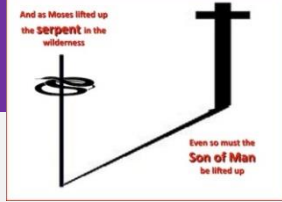


# LOOK and LIVE

Sunday, March 11 – 8:00 & 10:45

Fourth Sunday in Lent – 2018



**Holy Week:** TH at 11 & 7; FR at 11 & 7 | **Easter Sunday** at 7 & 10:45

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Because of the GREAT danger of injury or death, *people are encouraged – before crossing railroad tracks – to STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN!*

Because of the GREATER danger of eternal punishment, *the Holy Spirit is enabling us to **LOOK to Jesus and LIVE forever!***

In this sermon we will consider selections from today's OT, EP, and GO readings on the topic of **LOOK and LIVE!**

1. **Numbers 21:4-9:** During the 40 years in the wilderness:
  - a. Sin: The people sinned <sup>5</sup> ... **against God and against Moses...** <sup>6</sup> **Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.** // Sin brings temporal punishment, which, *without repentance – thus sorrow and faith*, will lead to eternal punishment!
  - b. Sorrow: <sup>7</sup> **...the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you...”** // Our tendency is to **NOT** take responsibility and **BLAME** someone else, *but such things are never good!* Whenever we sin, the Spirit is moving us to confess – *thus to admit and be sorry!*
  - c. Forgiveness: <sup>8</sup> **...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.”** // *What a foolish*

*remedy!* Imagine being bitten by a poisonous snake, being in pain, and dying; then someone says, “Hey, look over there at that bronze serpent on that pole and you will live!” Though it sounds foolish, would YOU believe such a remedy – *if it came from God?* Would you BELIEVE, **LOOK, and LIVE?** Knowing our great need, *we look*; those who deny their need *look away*.

2. **Ephesians 2:1-10**: In this passage, notice the **TOTAL bad news**; then the **AMAZING good news**:
- Look** – *you are dead and condemned*: For the believers in Ephesus – *that WAS true*; for everyone today who does not have a relationship with Jesus – *that IS true!* Paul wrote: <sup>1</sup> **...you were dead in the trespasses and sins** <sup>2</sup> **...following the course of this** [sinful] **world, following the** [devil and his evil ways]... <sup>3</sup> **...and [you] were by nature children of wrath...** // Paul reminded the Ephesians of their situation **BEFORE** *God made them alive in Christ*: being spiritually dead, your words and deeds **SHOWED** that was true, and you **WERE** in line to receive the eternal wrath of God!
  - Live** – *is God’s desire for everyone*: <sup>4</sup> **But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,** <sup>5</sup> **even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved...** // When is it too late to bring a physically dead person back to life – after 10 minutes, 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week? Amazing things have happened, yet, *at some point*, the situation becomes hopeless. That was true for us spiritually – **TOTAL HOPELESSNESS!!** However, enter the **GOD-FACTOR** and **NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!** So when we were dead

and condemned, GOD enabled us – *by grace through faith* – to **LOOK to Jesus and LIVE forever!**

3. **John 3:14-21**: In this section, keep in mind that Jesus is talking to Nicodemus, a Pharisee – a man who trusted in his own keeping of the law for his entrance into heaven, ***BUT a man who also wanted to learn more about Jesus!***
- a. A parallel: <sup>14</sup> **And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,** <sup>15</sup> **that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**  
// As the snake-bitten were called to **look and live PHYSICALLY**, so every sinner is being called to **look and live SPIRITUALLY** and **ETERNALLY** through Jesus!
- b. No one is left out: <sup>16</sup> **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that WHOEVER believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** // God’s great love moved Him to send His Son for **EVERYONE**; *then Jesus did a finished work for EVERYONE!* The Bible is so clear: **“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life”** (1 Jn. 5:12 NAS). *So Jesus is the ONLY WAY to heaven!*
- c. The two wills of God:
- i. Primary: <sup>18a</sup> **Whoever believes in him is not condemned...** // God has enabled us to trust in Jesus for heaven, so we know we have escaped the wrath we deserve!
- ii. Secondary: <sup>18b</sup> **...whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.** // God desires all to believe in Jesus, *so those who stubbornly refuse have condemned themselves!*

d. All people are in one of two categories: In this section, Jesus explains more about *the condemnation*:

- i. Light / Truth haters: <sup>19</sup> **...the light** [1:9; *the Christ*] **has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.** // The ultimate terminal disease is **unbelief**; the fruits of unbelief are **evil works**! Lenski wrote: **“Their [evil] works’ are... the net sum of their lives....** The implication is **not** that men helplessly lie in the toils of wickedness **but** that, *when the saving power of the Light comes to them and battles to free them, they fight the Light, hug their wicked works, and continue to make them the sum and substance of their lives”* (272-273, I added the emphases). All such people stubbornly **refuse to LOOK**, so they **do not LIVE**!
- ii. Light / Truth lovers: <sup>21</sup> **...whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”** // Belief created by God leads to *the doing of things that agree with God’s Word of Truth*. In time God enabled Nicodemus to **LOOK and LIVE**; *then, to show his change from death to life, he helped put Jesus’ dead body in the tomb!*

**Let Us Pray**: Dear Holy Spirit, though our old natures want to *look away and die*, You have enabled us to **LOOK and LIVE**! *So now, keep us looking and grant us the fruits of faith!*

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