Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Simply Believe
Scripture: John 3:11-14
Code: 43-16

All right, let's open the Word of God to the third chapter of the gospel of John, and we begin now to look at verses 11 to 21, really one of the most important portions of Scripture in all the Bible. I'm not going to be in any hurry to get through it, so we'll spend a few weeks on this passage, and that works out well because it will be around the Shepherds' Conference and it will be wonderful, at least for the folks who are for sure here next week to hear a little bit of our Lord's teaching in this vital chapter.

Now you will remember that this section of John's gospel, starting in verse 1 and running to verse 21, is the Lord teaching about salvation, teaching about salvation. And it all happens in a conversation with a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus. Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night; he's a very formidable man. The fact that he was a Pharisee meant that he had achieved a very elevated status in his devotion to the Old Testament and to rabbinic law and tradition. He was an expert. Jesus even calls him *the* teacher in Israel. There are some historical indications that he was one of the three wealthiest people in Jerusalem, which means that he has reached high levels of influence--a member of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court--a very, very elevated Jew.

Here we find the Lord Jesus Himself as the evangelist and Nicodemus as the subject of his evangelism. This is Jesus talking to a lost sinner, a hypocrite--very religious, very well versed in his religion, but lost, unconverted, outside the kingdom of God, not possessing eternal life; really an archetypal hypocrite. And we're not saying anything about Nicodemus that he didn't know. He is a deeply troubled man. He is a hypocrite who understands his hypocrisy. He is a secret sinner. He is a deeply worried man. He does not know that he is reconciled to God. He has no confidence that he possesses eternal life. He does not believe he is not sure that he is in the kingdom of which he continually speaks and which he ostensibly represents.

He has been watching Jesus, if only for a brief period of time, as Jesus has been in Jerusalem around the Passover. And Jesus has been doing mighty miracles and the evidence is that He is from God because, as Nicodemus said to Jesus, "nobody can do what You do unless God is with him." The only explanation for the powerful miracles was that Jesus was connected to God. Nicodemus is not saying he is God, but he knows he comes from God. So Nicodemus hopes that maybe this man from God can give him an answer to the deep anxiety of his own heart. Maybe this man can tell him what else he needs to do or what he needs to stop doing to get into the kingdom, to have some peace and some joy and some assurance and some confidence, and some real hope.

So he comes to Jesus at night and his heart is open to Jesus who knows everything in everybody's mind and heart, as chapter 2 says at the very end. He knew what was in man so nobody needed to tell Him anything about it because He knew the heart of man. Jesus knows the angst and the worry and the fear and the anxiety and the trepidation of this arch-hypocrite in Judaism at the highest level. He knows his aching heart.

And so He speaks to Him about entering the kingdom. And the first thing He says to him is, "It isn't something you can do." It isn't something that you can do. You can't make a contribution to entering into the kingdom. In verse 3 He says, "You have to be born again [*anothen,* "born from above"]." Later in that section, verses 3 to 10, you have to be born by the Holy Spirit. You have to be born of the Spirit and cleansed by power from above. And He uses the analogy of birth. Birth is an earthly analogy. We all understand that you make no contribution to your birth, none. And the same would be true in the spiritual realm. You make no contribution to your spiritual birth. That's why the analogy of birth is so appropriate. You need to be born from above. You need God to give you spiritual life, the same way God gave you physical life--and you made no contribution to your physical life, and you can make none to your spiritual life.

This is devastating. This is turning his religious paradigm and all his theological thinking upside down and inside out because his religion like all false religions in the world are all about people achieving a relationship to God, human achievement, works, religion, ritual, ceremony, morality, whatever the categories of accumulation. All religions systems in the world, bar none, are all about human achievement. This was apostate Judaism. That was his entire perspective. All of his convictions about theology, about God, about relationships to God, about life, kingdom, heaven were around the idea that he had to do something. He had to be moral. He had to be virtuous. He had to be righteous. He had to follow the rituals and the routines and the ceremonies to achieve this standing with God that would grant him entrance into God's presence eternally.

