## John 3:13-21

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Date: 23 June 2024 Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[0:00] I think we covered extensively there enough to talk about it no more today, to be able to move on from that. So, we'll pick it up where we ended, I think around verse 11, 12, and 13 in there.

And so let's pray together, please, and then we'll get into this passage of Bible. Father, we're asking that you'll move in our hearts and in our midst, and that you'll be glorified in us this morning.

And please speak to us and teach us some truths. God, let us never take for granted this beautiful and wonderful opportunity to come together and to have a holy Bible in our hands.

And to have the words of God and to be able to believe them and know them and study them. And to consider our brothers and sisters, even today in this world, that do not have a copy of the Scriptures, or those that have been saved by your grace and just have very little.

And then to think in the past of those who gave their lives and shed their own blood to circulate this book and to translate this Bible and to give it to the masses.

[1:08] And so, Lord, we're privileged. Lord, may we take care and take concern and give our focus and attention to what the Scriptures say. And please, again, be glorified in our midst this morning.

We love you, and we submit this time to you. In Jesus Christ's name we ask. Amen. Amen. So in John chapter 3, Nicodemus comes to Christ, and he's kind of an open-ended thing from him.

He just says, hey, we know you're a teacher come from God, you know. So, what's your point, Nicodemus? I don't know if he had one, except just like he had some light.

He understood that Christ was from God, and he had to get to him, and he just had to get near him. And then Jesus Christ, of course, dealt with the most important thing that he could ever deal with somebody about, and that was being born again.

And I want you to consider that in this conversation, it doesn't start off with these deep doctrines or reversing some pet doctrine or belief that Israel had, or he doesn't go after his customs and traditions that Nicodemus himself has been pushing and promoting and that he believes in all the washing of hands and of plates and platters and things.

[2:26] He doesn't even go at them with that. He just starts right where the biggest thing is, the heart, the need to be born again, made alive in Christ. The other stuff will come once you're saved, because you need to have your mind quickened.

God has to be in you to be able to start teaching you why that's wrong, why this is right, why we do these things this way. It always goes in that direction, is you start with salvation, and then you learn the ways of God.

Now, we covered some stuff here, so I'm going to just get past that and get to verse 13, and begin there so we don't backtrack too much. Verse 13, Now, he's referencing the conversations and the speeches and the teaching that he's been giving, because he comes from above, and he says, I tell you earthly things you don't believe me, and how are you going to believe if I tell you heavenly things?

And he goes on to say that I came down from heaven. So, I'm from above. Now, Nicodemus in verse 2 acknowledged that we know that thou art a teacher come from God, but I hardly believe that he believes that he came from God in the way that Jesus Christ said, I came down from above.

I'm pretty sure he just thinks, yeah, God sent you, like he sent John, and empowered him and gave him a message. I'm sure that's all he sees Jesus as a man. But nevertheless, he's going to show him that I'm not just any man.

[4:00] I came down from above. And as a matter of fact, I'm still there. In verse 13, the last phrase says, Even the Son of Man, which is, not was, not will be, but is, the Son of Man.

It doesn't say the Son of God. He's referring to that human that's in front of his face. Jesus Christ says, Even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. Now, we've mentioned this before early in the Gospel of John, and I'm not going to repeat it every time we get through here as far as running the verses, but just for your understanding and your recollection, this doctrine falls into that category of the nature of God.

God is a spirit. God is a threefold being of Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And that in itself, I cannot illustrate purely.

I've never found a way or heard of a way that illustrates that in human physical language and form. It's just Bible truth that we receive and believe.

We won't understand it in its entirety, nor will I understand that Jesus Christ is in heaven while he's talking to Nicodemus on earth. That just, that doesn't make sense to me.

[5:19] Well, what does make sense, or what I do get, is that he is a spiritual being. He is God, and that just goes into that category of his nature. Now, we don't have a problem believing this about the Holy Spirit, do we?

