

Salvation Has Come

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's wonderful to be back with you again. Let me set this up. Let me start off by asking us a question this morning.

What comes to mind when you hear the title or the name Jesus of Nazareth? For some of us, maybe he was a good moral teacher.

Someone who gives us wise advice how to go about our lives. This sounds very loud again. Is it very loud? Maybe we can turn down a little bit.

But who is this man, this man of history that left such an amazing mark on the world? Who's this man, whether you admire him or whether you reject him?

Whether you worship him or whether you're still skeptical about the claims of Christ? Most of us, I think, would recognize that Jesus of Nazareth, there's something fascinating about him.

[1 : 00] Something intriguing about him. Something inviting about him. Who is this man that has left such an amazing mark on our world? You know Napoleon Bonaparte, the famous French military leader?

He might not agree with him, but this is what he said. He said, I know men, and I tell you that that man, Jesus Christ, is no mere man. Between him and every person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison.

Alexander, Caesar Augustus, Charlemagne, and I, we have all founded great empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? We rested them upon force.

But Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love. And at this very hour, millions of men would lay down their lives for him. But you see what he's saying there? He's saying there's something about this man, Jesus, that's different from every other founder of great empires and religions around the world.

Who is this man, Jesus? And what's so special about him? What's so intriguing and inviting about him? Now, as we said, some of us here this morning, maybe you think upon Jesus as a great moral teacher.

[2 : 12] Someone full of wisdom, advice. Someone who will help you get through your life well. For some of us, maybe we are wondering whether he is, in fact, the Messiah. The one that the scriptures spoke about for all those years.

And for those of you that are in high school, I hope you don't just believe in Jesus because your parents believe in Jesus. I hope you're taking the time to search out the claims and see whether the claims of the Bible are compatible with history.

I hope you're taking time to work out whether believing in Jesus and believing in rational science and intelligence are compatible for those of us in high school. And for some of us here, you're still maybe exploring his teachings and wondering about the things that he said.

And for some of us here, he's the one that you've come to love and worship. Now, as Eric said, today we are starting an eight-week series called Who Is This Man? And so for the next eight weeks, we're going to go through the Gospels and we're going to look at eight different encounters that individuals had with Jesus Christ.

Some of these people were religious leaders. Some of them were skeptics. Some of them were doubters. Some of them had big questions about life and faith. Some of them were trying to work out, is he the Messiah?

[3 : 26] Some of them were disciples that fell from grace. But in all of these encounters, we're going to see that as these men and women engage with Jesus, they see both him differently and the world in which they live very differently.

And so we're starting that today. And so for the next eight weeks, we're going to dive in to the Gospels. And today we start off with John chapter 3 with Jesus and Nicodemus. Okay. Now, let's consider this man Nicodemus that Alex and Gigi read to us about this morning.

We are told in verse 1 that he is a Pharisee. Now, many of us will know that the Pharisees were the kind of religious leaders of the days. They were people that were extremely particular and fastidious about obeying every minute detail of the law.

So they'd read the Old Testament law and they not only obeyed every detail, but everything that was maybe an implication of that detail, they were extreme in obeying it.

Making sure that nobody could accuse them on any technicality of breaking the law. And so very, very devout, very, very faithful in their religion.

[4 : 38] And so Nicodemus is a dedicated religious man. But we also know he's a very powerful man. Verse 1 tells us he's part of the ruling council. It's kind of like the Sanhedrin, which is similar to the legislative council in Hong Kong.

He's a kind of politician. He's one of the leaders that gives leadership to the nation of Israel and speaks to the manners of the day. And so he's politically connected.

He's very politically powerful. But in addition to that, he's also very respected in society. He's a leading religious figure. He's a leading political figure.

He's well respected and admired. And in verse 4, it tells us he's one of the leading scholars and academics. In other words, all the Jewish people would have come to somebody like Nicodemus to say, What is your take on the Bible?

What is your take on God's word? And so here is a man who's very devout. He's very politically connected. He's admired and respected in life. He's probably wealthy.

