

Come, Experience God's Saving Love

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to John chapter 3. John's Gospel chapter 3. If you're visiting with us, there's a black Bible in the chair in front of you.

You can pull that out. Find page 72, 73. It rennumbers the New Testament, so go to the back. Find page 72, 73.

You find John, the Gospel of John chapter 3. Last week we did verses 1 through 15. This morning I'm going to study 3, 16 through 21.

John chapter 3, 16 through 21. And again, in my reading I mix the Greek New Testament with some New American Standard Bible.

That's why it might sound a little odd. There's a mixture of that. So 3, 16 of John's Gospel. For in this way God loved the world, so He gave the one and only begotten Son, that all the ones who believe in Him may not perish, but have eternal life.

[1:15] For God did not send the Son into the world, nor that He may condemn the world, that the world may be saved through Him. The one who believes in Him is not condemned.

The one who does not believe already has been condemned because He's not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the verdict.

That the light has come into the world. And men love the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil.

For all the ones who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light in order that their deeds may not be exposed. But the one who does the truth comes to the light in order that His deeds may be manifested as having been worked out by God.

When we lived in Sedona, there was a doctor there.

[2:21] He was pretty matter-of-fact. That's one thing I liked about him. Matter-of-fact, he didn't lose his cool. He was pretty mellow. Very calm.

I had a problem, I think it was with my shoulder or my elbow, can't remember what it was. I said, Doc, I'm having this problem with my shoulder when I'm doing this.

And he says, well then don't do that. I'm serious, he actually told me that. It was just really straightforward. Then he said, well, what's going on? I mean, he would smile, but he was just pretty level, even keel.

Some people don't like doctors like that because they can come across too abstract, too impersonal. There's a doctor that we had when Chris was having twins.

Some struggled with him because he was very matter-of-fact, very straight-faced. Didn't get affected by anything, just really calm, you know. Yeah, that's what's happening.

[3:28] That's what's going on. I'm like, he's having a baby! He's just... Now, some doctors can maybe be too abstract, right?

Too impersonal. And we struggle with that. When you come to a passage like this, there's nothing abstract about this.

There's nothing impersonal about this. God is not abstract. If you think that, you're wrong. He's real. He's personal. He's relational. He showed, or rather, we can say, he embodied his love in a person. Now, that's not being abstract, is it? That's not being impersonal. I mean, impersonal is... is bringing my wife flowers, saying, I'm supposed to do this.

[4:39] Here you go. Love you. That's abstract. That's impersonal. God's not like that. God comes, and he doesn't come with just flowers.

He comes embodied in a person. And the God-man. John's gospel is about come, receive Jesus. Come believe Jesus. Believe into Jesus. Come know Jesus. John drives that home, and today what he'll drive home to us in verses 16 through 21 is come, experience God's saving love.

Come. Experience God's saving love. Come. Come experience God's saving love in the sending of his son.

Come experience God's saving love in the sending of his son. There's nothing abstract about this. This is personal. This is intimate.

[5:52] This is relational. Come. Come. Experience God's saving love in the sending of his son. Here's a longer way to say this.

God loved wicked, evil, fallen, lost, rebellious humanity by giving the begotten son who came and died for sinners.

All who believe into Jesus do not perish but have eternal life. That's how you can sum this up. God loved wicked, evil, fallen, lost humanity by giving the begotten son who came and died his mission. And all the ones who believe into Jesus don't perish. You have eternal life, everlasting life. God sent the son into the world to save the world, not to condemn the world.

Trusting into Jesus brings no condemnation. Not trusting into Jesus brings condemnation because there's no belief. God's love. God's love. God's love. God's love. And this happens because humanity loves darkness and hates the light.

[7:16] So, only those God worked come to the light and do the truth. Only those God worked come to the light and do the truth.

So, you'll see this unfold in chapter 3, verse 16 through 21. Now, some preliminary things to bring up.

This is for all you nerds out there. It's for you. Some think Jesus did not actually speak verses 16 through 21, but it actually was John the evangelist who was doing this.

I know, you say, well, wait, but it's in red in my Bible. I suppose, I mean, of course, Jesus said that it's in red. That's a joke. Okay, never mind.

In the Greek New Testament, the words of, when he said it, they weren't in red, but, okay, never mind. You didn't get that? I mean, really? Okay, never mind.

[8:23] No, but seriously, some think that actually John the evangelist broke in here. And they say the reasons. John is the only one who says only begotten.

