation of your faith in me as your Messiah, your only hope of salvation.”

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You're familiar with that great text in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, they are," what? "They are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them because they are spiritual appraised." A Greek term that means they are incapable of rendering a decision because they can't recognize the facts. You simply will not receive our witness.

Jesus then goes on to explain why he can speak with such authority concerning heavenly things. Verse 13, he says, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: even the Son of Man." He's saying here that no human being has the ability to ascend into heaven. "Ascend," by the way, means in the original language "to rise from the depths to the heights." No man can do that on his own. The only one who has the power to do that, Jesus says, is "he who descended from heaven: even the Son of Man." By the way, once again, Jesus is here testifying to his deity, something that Nicodemus and the Jews simply refused to believe. He is testifying that he alone is the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Messiah sent from the Father. Jesus alone can speak heavenly things. This is reminiscent, by the way, of what John said earlier where, you will recall in his prologue in chapter 1:18, he says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained him," referring to Jesus.

Well, all of this is a hard pill for Nicodemus to swallow as well as the rest of Israel and this is also hard for people today to swallow because they will not receive the witness of the word of God. Often when I interact with non-believers they want to debate the deep spiritual things. Have you ever noticed that? "Well, you know, what I want to know is why does God allow the innocent to suffer? Why does God allow catastrophes to kill thousands? Why, if God is a loving God, does he say that there is a hell? Do you think a loving God would really send people to hell?" And, "Why does Christianity teach that Jesus is the only way? Are you going to tell me that all the rest of those people are going to go to hell?" Haven't you heard those things? I mean, that's typical. They want to know the deeper spiritual things and I want to be very kind to them, but what I will tell them is, "My friend, the word of God answers all of those things and I can answer them in great detail for you but quite frankly, you will never be able to understand them. And it's not because of your intellect, it's because you have no capacity to understand spiritual truth because you have never been born again. You are spiritually dead and if I were to even give you the answers in the word of God, you would laugh at them. You would mock them. You would not embrace them. You would not be humbled by them. You must first receive the witness of the word of God."

My friends, this is where Jesus begins with Nicodemus and this is where we need to begin with anyone that we love as we share the gospel with them. We can give them gospel and as we hear them reject it, we can plead with them that you will only embrace these great truths by faith if you cry out to God in humility and he, by his grace, will cause you to be born again.

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Having addressed the failure of faith which is Nicodemus' refusal to believe Jesus' witness concerning the new birth which was, again, revealed in Ezekiel, he then takes this Old Testament scholar to another Old Testament passage that he would have been very familiar with, one in Numbers 21:5-9. Notice what John says here in verse 14 of John 3, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes may in him have eternal life." Now, as always, we must understand the context of the passage of Scripture. Let me give it to you very briefly: this goes back to the ancient days of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness and they had just experienced another magnificent display of God's power by delivering them from a Canaanite king of Arad who lived in the Negev. This king with all of his people, had attacked the Israelites, had killed some of them, taken some of them captive and then Israel goes before the Lord, they cry out to the Lord for help for deliverance and they promise that if you will help us defeat these people and get our captives back, we will utterly destroy these people and we will not keep any of their possessions.

Well, the Lord honors them so after this great victory now, instead of going on north and west into the Promised Land, God tells Moses, "I want you to backtrack, I want you to go south and east because you are not allowed to go through the land of Edom because I have promised this land to be an inheritance to Esau." So, the Lord tells the people, "No, folks. We're not going that way, we're going back this way." By the way, the people of Edom were intransigent, they would not allow them to come there, so now the children of Israel have to begin to backtrack and they resented this. They did not want this to happen and so, naturally they thought, "Okay, now God, if we could beat all of these people from Arad, why can't we beat the Edomites too? So, Lord, we insist that you help us take them out as well." Moses says, "No, no. We have to go back this way."

So, they became apoplectic with rage. They did not like this and what we find is that they began to establish their confidence in themselves, not Yahweh, so they begin to rebel. Ultimately, their persistent murmuring and complaining against the Lord led to outright rebellion and the text says, blasphemy. By the way, that's what will always happen. Remember that. You start complaining persistently against the Lord, it's going to lead to rebellion and that rebellion is going to lead to judgment.

This is what happened. But the lightning rod of their outrageous mutiny against God was really the manna of his grace that he was giving them to nourish them on a daily basis. They decided they were sick of that so God finally got sick of them complaining and he brought a terrifying judgment upon them in the form of fiery serpents which, by the way, means snakes that produce burning. Evidently, these snakes that God brought upon the people and he infested them with these snakes, had a venom that produced an excruciating pain that would lead to an agonizing death. Let me read to you what God tells us in Numbers 21 through his servant Moses, beginning in verse 4,

"4 Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. 5 The people spoke against God and Moses, 'Why have you

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brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.' 6 The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 So the people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us.' And Moses interceded for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.' 9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived."