Jesus says to him, "What is required is something you can't do. You have no part in what needs to happen. Now what is striking about that is that would seem to me to be the last thing that most Christians today would want to say to someone who came to find out about eternal life, who came to find out about entering the kingdom, who came to ask about how to have a relationship with God, how to have your sins forgiven, how to be saved (to use our language). It would seem to me that the last thing people would say is, "Well, you're asking the impossible. There is no way that you can do this. There is no way that you can make a contribution to it." Whatever you are, whatever you have done, have not done, whatever good you've done, whatever evil you've done has no bearing on this. Your connection to religion has no relationship to this. Your connection to morality has no relationship to this. You're asking for something to happen to you that comes from God by sovereign power. But that's what Jesus told him. And I'm convinced that we far too often hide that great truth.

There are people who are afraid to say that to Christians, that the salvation they already received was a work of God from heaven. Somehow they think that intrudes on people's independence and freedom. Why would we say that to a non-believer? Answer: to stop the non-believer dead in his tracks, with nowhere to go and nothing to appeal to. "By the deeds of the Law," in the words of Paul, "shall no flesh be justified." You're asking something that is impossible. You would be better off trying to stuff a camel through the eye of a needle than to think you can earn your salvation. This is a complete, massive shift in the thinking of Nicodemus. That is why twice in that opening section, verses 3 to 10, Jesus says, "Truly, truly," "truly, truly," because I'm telling you for the first time what is true as over against the lies that you have longed believed.

Now Jesus holds him responsible for not knowing that. "How can you," He says in the end of that opening section, verse 10, "how can you be *the* teacher in Israel and not know this?" He should have known this because the message of divine, sovereign salvation is given clearly in the Old Testament, in the New Covenant passages in which Nicodemus would have been very familiar (Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36, Ezekiel 37). How is it you don't know that a relationship with God is something God does miraculously from heaven, it comes down?

So here is this self-condemned hypocrite with a guilty conscience, full of angst because he knows he's alienated from God, he knows he's a phony, he knows he's a secret sinner. And now he hears that he can't do anything about it and all he's ever known all his life is that he can do something about anything, even a relationship with God is in his hands.

So our Lord stops the sinner in his tracks. And I commend to you this approach. If somebody would come to you and say, "What do I do to be saved?" The answer is...What?...nothing. There's a sense in which you say this is a divine miracle, this is a work of God according to His will; as verse 8 says, the Holy Spirit does it when and where He will. And as we've been saying all the way through those opening verses, all you can do is ask, all you can do is ask.

Now last week we made a transition into the section verses 11 to 21. New birth was mentioned five times in the opening verses; belief is mentioned seven times in verses 11 to 21. So now we came to that second parallel track, you remember that? If you weren't here last week, you might want to get that message. The second parallel track, human responsibility. You can't do anything about it on the one hand, but on the other hand, you are responsible for your belief or unbelief. So the message to a sinner is, You can't do anything to gain your salvation. You can't make a contribution to it, but you are required to believe what God has done to provide it, to believe what God has done in Christ to provide salvation as a gift of grace.

Now with that in mind, let me read verses 11, and we'll read least down through verse 18. "Truly, truly I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen and you do not accept our

testimony. If I told you earthly things and you did not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged." And we'll stop there.

Now as we work our way through this passage, this most remarkable, remarkable passage, we're going to follow three simple lines. We'll cross into three little categories. Number one, the confrontation of unbelief. That's the opening couple of verses. Our Lord confronts unbelief. Then 13 to 18, He commends belief. And then 19 to 20, He condemns unbelief. So the whole thing is about believing and not believing--confrontation of unbelief, commendation of belief, condemnation of continued unbelief.

Now let's pick it up at verse 11 and you'll see how it connects. "Truly, truly," for the third time He says that because He's saying things that are so alien and at the same time absolutely true and speaking into the error and ignorance of Nicodemus. "Truly, truly I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen." And by the way, that's an editorial "we." You find other illustrations of our Lord doing that, where He uses a plural to speak of Himself. Some think He's embracing all others who would preach this message, but it's such a unique statement that I think it's best to see it as simply an editorial "we," which is something very common in all the language of the world. Sometimes when you refer to yourself, you defer from saying "I" and you say, "Well, we believe," and you understand that that's you, but there's truth beyond you represented by that that's also believed by others. So our Lord uses the editorial "we." We speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen.

