

God's Grace in the Night / "You Must be Born Again"

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Have you ever wanted to be a fly on the wall at an important event? Thought about what a historic meeting was like or a moment of great discovery? Imagine being in the lunar module as it touched down on the moon. Being on Solid ground, that isn't earth.

Or hearing Abraham Lincoln deliver the Gettysburg address and feeling the electricity in the air around you change as soldiers regained the will to fight for the proposition that all men are created equal. Seeing Moses come down from Mt. Sinai with the ten commandments or crossing the Jordan river with Joshua and knowing that everything has changed.

We wonder what these moments were like because these are moments that have ripple effects on history and become engrained into the story of humanity. For the next two weeks we're going to consider one of these moments in time and the ripples that we are still experiencing today.

We're gonna be a fly on the wall for one of the most important conversations in history because its implications, and what they mean for you and me and everyone, not only matter and effect how we experience God and life and each other every day, the words that Jesus speaks at a secret meeting in the night to Nicodemus reveal a truth powerful enough to sustain our worship of God for all of eternity.

Today, we are talking about being born again.
We're going to first see

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1. The need to be born again
2. The way we are born again
3. What belongs to the born again

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John 3 1-15

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Alright.

Now if you have been a Christian for any length of time, this story is, at the very least, familiar to you. And it is familiar specifically because of Jesus’ words “born again”. These words are in our culture. Even in America. Even in 2020. And this idea is central to our understanding of salvation from sin and restoration to God

And yet the actual phrase translated as “Born again” is only found in the Bible in John chapter 3 (where we are today) and in 1 Peter 1.

So let’s do it, let’s read the other two verses in 1 Peter
We have 1 Peter 1:3

SLIDE

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

and 1 Peter 1:23

SLIDE

since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God

And so now, today, you have heard all of the uses of the phrase translated as “born again” that appear in scripture. If this is the case, that there are so few instances of this translation of this phrase Why is being born again such a big deal? Why is a type of Christian in our culture today a “born-again” Christian? Why is this important?

And the answer is because Jesus Christ says it is.
He says in verse 3
“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again
he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

He talks about this new birth in a slightly different way in verse 5
“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit,
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

And he says again in verse 7
“You must be born again”
You must.

And while the exact phrase isn't translated this way in more places in scripture, the New Testament writers over and over again hammer home the point that without a distinct change, a spiritual change, brought about by God, from the inside out - we can't see God, please him, know him or be restored to him. And this is important too. As Nicodemus would have heard it, the literal meaning of this phrase in the original greek is "Born from above". When Jesus is talking with him, he's being really clear about this new birth being a spiritual birth that comes from God.

We see this from above translation used later in John's gospel in Chapter 3:31 the same phrase is used and it's translated

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31 He who comes from above is above all.

So think "unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God."

So the three phases we see are You must be born again. You must be born from above. You must be born of the spirit. It's the same idea, said a few different ways. They are basically interchangeable. What's non-negotiable, is our need for a big change.

This is our first point for today.

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The Need to be Born Again

We're going to flesh out that point in a little bit but I think it would be wise for us first to make sure we understand our characters and our setting in this narrative.

Now if I'm honest, when I first read this passage, I really had a hard time with the oddness of how this conversation starts.

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1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him,
"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God,
for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered him,
"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again
he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now as I read it to you, I'm already putting an inflection in my voice to where you might be interpreting this interaction differently than if you were simply reading the passage in your devotional time. When I read it in my head at first, it seemed to me like Jesus is either frustrated or confrontational or just messing with Nicodemus. Nicodemus comes in and offers pleasantries, and kind words. (Which I would argue were sincere) and Jesus seems to ignore that, and takes control of the conversation while moving it in a completely new direction.

That's how it seemed.

Sometimes with passages like this, it can really help to read things out loud. And I'd encourage to do that with passages of scripture that might be giving you a hard time. And besides discovering the tone of the passage, there is context we need to take into account and words we need to read intentionally.

The context that is helpful to understand as we drop in on this meeting has to do with who Nicodemus is. From the text what we know about Nicodemus is that he is a Pharisee. We get that from verse 1. Pharisees were religious leaders. The super holy people in society. They didn't just keep God's commandments, they added lists upon lists of extra rules to follow that made them appear even more perfect and this gave them power and authority in the culture while simultaneously causing everyone who was not "as-good" as the pharisees to look at them and say "why even bother trying to do the right thing, I'll never be as good as that".

John goes on to say that he is a ruler of the Jews. Jesus in v.10 calls him the teacher of Israel.

