

# What Love is This?

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Date: 12 September 2021

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[ 0 : 00 ] Genesis chapter 22. We're going to read this account of Abraham being tested. Genesis chapter 22. We're going to read the first 19 verses and then move over into the New Testament.

Sometime later, God tested Abraham. He said to him, Abraham, here I am, he replied. And God said, take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah, sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.

Early the next morning, Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac. And he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father, Abraham, father, father.

[ 1 : 19 ] Yes, my son, Abraham replied. The fire and the wood are here, Isaac said. But where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Abraham answered.

God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. And the two of them went on together. And when they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.

He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And when he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son, then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, Abraham, Abraham. Here I am, he replied. Do not lay a hand on the boy, he said.

Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son. Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns.

[ 2 : 29 ] He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place.

The Lord will provide. And to this day it is said on the mountain of the Lord, it will be provided. The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.

Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies and that through your offspring, all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me.

Then Abraham returned to his servants and they set off together for Beersheba and Abraham stayed in Beersheba. Then turn over to the gospel of John.

John chapter three. I'm going to read the first three verses and then we'll skip ahead a little bit.

[ 3 : 46 ] Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.

And replied, Jesus declared, I tell you the truth. No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Then verse 13.

No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven, the son of man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the son of man must be lifted up.

That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only son.

[ 5 : 12 ] Let's hear God's word preached. Well, no one will argue with me this morning when I say that John 3.16 is one of those big texts in Scripture.

We've talked about the garden and finding flowers in that garden, a mine that the Scriptures are a mine, and digging out precious jewels.

Here's a precious jewel. It's the gospel in a nutshell. It's cramming so many truths into one sentence. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Many of you have known this verse from childhood. Maybe it was the first verse you ever memorized. And I think that one of the dangers of such a familiar passage is that we come to it half reluctantly, thinking there's nothing new here, nothing I don't already know.

And so I would remind us all, myself included, that the purpose of God's word is not always to show us something new.

[ 6 : 29 ] I rather find that my greater need is often to have an old truth brought to my heart with fresh power, that I might treasure it and live in the light of it.

And such is John chapter 3 and verse 16. We are about to look upon the greatest act of love ever in the universe.

And we need to know the power of this verse because we are so capable of just yawning with, I know that, I know that, rather than being captured and captivated by that love all over again.

And that's my desire for myself this morning and for you as we turn our thoughts to John 3, 16.

Now, a few introductory comments about the context.

With any verse, this verse is not just hanging there on its own. It's intimately connected with the verses going before and following after, especially when you see that, that connecting word for.

[ 7 : 44 ] That's how our text begins for. And it reminds us, we need to consider what comes before. And we'll also need to consider what comes after it.

And interestingly enough, we find this verse is linked to something that happened in Israel's history some 1,500 years earlier. So we're going to need to consider that as well as part of the context of this verse.

The whole Bible, in one sense, is the content, the context that pours its content into this precious jewel of John 3, 16.

And then there's the fact that we're eavesdropping on a personal, private conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, that religious Pharisee and teacher of Israel.

And that too is part of the context of John 3, 16. Now, there is a question about where Jesus' words to Nicodemus end, and where the inspired writer John picks up his own commentary of giving us the fourth gospel.

[ 8 : 54 ] Is verse 16 John's words, or are they still part of Jesus' words to Nicodemus? That's a difficult thing to discern from.

There are no markers in the original text, but we're left to try to figure that out by the context. And whether the text came from the mouth of Jesus to Nicodemus, as the NIV has it, or whether it's from the inspired pen of John to his readers, what it says is the same either way.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

This verse is about a love gift like no other, which if a person receives, will change his life here, and their eternal life hereafter.

So let's examine it by way of five points this morning. Number one is the giver. For God so loved the world that he gave, his one and only son.

[ 10 : 15 ] So the giver is God. But let's be more specific. Our God is triune, as we've learned recently in Sunday school, been reminded of that. There are three persons in this one God.