That is a really stunning statement because what Jesus is saying is, I am telling you what I know and what I have personally experienced. I'm not giving you second-hand information. You're not getting second-hand information from Me. It's not like a prophet came to you; it's not like a preacher came to you; it's not like an apostle came to you to give you what he had received from God, I am speaking to you what I eternally know and what I have eternally experienced firsthand. Really a very dramatic statement.

But notice how verse 11 ends. "And you do not accept our testimony." Shocking, shocking. "You" is plural, "you do not accept our testimony." "You" is plural. Why is it plural? You, your friends the Pharisees, the leaders of Israel, your nation and the world: "He came into His own, His own received Him not, He was in the world, the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not" (John 1:10-11). I have come to you with the truth, eternal truth that I have always known, truth that proceeds from Me as the eternal Son of God. I have given you that truth.

By the way, remember now, you have a representation of a conversation that could be read in a few minutes, but probably lasted for hours in the night as Nicodemus and Jesus talked. So, Nicodemus, *the* teacher in Israel, as imminent as any teacher, as gifted as any teacher, as skilled as any teacher, had just more than met his match. He had just had a conversation with the perfect teacher, the most powerful, the most competent, the most convincing, the most brilliant, the most wise, the most clear, the most persuasive voice that ever uttered a human word had been talking to Nicodemus--the very Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. And He had told him the truth about salvation, that salvation is not a matter of works. It is a matter of a divine miracle that God does independent of the sinner. He had told him that. Powerful statements. It's as if He said, "Look, with all divine authority, firsthand information from Me as God, eternal God, I have told you the truth about salvation. It's not works; it's a divine miracle. I have told you what I have always known and I am eternal. I have told you what I have understood from all eternity in union with the Father and the Spirit. I have not learned this, I have not heard this, I have not read this, I have not received it, I have not been taught this. I have eternally known everything I have said to you.

In John 8:38, Jesus said, "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father...with My Father...and you do not accept My testimony."

You know, in a sense that's discouraging. But in another sense, it's encouraging. If this man who knew the Scripture wouldn't receive truth from the greatest, most skilled, powerful, effective teacher who ever spoke on earth, don't be surprised when they don't believe you. I'm not surprised when they don't believe Me. You don't believe. That's the post-mortem on the conversation with Nicodemus, you don't believe. So where is Nicodemus after what he just heard? He doesn't believe; he's a non-believer; he doesn't buy it. It's way too dramatic a paradigm shift. It literally has turned his theology on its head. All he's ever known like everybody else in religion is works--works, legalism, righteousness by effort--that's all he's ever known because every religion in the world is that, every single one, including apostate Judaism. And our Lord has told him something that is just shattering; it's just not possible to process this, that entering the kingdom is something that happens to me to which I make no contribution.

Having said that, our Lord then turns and deepens this confrontation by pointing out the ignorance of Nicodemus. Everybody, all Nicodemus' career had: "O, Nicodemus, you're such a great teacher, you're such a great teacher. You're *the* teacher in Israel." He was an elevated man. Everybody sat at his feet in wonder and awe, and that's why he kept getting pushed up until he ended up on the Supreme Court, the Sanhedrin.

But Jesus doesn't treat him that way. Verse 12, He says, "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" It's pointless for Me to go any further with you. It's pointless for Me to dig deeper into the profound realities of theology and the mind of God and

the purposes of God in salvation, I can't go there because I gave you a simply earthly analogy and you can't even believe that.

What's He mean when He says, "If I told you earthly things?" Earthly things simply refers to the concept of birth. That's an earthly thing; that's an earthly thing. Birth happens on earth; it doesn't happen in heaven. It happens here. It's a simple analogy, a simple earthly illustration and you don't get it, and you don't buy it, and you don't believe it. And it's so simple. And it's so clear. How in the world will you believe if I now drop the earthly analogy and start talking to you about the Trinity? About eternal predestination? About the relationship of the Father to the Son and the Son's role in atonement to propitiate and satisfy God? How can I possibly tell you about all the panoply of glories that are attached to the work of God in salvation? How can I possibly explain all that heavenly theology when you can't even believe the simple earthly illustration?