Later in the book of John in Chapter 7:50–51, we learn that Nicodemus is a member of the Sanhedrin, which was the governing body of the Jews. Each city could have a Sanhedrin, and this was like a Jewish only lower court system. Under Roman authority in the time of Christ, the Jewish nation was allowed a limited amount of self-regulation, and then the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was the final court of appeals for matters regarding Jewish law and religion.

Nicodemus is all of those things. He is high up on the food chain. A pharisee, a rabbi, a teacher, a ruler, a judge. All of the above. And Jesus is not impressed.

Anyone who has read the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John knows that Jesus' harshest criticism was directed specifically at the pharisees.

Here is a highlight reel that I'm going to paraphrase from Matthew 23
These are Jesus' greatest hits about the pharisees

Jesus says

Do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. Because they don't practice what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. You travel across sea and land to make a single follower, and you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give offerings of mint and dill, but you've neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

You clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but have a rotting corpse inside you outwardly appear righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

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It is an understatement to say that Jesus has a strong opinion about Pharisees. And Nicodemus is a Pharisee of Pharisees. This is the context of this meeting. I mean, you would never imagine these two spending time together like this. And yet Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus by night. And while this is a secret meeting, I don't believe that this is espionage. Nicodemus isn't a spy here gathering intelligence. You can tell by his words. He says in Verse 2

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“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

Something different is happening here. Why has Nicodemus asked for this meeting? I believe it's because God has already been at work in his life. I said earlier that we need to understand the context and that there are words we need to read intentionally in order to understand what's happening.

These are those words I'm talking about

Nicodemus says “you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

and Jesus says “unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

All of Jesus' miracles and his ministry point to and show what the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven is like and something is changing inside of Nicodemus or else Nicodemus could not see that God was with him.

Jesus in his response seems to point to how God is at work in Nicodemus' heart though Nicodemus himself is barely aware of it.

As a Pharisee with all the baggage that goes with that, and as someone in need of being born again or regenerated (that would be another word for it) Nicodemus does not and cannot understand the impact of what Jesus is talking about when he says unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

So he goes on to answer in v. 4

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How can a man be born when he is old?
Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Now his response can seem silly to us. What a dummy that he doesn't get it. But Nicodemus came to Jesus in the middle of the night because he knew that there was something different about this man. That he came from God and that God was with him. He wants to know more.

And just as this Pharisee treats Jesus very differently, Jesus treats this Pharisee very different than he does all the others in scripture. He goes and rephrases his response and clarifies it. Jesus is being kind here, not confusing.

Starting at verse 5

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Jesus answered, "truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

So again Jesus clarifies and emphasizes his point.
The need to be born again. Born from above. Born of the Spirit.

Some Theologians think that born of water is talking about a spiritual cleansing from sin, but most would say that the phrase born of water is referring to our natural physical birth. How we are brought into the world. Jesus is saying we've had a physical birth, we're born of water, and we need to be born of the spirit and have a spiritual birth as well in order to enter the kingdom of God. Being born into the right family won't save us (this is an important thought for Nicodemus as a Jew), we need to be born again, and that's a spiritual birth.

Jesus says exactly this another way as a follow up
"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

And we need to be born again of the Spirit precisely because we are born of the flesh.

What does it mean to be born of the flesh? It means to be born a human. A descendent of Adam. And as descendent of Adam we have an inheritance from him. Our inheritance from Adam is sin.

A couple helpful texts here would be
Psalm 51:5

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Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

So sin is our problem even from the time we are born.

or Romans 5:12

SLIDE

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

Adam's sin resulted in a consequence that cascade and effects everyone who came after him. That consequence is death. And a death that is deeper than physical death. Adam's sin resulted in spiritual death.

Ephesians 2 says

SLIDE

2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Now Nicodemus completely understands that there is something wrong between us and God. In fact, this is precisely why he is a pharisee. This is why he does everything that he does. This is why he orders his life around hundreds of laws that he must keep. He feels the burden, the weight of his sin and he has determined in his heart that if he simply does enough of the right things, at the right time, in the right way, that he can save himself from what's wrong between him and God.

If you were to ask someone "Why is sin a problem, and why we need a Savior from it?", they would probably say that sin is what makes us guilty before God and it brings us under his judgement; and so we need a Savior who can forgive our sins and take away our punishment.

This is absolutely right. But it is not the point of Ephesians 2:1 where it says we were dead in our sin. The reason we need a Savior is not just that God isn't happy with us and we need to be forgiven for offending him. We need a Savior because spiritually, we're dead in the ground.

Physically we have been born, and Spiritually, we must be born again. Without this new birth, we remain dead in our sins. You see Nicodemus doesn't understand how big the problem is. He thinks he can fix it. And naturally, none of us can see how big the problem is. And none of us can fix it And so by wearing this weight, that his actions will justify him before God he misunderstands where salvation comes from. He think that it comes from him.