Now, we must ask the question: why would Jesus use this text to bring conviction to the heart of this Pharisee? Well, he wants to help him see some very important considerations, two in particular: 1. the idea of new life and 2. the idea of Christ one day being hung upon the cross as the source of new life. Let me explain it a little bit further: if as a means of deliverance from sin God can grant new physical life by grace through faith, then why should it be a surprise, Nicodemus, that he should also grant new spiritual life by grace through faith? Moreover, the bronze serpent Moses lifted up so that all could look upon it in faith and live, is a picture of Jesus, the Son of man who must also be lifted up on the cross so that all who look upon him in repentant faith could have eternal life.

So, Jesus now moves from the failure of faith to secondly, the look of faith. And here Jesus explains what a convicted, convinced sinner must do to be saved. He must look to the crucified Christ. Verse 14, again, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." By implication, we can see several points of comparison here. Think about it: in both cases, that which was cursed and lifted up became the basis of salvation. Secondly, in both cases, the remedy for sin consists of some thing or some one being lifted up in public view for all to see and to respond. Thirdly, in both cases, the punishment of sin is death, one physical, one spiritual or eternal. Fourthly, in both cases, the remedy of sin is offered by sovereign grace alone, not by human merit. Fifthly, in both cases, the merciful provision of grace simply required a response from the sinner, a mere look of faith. Not conjuring up some feeling, not having to recite some prayer, not going through some ritual.

But, also, remember that in biblical typology, the antitype is always far greater than the type. In Numbers, the rebellious Israelites faced physical death as a result of sin but in John, the sinners faced eternal death. In Numbers, the sinner experienced physical healing but in John, the emphasis is on spiritual healing. In Numbers, the brazen serpent had no capacity to heal but it points to the greater antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ who does.

Friends, don't miss this, don't miss the crucial point hidden in this amazing picture, one that later on, Nicodemus came to understand: the manna was a picture of Jesus. He was

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the bread of life, the bread of heaven. Later on in John 6, beginning in verse 47, Jesus will say this, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die,” referring to himself. “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” So, beloved, we must see that this rejection of the heavenly manna is tantamount to the rejection of God’s gracious provision in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Jesus uses this familiar event as a type of his sacrificial death on the cross.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up.” By the way, this indicates that Christ’s death was not Plan B. It was not Plan B. It was a necessary element of God’s plan of redemption and we know that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin, Hebrews 9:22. Furthermore, the righteousness of God required this. There was no other means for God’s justice to be satisfied. The Son of man, the sinless Savior, had to be lifted up. But I would also add that John uses this Greek verb “lifted up” four times in his gospel, a verb that literally means “to lift up” but it also figuratively means “to exalt” and both can be seen here. In fact, in the context of the suffering servant in Isaiah 52 and 53, you will recall that Isaiah combines both of these themes. He says in 52:13, “Behold my servant will prosper. He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.” And, indeed, dear friends, Jesus was lifted up.

And we see here that whoever believes may, in him, have eternal life. He’s saying to Nicodemus, “This is what you must do in order to see the kingdom.” The Father has granted the son to have life in himself, Jesus said in John 5:26. He even said that he alone is the resurrection and the life in John 11:25. So, no one will ever see the kingdom, no one will ever even experience the miracle of the new birth, no one will ever receive the gift of eternal life unless they look upon the crucified Christ in repentant faith.

So, having exposed the failure of faith and addressing the look of faith, he then explains the promise of faith. We’ll look just at verse 16 in closing here this morning, a passage that you’re all so familiar with, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,” “begotten” means “unique,” it means “one of a kind,” “that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting,” or “eternal life.” My friends, here in this familiar passage, Jesus states both the mission and the root cause of his mission, namely God’s love for this sinful world of rebellious humanity. There are so many passages that attest to this. My mind went to Galatians 4, beginning in verse 4, where the Apostle Paul said, “When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

I trust that you have all experienced that heartwarming heat of God’s love for you which he actually bestowed on you in eternity past. Notice the past tense here in verse 16, “God so loved.” Certainly, he continues to love but he says “God so loved.” Friends, this is a

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mind boggling truth. We read of it earlier today in Romans 5:8, we read that “God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then,” which means “even more overwhelming than that,” he says, “having now been justified by his blood we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him.” You know, John was so consumed with this reality that he would later write in 1 John 3:1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us.” A love even in eternity past, even when we were dead in our sins. Oh child of God, never allows this truth to drift far from your heart. Keep it tethered to your heart by reflection and by praise.