Let me tell you something about unbelief. Unbelief produces ignorance. If you want to hear ignorant representation of the Bible, listen to unbelievers. They will misrepresent the Scripture constantly. I never expect to hear any unbeliever rightly represent the Bible. A lot of the time I don't even expect believers to rightly represent the Bible, but I certainly don't expect non-believers to rightly represent the Bible. Why? Because unbelief locks them in ignorance, because that's 1 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural man understands not the things of God." What are they to him? Foolishness; to those who are perishing, they are foolishness.

I was doing a little research, thinking about Shepherds' Conference next week, and maybe talk to the men about an interesting character in the last century, a very prominent preacher by the name of Charles Templeton. Some of you may remember that name. He was one of the founders of Youth for Christ, along with Billy Graham. And he was believed at that time to be the greatest of the preachers. Billy was kind of the second preacher. He was the great mind, he was the great presence, he had all the drama. He had it all--brilliant mind, all of that, and he became a great preacher and a great evangelist and preached to stadiums full of people and he was carrying the weight of that kind of Graham/Templeton duo in the early years. And people fell at his feet. People loved to listen to him. He was...he was basically targeted for massive success.

Little by little it began to surface that he misrepresented Scripture. And he began to a little more, a little more out about what he thought about Scripture. It all came to a culmination when he wrote a book. The title of the book is a biography of his spiritual journey, and the title is *Farewell to God* by Charles Templeton. He ended up a journalist in Canada, a novelist, writer, television personality; *Farewell to God.*

What he does in that book *Farewell to God* is attack the Bible. And it's amazing for someone who was trained and who prepared and who preached. He gets everything in the Bible wrong, everything. His view of everything is warped and skewed, and that is the legacy of unbelief. The legacy of unbelief is

ignorance. That is why if you go to a university and you listen to unbelievers talk about the Bible, they'll get it wrong. If you go to a seminary and you have unbelieving professors talk about the Bible, they'll get it wrong. And here was Nicodemus, he was one of those. Unbelief produces ignorance. And so we see the passage open with this really startling confrontation of the condition of the heart of Nicodemus and the universal condition of every unbelieving heart, that it is locked in and it is prisoner to spiritual darkness, spiritual ignorance.

So Jesus is saying to him, "Look, there's really not a lot of point in Me launching on deeper theological explanations because I'm talking to a brick. You have no capacity to absorb this. Your mind is darkened. You're double-blinded by Satan, we might say, if we borrowed Paul's insights.

So, what's the remedy? The confrontation of unbelief then leads to a commendation of belief, and starting in verse 13 the Lord says the only thing you can do is believe. That's all you can do. "No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."

What can Nicodemus do? He's locked in unbelief, and he's double-locked in darkness and ignorance. What can he do? Whether he was moral or immoral makes no contribution to his entrance into the kingdom. Whether he was religious or irreligious, makes no contribution. What can the sinner do? All the sinner can do, according to verse 15, is believe, but that is enough. That's enough. So we have in verses 13 and following this commendation. Really it's a command to believe; that's the only hope. So here's the truth of *sola fide*, faith alone. And it's not from a Reformer, by the way, but it's from the author of truth, because truth is eternal, because He is eternal and truth is simply an extension of who He is. And I love how our Lord says this. Verse 13, let's see how He makes this point about commending belief: "No one has ascended into heaven."

Now I can't resist stopping at that time. Look, that's obvious, that's obvious. We're locked in a space/time realm, right? We're material, we live in bodies. We're locked into space and time. We don't transcend that. We don't get out of our space/time box. Nothing can get us out of that. I know people want to get out of that, that's why there's so much stupid fantasy in the world--movies, books, television. I wouldn't watch fantasy for two minutes. I don't need fantasy, just give me reality. And I don't ever want to start living in the world of fantasy. It's all full of lies and misrepresentations. The only fantasy I'm interested in is watching cartoons with my grandkids. But it's not very deceiving because I know Mickey is not really a mouse. But a whole culture of people consumed, whether Harry Potter or whatever it is; "Twilight" or whatever it is, living in some kind of fantasy world. Look, you're locked in space and time--deal with that; deal with that. Don't fool yourself into believing that you can live in a fantasy world.