This is our Second point for today

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The Way we are Born Again

Let's back up to verse 6 and read through verse 11

SLIDE

Jesus says 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

Now there's two things to see in this passage of scripture

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One is that Jesus thinks Nicodemus should know better

I'm saying this because of verse 7 "do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' and his question in verse 10 Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"

So I want to explore that. Why Jesus says that.

and the second thing

Is that Jesus says that **People are only born again through the Holy Spirit.**

Nicodemus should know better.

Salvation has always come through God and God has promised to recreate us and make us new in the Scriptures that Nicodemus would have read, and known. The scripture he would have memorized and taught.

The most straightforward of these verses being found in
Ezekiel 36:24-27

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I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Speaking about Jesus' rebuke to Nicodemus, the theologian D.A. Carson said that that verse 10 might as well read

"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not know your Ezekiel."

This passage is huge. God is going to gather his people from all the nations, He's going to clean them from their sin, He's going to perform a heart transplant

But not a normal one

normally there is a heart that kind of works being changed out to a heart that works better

But in this operation God is changing out our dead, un-beating, hard as a rock heart of stone, he's changing it to a heart of flesh, a heart that beats. A heart that is alive.

And he's putting his spirit in us.

No longer is the Holy Spirit something that comes upon people and prophets for short and specific works in redemptive history. Now Instead God gives his Spirit to newly alive heart transplant patients so that the spirit can highly suggest that we do more good things than bad.

No that's not right.

The spirit will encourage us and say "you're doing a great job. follow your heart. That will work out well"

Nope that's not it either.

God says "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

You see, Nicodemus should have known better. We must be spiritually be made new, God has promised this and this is something that God does through his Holy Spirit.

This is that second thing I want to address in this section

People are only born again through the Holy Spirit

The active work of the Holy Spirit is only way that people are born again.

And now we come to verse 8.

SLIDE

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound,
but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.
So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Again, Jesus is being kind to this Pharisee. Nicodemus could not grasp the spiritual nature of the event Jesus was describing. So, Jesus explained that spiritual birth was something that others cannot see. And so using a metaphor for the Holy Spirit, he compared it to the wind. You cannot see the wind, but you can see the result of its passing.

Now Jesus is having some fun with words in his explanation here. Because, fun fact, The word for wind and the word for Spirit are the same in Greek. It's "Pneuma". Jesus is saying that the way the Spirit moves is like the wind. The way that the Pneumatosis moves is like the Pneuma.

So in what way is the Holy Spirit like the wind?

Well Jesus says, "The wind blows where it wishes".

Another way to say that is that it goes where it wills. It does what it wants. It's able and free to go where it pleases. The Holy Spirit isn't bound by us. It's not a genie doing our bidding. The Spirit acts on us and we respond. Like the wind in a sail.

This is the next way that the Holy Spirit is like the wind.

Verse 8 says "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound."

Like the wind in a sail, we can't see the wind but we experience its effects. We hear its sound we feel it at our backs or we see the trees sway. When you are around someone who experiences new birth in Christ, though you have not seen the wind of the Spirit, its effects are remarkable and visible to anyone. A life has been changed, non-existent affections for God have suddenly exploded. Desires for sin have been replaced by desires for righteousness.

In Verse 8, Jesus goes on to say "but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes"

We don't control it. We don't make it happen. We don't conjure it up. It's the same with Salvation. This is a mystery that belongs to God. We don't decide what the wind does or where it goes and likewise with the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit does what it does. It moves where it moves and moves and acts as it wills. It doesn't bend to our will. We bend to its will.

In the last part of this verse Jesus says
"So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Quite simply everyone who is born again, everyone who can see God and enter his kingdom, everyone who is born of the spirit is born the same way: by the Spirit's decisive recreating work. This is the way it is for everyone who is born again.

We believe because of the Spirit's work. And not the other way around.
We don't believe and then come alive. Dead stone hearts can't believe anything. They're dead. Instead the Holy Spirit made us alive and we believed.

After hearing everything Jesus said about this

Nicodemus responds

SLIDE

"How can these things be?"

So how do we read this?
Does Nicodemus just not understand Jesus' explanations?
or is the problem that he does
and that at this moment
it sounds too good to be true?

Does it sound too good to be true for you?

If you're here today or watching online with us and you have thought of yourself as an unbeliever in the Gospel, the good news that Jesus has done everything that was required to forgive our sins and restore us to God, I want you to know that belief is a gift from God. That God the Father draws people to Jesus, and that the Holy Spirit of God works in the hearts of people so that they might see Jesus as Savior.