[5 : 39] He has an established career. He's an academic. He's got the qualifications. Here is a man that's got everything going for him. What more would a man in his day want than all these things?

There's nothing in his life that's lacking. Except there's a problem. Because look at what happens. There's something that's troubling Nicodemus.

He comes to Jesus at night. Now in John's gospel, John is very careful about everything that he writes about. And in John's gospel, he's always picking up on these themes from the Old Testament.

And one of the themes that he picks up on is the theme of light and darkness. And so in John's gospel, many people come to Jesus. And whenever John talks about darkness, he's always overtones of a shroud of darkness.

He's talking about the fact that Nicodemus has got everything going for him, but there's something troubling his soul. There's a shroud of darkness over his soul. There's something that he can't put his finger on, but it's keeping him awake at night.

[6 : 44] And so John is telling us this. And I wonder, have you ever felt like that? I wonder for how many people in Hong Kong we feel like that, right? We've got the name brand accessories.

We've got the fantastic apartment in the right address. We've got that good bonus. We've got our careers going off. We're about to get our PhD. Everything is going well for us.

And yet there's something in our hearts, there's something in our souls that we struggle to put our finger on. There's something that leaves us anxious and lonely. Have you ever felt like that?

Well, Nicodemus feels like that, but he does the right thing. He comes to Jesus. And he starts a conversation. And so he comes to Jesus and he says, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher that has come from God because we've seen the signs that you do.

And so Nicodemus and his friends come to Jesus at night and they've noticed something about him. They've noticed that Jesus is not just an ordinary man. There's something supernatural. There's something different about him.

[7 : 45] And what is it that they've noticed? They've noticed the signs. They've noticed that Jesus does and speaks to people in an amazing way that it kind of invites them in. They're leaning in.

They want to know more about this man. Who is this man, Jesus? And so they've come to find out. Except notice, Jesus doesn't allow them to ask the question.

Jesus kind of interrupts them. Nicodemus comes and says, Jesus, we've been watching you. We've seen the signs. We know that you're a man that comes from God. And before he even gets to ask a question, Jesus cuts him off straight away.

And he interrupts him. And what does Jesus say? He says, I know you've seen the signs. I know you've been watching me. But actually, you haven't seen anything. Because until you're born again, you can't even begin to see the kingdom of God.

Now, if I wanted to start a new religion, if I wanted to get people to follow me and start this new movement, that's not how I would respond to someone.

[8 : 48] I would have said, Yeah, yeah, come. Let's come. Let's talk about it. But what does Jesus do? Firstly, he interrupts him. He cuts him off. And then secondly, he says, Just by the way, you haven't seen anything.

You need to get born again. And then you can come follow me. Then you'll know what you're talking about. That's not a way to win friends and influence people, right? A great way to start a new religion. And yet, that's one of the most amazing things about Jesus.

One of the most incredible things about Jesus is Christ has this ability to both challenge you and encourage you at the same time. He has this way of both confronting you, confronting the way you see the world, confronting the things you trust in and the hope in, this way of challenging you, but at the same time, he's inviting you in.

He's bringing you near. And that's what he does here. He challenges Nicodemus on how Nicodemus sees him, but at the same time, he's offering him an invitation. He's saying, Nicodemus, unless you're born again, unless you're born from above, you haven't even begun to see me.

He's offering him an invitation to come on and to see Jesus. Now, I'm not sure what it's like in Hong Kong here. We're still new and getting to know the culture.

[9 : 59] But where we come from in South Africa, and I think this is true in America. I think it's true in Australia. It's probably true in England. Tell me whether it's true in Hong Kong as well. What comes to mind when somebody says, I'm a born-again Christian?

What comes to mind? I'll tell you what comes to mind. Sorry, what is it? A Bible-bashing Christian, right? Yeah, exactly. Well, where we come from, people think of two things.

If you say, I'm a born-again Christian, people assume two things. One, they assume you're emotionally unstable, and you need some emotional help, right? You need somebody to come along and lift you up.

