

Talking Points Irresistible Draw Delivered 3 14 21 ajj

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10 **John 3:14-21**
(Sermon)

Our scripture this evening contains one of the best loved verses in the entire Bible: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” John 3:16

It is the perfect description of God’s extravagant love for the world is expressed in the loving act of a Father giving His only Son.

Giving him for the sins of the world.

Giving of a Son who was perfect and sinless, who was fully Divine and fully human. Giving a son as a ransom or payment for the sins of mankind by a self-sacrificing act of total love.

Jesus, simply put, paid a debt He didn’t owe to pay for a debt that we couldn’t pay to purchase a place for us in heaven.

John 3:16 is at its core, an expression of how much God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, loves you and me.

Placed within the rest of the pericope of scripture this morning we can see the full power of this act.

In verse 14 we have the fullness of reference to how critical this moment of Jesus literally being lifted up upon the cross as we look at our Numbers passage read earlier.

In Numbers 21:4-9, we find God's chosen people wandering in the desert. This time in the desert would amount to years, decades of God's chosen people's 'wanderings'

During this time the scriptures in Numbers tells us that the people grow "impatient" along the way. God has delivered them from the hands of their captors in Egypt. As they begin to remember what was left behind and yearn for what could be, or what they felt 'should be', they begin to complain.

They complain against God and against Moses, the man of God whom they are following.

They are complaining that they have to now survive in a land with no food and water. They are tired of being a wandering people and soon forget the good that God has done and they grumble and complain.

As a result of their complaining large terrible serpents/snakes appear, bite many of the people and the bites of the serpents are found to be poisonous as the people who are bit begin to die.

When the people repented, the Lord told Moses to make a serpent and set it on a pole so that anyone who had been bitten might look at it and live. The serpent was a mark of God's anger as it bit the people, but now it was also used as an reminder of God's mercy.

God's people might be saved by the God who gives life and life abundantly, if only they would look upon the image of that which would have brought about their death.

It is in this backdrop of this horrifying event that the people experienced, which was initially God's punishment but also his expression of mercy.

God is saying to them understand your sin, but also understand my mercy, my grace and my great love for you.

The chosen people in this desert moment had to first begin to see things with new eyes.

They had to repent, but before that they had to understand what they needed to repent from.

That their acts of unbelief and rebellion were indeed sin and where God had demanded obedience, there was now an understanding that there is a consequence to not being obedient to God.

But in order to understand the wickedness of their ways they had to see the reminder of the punishment lifted up, and if they believed on God and his holiness, mercy, grace and righteousness, as they looked toward the serpent wrapped around the tall staff of Moses they would be delivered from the punishment.

What a graphic remembrance John brings around his scripture “For God so loved the world....”

To see the Son of Man lifted up calls for “belief” for the sake of eternal life, not simply a restoration of earthly life.

God once saved the people by calling upon them to gaze on the serpent.

Now, God delivers His promised salvation to the people, all people, by having them gaze in belief upon the Son, lifted up.

But that gaze cannot be just a gaze, there must be genuine belief in that outward watching.

That gaze cannot be just a gaze, there must be genuine repentance in their inward watching.

In Ephesians 2 we are told “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:1-4a)

We just like the wandering chosen people, were once wandering through this life making mistake after mistake as we fell into temptation and sinned.

Wandering through life as the consequences of our sinful actions, thoughts, and words meant death or full separation from God.

But because of God's mercy and because of His great love towards us, God now says the same thing to us about the Son of God and the cross as he once said about the serpent on the pole.

Look to the cross of Jesus knowing that it was intended for you as punishment of your sins.

Look to Jesus hanging on the cross, knowing that your salvation and forgiveness is found only in acknowledging Him as what can save you from your sins.

Into the darkness of our lives, Jesus shines His light of love, grace, forgiveness and belonging.

We are made right because of His sacrifice if we accept and believe in Christ and Him crucified for us.

We are accepted as part of the kingdom of God with all its benefits, not because of our own works, so that no man can boast, but it is the gift of God. (ephesians 2:9)

Salvation is the free gift of God.

The verse of Christ says If I am lifted up I will draw all men unto me.

It does not say that all who are drawn to Him accept Him.

Christ's irresistible love for us draws us to Him in the act of self-sacrifice that He makes.

Like metal to a magnet we are drawn to acts of love.

Christ gives us a choice.

He does not force Himself upon us.

He doesn't make us remain at the cross.

God gives us free will that we can choose the love that we are drawn to in the person of Jesus Christ.

The result?

Follow a little past John 3:16 to John 3:18 "18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

As we journey through Lent we can indeed do as the Psalmist in Psalm 107 “O give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble...”

What kind of trouble do you find yourself in today?

The world has plenty of problems to offer us.

The Christ who drew you to Himself, calls to you still.

Look to the cross and find salvation.

Look to the Christ of the cross and find peace for your troubled soul and find light for the darkness you may be encountering.

Look to Jesus and remain in Him.

Amen.

Our challenge today:

Look to Jesus. The same Jesus who draws you to Himself, calls to you now. With whatever you are dealing with, look to Jesus. As long as we keep our eyes set on Jesus, we are reminded of an irresistible love of the one who gave His life for us. We are reminded of God's great love and mercy and His forgiveness. We are reminded of a love that brings a peace that surpasses understanding.

Look to Jesus, every moment of every day.

Amen.

Our Benediction this morning is from Romans 16:25-27

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.—

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Go in peace knowing that you are God's beloved child.

If you found today's worship service helpful to you please send us an e-mail at: yourmtparan@gmail.com

We would LOVE to hear from you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Meeting – Part Two

TODAY Sunday March 14th at 11am by Zoom

Please check information that was sent to you on email, WhatsApp.
Also on our website

MtParanChurch.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Palms will be given out from noon – 1pm
Sunday March 28th by drive-thru.

After 1pm, they will be left outside of the
main church door for pickup.

You may feel free to help yourself.

Drive-Thru Communion:

***First Sunday / April 4th Easter Sunday
from 12noon – 1pm***

Church parking lot located at
10308 Liberty Road Randallstown 21133

Please remember to stay masked and remain in your car

Mail and Electronic Tithes and offerings:

BY MAIL: Mt Paran Presbyterian Church

P. O. Box 415

Randallstown MD 21133

BY ELECTRONIC GIVING: Electronic Offering

by Zelle through your bank

Select *YourMtParan@gmail.com* when prompted

John 3:14-21**John 3:14-21****New International Version**

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

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 they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people 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 their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.