Jesus never says that in John's gospel. Plus, Jesus never called his father God. He always would say, my God, or he would always say, really, Father. Okay.

Okay. If you think John the evangelist wrote this, chapter 3, 16, and 21, it's fine. If you think Jesus said these words, it's fine.

Either way, don't worry, you're not going to hell for that. It's okay. Don't let it sidetrack you from the importance of these verses. God's love for humanity.

And this love is sacrificial and has an eternal purpose. Notice how this begins. God's love for humanity. Verse 16. For in this way, God loved the world.

[9:25] Now you have, I mean, translations say, for God so loved the world, and so some think it should be translated, for God so loved the world. That's not how that should be translated.

I mean, there's a few occasions where it's like that, but the usual way that that's translated is like this, in this way, that word. So, it should be read like this.

For in this way, God loved the world, so he gave, et cetera. And now understand this.

When we start jumping into 3.16 through 21, this is a further interpretation of the dialogue between Nick and Jesus. Remember Nick?

Nicodemus. Nick for short. This further explains this dialogue between Nick and Jesus in chapter 3, verses 1 through 15.

[10:23] And remember, the encounter went beyond Nick. There was a conflict between Jesus and the entire Jewish religious authorities, and really, even deeper, there's a conflict between God and humanity.

What's the conflict? Well, I'll give you an example. What's happening in Ukraine right now? War. That's the problem.

There's a conflict between God and humanity. God and the entire human race. The human race whom God loves in order to save them.

So how would God save them? He'd show love. God's love for humanity. For in this way, God loved the world.

This kind of love gives. God's love is defined as God eternally giving himself to others. Thank you, Wayne Grudem.

[11:31] It's selfless, costly love. It's a love that wants to bring joy to another. That's why the Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Spirit, Spirit loves the Son and the Father because they were giving to each other love for each other.

And this love for humanity is redemptive. By the way, it's the first time that the word love is used in John's Gospel. And it's the ones who shamed Jesus.

Because notice, for in this way, God loved the world. Who is the world? We said this earlier. Fallen, lost, sinful, rebellious, evil humanity. Now to say that this means every single human being who's ever lived in the entire human history, you're reading that into the passage.

That's not what this means. You can't say that. Don't read that into the passage. It simply means humanity. Fallen, lost, sinful, rebellious, evil humanity.

[12:47] And really, more than this, remember the conversation between Nick and Jesus.

Remember who Nick was. He was part of the Jewish elite. So the Jews said, we're in the kingdom.

We're good. The world? No. Gentiles? No. No.

Jews, man. No. The world versus Jews. And there's nothing lovely about you, is there?

There's nothing worth loving, is there? My unworthy soul is one. Remember you saying that just a few moments ago.

And when you come to this part, for in this way, God loved the world, you know, we as Christians need to remember that we were not born Christians. If you think you were born a Christian, you're wrong.

[13:56] You were not born a Christian. You were a fallen, lost, sinful, rebellious, evil human.

That's who you were. We were at one time dead in our trespasses and sins, as we learned in the first hour.

With God's very own judgment upon us, his condemnation, verse 18. But God doesn't leave us to ourselves. No. He extended himself in love by giving a son.

This is amazing love. What love, my God, would bring you down to earth. What love, my God, so gracious and extreme to come and fight for me, to go through hell, and then he goes into the grave. He's on the cross. He's facing hell because he's facing the wrath of the Father and he dies. This is amazing love.

God's love for humanity. And so, this love, what are the results of the love that he has? The son's mission. He comes and he dies.

[15:18] What is the motivation and basis of the son of man's mission? The love of God. For in this way, God loved the world, so he gave the only begotten son.

What results in God's love for humanity? What's the result of God's love for the world? The mission of the son of man. The only begotten son of God.

To come and die. His love gave. The father gave the best of the best.

To best people? No. To sinful, lost, fallen, evil, wicked, dark humanity. He gave the only begotten son.

And this speaks both of the incarnation, his coming, and his death. So, God's love is not abstract.

[16:28] It's personal. It's, as one writer put it, embodied in human flesh. How do I, how do I feel the love of God?

It's not about a feeling, it's about a truth, it's about a person. It's Jesus. Jesus. The only begotten son of God.

And remember, begotten, some of the translations might say, one and only ESV. I believe that this should be translated as begotten from the word beget.