You're kind of emotionally unstable, but now you've got a religious bend to you. Emotionally fanatical. Becoming a born-again Christian means God wants you to become emotionally fanatical. But the second thing people think it means is becoming morally fanatical, more religious. Ascribing to more rules, more do's and don'ts.

[11 : 01] You know, fundamentalists, there's no gray. There's just black and white. And born-again Christians are like that. No gray in their life. Just strict, authoritarian, religious regimes.

Now, is that what Jesus is asking Nicodemus to do? Is Jesus saying, listen, Nicodemus, you need to become a bit more emotional, right? Or, Nicodemus, you need to become a little bit more religious, a little bit more dogmatic.

Of course not. Nicodemus doesn't seem like the emotionally unstable kind of person. He's a Pharisee. He's a religious leader. He's an academic. He's a scholar. He's a member of the legislative council.

He's someone who, he's got it all together. Is Jesus saying, oh, you need to become a little bit more emotional? No, of course not. But secondly, is Jesus saying, you need to become a bit more moral? You need to ascribe to a strict set of authoritarian, dogmatic rules? Nicodemus is one of the most moral, authoritarian, dogmatic people there is. Jesus isn't asking him to become more moral, more religious.

[12 : 04] And yet Jesus says to him, you must be born again. You must be born again. You know, sometimes people say, oh, my colleague, she doesn't smoke.

She doesn't drink. She doesn't sleep around. She goes to one of those happy, clappy churches, those emotional churches. She must be a born again Christian, right? Jesus comes to somebody like Nicodemus.

He doesn't smoke. He doesn't drink. He doesn't sleep around. And Jesus says, you must be born again. What's Jesus doing? He's saying, Nicodemus, and he's saying to all of us here today, he's saying, if you want to know God, you don't just become more religious.

Something needs to happen inside of you. You need to encounter me. You need to encounter God in a way that transforms you on the inside. You need to have an encounter with the living God that

doesn't just change the outside or the behavior.

It'll do that. But something that causes a creative act of God inside of you to change you fundamentally who you are inside. Friends, Jesus Christ is telling every one of us, unless you encounter him in a way that fundamentally changes you, something that almost creates a new you, something that comes from outside of you, into you, you don't really know him.

[13:17] You've never really met him. You don't understand who he is. And Nicodemus says, we've been watching you. We've seen you. Jesus says, you haven't seen anything. Unless you've encountered me in a way that changes you, you haven't seen me.

And what Jesus says to Nicodemus is what he says to all of us. Nicodemus, you can't initiate this. I didn't come to get you to initiate a self-improvement project. I haven't come to tell you to pull up, you know, to get more moral or to become better or to become a more religious person.

That's not why I've come. I've come to bring a new life, a life from outside of you that changes you inside and to set you free. Nothing less than a supernatural, creative act of God making us news what Jesus has come to do.

And you know what? That's still the same way we get to know God. That's still the same way that we get to encounter Jesus. Jesus looks at each one of us in the eye and he says, you don't need to become more emotional.

You don't need to become more religious. You don't need to become more dedicated. You need to meet me in a way that changes you fundamentally on the inside. A way that changes everything about our lives.

[14:25] We need to meet God in a way that changes the way we view money. The way we view our careers. The way we view sexuality. The way we view our colleagues. The way we view our family members.

The way we view the past. We need to meet Jesus in a way that changes the way we view the future. We need to meet Jesus in a way that changes us so fundamentally inside. It changes everything about the way that we view the world.

Now, Jesus says, you must be born again. Something inside of you needs to change. Now, look at Nicodemus' response. Nicodemus says this. He says, hang on, hang on, Jesus.

Hang on now. Are you saying that as an old man I need to go back into my mom's womb and get born again? Like go through another delivery process? Is that what you're saying?

Now, Nicodemus is, that's not really what he thinks Jesus is saying. He's not that dull. Okay? He's a sharp man. But at the same time, he completely misses what Jesus is saying.