Might God the Father be drawing you to believe today?

I've heard another Pastor say, that You do not need any other witness of the Spirit's work within you than the desire you feel to come to God.

And so If any part of you is longing to trust Christ, it is of God, and you can believe that he is at work in you. He has brought you to this point and will continue to be with you.

So if that's you, I want you to reach out to me or any of the other Pastors or Elders, maybe one of your Christian friends. We would love to help you continue to grow and know more.

For the Christians here, are you still effectively trying to earn God's favor or are you resting in wonder that God through his Spirit would reveal the Gospel to you and cause you to believe?

Though you did nothing to merit Salvation, God has freely given it to you as a gift. And it's a gift you can enjoy.

I want to encourage you this morning that mediating, thinking deeply about God's choosing love for you will lead to an effervescent overflowing fuel for worship that will give you strength and peace and comfort and will sustain you in your holiness and good works.

If your excitement has grown cold, and your contentment has wained there exists the possibility that you have forgotten how miraculous it is that you believe the Gospel. This morning, remember and rejoice that God has freely lavished his love on you and the evidence is that you believe.

KJ Keogh one of the other Pastors here on Sunday mornings after particularly powerful times in worship often says to me "Can you believe that you get this? Isn't it amazing that any of this makes sense "

It is. Because it is only through the work of the spirit that we become spiritually alive and able to please God. Able to see the Kingdom. Able to enter it.

You know, I think Nicodemus almost gets it. But he doesn't believe yet.

Look at v. 10-11

SLIDE

10 Jesus answered him,

"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?

11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

He has the scriptures, He has the testimony of Jesus' followers, he even has Jesus himself explaining the new birth. But he doesn't believe yet. He's looking for another explanation for what's going on. Because I think he knows that if what Jesus is saying is true, that it's going to cost him everything.

The respect of being the holy guy who everyone thinks is perfect. The loss of stature in the community. His whole identity will change. Everything he has worked for. It's been futile. It hasn't brought him any closer to God. All of his actions have only masked rebellion in self-righteousness.

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus came to save self-righteous rebels like Nicodemus and you, and me.

And here is our last point

SLIDE

What belongs to the born again

Let's finish our passage

John 3:12-15

This is the rest of Jesus' response to Nicodemus' question
"How can these things be?"

Jesus continues,

SLIDE

12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe,
how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

13 No one has ascended into heaven
except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Jesus has attempted to explain becoming spiritually alive to Nicodemus using examples from life and nature to describe spiritual things. Birth, water, flesh, wind. Jesus has also pointed to the visible work of the spirit on the earth, the testimony of those who now follow him. The effects of the wind of the spirit, if you will.

But Nicodemus still can't see it, because he's not yet born again. Jesus knows that without agreeing on the basics, that an explanation of deeper spiritual realities would fall on deaf ears. And that's because the ground floor of a relationship with God is admitting that there is problem between us and God that we can't solve. We've sinned against him. We need God's grace through Jesus.

In the last minutes of this message today, we're going to talk about how Jesus didn't give up on Nicodemus, just like he didn't give up on you and me when we were dead in our sins and transgressions. At the end of this text Jesus changes the way he talks to Nicodemus. He pulls back the curtain, reveals who he is and what he came to do.

V. 13

SLIDE

13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Up until verse 13, the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is very much like two teachers talking. They have a discussion and there's a debate.

But at verse 13, the debate stops. Jesus stops talking as a teacher and starts talking as the Lord. The Son of man who came from heaven to make the new birth that we need possible.

Jesus takes Nicodemus to a story from the Old Testament. To Numbers 21:4–9

It says

SLIDE

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Back to v. 14 from our text

SLIDE

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Just as the bronze serpent lifted up was the embodiment of the curse God’s people were under, and if they looked upon it they would live, so too would Jesus become cursed for our sake as he was lifted up on cross.

And if we would look upon him and believe in the power of his finished work, that the death we deserved died with him and the life he was raised to is ours to receive, we would receive eternal life in his name. Looking to the bronze serpent in Moses day removed the power of deadly venom, but looking unto Jesus removes the power of death itself.

So what belongs to the born again? Eternal life with Christ our Savior, free from the power of sin and death.

We’re going to close our time now.

Our problem with sin was so great that we needed to be made into a new creation. So great that no amount of rule following, good deeds or religious observance would tip the scale in our favor. But the Father’s love for us was so great, that the Son of God laid down his life for ours and through his Spirit causes our dead hearts to come alive and find a joy that will carry us into eternity with him.

To sinners without hope, Jesus Christ doesn’t tell us to do better or to do more. He tells us to be born again to look at him on the cross and believe.