That the Spirit of God can be in more than one place or more than one person at once. Is God in you? Is Christ in you, according to the Bible? If you're saved, he's in you.

Christ is in you, and the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. And if that's true, what happens when you leave this place and go home? Does he stay here?

Does he go with you? Is he still in you? Is the Spirit of Christ in all of us individually, not just because we're together, but because we are his, and we've been bought with the blood of Christ?

So the Spirit of Christ is in me, and he's in you. And as we part and go different ways, he's still in us. So we don't have any trouble believing that about the Holy Spirit. So then, why should it be any harder to believe about the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ?

[6:24] He's deity. He's God, just as much as the Spirit of God is God. I know it's hard because he's speaking as a man in front of a man, talking language and words, and they can see each other face to face.

But when he says, even the Son of Man which is in heaven, yeah, he's in heaven. We saw a verse, look back at chapter 1, verse 18.

This is where we first hit this concept, or some of the teaching here about the nature of God. In verse 18, no man hath seen God at any time.

The only begotten Son, he's begotten, so he came forth. But while he's the only begotten Son, it says, which is in the bosom of the Father, as if he was never begotten.

But he is begotten. But he wasn't. But he came out, but he's still in. That's just, that's where our brains just can't make the connection. And so it's truth, nevertheless.

[7:27] It's just, the best I can say is just chalk it up to, this is the nature of God. And it's something that we can't fully relate to or understand, but it doesn't make it untrue.

All right, so John chapter 3, and verse 13, no man hath ascended up to heaven. But he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.

Now, people get a little bent out of shape from verse 13 here when it says no man hath ascended up to heaven. It may not have bothered you at all. When I read through, it may not even have crossed your mind. But people will say, well, what about Elijah?

Didn't he go to heaven? Did the Bible say that the horses and chariots of fire, and up he went? So, what about, thank you, Enoch back there in Genesis.

What about him? God took him. So, what about him? Well, the way to get around that, I shouldn't use that word, but is that it says ascended.

[8:29] No man hath ascended. And the thinking there is that those men did not ascend, as in of their own power. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended up out of their sight, but those men were taken up.

The Lord took him. God translated Enoch and took him. He did not himself ascend. And that's the thinking there, is it wasn't of their own power. Elijah himself did not say, well, I'm just going to go to heaven right now, and then ascend.

But rather, he was caught up or taken up in the chariot. So, that's the way to, so it may not even hit you or bothered you at all, but people that are skeptics look for contradictions in the word of God all the time, because they are sinful in their heart, and deceitful, and they want to find an error, so they can get off the hook.

And thank God, this is a holy book, because it's written by a holy God. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. Verse 14, And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

No man is believing anymore on a serpent lifted up upon a pole, but that was only a type, or a picture, a foretelling of what would happen to the Lord Jesus Christ as he's lifted up.

[9:53] Now, in the moment, Nicodemus doesn't know what in the world he's telling him. But it sure sounds like he's going to be killed, or something. But he doesn't get that.

It's not even understood and being received, even as he speaks it. Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness. That's going back to Numbers chapter 21. And I trust you read your Bible, and you understand that that passage has God's wrath going forth into the camp against his own people that are murmuring and complaining and ready to quit and ready to get rid of Moses and Aaron.

And it's just, those people have always been a stiff-necked and rebellious people, always, through their whole history. I'm just, a side note here. You may have in your mind, like, these were God's people, God's holy people, Israel.

And you may have kind of programmed that pray for the peace of Jerusalem and bless them, that bless the, you may have this idea, like, they're a blessed people and a holy people and they're God's people. And while all that language is true, in reality, you read your Bible, they, they have only had small, small windows, whereas a nation, they sought the Lord or they loved God.

The majority of their existence, they have been rebellious and stiff-necked and, and blasphemous even. They rejected and murdered and crucified Jesus Christ.