[15:23] So he's not really, he doesn't really think Jesus is saying you need to go back into your mom's womb. But he gives this stochastic answer because he's trying to work out, Jesus, what are you really saying? He's been watching Jesus, but he hasn't understood him.

And so Jesus' words miss him. And maybe he never thought of faith like that. Maybe he thought faith is just, you know, a set of moral principles. Maybe he thought faith is just a crutch for people who can't get through life on their own.

They need a bit of religion to help them. Maybe he thought, you know, faith is a way to control people. It's the opium of the masses. It's a way to control people's minds so that you can control them.

And so he completely misses Jesus. And so Jesus helps him along. And what does Jesus do? He takes him back to the Old Testament. And he says, he says this in verse 5, he says, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Do not marvel at the fact that I said you must be born again. The wind blows wherever it wishes and you hear it 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.

[16:32] Now, what on earth is Jesus talking about? Well, Nicodemus is a Jewish Pharisee. He knows the Old Testament really well. And so Nicodemus knows exactly what Jesus is talking about.

Jesus is not saying you need to have two births. You need to be born of water, you know, your mom's amniotic fluid, and you need to be born of the Spirit. That's not what he's saying. Nicodemus knew that in the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, Ezekiel chapter 36, the people of God have gone astray, things aren't going that well.

And God says to his people, he says, I will wash you with cleansing water. I will wash your sin away with cleansing water. I will wash you clean. And I will put my Spirit inside of you.

I will cause a new spiritual life to take hold of your life. And the result is, you will be my God and I will be your God and you will be my people. No, no, you won't be my God.

God says, I will be your God and you will be my people. In other words, Jesus is saying to Nicodemus, what God has always said to his people for thousands of years, he says, for you to really know me, it's not a matter of what you can do for me, it's what I need to do inside of you.

[17:42] You need to be washed of your sin. You need to be washed of your brokenness. You need to be washed clean again. And you need a new spiritual DNA to be put inside of you.

You need to become alive spiritually. You need to be infused with my spiritual life. But, says Jesus, this is not something that you can generate on your own. This is not something that you can muster on your own strength.

This is not something that you can do by going to Mecca or going to Jerusalem or going on some pilgrimage. This is something that God himself needs to do inside of you. You can't buy it with all the money in the world.

You can't earn it with all the hard work. It's a force of nature that comes from outside of you and when you experience it, it changes you. What's it like? It's like a typhoon of God's grace that completely changes your life and doesn't leave you the same.

You know, there's a wonderful story and I don't, I haven't been able to verify that it's 100% true but it's attributed to a man called Augustine. And Augustine was a great philosopher and theologian of the 4th century.

[18:50] Lived 1700 years ago. And he's kind of one of the founding fathers of the Christian faith. A man that really understood the gospel and the Bible in a beautiful way. But Augustine was, before he became a follower of Jesus, he was an absolute hedonist.

He was someone who lived for pleasure and pleasure alone. He was a self-confessed sex addict and so he had multiple relationships going on at the same time. He was sent away from home as a young boy to go study at the top universities of the world.

And he used to just go from city to city to city tasting the pleasures of the city. And his mom was a devout follower of Jesus and his mom used to pray for him but he didn't follow his mom's footsteps until one day, one day God got a hold of him.

One day he's outside in a courtyard and he's a spiritual seeker. He's asking these big questions about Jesus and life and faith and he hears somebody singing next door about the wonders of the gospel.

And he says it's like a bright light shone from heaven into his soul and caused him to be born again. But anyway, Nicodemus Augustine, his whole life changes.

[20:00] And so a few years later he's walking through a town that he used to frequent you know often and he meets a lady there. There's a lady, a sex worker and she recognizes him and so she runs up to him and she's expecting this warm, salacious welcome.

Right? And she's very friendly and she's expecting him to reply and Nicodemus is kind. Not Nicodemus, Augustine. Okay, my friend Bob.