There were some exceptions. There are some people who have come back from heaven. Really? Yes. Lazarus, John 11; he was dead for a few days and he was somewhere and he came back. And then when the Lord died on the cross, do you remember the graves were opened and the saints came forth, so they came back. And Paul, 2 Corinthians 12, had a short trip to heaven and came back. But here's the important part. That exception proves the rule. Those are very rare, very, very rare. Elijah went to heaven, but really only came back in the moment of the Transfiguration. Very rare. We don't go to heaven and come back. People don't do that. By the way, you wouldn't know that if you went to your Christian bookstore and saw the shelf on the people who have been to heaven and back. Really; it's crazy. And they come back and they say, "Well, Jesus has a rainbow horse, and I saw God, and the Holy Spirit's a blue fog," and on and on and on they go. There are several books like this that are very, very popular. Heaven is for real, and ninety minutes in heaven, and one other book. There's one book where a boy had an accident and his father wrote a book about him going to heaven, coming back. It's very interesting.

We're just completing it, it will be out soon--a new edition to the book on heaven in which the opening whole section opens a book--it's a new seventy-fifth anniversary for Crossway Publisher--and the whole opening is debunking all these phony trips to heaven and then talking about the real heaven as revealed in Scripture.

But anyway, people don't go to heaven and come back. When you go to heaven, you stay there and you'll be glad you did, really. Can you think of any reason in the world you'd want to come back? No, you can't.

Well, there's more to that than just that. There's some very important truth here that I want you to understand. No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. Listen to this, the only...the only person who ever came down from heaven with the truth about salvation is Jesus. Every other religion comes either from this earth or below. Every religious system is earthly, demonic. There's only one heavenly gospel, only one heavenly message that came down, and that's from Jesus. Not even the most religious saint, not people who think they're into transcendental meditation and they ascend to some higher levels of consciousness. That's ridiculous. That's just mindless meandering. No person has gone to heaven and brought down the truth. Not L. Ron Hubbard, not Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Glover Frye, not Joseph Smith, not anybody--not any angel, not any human. Jesus said, "I'm the only one whose come down from heaven. And the message that I bring is that salvation is a work of God in which you do not participate. It is a gift that God gives according to His will and all you can do is receive it by believing. That's the truth. And I'm the only one whoever came down from heaven with the truth, with a message.

Jesus refers to Himself a number of times in that same phrase, "He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man." For example, in John 6:33 He calls Himself the bread of God which comes down out of heaven. John 6:38, "I have come down from heaven." Again in verse 51 of that same chapter, chapter

6, “I’m the living bread that came down out of heaven.” Chapter 8, verse 42, “I came down from heaven.” Chapter 13, verse 3; 16:28; 17:5--many times He says I came down from heaven. He is the only heavenly source of heavenly truth. And the message is salvation is by faith alone. So He comes down; He brings these two parallel truths: salvation is a divine miracle, new birth, being born from above, and salvation is received by the sinner believing. He is the Son of Man, that’s a messianic title taken from Daniel 7. He is the promised Messiah. He is God’s sent prophet. So Nicodemus is speaking with God in human flesh. Nicodemus is talking to a heavenly being. He is talking to the eternal Son of God and the eternal Son of God is saying, “Don’t believe anything other than this, because no one has ever gone up to heaven and brought down the truth. I have come from heaven with the truth.” That’s why Paul says, “Believe any other gospel,” Galatians 1, “you’re cursed.” Believe any other gospel, you’re cursed because no one’s been to heaven and brought it down. It’s earthy or it’s demonic, a combination. False religious systems are the work of Satan who is disguised as an angel of light; they’re a combination of human ideas and demonic seduction.