And in a text referring to God and to his one and only son, well, it's very clear. Just which of the persons is the giver?  
Because of the three persons of the Godhead, only one of them has a son. And it is God the Father. So God the Father is the giver.  
And that's why we thank him for the gift of his son. Secondly, the motivation of the giver. Why did he give his son?  
And first, why he did not, some negative reasoning. He didn't give. It wasn't like giving arose out of some necessity or need.  
[ 11 : 23 ] He has no needs. He's the great I am, the eternal self-sufficient one. He didn't have to give his son. In fact, you remember that when a great number of the angels fell into sin, he didn't send his son for them, but left them to perish in their sins and reserve for them the lake of fire where they will be tortured day and night forever and ever.  
Then what was it that moved God the Father to give his only son for us? Well, God so loved the world. He so loved the world that he gave.  
It was nothing outside of himself that moved him. No deservingness in him. Oh, oh, look, these these people are much more valuable than the angels. No, no, not at all.  
It was something from inside of him. It was his own love. His own sovereign love. First John four, eight, nine says God is love.  
So the reason has to do with the very nature of God. He is love. Not only is love something he does, it's something he is.  
[ 12 : 46 ] And it is the nature of God to love. And it is the nature of love to give. It delights in giving. It's an outflowing of generosity and goodness.  
And that was the motivating factor for giving this gift to the world. As John goes on in first John four, nine, he says God is love.  
And this is how God showed his love among us. This is how he demonstrated his love among us. He he sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him.  
So this amazing love of God is the very heart of the gospel. It's the very center of Christianity. It's the very focal point of the Bible.  
And it is the motivation behind his gift. He gave because he loved. And that is the wonder of it all that has forever won our hearts and made us worshipers of God our father.  
[ 13 : 55 ] The God the father, the motivation of his giving, it's it's love.  
The object, the object of this love of God for God so loved the world, the world. Consider the world that God loved and into which he sent his son.  
It was first of all, the world created by him. Designed, thought up, planned by his own infinite wisdom and then created out of nothing by his almighty power, his spoken word, his creativity with man.  
Mankind is the pinnacle of that creation, male and female made in his own image, reflecting something of the glory of this God.  
And given dominion over the rest of creation, it was all very good as he saw it. A world that brought him great glory.  
[ 15 : 08 ] And so in one sense, it's no wonder that he loved his own creation. But secondly, this world that God loved and into which he sent his son was the world that had rebelled against him.  
The world of mankind, every one of them, down to every last one of us this morning, had despised God, had sinned against God, had disobeyed him, had turned our backs to him, would rather have him gone that we might live our own way.  
We not only rejected him, but what's worse, we had joined forces with his argeny, the most anti-God being in the universe, the devil himself.  
We joined forces with him. We were children of the devil, as he says in John 8, verse 34. That's the world he loved, a world in rebellion, a world at war with God.  
The world was not neutral toward God. They hated God. They were his hostile enemies, like the Taliban or Al-Qaeda is to the United States.  
[ 16 : 27 ] And it was a world he knew would hate and torture and kill his son. So I say, though it's no wonder that he loved the world that he made, it is the wonder of wonders that he loved the world that had rebelled against him, that was his enemy, that hated him.

This is a gracious, merciful love to a rebellious world. And then it was a world already condemned, already condemned and under God's wrath and judgment.

The word had already gone out from the courts of heaven, the soul that sins, it shall die. I will in no way clear the guilty. We were by nature the objects of wrath.

And so the verdict was clear, guilty, condemned, deserving of hell, cursed under my wrath. That was the verdict of this world.

Like men found guilty and placed on death row, just waiting for the day of execution. This was the world that God loved, already condemned, as verse 18 reminds us.

[ 17 : 45 ] Saw a track once, and as it lies there on the table or wherever it's been placed, it says, what must you do to go to hell? And you pick it up and you open it and it just says nothing.

You're condemned already. You're condemned already. That's it. This world that he loved was already under condemnation for their rebellion and sin against him and not believing on the Lord Jesus.

And then it was a world of all nations, lastly. The world he loved was not just one nation. It was not just the Jews, but no, now, it's the world made up of all nations.

Idolatrous, sinful, pagan nations going their own way, worshiping other gods with their own religions. This is the world that God loved. Now, doesn't that make God's love amazing?