So Augustine, he's kind, he's polite but he doesn't respond to her and he walks on in his way and she's very confused.

And so she thinks to himself, maybe he's forgotten who I am. And so she calls out, Augustine, it's I. And she names her name. And Augustine turns around and he says, I know, but it's no longer I. For the old Augustine is dead and I've been made alive again. You see what happened? Here was a man that, he was still the same man. It was still Augustine. His mom would have still recognized him.

[21:08] He wasn't, he didn't have a new face or a new personality. He's still the same person. But something about him had experienced the typhoon of God's grace and had left him a new man.

Something inside of him had changed fundamentally. There was a new person. It is no longer I. It is a new man. And this is what Jesus has come to do. And friends, isn't this what Matt was saying to us?

Matt didn't become a follower of Jesus because he decided to become more religious. Matt didn't become a follower of Jesus because he was born in life and he thought he'd become more dogmatic or more emotional.

Something of the typhoon of God's grace, the wind of God's grace blew into his life and caused a new life to well up inside of him. And he became a new person and he shared about that.

Friends, this is the wonder of what Jesus does. He encounters us and he doesn't leave us the same. Now, look at what Augustine says in verse 9. Augustine says this.

[22 : 04] He says, How can these things be? And isn't that a great response? When you understand the wonder of the gospel and what Jesus has done, something inside of us just says, How can these things be, right?

How can it be that God would take sinners like you and I and welcome us into his family? How can it be that God would take men and women whose sin is red like the piano cover and wash us white as snow again?

How can it be that God would take people that have lived their lives for their own glory and their own pleasure and now turn us around to live for him? How can it be that God would take us and welcome us into his family and give us a new life and cause his spirit to be infused in us?

How can these things be? Well, Jesus gives the answer. In verse 10, he says, Are you not the teacher of Israel and yet you don't understand these things?

In other words, he says, How can you not see God's been telling you this for 2,000 years?

Throughout the whole Old Testament, God's been speaking. He's been showing you right from the beginning how these things can be.

[23 : 10] And then in verse 13, Jesus says the most amazing thing. He says this, No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. How can these things be?

Two ways to experience the life-transforming power of God. Experience this typhoon of God's grace. Firstly, look to the one who came down. Remember earlier, Jesus says, he says it a couple of times, he says, You must be born again.

Remember that? Well, if you look in your Bible or also in the bulletin, you should see a little footnote where it says born again. I think it's in verse 3. And there's a footnote at the bottom that should say something along the lines of this can also be translated born from above.

Do you see it there? It's in the notes in the bulletin. You see, Jesus purposely uses this word that's a bit ambiguous in the Greek. It can either mean being born again like a second time but it can also mean being born from above, being born in the heavens.

[24 : 27] What's Jesus saying here? He's saying, if you want to know me, if you want to experience the typhoon of my grace, you must be born again. There's something that you knew that needs to happen inside of you.

But in addition, you need to be born from above. You need something in the heavenly realms to happen to you. But this is what Jesus is saying. There's a problem. It's in the heavens. It's beyond your reach.

You can't get it. The thing that you and I so desperately need is way beyond us. You can't just climb a ladder. You can't earn it. You can't buy it. Something that's in the heavenly realms.

Jesus might as well have said, if you want to be born again, you need to go to the stars. There's no hope. But then what does he say? He says, no one has ever gone there. No one has ever ascended into the heavens.

But there is one who has come down from the heavens. The Son of Man. The Son of God. You see what he's saying? He's saying the salvation of your souls, it's beyond you. It's beyond your own ability.

[25 : 26] You can't generate it. You can't earn it. It's beyond the stars. But there is one who's come down and he's come to bring the salvation to you. Salvation is in the stars but also it's right in your midst because it's in me.

Salvation is in me, says Jesus. Friends, who is this man? Who is this man, Jesus of Nazareth? He's the one who's come down. He's the one who's come to bring salvation to us.

He's the one who's come to bring to us what we could never reach, never obtain on our own. He's God himself in human form. How can these things be? Look to the one who came down and brought it to us.

