

LOOKING UP!

By Matt Huddleston

Several years ago, Kenneth Woodward wrote a surprising article. His article in Newsweek compared the world religions, their attraction to Jesus, and ironically the errors of mankind's theology. Each world religion has been attracted and repelled by Jesus Christ.

Drawing attention to the central truth of Jesus when he writes, *"The cross is what separates the Christ of Christianity from every other Jesus. In Judaism there is no precedent for a Messiah who dies, much less as a criminal, as Jesus did. In Islam the story of Jesus' death is rejected as an affront to Allah himself. Hindus can accept only a Jesus who passes into peaceful samadhi, a yogi who escapes the degradation of death.*

There is, in short, no room in other religions for a Christ who experiences the full burden of mortal existence — and hence there is no reason to believe in him as the divine Son whom the Father resurrects from the dead.

That the image of a benign Jesus has universal appeal should come as no surprise. That most of the world cannot accept the Jesus of the cross should not surprise us either. Thus the idea that Jesus can serve as a bridge uniting the world's religions is inviting but may be ultimately impossible."

In scripture we look up to find God's Word teaching us, *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"* (John 1:14 & Phil. 2:8)

SERMON NOTES

Excellent

June 27

We are _____ into a _____.

- ◇ 2 Corinthians __:__
- ◇ 2 Corinthians __:__
- ◇ 1 John __:__

_____ came into our _____ and demonstrates _____.

- ◇ Colossians __:__
- ◇ Hebrews __:__
- ◇ Philippians __:__
- ◇ John __:__

We can _____ a new _____.

- ◇ John __:__
- ◇ Acts __:__

We can bring _____ and _____ to those in _____.

- ◇ 1 Corinthians __:__
- ◇ 2 Corinthians __:__
- ◇ 2 Peter __:__

Next Week:

JULY 4, 2021

ISA. 25:1

PRAISE HIM!
MATT HUDDLESTON

PERSONAL STUDY

It is rewarding to invest time each day in God's Word.

Mo 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Read this verse and evaluate your mind. Do you fight feelings of anxiety, fear, failure, or regret? Do you blame others or yourself for failures and hard times? When do you need to focus on Godly hope?

Tu Acts 26:15-18

What does God wish Paul to do? If you are a Christ-follower, are you living with your eyes open and turned to God? If you are not a Christ-follower, would you like to know more about forgiveness and light?

We Philippians 2:6 & John 1:14

Set aside time today for his noble thought; Christ dwelt among us. Quiet your mind, focus on this truth, then seek to respond. How do you feel? What should you do? Whom should you tell? This is good news!

Th 2 Corinthians 5:20

Scripture reminds us, "You are not who others say you are. You are who *I* say you are. And *I* say you are called to *my* ministry." Will you follow and obey?

Fr 1 Peter 2:9-10

Do these verses line up with your daily thoughts, personal beliefs about yourself, and your direction? Memorize these two verses today. Each time doubt and fear come to your mind, repeat these verses out loud.

Sa 2 Peter 1:3-7

Escaping the corruption of this world is a combination of us participating with the great gift from God. Where do you need to set your mind today: Seeing His gift or participating with it?

STUDY & DISCUSS

- Read Philippians 4:8. Describe something that is excellent.
- Does excellent describe your life and output? Why or why not?
- Read 1 Peter 2:9 and 2 Peter 1:3-9. These are the only other verses in the New Testament where this exacting and virtuous word (ἀρέτη - aretē) appears. What does Peter's usage add to our understanding and life choices?
- Craig Groeschel's book titled "Winning the War in Your Mind" asks the reader to take inventory of their thoughts. Have any of these thoughts been in your mind this past week?
 - ◇ I just can't make a change. Even if I try, I'll always be stuck.
 - ◇ I can never get out of debt. No matter what I do, I'll always struggle financially.
 - ◇ No one really loves me. And if they knew the real me, they'd definitely not want to be in my life.
 - ◇ I can't get close to God. I'm sure it's my fault. There must be something about me that keeps me from experiencing God like others do.
- After taking an inventory, we must participate in transforming our mind (Romans 12:2).
 - ◇ When worried about change, what verses remind you of God's purpose and hope?
 - ◇ When wanting more things, what verses remind you of God's provision and the true blessing of giving?
 - ◇ When confronted with isolation from others and God, what verses give you a better perspective of trials and God's love?