We believe in the eternal generation of the son. From the father, the son has always been the son from eternity past. So there's the eternal generation from the son.

Just a reminder to you about that. So that's the results of God's love. The son's mission. And what is his, what is his eternal purpose to save?

[17:28] How? Believe. Notice, in order that, there's the purpose, literally, all the ones who believe in him may not perish but have eternal life.

All the ones who believe into him believe into a sultan, which is very cliché for John. He has it everywhere. When you believe into Jesus, believing into Jesus, he has it everywhere throughout his gospel.

Believe into Jesus. Believe into Jesus. Jesus, the son of man, the only begotten son. this is the only hope for the world, for fallen, lost, sinful humanity.

This is their only hope. Believe. The appropriate response to God's love is to believe into the son. Trust him.

And belief is not mere assent to facts about Jesus. Oh yeah, sure. Sure, whatever. No, it's deeper than that.

[18:37] It goes farther than that. It's a belief, it's a belief that gives oneself to the son and to the father. It's the Latin term *fiducia*, which means trust, confidence, commitment.

Notice, all the ones who believe into him may not perish. Perish is death, eternal destruction. We believe this to mean the eternal torment of people in hell forever.

Because they do not obey the gospel or know God. They've rejected God and his truth of Christ. But notice he says, but have everlasting life, eternal life.

Notice, eternal life is a present possession. They have it because this kind of life is knowing God and Jesus Christ from me has sent. See, it's not so much about a place but being with a person, the Godhead, enjoying God because God's personal.

He's not abstract. He's relational. He's intimate. You have that life. You have that relationship. You have that intimacy. You have that personal connection with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[20:01] He who has ears to hear, please hear these vital important truths. What love, my God, that brings you down to earth. this is what our world needs.

Not a political makeover. Not to be shouting Black Lives Matter. That's not what our world needs. Our world needs the gospel because you're dealing with evil, fallen, lost, wicked humanity. They need truth.

They need the gospel to change their hearts, to trust in Christ. That's what the world really needs. And as one person said, yes, John 3, 16 is the gospel embodied in one verse because it's embodied in one person, Jesus.

And now notice what, whether it's Jesus speaking or John, the apostle, the evangelist, what he was doing, he starts to clarify things.

[21:21] Let's clarify this. Notice he's gonna clarify the purpose. Look at verse 17, for God did not send the Son into the world in order that he may condemn the world.

that the world may be saved through him. These next few verses give further insight and application to what he says in verse 16, even verses 19 through 21. It gives further clarification of his mission and what God was doing.

So notice, the Son's mission was not to judge or better translation would be condemn the world.

Say that to somebody when you're giving them the gospel.

Say that when you're doing evangelism, God didn't send Jesus to condemn you. He came to save you. His purpose was to save the world.

His purpose was to save fallen, lost, sinful, wicked, rebellious humanity, not condemn them, which is what darkness rightly deserves.

[22:28] We justly deserve him to condemn us, don't we? And notice, by the way, the world is not in a state of neutrality.

It's lost, fallen, wicked. And Jesus came to save some. They should be condemned, but he came to save some.

That's the very purpose of the Father in sending his Son was to bring salvation. The Lord is our salvation. That's why we're saying that. Salvation only comes to the begotten Son.

There is no other way to be saved. The exclusivity of the gospel. The intention of the Father was to give honor to sinners through dishonoring his begotten Son.

you shame the Son so that you can honor believers who believe in him. So he says, clarify the purpose. This is the purpose. He came not to condemn but to save.

[23:35] And notice, he's gonna clarify the response to verse 18. The one who believes in him is not condemned. The only appropriate response to this love is to believe the one who does not believe already has been condemned.

Why? Because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And notice, he says name here. And John or Jesus does this on purpose because when he talks about the name of someone, he's talking about something about the person's character.

And so the character of God is love. There's the emphasis here. The world stands in need of a Savior. So when you reject the gospel, you're rejecting the love of God.

When you reject Christ, you're rejecting God's love, God's mercy, God's grace, God's compassion. You're rejecting that. Rejecting the truth of the gospel compounds this guilt then.

That's what it says here in verse 18. And as John, the evangelist, will say later, God's wrath remains on that person, chapter 3, verse 36, until they come to Jesus and believe in Him.

[24 : 59] So there's clarification about this. About the purpose, about the response. Now verse 19 to 21, we need an explanation.