The second thing is this. Look to the one who saves. Look at what happens here. Nicodemus comes to Jesus and he says, Rabbi, Rabbi is the Hebrew word for teacher.

He says, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher that comes from God. And then Jesus interrupts him and he says, no one can see the kingdom of God unless you're born again. Now first you think, Jesus, why are you changing the subject?

[26 : 29] Just listen to him, right? But what's Jesus saying? Nicodemus says, Jesus, I see you as a teacher. And Jesus says, if that's all you see me, you haven't seen me at all. If you think that I'm just a moral teacher, someone's come to set an example, someone's come to tell you how to live your life, you've missed me completely.

Jesus says, you'll never get to know me. You'll never experience the force of my grace if you come to me as teacher. You have to come to me as savior. Jesus says, you say I've come to teach you, but I say I've come to save you.

If you come to Jesus as teacher, all you'll do is you come to him for an example. You'll come, you'll think of Jesus as a good example, how to live your life, someone to get some wisdom and you'll miss him completely.

Jesus says, I haven't come to be your teacher. I haven't come to be your guru. I've come to be your savior. I've come to save you. And look at what he does. Jesus says this, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him, they have eternal life.

1300 years before this in the Old Testament, the people of God are in trouble. The nation of Israel are in the wilderness and they're going their own way. They're not really following God.

[27 : 43] They're living for their own glory. And so God sends snakes into the wilderness as a form of punishment. The problem with sin is sin is so deadly serious.

And so these snakes come into the camp and if any Israelites is bitten by a snake, they slowly start to die. And so God sends these snakes into the wilderness. But even though death is a natural consequence for sin, God wasn't trying to kill them.

He was just wanting to wake them up. He was wanting to get their attention so that they would turn back to him and come to him in faith and repentance. And so God gives them a way out, a way to be saved.

He says to Moses, Moses, form a bronze snake and lift it up on a pole, on a stick, high in the camp. And if anybody is bitten by a snake, all they need to do is look at the snake.

They need to look at the pole and as they believe, as they trust that God will heal them, they'll automatically be healed. They'll be saved. They'll be forgiven. They'll be made new again.

[28 : 47] Now look what Jesus says. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. What's he talking about? He's talking about the cross.

He's talking about the cross. Friends, this is what Jesus is saying. He's saying, just like the people of the Old Testament were stuck in their sin, they were slaves to their sin, and the consequence was death.

He says, every one of us on the same boat, we are slaves to our sin. We're stuck. We're dying. And the problem and the consequence of sin is that it always leads to death.

Maybe some of us here, maybe our sin is obvious. Everyone can see it. Maybe we think of like a cousin or a friend, and you think they sin is because they're addicted to some substance, or their life is going off the rails.

They need Jesus, but me, my life's fine. Maybe some of us here are like Nicodemus. On the outside, everything's all together. You're respectable. People, society think your life is perfect, but inside, there's a lingering hunger.

[29 : 51] There's a darkness that hangs over us. Every one of us are like the Israelites. We've gone our own way. But then Jesus says, in the same way that the bronze statue of the snake was a symbol of God's punishment, so the cross is a symbol of God's punishment.

The cross is a symbol of God's grace, but before then, it's a symbol of God's punishment. That sin is so deadly serious that God put the sin of the world on Jesus. The seriousness of the cross persuades us of the seriousness of sin.

God took our sin and put it on Jesus and punished Him there. But that's not all. Just as the Israelites look to the snake, they look to the statue, so they find healing. Jesus says, if you simply look to Me, if you simply believe in Me, don't need to go to Jerusalem, don't need to earn your stripes, don't need to become more fanatical, just look to the One who is lifted up on the cross.

As you look to Me, you'll find your healing and your wholeness. Don't look to Him as a teacher, don't look to Him as a guru, don't look to Him as a man of good advice, believe in Him, bank your life on Him, bank your future on Him, look at Him as if He's all you have.

