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## **JOHN'S GOSPEL 3:14-21**

**Jesus said to Nicodemus:  
'The Son of Man must be lifted up  
as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,  
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.**

**Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost  
but may have eternal life.**

**For God sent his Son into the world  
not to condemn the world,  
but so that through him the world might be saved.**

**No one who believes in him will be condemned,  
but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,  
because they have refused to believe  
in the name of God's only Son.**

**On these grounds is sentence pronounced:  
that though the light has come into the world  
men and women have shown they prefer darkness to the light  
because their deeds were evil.**

**And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light  
and avoids it, for fear their actions should be exposed,  
but the person who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so  
that it may be plainly seen what a person does is done.**

# Light within the Darkness

Nicodemus is at the centre of Sunday's Gospel. Nicodemus is a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin – the supreme court of the Jews. The Pharisees had a dislike to Jesus and were looking for a change to get rid of him. Nicodemus, on the other hand, was impressed by the teaching and the good deeds that Jesus was doing so he wanted to meet him. He knew he could not be seen with Jesus in the day time, so he came in the darkness of the night.

Jesus reminds Nicodemus of the old Bible story of Moses and the bronze serpent. As the Israelites journeyed towards the Promised Land, they began complaining to Moses about the hardships they were experiencing. Shortly afterwards, serpents appeared and started attacking the people with their deadly poison. The Israelites cried out to Moses for help and God heard their plea. God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and coil it around a pole and whenever anyone looked at the serpent they would be healed. Jesus points out to Nicodemus, just as physical healing came to those who looked at the bronze snake, those who looked at the crucified Christ would be spiritually healed.

In the Gospel Jesus is talking to us through John. As in the case of Nicodemus, Jesus is inviting us to believe in him. To believe that he is the manifestation of God's love and is prepared to give up his life in self-giving love for us. Jesus promises that if we believe in him and live according to that belief, we will have eternal life.

This week we are being invited to look prayerfully at the cross.  
In the symbol of the cross the depth of God's love for us is revealed.  
It tells us of the extraordinary length to which God is willing to go  
to assure us of his love for us.

Jesus on the cross is an inspiration and an encouragement to us. It helps us to understand the rawness of our daily living, physical pain and sickness, conflicts, hurts, misunderstandings are all embraced in the cross and death of Jesus. We all carry to some extent Christ's passion. Nothing in our lives is ever lost, no tear, no painful struggle is ever wasted.

On Good Friday when all seem lost the love of God stood firm. We are reminded that love is more important than anything else. All our efforts to love, however imperfect, has potential to flesh out the love of God. Every word and act of kindness, every gesture of compassion and forgiveness has a far-reaching effect on the people around us and the world at large.

Jesus came into the world bearing light,  
the light of truth, of love, of compassion and of forgiveness.  
Jesus did not come to judge us, he came as a friend to save us from ourselves, to free us from everything that makes us less than what we really are.

There is darkness in each of us and this darkness can take many forms. We need the light of Christ the power of the resurrection. Knowing that we have the power of the resurrection within us, we can overcome every fear, every set back, and every broken dream. We have the capacity to hope against hope, to begin again when our lives are touched by tragedy.

**What God created in love, God will never stop loving**