But all the way through that Old Testament, you see them turning to other gods and worshiping other gods and just embracing the filth of this world and the Lord just being merciful, even in his, and sending, and so anyway, I'm going somewhere I'm not intending to go this morning, but that people has never been this glorious holy people just walking around worshiping God in the temple and sacrificing and, I mean, the Lord set it up, but for the most part, they were terrible and God was, he made a covenant and because of that covenant and because of his word, he would not go back on it.

And anyway, so, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, there's a place of judgment where he's killing them, literally killing the people in the wilderness, but Moses fashioned up this brazen serpent and held it up and if they would look to that serpent, it said, if they would look to that serpent, they would live.

So that look was a look of faith. If you said, that's stupid, I'm not going out of my tent, I'm just going to die right here in my disease. I'm not going out there to find that serpent, it's all the way across the camp.

I'm hurting right now from this snake bite. You think I could get all the way over to where I could see this thing? And so they could have had excuses and I'm sure some of them did, but if they would have said, that's what I need to do to be cured of this snake bite, this disease, I'm doing it.

Whatever I need to do, I'm doing it. I just need to go look to his, that's a look of faith to believe that you can look at an artificial serpent wrapped around a pole and you believe that's going to do something for you to cure you just to look upon it.

[13:01] That takes faith. That's what it is. It's an exercise of faith in those people and that's what Christ says, whosoever, verse 15, believeth in him. When the Son of Man is lifted up, whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

And so there's a lot of stuff here to consider, like Jesus Christ is the type of the Lord Jesus Christ is a serpent. The Bible says that he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.

He made him to be sin. That serpent picture, Jesus Christ, who would think from Genesis chapter 3, the serpent was more subtle than any beast in the field. It's the devil.

Who would think that Jesus Christ would liken himself or take upon him the form of a serpent in that picture? It just doesn't match. But you will probably never know the depth that Christ went through and the horror that he endured and took upon himself for our sins.

We probably won't get it. Even from the language of the Bible, I doubt in this life we'll fully understand or comprehend how low he went and the extent that he went to wash us of our sins.

And if we could get a glimpse of it, it would break you down and bring you to tears and humble you before him and make you fall on your face and worship him.

If you could realize what he actually endured and took and what you won't ever have to take. You know what it said there? It said that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.

So there's little six letters, P-E-R-I-S-H. Do you have any idea what that means for your soul? Do you have any clue what that means? What he took, kept you from?

The Bible says in Revelation that the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever. And those names were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire

And you're just like, yeah, yeah, Lord, thank you for saving me. Thank you for freedom in America. Do you have any idea what he saved you from?

[15:20] So he took a lot more than we have ever even considered, I don't doubt. And when he looked, when he likened himself to that serpent lifted up in the wilderness, I think there's a whole lot more detail there that we could cover and think on, but it's more than we'll really study tonight.

If you want a little verse, a little teaser, the Bible says of everlasting fire, it says, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. What in the world does it mean their worm dieth not?

So there's something about the destruction of the soul in eternity, not an annihilation of it because it dieth not, but it's destroyed in such a manner.

Anyway, so we're going somewhere I didn't want to go. Verse 14, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever, that means he's lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.

The reason I'm being lifted up is for somebody to believe in me. The reason Moses lifted up that serpent was for people to look to it and be delivered and be saved and cured.

[16:28] And I'm going to be lifted up because men have a disease of sin that's damning their souls before God and they need to believe on me. Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And now the next verse is like the world's, if there's ever been a verse that's traveled the globe and gotten more exposure, it's John 3.16. And in the context, John 3.16 is spoken after the fact of 15.

Like 15 was the statement and then he repeats it and summarizes it in 16. So after he says that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life, he continues with summarizing, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him, Nicodemus, should not perish but have everlasting life.

And so while it's probably such a popular verse, it's really just a, it's not necessarily a climax in the statement, it's a continuation and a summary of the previous thought.