But notice this gift of eternal life is only available to those who believe in him. It doesn't matter how evil the sinner, if he or she will merely look upon the cross, the Savior hanging there and in faith believing all that he is, we see that they will not perish but have everlasting life.

No doubt Nicodemus was absolutely speechless as he heard Jesus saying all of these things because his entire works righteousness system had just been exposed as worthless, even damning. It was demolished. You know, that's really hard for people, especially those who have believed a lie all of their life. When they hear the truth, they don't want to embrace the truth many times because they've got all of their life, their identity, invested in it. And if they embrace it, then that means, “Mom and Dad, you were wrong with what you said,” possibly and they might be kicked out of the family and so forth. However, as we will discover, the convicting wind of the Spirit did blow upon Nicodemus and he eventually received the word of truth, he looked to Christ and he was born again. I pray that that is true for each of you.

I'm going to leave you with just two things by way of real practical application. You know, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who have looked to Christ and believed his witness and by faith have been born again and those who have not. First, I want to address briefly those who have not done this. I would plead with you as a minister of the gospel to look to Christ who is lifted up on the cross. He is your only hope of salvation. “But shouldn't I have some special feeling? Shouldn't I walk an aisle? Shouldn't I repeat some prayer? Don't I have to be baptized? Don't I have to perform some kind of a ritual?” No, you must look to Christ in faith believing. Others will say, “Away with your superstition. Away with all of this mythology about Jesus. I want nothing to do with this.”

Well, my friend, if that is you, I cannot force you to look. All I can do is lift him up and I pray that you will not turn away. But if you turn away, please hear this, some day you will look upon him but he will not be your Savior, he will be your Judge because the word of God is clear that some day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. You may be bold today, you may scoff at the provision of God's grace. You may look me in the face and call me a fool but one day, unless you repent, you will experience the fiery venom of divine retribution flowing through your veins and there will be no remedy.

**Website:** [otcr.org](http://otcr.org)

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# The Look of Faith

By David Harrell

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While some enter into judgment without experiencing the agonies of hell this side of it, others do not and I've been there before, maybe you have too. As a pastor, I've been a foot from people on their deathbed pleading with them to place their faith in Christ. And I've heard on a number of occasions men and even women, growl at me with a voice that could only be described as demonic. I've seen people look away with hatred and like the snake-bitten Israelites writhing in pain, I have seen some of them shriek loudly in agony as they begin to pass from this life into the eternal death. I've been in hospital rooms where I've heard this weeping and this wailing. I've seen people come out of their beds right before they die and grab at everything in sight trying desperately to hold on to life as they begin to experience the wrath of an eternal hell. You laugh at me if you will but you remember what I have said today and never let it be said that you were not warned to look upon Christ.

And for those of you that love Christ, I pray simply that you will lift up Christ. If you've looked on him, now will you lift him up? Will you lift him up? Is that so hard? Isn't that our great commission? Isn't that the solemn responsibility of every pastor? Recently, I watched what many call the "America's Pastor," I watched him stand before a huge crowd of Muslims and do you know what his theme was in his sermon? Mutual respect between Christians, Muslim and Jews because, after all, we all serve God, a God of love who commands us to love one another. You know, my heart just sank. I thought, "Oh, would that he would love those people enough to boldly lift up Christ before them, to beg them to believe, that this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and unless you believe in him, you will perish in your sins."

Oh dear Christian, make it your habit to preach Christ with clarity, with conviction. Lift up Christ. We're not called to lift up world peace. We're not called to lift up mutual respect. We're not called to lift up the grand notion of loving our neighbor without first loving Christ. So, lift up Christ for all to see and fathers, let it begin with you. Let your children see you lifting up Christ in your life. From your lips, tell them the story of Jesus. Take them to this text. What an amazing text to take children to. They can understand this.

Unleash the gospel, dear friends, on your family members, on those that you come in contact with. Warn them of the failure of faith. Explain the look of faith. And rejoice in the promise of faith. And when you do, God will be glorified and you will be blessed and sinners will be converted. Amen.

Let's pray together.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May they find a place in our heart. May they change the way we think, the way we live. Especially, Lord, change those who are lost in their sins, only you can do that. They have heard the word, now we commit them to you and relax in your sovereign choice. We pray all of these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.*

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We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).

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