So it's amazing because of the objects of his love. This world he made that was in rebellion and condemned the world of all the nations that had gone their own way.

[ 19 : 05 ] But we now come to that which makes God's love breathtaking, even staggering, as we consider in the fourth place, the gift that he gave to this world.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. He didn't give an angel. He didn't give a band of angels.

He didn't give an adopted son like we are in the family of God. No, it wasn't that kind of son at all. It was his one and only son.

His eternal son. The one who was never not his son. The one who for all eternity past was with God in the bosom of the father, in the face-to-face closest intimate relationship from everlasting.

That son. He gave that son to a world in rebellion. The son in whom he delighted, Isaiah 42, 1.

[ 20 : 12 ] Never did a father find more joy in a son than this father found in this one and only son. Twice during his public ministry at the beginning and once on the Mount of Transfiguration, this father, God the Father, boomed his voice unto this earth saying, this is the son I love.

With him I am well pleased. Never did a father love a son more than he loved him. Never did a son please his father and was found well pleasing to his father like this son, his one and only son.

And in giving his one and only son, the son of his love, the father gave what was most precious to him. The staggering cost of this gift makes his love for the world staggering to the mind.

Is there not some sense in which the cost of the gift shows our value that we're placing upon the object of it? Is there not, does it not reveal something of the depth of love and relationship that we have for that person?

And here God pulls out all the stoppers and gives what he could not give more of. He gives his one. He gives his only. His beloved son.

[ 21 : 48 ] Now I had Genesis 22 read because commentators have for a long time noted the connection of John 23 16 with Genesis 22 as Abraham was promised a son but his wife Sarah was barren and after waiting 25 years that son of promise was finally born and he named him Isaac.

He laughs. Laughable that we in our old age Sarah with you barren and me as good is dead that we should have a son.

And he named him laughter and oh how Abraham laughed and loved his son and year by year as he grew he loved him more and more. And then God came to Abraham one day saying take your son your only son Isaac the one you love and go to the region of Moriah sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.

back in the early 1500s in Germany Bibles were handwritten and extremely rare few had them and one day in family worship Martin Luther was reading Genesis 22 and it could have been the very first time his wife Katie had ever heard it the Bible was that rare in those days for when Martin read how God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his one and only son Isaac whom he loved she just blurted out I can't believe that God would make Abraham do that he wouldn't do that for his own son to which Martin said oh but Katie he did he did do that to his own son for God so loved the world

that he gave his one and only son the son of his love and gave him to be sacrificed on the cross in the place of all those who would believe on him that they might not perish but have eternal life this is love not that we love

God but that he loved us and sent his son as what as an atoning sacrifice for our sins a sacrifice that would propitiate the wrath of God turning it away from us by pouring out his wrath upon his son that was the substitutionary sacrifice Christ in the place of the sinner oh he did Katie he did give his own son as a sacrifice and all for love love for a world in rebellion what kind of love is this and as Abraham and Isaac made their way up the mountain Isaac says father yes my son the fire and wood are here but the lamb where is the lamb for burnt offering ah son

[ 25 : 27 ] God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering and when they got to the place Abraham built an altar arranged the wood bound his son Isaac laid him on the altar on top of the wood and then reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son but the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven Abraham Abraham do not lay a hand on the boy now I know you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son your only son it said three times in this chapter of Genesis your son your only son Abraham looked and there in the thicket was a ram a male sheep caught by his horns and he went and took the ram and loosed his son and sacrificed the ram in the place of his son as a sacrifice a burnt offering and so