John 3.16, just saying John 3.16, it feels like I've said it a thousand times, you've probably heard it a thousand times, it's a very popular and a positive concept that God loved and that God gave his son, Jesus Christ and that if we believe in him, we won't perish but we'll have eternal life.

and there's a wonderful teaching and concept there to tell others but I want to caution you and I don't want to be overbearing on this but I want to caution you that that verse and statement alone does not convey to a lost sinner everything they need to understand and know about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

when you want to tell somebody how to be saved, you don't necessarily start by saying God loves you so much because that statement there, okay, well, I'm good.

God loves me. I'm good. But no, where you start is with what the scripture says about their sin.

They need to see they need to fear God. They need to be afraid of him and his wrath and the fire of hell. They need to come to Christ as a way of escape not as like a buddy.

And so when you start with love you're kind of starting on the wrong foot. Now, I said I'm not trying to overemphasize or put this down too hard because not everybody is in the same boat.

[19:07] Not everybody understands the same thing as you try to witness and speak to people. Some people understand they're a sinner and some people understand they're worthless and they're already depressed and it is a good message to hear that God loved them enough to die for them.

So you can go that direction. It just depends. You know, use wisdom. But don't let that be the only thing you tell people is God loves you. It says that God so loved in a past tense he loved the world and the references to Calvary I've pointed this out it's been a while I'm sure but it's it's always in the past tense.

It's that Christ died for us and this was manifested past tense the love of God in that he gave his I got that mixed up gave his life for us.

There's probably a good I could give you six to eight verses that describe the cross of Calvary and the love of God and it's always given in the past tense meaning that God's love was displayed at Calvary for sinners.

It is not displayed today in the world for sinners. I love you I love you I love you but no if God's gonna show you love it is Calvary the cross giving his son to die for your sins.

[20:26] If you won't come to Calvary you won't ever get God's love for you. You've gotta go to Calvary to be born again to become a child of God then as a child of God you can be in the Father's love today but do not point somebody to God's love if you're not pointing them to Calvary that's where the love's at and that's Romans 5 that's 1 John chapter 3 and I don't have the references in my mind right now we're not even gonna go there.

What I want you to consider is that it's in the past tense and that this verse here it's a wonderful concept and it's pointing somebody to believing in Christ and it does say that you won't perish.

Praise the Lord for that but the majority of that verse is very positive so therefore it's very popular and be careful with that. Be careful with how popular you make Jesus and God and the gospel or how positive you make it and when Paul defines the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 he says how that Christ died for our sins and that he was buried and rose again the third day and was seen of many witnesses and so the gospel Paul preached started with Christ's death and it started had to do with our sins there's no mention of your sins in John chapter 3 verse 16 not even close it does say perish but it actually says not perish so the double negative there kind of makes it positive everything's positive in that verse now we're moving on from that John 3 16 for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son you should have the word begotten in your Bible because that's what the Bible says that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life continuing verse 17 for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved the first coming in the first advent

Jesus Christ came that the world through him through him might be saved the world is not going to be saved if there's no him so you're going to have to get Jesus Christ to be saved the second coming he's going to come to condemn the world and he's going to come to put down all the enemies of God and there's going to be fire and indignation and wrath and it's going to be ugly if you're not on the right side but the first coming was for salvation the second coming there'll be condemnation to the lost verse 18 he that believeth on him is not condemned what a blessing Romans chapter 8 says there is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus which walk after the spirit and not after the flesh and he that believeth on him is not condemned the word condemned means to be declared guilty or judged and found guilty you could stand in a courtroom and you could plead your case and have an advocate for you and plead your case and you haven't been declared anything until the end and the verdict comes and then you're either condemned or you're justified the charges are laid against you and if you're justified then you're declared innocent if you're condemned you're declared guilty and the Bible says that we have been justified by faith in Christ Jesus but the truth is we are guilty you are guilty