The gospel in all its richness, with all of its elements is the only message that has come down from heaven. And then in verse 14, our Lord says, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” You’ve got to lift Him up. First of all that means elevate Him above all others. Elevate Him above all others. He’s the only one that has come down. He is the eternal Son of God. He is the Lord of Lords. He is the second member of the Trinity. He is the source of truth. He is the truth as well as the life, and the light. Elevate Him; lift Him up. Lift Him up. John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.” Acts 4:12, “Neither is there salvation in any other.” There’s no other name under heaven whereby men may be saved, only in the name of Christ. Believing in Christ alone, Christ alone, Christ alone; *sola Christus*, *sola fide:* faith alone, in Christ alone.

I am the one that has to be lifted up. And in saying that, there is a reference to His crucifixion. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” What is that about? Back in Numbers 21 the children of Israel in their disobedience were punished by God. God sent snakes, remember, to bite them. And they were bitten with this toxic and deadly poison and they were in a panic. They cried out to God and what did God do? God in His compassion and His mercy said to get a pole, put a bronze serpent on the pole, and for anyone who looks up at the pole, I’ll provide immediate healing. That’s just a story from Israel’s past, and it’s an analogy. It’s not an allegory; it’s just an illustration. In the same way that the children of Israel, carrying about the deadly poison of the bite of this snake, could be delivered from death by looking up at a brazen serpent, so it is that sinners carrying the poison of the arch serpent and the sin that he perpetrated on the human race can be delivered from death by looking up at the crucified Savior.

What a beautiful analogy. That’s the first time we know that there’s a certain lifting up of Christ. We haven’t heard how He’s going to die. But we do know from Psalm 22, some of the features of His body--we know about His thirst, and we know about His wounds. And from Zechariah we know He’ll

be pierced. And from Isaiah 53, we know that He will be beaten and again that He will be pierced for our transgressions. We know that He's going to die. Already chapter 2, verses 19 to 22, Jesus said, "Destroy this body and I'll raise it up." But now all of a sudden, we're getting another perspective here and the perspective is that His death will be a death in which He's lifted up.

But there's more to this than just being lifted up in His death. It means that you give Him all your attention. You elevate Him above all others, over all others, as the preeminent one and you look to Him in faith and Him alone for salvation.

The bitten Jews were healed from the poison by a look of faith. They had to believe I'm going to go where that thing is. I'm going to go there, I'm going to look, and if they would do that, they would be healed. And so it is that all God asks of us is to look at His Son, lift Him up. The Jews who were bitten didn't have to do anything. There were no works. Nothing for which to atone. No restitution, nothing; just look and you have life. What a beautiful analogy. And I know when it happened it was in the plan of God that it would be the analogy of the simplicity of salvation by faith--Christ lifted up; we look at Him and that's enough, we have life.

And here's the heart of the heavenly message that Jesus brought down. Verse 15, "So that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. Whoever believes will have eternal life. That's all the sinner can do. Belief, belief--that's the heart of the gospel.

The real shocker here is the word "whoever." If you want to know why that's such a shock to Nicodemus, be right where you are next week and we'll see.

Bow with me in prayer. Lord, we are so overwhelmed by the majesty of Scripture, the wonder of it, so grateful for the grace of it that all that needs to be done You do. You provided the sacrifice. You provide the power, the will. You do the work. You give us life from heaven, from above by the Spirit. You regenerate us. It's all Your work, and You receive all the glory. And the only thing that we can do, the one thing is to lift our eyes to see Jesus above all others--the only Savior, dying on a cross, hanging there for us, bearing in His body our sins and believing in Him we have eternal life. What an amazing gift.

That eternal life frees us from ignorance and the truth becomes clear to us, and what was foolishness once is joyous, clear truth. Father, would You awaken hearts even today? And call sinners to believe, take their eyes off Moses or Abraham, or any other religion or religious leader and lift their eyes only to Christ, and look to Him in faith as Savior and Lord and receive eternal life.

Father, now we ask that You would commit to us the truth and that we might find expression for it this week, to communicate what we've learned so that we can know it even more deeply because we've shared it, and so that it can be useful in the lives of others. Give us that opportunity, we pray, and

bless every soul here. May each look to Christ and find in Him eternal life. Amen.

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