Abraham called that place the Lord will provide so he said to his son the Lord will provide the lamb my son and so after it was all over he says there's only one name for this this place it is the Lord will provide and to this day Moses says as he writes it is still said on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided it will be a forward looking promise a lamb for sacrifice and the angel of the Lord went on to say to Abraham because you have not withheld your son your only son I will surely bless you and through your descendant all nations on earth will be blessed the whole world will be blessed through your descendant because you have obeyed me and two hundred years later excuse me two thousand years later a descendant of Abraham he's making his way outside of Jerusalem through the city gates carrying a cross on this same Mount Moriah it's God's one and only son the son of his love and when he's arrived at the place of the skull the cross is laid on the ground and Jesus body is stretched out on top of the wood and when the Roman soldier grabs the hammer and lifts it into the air there was no voice from heaven to the astonishment of the angels saying stop stop but the silence was broken only by the thud of the hammer coming down and driving the spike through the flesh of Jesus onto the wooden cross and the groans that must have come from our savior he's hoisted into the air to be tortured to suffer and die oh but he was raised on the third day and to this day believers have been saying on the mountain sin of the Lord it has been provided it has been provided a substitutionary curse bearing sacrifice the lamb of God that is bringing salvation blessings to believers of all nations of the world to whoever believes on him that's how

God loved the world friends he did not spare his one and only son but gave him up to the hellish cross as a sacrifice for sin gave him up not just to watch him suffer don't ever think that God the father was just a spectator that day any more than Abraham was just a spectator no the Bible says it was the Lord's will to crush him it was the Lord's will to cause him to suffer it was the Lord who struck the shepherd and laid upon him the iniquity of us all and then punished him in our place I can't believe it God would never do that to his own son oh but he did Katie he did so great is love and because he did there is salvation to offer to the whole world so we come from the indescribable gift given to our last point point five which is

God's purpose in giving the gift of his one and only son what is God's purpose in this this rare this this jewel of a gift of his one and only son it's given in the form of a promise isn't it that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life so God's purpose in giving his son was a mission of rescuing the perishing it was a mission of salvation it was a purpose of salvation wasn't it to see men's eternal destiny change from perishing in hell to enjoying God forever and ever in what is called eternal life which is to know thee the true and living God and Jesus Christ his son to be in relationship with him to be brought right into that eternal fellowship of love and we're brought right in and now we have fellowship with God and his son and the

[ 31 : 51 ] Holy Spirit that's eternal life yes the duration is forever and ever it is everlasting life oh but it's a different quality of life it's instead of being separated from God forever and instead of being suffering the wrath of God it is to be enjoying the love and favor and fellowship and friendship of God forever it starts here and now it ends never that was God's purpose you see there was a need

for this gift men were perishing they were dying in their sins they were going to an eternal hell for by our sins we had forfeited eternal life and there was nothing we could do to regain it that was our desperate situation it was for this saving purpose that God in love sent his own son verse 17 goes on to just underscore that for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved

Jesus wasn't sent to condemn the world it was already condemned it needed saving from condemnation and wrath and to that end and for that purpose God sent his one and only son to save well sinners from their well deserved condemnation now I said that the saving purpose is given in the form of a promise and I want you to know that notice that there is an element of this purpose that is inclusive and then there is another element of it that is absolutely exclusive let's notice first the all inclusiveness of this offer that whoever believes on him shall not perish but have everlasting life the salvation is offered to one and all whoever whoever be man woman boy girl whoever be a

Jew Gentile slave free religious immoral church member prostitute serial killer or mother of the year homosexual drunkard abuser whoever you are whatever you've done this salvation is freely offered personally to you it's for you whoever will may come and all who do come will be saved none are excluded from the invitation except those who exclude themselves by not believing and so we come we see it's inclusiveness inclusive inclusivity is is is celebrated today it's the virtue of all virtues to be all inclusive and there are a few things that are so hated as being exclusive but there is in this purpose of

God and in the promise of God an exclusive statement and that by necessity not just arbitrarily God makes this some exclusive statement of necessity it is exclusive I want you to notice that it is whoever believes this promise is to whoever believes not not to those who do and work but to the one who believes and it's believing in him in him and and no other in the one and only son of God there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin he only could unlock the door of heaven and let us in neither is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved it's either saved by him or not saved lost forever