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I'm very guilty there's a lot of guilt there's a lot of deeds and thoughts and words that have been against the word of God that's come from this man and you too young old doesn't matter you've got the guilt and you can believe on him and just not be condemned and just washed away gone it's it's what God did here and the grace of God and the ease of receiving righteousness and justification I don't understand I mean it's it's so available and so simple Paul said he calls it the simplicity that is in Christ and yet people are bewitched and they're misled about the truth of the gospel when it's as simple as believing on Jesus Christ for salvation he that believes on him is not condemned verse 18 but this is what everybody needs to know he that believeth not is condemned already what does that mean it means they've already declared guilty the judge has already cast the verdict about them they don't have to wait till they die and go to heaven and stand before God it's already been decided what I like to tell people if they say you don't don't judge me and you're not any better

I say look I'm not judging you God already did he already told you the judgment the declaration the verdict it's already been passed about you if you reject Jesus Christ you're condemned you're in your sins and you can do something about it now and people need to understand that they're already condemned why verse 18 because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God it's faith in Jesus Christ the only thing the only variable that can change you from darkness to light in where's that verse at I wanted to look at look at chapter 8 John chapter 8 while John 3 16 is probably the most popular verses John 3 18 is one of the most plain verses about a man's condition before God that he's either condemned or he's not condemned and it completely hinges upon what he does with Jesus

Christ and so John chapter 8 and listen God made it so plain don't the argument that the excuse that somebody offers to the Lord oh that was that Bible is hard to understand God gave these certain things that are just as low level as can be and when he presents that to a lost sinner that rejected Christ and says what about this you couldn't understand that every mouth will be stopped and all the world become guilty before God so John chapter 8 take a look at verse 23 he said unto them ye are from beneath I'm from above ye are of this world I am not of this world I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins for if ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins it's a matter of believing in the name of the only begotten son of God believing on the

Lord Jesus Christ flip back to chapter 6 John chapter 6 and verse 28 then said they unto him what shall we do that we might work the works of God Jesus answered and said unto them this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent they're not going to get around what God is demanding of them is to believe on his son.

But they want to do works instead. They just want to do some mighty works, some good deeds. And in attempts to get around believing on Jesus, that's religion to it.

That is man's lost innate drive and goal is to get around believing on Christ and to do works.

[28:43] To do good works, the works of God. Then we'd be accepted of God. And Christ said, no, there's only one thing he wants from you. Believe on me.

Believe on me. It's that plain. It's the sin of unbelief that's going to damn a soul to hell. The Apostle Paul, he has a lot to say on it and it would just take us time that I don't think we need to get into.

But he lays it out even more thorough of how it's faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ that can save a soul. Not deeds of righteousness.

Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. Yet man wants to do deeds. Come back to John 3 and look here at verse number 19.

He says, And this is the condemnation. So they're already condemned. Well, how are they guilty? How are they declared guilty? They didn't even get a chance. Oh no.

You have had a chance. This is the reason for the condemnation. is that light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light.

Back in chapter 1, it says that he was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. But men love darkness rather than light. And so, you could ask folks today what is it that would condemn them and they could say, well, you know, not being tolerant, being judgy, that's wrong.

They could come up with some ideas. Hating, hating others, that's not right. Being prejudiced or being racist, that's not good.

That's like the big things in our world today or at least in our society. And they're all dead wrong about what the condemnation is from God. And condemnation has to do with their unbelief.

It's not their evil deeds that damns their souls, but it's those evil deeds that keeps them from coming to Jesus Christ to have their sins forgiven. And among the religious crowd, John's not really popular gospel because he puts it just as dead on plain as possible as believe on Christ, faith in Christ, believe on Him.

[31:03] The religious crowd likes to go to Matthew. If they had a book, their favorite book, it's Matthew because it's do these good deeds. Love your enemies and pray for them which despitefully use you.

And that's the message all the time from religious men. It's work the works of God and not believe on Jesus Christ. Verse number 20, it says, For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

That's true in this world. That's true in your flesh. Your flesh doesn't want to come to the word of God because sometimes it just wants to sin or just wants to do it its own way or just, just, it takes a little bit of humility and it takes, it takes some effort to go to the scriptures or to get on your face and there's so many times the Lord will tell you, go to the light, spend time, you need to pray about that and it's just like as soon as that voice comes, so does three others that tells you the things you need to accomplish today.