Explain this. Because it says, and this is the judgment really, the verdict, an ongoing judicial process, the decision on why things are the way they are.

Why is it this versus that? Why does it happen this way? Why is there belief on this side, but then there's no belief on this side?

Why does it happen this way? Why does it happen this way? This needs an explanation. and that's what verses 19 through 21 do.

So this is the verdict. Notice, the light has come into the world. Sounds familiar. Remember the prologue. Lots of things that said here in verses 19 to 21 reminds us of the prologue.

[26 : 12] Chapter 1, verses 1 through 14. The light has come into the world. The word become flesh. chapter 1, verse 14. Chapter 1, verse 5, verse 9.

Here's the revealer of God. Here's the exegeter of God. Remember that? Here's the ultimate self-expression of God. This one has come into the world.

Chapter 1, verse 10. This one has stepped into time and space. The light has come into the world. Notice the next part. And men love the darkness rather than the light. People love darkness rather than light.

They desire to live without God, without light, without Jesus on their own. the default of all humanity is this.

[27 : 21] We hate the light. We value pride. We value self. We value the things we want. God should be loved, obeyed, worshiped, adored, believed.

We do the opposite. it. And notice what he says, the last part of verse 19. For their deeds were evil. People love darkness rather than the light and that is evident by the way they live.

Evil. Evil. Their deeds are true genuine marks of who they are. What they love.

What they hate. This is the verdict. Why do people not believe Jesus? This is love.

This is love. I mean when somebody says I love you and they want to give you a big hug and kiss you, don't you dare kiss me. Especially Mike Johnson.

[28 : 38] If you want to do that, you want to embrace that, right? Yeah. Love. My kids, I go up and give them a hug, yeah. Who doesn't want that?

It doesn't make any sense. Why don't you want love? They hate him. Verse 20.

For all the ones who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light in order that their deeds may not be exposed.

Friends, this explains the reality of those in the darkness. All who do evil hate the light. All who do evil do not come to the light.

love. And this goes for the whole world. For all of sinful loss, fallen, evil humanity.

[29 : 37] Notice that whether it's John writing this or Jesus speaking it, they're saying this is about willingness. They are unwilling to come to that love.

It's not so much ability. That's true. They're not able to come to the light. We'll see that in verse 21 in a moment.

But here it's talking about willingness. I don't want to. Light exposes darkness. Light overpowers the darkness only when it sovereignly wants to overpower it.

Chapter 1 verse 5. Darkness doesn't want any shame. Darkness doesn't want conviction. Leave me alone. Says the cockroach when you turn the light on.

It's not cockroach season yet, praise the Lord. It's coming. Friends, it's coming. Don't remind me. I'm going to start dry heaving right now, sorry.

[30 : 46] April, May, that's when all the cockroaches start coming. You turn that light on. They don't like it. Leave me alone. That's how humanity responds to the light.

Leave me alone. Humanity hates the light and doesn't come to him, notice I said him, in order that their deeds may not be exposed, manifested, displayed.

Again, there's no shame or desire for any kind of conviction. They love darkness. Don't expose the things I'm doing because I like it.

Unwillingness. This is what we call total depravity. This is why people don't come to Christ because humanity hates the light and they don't come to him. They don't want their deeds exposed. They don't want it manifested. They don't want it seen. They want to keep it in the dark. Why don't people come to Christ?

[31 : 59] Because they love the darkness and enjoy doing the deeds of evil. People love sin because sin is fun. Sin is fun and enjoyable, though that fun is fleeting, temporary, lasts momentarily.

And what will do, that sin, it will come and slave you and lock the key. So now you're bound to it. Friends, this is why people need new life. This is why. Rebirth, regeneration, renewal and cleansing, in and of themselves, they won't come.

But we say come. We still say come. If you're here and you're not a Christian, come. Come to the light. Come to Jesus. Come to the Savior. Come and be saved.

Come and be forgiven. He'll forgive you. He'll save you. He came to save, not to condemn you. Don't you want love? Why won't you come?

[33 : 13] Come. He'll love you. Come experience the very love of God. Come. Why won't you come?

Why won't you repent and trust Christ? Why won't you experience the love of God? Because you don't want to. Which is why we need verse 21.

Verse 21. Verse 21. But the one who does the truth comes to the light. Does the truth, acts faithfully.

These come to the light. They enjoy the light because all that is done has been done through God himself. Life has brought life. New life brought the embracing of Jesus instead of self.