I am the way the truth the life and no one comes to the father except through me you see it's a very exclusive promise the promise of not perishing and having eternal life is only made to those who believe in him and if you don't believe in him then the wrath of God is still abiding upon you you see that in verse 36 the last verse of John 3 whoever believes in the son has eternal life but whoever rejects the son will not see life for God's wrath remains on him you see we all start out with God's wrath we're children of wrath by nature we come into this world as enemies and and hostile to God and so we're enemies from the get-go and our sins only prove that we're enemies and fighting against him wrath is upon our heads that's why he came not to condemn the world we're already condemned under his wrath he sent his son to save us from that wrath and how does he do that by bearing it on the cross for whoever believes on him but it's only and exclusively those who believe in him well you see then the all important question is what does it mean to believe in him that's the difference between heaven and hell that's the difference between perishing and everlasting life what does it mean to believe in him so I ask you do you believe in

[ 37 : 52 ] Santa Claus you say no no it's a myth okay do you believe in Jesus Christ of Nazareth oh yes oh yes I believe he was virgin born he was the long promised Messiah I believe that he he went around doing good he did miracles he taught the people I believe that he was crucified died as a sacrifice in the place of sinners rose again the third day ascended into heaven coming back to judge the world in righteousness I believe it all and James would say well there's nothing in your testimony that the devils don't have in theirs the devils believe and tremble that's not saving faith just to believe some facts about Jesus Nazareth you believe he's God's one and only son good for you the devils confess it often on earth that's not saving faith just to believe the facts that you hear that you read in your Bible that you hear preached and taught in Sunday school and hear from your parents well if that's not saving faith then what is well the religious

Pharisee Nicodemus he needed to be clear on that as well you see he did a lot of religious things and he thought that he had eternal life because of it but he didn't believe in Jesus and so Jesus needs to give him an object lesson and he does he kindly gives him an object lesson and as we listen in we will learn what true saving faith is what does it mean to believe in him so as to not perish but have eternal life these are the two verses just before our big text just before name comes 14 and 15 and this is what it says Jesus talking to Nicodemus just as Moses lifted up the snake in the

desert so the son of man must be lifted up that whoever believes on him may have eternal life now this was a well known event in Israel's history recorded in Numbers 21 4 to 8 4 to 9 and all as the it would have known by this Nicodemus as the Israelites were approaching the promised land after coming out of Egypt and after being unbelieving and going away the first time and the whole generation dies off and now here they are traveling and they're almost there 40 years in the wilderness their punishment for their unbelief and that whole generation of unbelievers died and they're almost there you ever been almost there on a long journey only to find there's a detour and they had to detour and go around the long way around Edom not friendly toward them and so they grew impatient on the way and I'm sure that never happens in long trips that you take but they grumbled they grumbled against God and they grumbled against Moses it was about the eighth time on record for these grumblers why'd you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert anyway there's no bread there's no water and we detest this miserable food manna from heaven oh how they rejoice the day they saw it we detest this miserable food

God doesn't take kindly we heard of it he deserves thanksgiving for the gifts he gives it's one of the marks of the unbelieving world neither were they thankful they're not saying thank you to God all day long not at all we don't like this miserable stuff was their response and so the Lord sent poisonous snakes among them and they bit the people and many Israelites died you say for grumbling that's right for grumbling and the people came to Moses and said we sinned we sinned when we broke when we spoke against the Lord in you pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us so Moses prayed for the people and the Lord said Moses make a snake put it up on a pole and anyone who's bitten can look at it and live so Moses made a bronze snake put it up on a pole and whenever anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake he lived here they were under the punishment and condemnation for their sins for their ingratitude and unthankfulness and grumbling and charging God foolishly and rather than taking the snakes away

God does something else he makes a provision for snake bite and the snakes keep on biting but he provides a provision for man's deliverance from death when they had the bite of death how were they to be saved just by doing that right there did you miss it looking at the snake elevated to where all in the camp could see it and whoever looked lived whoever looked lived but there were some perhaps that maybe thought how can simply looking at a snake up on a pole heal me when I have real poison shooting through my veins I've got to get that out of there no I've got to slit my wound and suck out the poison and spit it out if I'm to ever be saved if they didn't look they died others might have said well grandma had an old herbal medicine for snake bite find me some herbs but if they didn't look they died but whoever looked you see the inclusiveness and the exclusiveness of the offer whoever looked lived and whoever did not look died and then