Just as Moses was lifted up in the serpent, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He sent His Son to be lifted up on the cross, that whoever looks to Him, whoever believes in Him, will not perish, but have eternal life.

[31 : 17] Friends, who is this man? Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? He's the one who came down, but He's the one who was lifted up. He was lifted up on the cross that we can just simply look to Him and believe and find new life.

Friends, for those of you that haven't encountered the typhoon of God's grace, will you look to Him? Will you look to Him today? You may have it all together on the outside. You may be greatly admired and respected, but will you look to Him?

Every one of us has a cancer of the soul that Jesus wants to heal. Will you look to Him? For those of us that are followers of Jesus, this week, will you look to Him? As you go to work, as you travel around the region, as you look after your kids, as you write exams at school, will you look to Him? Will you look to the one who was lifted up on the cross for you? Will you look to the one who rose again victoriously? Will you look to the one who ascended into the heavens and now He rules and reigns? Will you look to the one who intercedes for you and prays for you daily?

Will you look to the one who is coming back again to make all things new, to wipe away every tear and to destroy every sin? Will you look to Him? You know, later on, we encounter Nicodemus again.

[32 : 29] In fact, we encounter Him two more times in John's Gospel. In chapter 7, the Pharisees are arguing about Jesus and they're working out how can we arrest Jesus and how can we kill Him?

And so Nicodemus goes to the Pharisees and he says, guys, this time no longer under the cover of darkness. In broad daylight, he goes to the Pharisees and he says, does our law allow us to put somebody on trial without giving him a fair trial or to arrest somebody or to kill somebody without giving him a fair trial?

And the Pharisees turn on him. They say, who are you to defend Jesus? They suddenly turn on Him and attack Him. But then later on, we meet Nicodemus one more time. Jesus has been crucified and He's hanging on the cross.

And Nicodemus and another man, Joseph of Arimathea, go to Pontius Pilate in broad daylight in front of all the other Pharisees and they go and they say, we'd like to give him a decent burial. Can we have the body? And so Pilate consents. He allows them to take the body. And Joseph of Arimathea, he has encountered Christ's grace and the result is he becomes exceedingly generous.

[33 : 41] He says, I've got a tomb that is prepared for me, cut out especially for me, but Jesus can have it. He gives away his tomb. And Nicodemus, he comes and he brings a whole lot of spices and perfumes to embalm Jesus' body.

In fact, he brings 65 pounds worth, almost 30 kilograms. Some commentators say, the amount of spices and perfume he brought was almost what people would have brought for kings and governors and people and royalty.

What's happened to Nicodemus? This man that first came in the shroud of darkness, covered at night, didn't want the Pharisees to see, came to settle, you know, came up to Jesus to ask him a question privately.

Now in broad daylight, he comes and he wants to, he wants to give him a decent burial. What's happened to Nicodemus? Friends, I'll tell you what's happened. He saw the one who came down. He saw the one who was lifted up on the cross. He experienced the typhoon of God's grace that changed his life and left him a completely different person. He experienced the amazing, magnificent grace of God.

[34 : 48] Friends, who is this man? The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ, God himself, came not to show us how to live, not to tell us to become more moral or more religious, not to curtail our fun or to tell us how to live our lives necessarily.

He does that, but he came to save us. He came to cause us to be born from above. He came to give us new life that changes us completely. He came because he loves us.

For God so loved the world that he sent his son, his son from the heavens to come and to be with us. For God so loved us that he sent his son to go and hang on the cross. That whoever would simply look on him, believe in him, bank their lives on him, to get to experience the typhoon of God's grace, the life-transforming power of the living God. Friends, will you come to him? Will you look to him? Will you trust him? Will you bank your life on him? Now, this is Christ, our King.

[35 : 54] Let's worship him together. Will you stand with me? Or actually, maybe stand if you want to. If you want to, just take some time reflecting. You're welcome to do that. Respond in any way that you feel appropriate.

But let's worship. Let's worship. Thank you.