Which in turn brings eternal life. Notice. in order that his deeds may be manifested as having been accomplished in God. The purpose is that his deeds may be displayed as having been accomplished or new American standard having been wrought in God, worked by God.

[34 : 28] Only God can do this work. Only God. only the new life brought about by the spirit will bring deeds that reflect one has come to the light and that that one enjoys the light.

There must be the renewal of the spirit. Only then will there be belief. Only then will there be a coming and experiencing the very love of God.

That's the only way. That's the only way. another way of saying believe into his name is when a person willingly comes to the light having deeds that display that coming.

Only the new life brought about by the spirit will bring deeds that reflect one has come to the light and that that one enjoys the light. In other words, those of the light follow their course because God has done his work in them.

That's what this means. Only rebirth will bring a person to the point where she or he will come to the light. Without it, they'll love darkness.

[35 : 49] Notice how we've come full circle. We were ending right where we've begun.

Where did we begin? Where Jesus said, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one has been born new, he's not able to see the kingdom of God.

You need the spirit renewal. You must be born new. You must be brought renewal and cleansing. You need a rebirth. You need to be born again. So what does this mean for us as Christians?

Well, first of all, we don't deny our inherent sinfulness, do we? No, we actually, for lack of better terms, we wear our sin as a badge, as a proof that God has worked his grace in us.

[37 : 08] Friends, we don't have it all together. That's why we come here. Because it's not me.

It's all grace. we come here because apart from God's gracious love, I'm condemned.

And so are you. I mean, think about it. We don't come here because we have it all together. We come because we don't.

I don't have it all together. I'm a sinner just like you. I need grace just like you.

This is the love of God. This is why we come, to sing and to pray and to hear the word of God and to say, wow, wow, God's been so gracious to me.

[38 : 09] Wow. This is why we come. We don't come together because we have it together. We come together because God has shown his love.

Right? And not only does God embrace us, but now our true identity is a child of God, not because of our sin, not in spite of our sin, but it's by means of our sin.

God has done his work of rebirth in us. So now, Christ is not repulsive to us, but attractive.

That's how one writer put it. I love how he said that. And now, sin is not attractive to us, but it's repulsive. we now do the truth, which is the only appropriate response to this great love in the Son. It's God worked. In enough, me, Jim, it will not happen. Travis, it will not happen.

[39 : 29] Michael will not happen. It will not happen. Kaylin won't happen. It's God worked. God's worked in us. So that we will see the very love of God and experience that love in the Son.

God loved wicked, evil, fallen, lost, rebellious, put your name in there.

God loved wicked, evil, fallen, lost, rebellious, Jim, by giving the begotten Son who came and died for it, Jim. All who believe unto Jesus do not perish, but have eternal life.

that's it right there. That's the love of God. Come, come, experience God's saving love in the sending of the Son.

And when we come together, we sing about this, we pray, we preach it, we read it, may we never grow tired of it. Because we know not only is it what we need, but our world needs that.

[40 : 47] Those Russians need that. Those Ukrainians need that. Joe Biden needs that. Kamala Harris needs that. Those congressmen, congresswomen in Washington, they need the gospel.

They need Christ to be saved. That's what they need. And your next door neighbor needs the gospel. And those people in Jerome need the gospel.

Come experience the love of God. And we sing about this because we're just so amazed that God would love us. It's not because we deserve it, it's because we don't deserve it.

Does that make sense? Let's thank the Lord. We do thank you, oh Father, for your love. it stirs our emotions when we consider how evil we are.

And we pray that as we learned this past Wednesday, we'll have a grace based model in our lives.

[42 : 03] Or we can even say a love based model in our lives. to realize that we can never pay you back, oh God.

It's grace. It's how you show your love. But by this, we know love. That you laid down your life, Jesus. May you evoke in us, just praise, a response of thanks, a response of joy, a response of awe.

You have me, God. You have more and more of me today. And I encourage you, just these few moments, take this time.

Relish, bathe in the love of God. read that verse and put your name in there.

In this way, God loved, put your name in there. Fill your mind with truth. Fill your mind with the word.

[43 : 25] And we'll sing, we'll pray, pray for our food. But this time, just a minute or so, between you and the Lord, where you can pray that the truth of his word will affect you, infect you like a virus and will take over you.

So it just comes out as joy, thanks, praise, and love. Would you please do that now? Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.