[ 44 : 38 ] Jesus says to Nicodemus who had done all kinds of things thinking to save himself he said just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness even so the son of man must be lifted up that whoever believes in him should have eternal life believes in him now when he says he must be lifted up that's the way Jesus referred to the cross he said that three times in John's gospel and he said it to show the kind of death he was going to die he would be lifted up just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert that whoever believes in him whoever looks whoever believes may have eternal life now do you see what it means to believe looking is believing it's the look with the eye of faith it's focusing my trust on Christ alone

Christ in him crucified Christ in him lifted up as the object of my faith and so that means I'm looking away from anything in myself anything I might do or be I'm not looking here I'm looking away over there away from myself that's what damns people looking to themselves for a reason why God should accept them no you've got to look away from so it's all what's happening over there lifted up on that their stake as Jesus God's one and only son is bearing the wrath the hell that you deserve that's the only hope for sinners look and live what a message and Nicodemus that's what I've come for to be lifted up that whoever believes on me shall not perish but have eternal life it was about 200 years 200 years ago in

England a 15 year old boy I got up in the morning and he headed out to church on his own it was a snowy morning and he couldn't go on he had been troubled with his sin and could find no peace with God and so he turned in to a primitive Methodist chapel and the preacher was not able to get there the irregular preacher and so just one of the business men in the congregation came to the front pulpit announced his text Isaiah 45 22 look to me and be saved all you ends of the earth for I

am God and there is no other and this 15 year old boy says later that for 10 minutes the fella carried on had little to say other than to repeat the text look to me and be saved all you ends of the earth look it's not doing it's just looking and there's not a lot of pain in just looking he said but it says look to me and many of you are looking to yourselves but it's no use looking there you'll never find any comfort there it says look to me and then looking right down at the 15 year old boy he said young man you look miserable and you will always be miserable unless you obey my text look to me look to

Jesus that's who's speaking here look to the Lord look look look young man you have nothing to do but look look and live and young Charlie Haddon Spurgeon says I saw at once the way of salvation open up before me I had been looking for 50 things that I must do to be saved and with that one word look I saw the gospel at once he has done it all and it's just mine to look with faith to look with expectation for salvation to what he's doing what he's done and to nothing of myself that's saving faith that's what it means to believe in him and whoever does will not perish but have eternal life Nicodemus got an earful that night you see he found out that though he was so religious that he was still lost and would be lost forever unless he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved and we catch up with Nicodemus some two or three years later at the end of John's gospel he's outside the gates of Jerusalem on Mount Moriah otherwise known as Golgotha and before him is the very scene that Jesus of Nazareth had described to him that night when they had their private lesson the son of man is now lifted up he's there he sees him can you imagine that he didn't remember the words just as the snake was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness so the son of man must be lifted up that whoever believes whoever looks will not perish but have everlasting life it's the same Jesus now lifted up and

[ 50 : 47 ] Nicodemus Pharisee teacher ruling council member with so much to lose gives all caution cast it to the wind he's coming out he's openly confessing his faith in Jesus of Nazareth that Jesus hanging lifeless on the cross he's my savior and lord I am his disciple I am following him I am no longer ashamed he is my savior I am following him and he went out along with Joseph of Arimathea to give him an honorable burial burial when the twelve have fled and here's Nicodemus looking living and honoring his savior now that's why in love for the world God the father gave his son that a person like Nicodemus very religious but lost or like that woman in the well that we meet in chapter four of

John very immoral woman that whoever they are that they might look and live might believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved that's the purpose of this love gift the gift of God's one and only son receive him and begin to live the life that is truly life today let's pray our father in heaven our word seems so hollow to say thank you for this gift of your one and only son thank you that you didn't spare him as you spared Abraham and his son thank you that you poured out the wrath that we deserved that whoever believes on him might have everlasting life thank you for the life to which you have saved us a life in fellowship with you no wonder Spurgeon ran home that day kicking up his heels rejoicing in the snow storm because he now had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ any who are here today we pray that you would bring them to look upon what Jesus has done for hell deserving sinners and to go home saved to go home right with God living really living for the first time do it Lord we ask it in Jesus name Amen God