But I have to get the wash going. But I have to get back to work. But I have to make a phone call or I was, it's getting late or I, and the chores come up and sometimes it's more than that, it's your sins.

It's your evil deeds that would rather, because there it's a whole lot easier to sin and to fall into the flesh than it is to fight the flesh and to get up and get into the spiritual things and go to the light.

[ 32:42 ] And the lost man and your flesh alike hate the light and they don't want to come to the light because they don't want their deeds to be reproved. The Bible says in Ephesians 5 that whatsoever doth make manifest is light and that our light or as children of light we're supposed to walk as children of light and walking as children of light reproves the unfruitful works of darkness around us.

In plainer words, your Christian life ought to be light to the world that not your voice, not your mouth saying you're sinning, you're wrong, you're wicked, you're wrong, you're wrong, but rather your walk shines that they may see your good works as Christ said, your light shines to them and reproves their evil deeds.

Not your words but your light. And when you don't have a light and you don't walk and display the light of a child of God in the life of the lost, your words are nothing.

your words are, they just fall to the ground because if they can't see a difference in you, they don't need to hear a difference from you. And that's just human nature.

I'm not going to listen to somebody tell me what to do when it's obvious they're not doing it or they haven't proven they know how to do it themselves. Don't tell me how much you know if you can't show me and live it and prove it.

[ 34:10 ] And God calls your life your testimony to be a light in Ephesians chapter 5. Look at chapter John chapter 5 and look at John chapter 5 and verse 40 because Jesus Christ is the light of the world and Jesus Christ said come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and verse 40 ye will not come to me that ye might have life.

He told them why. He told them because their their deeds would be reproved if they come to him and they would be able to walk in the light of God and they would have life.

But man here's a little here's a line this really covers it better all self-righteous people would rather go to hell than have their deeds reproved.

All self-righteous people would rather go to hell than come to the light to have their deeds to admit that they're wrong. And why would that be?

That's just pride. That's the pride in the heart of man that won't come to God. And so everyone that doeth evil hateth the light neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved.

[ 35:33 ] But in verse 21 he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. What you see here is one that doeth evil and one that doeth truth.

And there's a there's the light and darkness the contrast is so strong in the Bible and in you and your Christian life the contrast is inside of you and it's it's inside of you with the new man and the old man and it's also evident in the world just like here that you as a Christian ought to be doing truth and you can expect out there that they're going to be doing evil and you'd think well I wish they'd do better than that but John said the whole world lieth in wickedness you shouldn't expect any more from them.

Just expect them to be liars expect them to be deceitful expect them to be nice to your face and then say other things behind your back. Why would they do that? Because there's nothing in them that's going to convict them of their sin or that's going to cause them to be better than they should be.

They need the spirit of God in them but he that doeth truth cometh to the light and that's where you and I need to live in the light of God. Nicodemus came to the light and he heard some things that he had never considered and it had an effect on him because the next couple times you see him in the Bible he's verbally standing up for Jesus Christ when they crucify him he's coming there and assisting Joseph in getting him off the tree and wrapped up and taken care of and anointed and Nicodemus he shows something changed in him as a Jew as a ruler of the Jews he'd have never been caught dead touching that carcass of the one that was just murdered so it doesn't come out real plain but there's evidence there that Nicodemus came to the light and it seems like his deeds got reproved and he might have been like an undercover believer maybe a little behind the scenes but nevertheless there was a change in him that's evident going forward we'll see it as we cross those verses in the future we'll probably have to stop here because we're going to kind of take into a new paragraph and a new area of study here with baptism and purifying and questions brought up to John and so we'll just pause here and that'll be a good place to pick it up next Sunday

Lord willing at verse 22 so let's take a break and I think there's some snacks out there in the dining room if you want to take a couple minutes enjoy that and then we'll come back at 10 where to get the dining room at about the country here and thank you for the the Miami