

# Looking Unto Jesus

Having been reared in a Christian home, I consider myself blessed. The benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. In truth, I cannot think of any drawbacks that would not be equally compensated by the blessings. As I look back, the so-called drawbacks could have been considered something good, if I had looked at things differently. A perceived drawback is the disappointment that comes in exposure to people who lived inconsistent Christian lives. My mom told me as a teen-ager, "Son, if you look at men they'll always let you down. You've got to look to Jesus; He'll never let you down." As a teen, I began to look to Jesus. Mom was right - He never let me down.

I would like to tell you of the over compensating benefit of looking to Jesus, or in other words, of how looking to Him changed my life over forty years ago and still does to this day. *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds"* (Hebrews 12:2,3).

## **1. Looking to Jesus is the heart-cry of the world.**

When the Greeks had come up to the temple to worship, Jesus was in the area where only the Jews were permitted. The Bible says, *"The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus"* (John 12:21). It has been said there is a God-sized vacuum in our hearts that can only be met and filled by God. Jesus, while on earth, was the visible expression of God: *"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person..."* (Hebrews 1:3). The Gentiles were saying, if we come to God's temple and go through God's prescribed method of worship, but miss God...we miss everything. *"...Sir, we would see Jesus."*

Many who don't even realize it are looking for Jesus. They do so by trying to fill their vacuum with the stuff of this world. Only Jesus can satisfy the empty soul. He makes life worth living.

## **2. Looking to Jesus in His life on earth is life-changing.**

Go to the Gospels and view Christ's birth. His is the only birth in innocence. Here lay a Babe who would never cry for spoiled attention. Here is One of whom the angels lit up the Judean sky at His birth. Here is One whom the magi would travel over five hundred miles to proclaim Lord.

Look at Him at twelve in the temple. Luke 2:46, 47 says, *"And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."* Now over two thousand years later we are still astounded at His answers. He alone has the answers to life's most difficult questions. It was later in His life it was said of Him, *"...Never man spake like this man"* (John 7:46).

Look at Christ in His healing. A man born blind was healed by Jesus and said, *"...one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"* (John 9:25). The man continued, *"If this man were not of God, he could do nothing"* (John 9:33). The obvious is before us: Jesus can do everything within the consistency of His nature. There are some reading these words who are up against a seemingly impossible situation. Well, here's

some good news for you: *“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible”* (Mark 10:27). Earlier Jesus said, *“... If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth”* (Mark 9:23). Even now, believing Christ brings forth the miraculous. I look for a miracle every day.

### **3. Looking to Jesus in His death is life-giving.**

This truth is a main teaching of the New Testament: *“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him”* (Romans 6:8). *“For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you”* (II Corinthians 13:4). *“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him”* (II Timothy 2:11).

Nothing has brought more spiritual vitality in my life more than contemplation of Christ’s death and its meaning. Studying His death is like a kaleidoscope that opens a different view with every observation. I think of the beating He received, so severe that the Scripture says, *“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men”* (Isaiah 52:14). The implication was that His appearance after brutal beating was not even human! The examination before the Sanhedrin, Herod and Pilate was an atrocity beyond all imagination. And yet we remember the words to Simon Peter, *“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?”* (Matthew 26:53). Our Lord could have avoided all the pain and punishment of the cross but endured it all for you and me. *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”* (Hebrews 2:9).

### **4. Looking to Jesus in His resurrection brings hope beyond this life.**

As we mourn Christ’s death upon the cross, it soon turns to jubilation, as we come to the understanding that when He died, we died, but when He rose, we too rose with Him, *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”* (Romans 4:25). *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”* (Romans 6:5).

The worse that can happen to us is taken care of by His resurrection from the grave. When you combine the death, burial and resurrection, you find Paul’s deepest longing expressed by these words, *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Philippians 3:10). And in this final thought, we see the life-changing power of one who looks to Jesus regularly, constantly, and consistently throughout one’s life. For the Bible says, *“...but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits”* (Daniel 11:32). The word “exploit” from the Latin means “unfold.” In modern usage, it means to make full use of and derive benefit from (a resource). As we meditate and think on Jesus, we received the full benefit of what He did for us through the cross, burial and resurrection. And not only that, but it saves our sanity! That is what Hebrews 12:3 is saying, *“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”* We find our rest in Him! The song writer said, “Jesus, the very thought of Thee, with sweetness fills my breast...” Jesus brings the sweet from the bitter. Today, begin or continue your journey through life by “looking unto Jesus.”

-Pastor Pope-