Christ Was Lifted Up To Save
4/12/2020 Sunday AM

Announcements and Worship Songs

- Good morning everyone! I hope everybody is doing well on this Resurrection Sunday!
- I am so glad we are able to "meet" together like this, even under these circumstances.
- **Announcements:** Remember Operation Christmas Child during this time, we still want to keep on track with that as best we can. We will attempt a Drive-In service next Sunday as well, weather permitting. You can go to the website at www.uccmacon.com to see different Opportunities to Stay Connected from youth and children to adults. You can also give your Tithes and Offerings on the website as well. Those of you that are here, there is a box you can place your tithes in if you choose to do that. After the service this morning, we will have communion and the ushers will deliver it to you curbside. **I do ask that every everyone remain in your cars or at least practice social distancing if you have to get out of the car. Restrooms are available.**
- **Let's open up with prayer as we begin this morning.**
- **Songs: We Believe, Forever, Because He Lives**

- This morning we are going to discuss, **Christ Was Lifted Up To Save** and we will be in **John 3:14-15**.
- What we see in John chapter 3 is Nicodemus who was a Jewish religious leader and teacher come to Jesus at night and said in **v.2**, ""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.""
- Nicodemus acknowledges that Jesus is a teacher who has come from God.
- Jesus replied and said, ""I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."
- Just believing in Jesus as a good teacher from God wasn't enough.
- This confused Nicodemus and it prompted him to ask, """How can a man be born when he is old?" "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!""
- Jesus proceeds to explain to Nicodemus that you have to be born of the Spirit, but he still doesn't understand.
- Since Nicodemus is a Jewish religious leader and teacher, Jesus choses reference an Old Testament story that he will surely know and be able to understand. **That brings us to our primary verses for this morning.**

John 3:14-15

[14]Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, [15]that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

- Jesus was referencing **Numbers 21:4-9** which says, "[4]They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; [5]they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" [6]Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. [7]The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.[8]The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." [9]So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.
- We looked at this same passage of Scripture back on January 12 in my sermon **God Always Makes a Way**.
- Jesus knew that Nicodemus was familiar with this passage and instead of continuing to try to explain to him what actions he should take, Jesus began to explain what He would do for Nicodemus and for us all.
- Some may find it odd that Jesus would compare himself to a snake, however, notice the parallels:
    - The people in the Old Testament sinned and God sent venomous snakes to bite and kill many of them.
    - Once they began to feel God's wrath, the people wanted to repent and be saved from God's wrath.
    - God directed Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole as a symbol of the people's sin and curse.
    - Anyone that was already bitten could simply look at the bronze snake and they were healed and saved.
- What Jesus was telling Nicodemus in that shortly, he too would be "lifted up" referring to the Crucifixion and that he would be doing this so "that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."
- Just as the snake in the wilderness was a symbol of the people's sin and God's wrath, so to would Jesus become a symbol of mankind's curse and the wrath of God.
- ***2 Corinthians 5:21*** says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the *righteousness of God.*"

- **Galatians 3:13-14** says, "[13]Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."[14]He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."
- Over 2000 years ago Jesus Christ was nailed and lifted up on a cross to bear God's wrath because of our sins. **Why?**
- Because of **John 3:15** said, so "that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."
- Just as the serpent in the wilderness was God making a way for the people to be saved, Jesus sacrificially giving his life on the cross over 2000 years ago was God making a way for everyone of us to be eternally saved and born-again.
- After Jesus gave Nicodemus the Old Testament reference, the very next verse is **John 3:16**, we will read to **v. 21**.

John 3:16-21

[16]"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. [17]For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. [18]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. [19]This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. [20]Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. [21]But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

- Folks, in our present circumstances, we need to remember who our Healer is!
- Not only can Jesus heal us from any sickness that is known to man, he can do much better than that, he can heal us from the pandemic of sin that is ravaging our world on a daily basis.
- He can do that because when he hung his head on that cross over 2000 years ago and said, "Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit, it is finished!" he became the substitutionary atonement for all our sins. He bought us with his own blood that day.
- All we have to do is put our faith, hope, and trust in him and we will be saved!
- During this time of fear and desperation, remember, **Christ Was Lifted Up To Save!**

- As powerful and as magnificent as Christ's sacrifice on the cross was, it would not be anything if the events that we are celebrating today did not take place.
- Today is Resurrection Sunday, and it is the day that we as Christians have set aside to remember the fact that after Jesus was beaten, mocked, ridiculed, crucified, and buried in a borrowed tomb that after 3 days he showed himself to be the Son of God by bodily resurrecting himself from the dead! **As Amanda Burney says in the play, "He is not dead as some would have you to believe, He's alive! He's alive! He's alive!**
- The empty tomb shows us that Jesus Christ is who he says he is and if he is who he says he is, then he can do what he says he can do. It he can do what he says he can do, then we can trust this morning that we are healed, delivered, and saved!
- Easter is not about a rabbit or eggs or any of that garbage, and there is no better time that right now for the church to proclaim to the world that we serve a Risen Savior and that is what Easter is all about Charlie Brown!
- I want to close with the lyrics of an old hymn "He Lives",

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near
He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives, He lives, Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

In all the world around me I see His loving care
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast
The day of His appearing will come at last

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find
None other is so loving, so good and kind
He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives, He lives, Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart