

John 3:16-21

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- [0 : 00] For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.
- Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.
- And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world, and people love the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.
- But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.
- Good morning.
- [1 : 15] Good morning. Good morning. All right. All right. Well, greetings. My name is TJ Morrisette. Let's pray.
- Lord, thank you so much for your word. Thank you that we can have life in your name and we can know the truth that sets us free. Lord, please be with us this afternoon, this morning.
- Reveal your word to us. And allow us. Give us the grace in order to follow accordingly in Christ's name.
- Amen. I want to invite you to consider three questions that I think the text kind of points out for us today. Three questions.
- Question number one, what is God doing in the world? What is God doing in the world? Question number two, what does it mean for the world? And question number three, what is hindering us from getting on in the world?
- [2 : 21] What is God doing in the world? What does it mean for the world? And what's hindering you from getting on about your father's business in this world? In the last few weeks, we've heard from Jesus, according to John.
- It's the title of our series, Jesus, according to John. Including last week, Christ had some words for a young man named Nicodemus, or an older man named Nicodemus.
- And it was something of a wrestling match of words, verbally. And we see Christ challenging Nicodemus and his understanding of religion.
- Causing Nicodemus to when he first stepped up to Christ, it was, yo, we know. And then afterwards, it's like, well, I don't know if I know. And isn't that what Christ does?
- I would argue he evens the playing field for everyone, so where everybody has to question what they actually know. But you see Nicodemus backing off of the we know, and he's now shaken in his confidence concerning the role of religion and how it plays into the relationship he has or he thinks he has with God.
- [3 : 40] And indeed, the word is something that is supposed to shake your ground to at least make you question or reconsider what your relationship is with God, if there is one to begin with.

Someone once said, everyone's got a relationship with God. You'll either know him as Savior or you'll know him as Judge. I think you'll see some of that in the text today. And then for those of us tracking with the John series over the last few weeks, John, the writer, has been showing us that maintaining a relationship with God, how it corresponds with the religion that folks would place themselves in, or that God is the one replacing what you think you know about religion by bringing his son in and saying, hey, listen, this relationship that you say you want with God, it's not owing to your works.

It's outside of your doing. It's not based on what you know or what you've achieved. It's despite what you believe and even despite how you behave.

It replaces this, this replacement of Christ replaces the traditional modes of getting into communion with God or lack of.

He replaces the insignificant courses of actions. God replaces any insignificant course of action you might have with himself.

[5 : 27] I'm going to download myself into what you think is getting you by. And so, John, the writer shows how the gospel message is framed in this replacement motif by pointing out how even in creation, in the creation of the world, Christ is offered as the new creation.

Amen. He's offered as the new creation or even in the wedding of Cana shows us how purification of man is replaced by a messianic arrival of Christ.

To the kingdom, his own kingdom. Or how sacrifices are replaced with Christ's own body. Or how Nicodemus understands religion is replaced with seeing Christ as the true figure.

As attested to in scripture figuratively. As the serpent represented God's wrath turning away from the people. Now you have a substitute who will take away the sin of the people.

Who will heal the land. Today we get a chance to see John's reflection and his meditation in 16 through 21 in his own words as to what the consequence of this relationship with Christ yields for believers.

[6 : 47] You ever thought about that? What's the consequence of my relationship with Christ? What would be the consequence if I would argue there has to be a consequence because if you come to Christ you were changed?

Relationships change. Relationships you had with things and certain individuals and what you look at and how you think. It changes.

It's not really an argument. That's just what it is. Of this relationship with Christ and what it yields for believers. Especially as it relates to the son of God being lifted up.

John decides after having written about words of Christ what Christ has said. He offers his own words concerning Christ. That's what you see in verse 16 through 21.

Christ is being reflected on through John's own words about Christ. And if you have a red letter Bible you might see that it says that Jesus' words are what's being quoted here.

[7 : 51] But if you actually look at the text and see the understanding here. Especially in words like only begotten. Christ wouldn't use a word like that for himself.

But it's used to talk about Christ. Only even used in chapter 1 as talking about Christ. Never really Christ talking about himself.

But us talking about him or the people talking about Christ. So Christ is being reflected on here as John uses 16 through 21 to kind of give a meditation to what had just been spoken of to Nicodemus about this new life.

About this rebirth that he's walking into. So John comes in and says let me add my two cents about this only begotten son.

And you see a lot of this language in Johanian writing as you get even as we read during worship 1 John. So John invites us. You're invited.

- [9 : 02] To marvel. I like that word. To marvel at the love of God in these verses. I invite you to marvel at the love of God within these verses.
- By seeing first what God is doing in the world. What's God doing in the world? As it relates to the love of God. And for men like Nicodemus.
- If they're going to take part in the new life. If you're going to take part in the new life. What you need to know. About the incarnate Christ. What's God doing in the world?
- Verse 16 through 17. This is the first mention of love. In the gospel. In the gospel. As it relates. Subtly. To his readers.
- He's relating this marvelous work of God. Of how God would willingly allow his son. To be lifted up because of unrighteousness.
- [9 : 58] For your salvation. It's even greater to understand the depth of the father's love. If the father who loves his son is willing to give up his son on the cross.
- How great is that love? And I purposely kind of skip this world. Because you have to see the love of the father to the son.
- And the love of the son to the father. In order to appreciate being the world as the object of God's love. God's love as a text seems to lay out as the means to which he gave up his son.
- It's God's love as the means to which he gave up his son. It's the very climax to the mission of God. The lifting up of his son is grounded in the love of God.
- Don't let no one tell you different. It's love. Or as one rapper said. It was love that made him bleed and cling to a tree. And we're seeing in these few words the intensity of the love.
- [11 : 10] For God so loved. It's his intent. It's his intensity. That the greatness of the gift brought out through the love is stressed.
- By noticing first and foremost the son. For God so loved. The world. That he gave his son.
- It's interesting if you just Google John 3 16. Which is really fun because everyone has an opinion on it. How quickly we jump to us. How quickly we jump to where we fit in it.
- And then on the back side. And Christ is the gift for you. And while that is true. And it is true. You ought not skip over the fact that. No, no, no. In eternity past.
- We're talking about a son who was in the bosom of the father. The only begotten son. The chief of all creation. Christ. And we are to take notice of the love of the father and the son first.
- [12 : 16] A unique and special kind of love. To peep their relationship. As. As one that has never been replicated. Replicated or duplicated.
- The love we are witnessing from the father. By the father. Concerning the agent. His son. Can only emphasize the marvellessness of the gift given to the world.
- That is. The son. Do you know this gift this morning? Do you speak highly of the gift that you've been. Graced with this morning.
- So to the person reading John's words here. It's an astonishing thing to see. For God so loved the world. It's a shocking thing to see.
- The fact that this love. This verb to love prioritizes the world. Seemingly over the father's. One and only son.
- [13 : 16] It's meant to be understood. That the force of love. Is implied in. In the language. Is. Is that it was God's choice. It was his conscious decision.
- He didn't fall into it. He didn't say. I got no other choice. Or as. I grew up here. And he didn't search all over.

And then. You know. Let me just go with my son. A conscious. Loving. Full. Weight. Of decision. From God.

To send his son. As. The gift. So what's God doing in the world? Well he's showing you that he prioritizes his son. He's showing you that.

You know what? There's a lot of things people are on about. But you ought not skip Christology. What God is doing in the world according to John.

[14 : 18] The father is providing the greatest gift the world has ever seen. And the greatness of this gift says much about the greatness of the giver. Right?

It's. It's. It would be weird. To me if. As an artist. Somebody. Like. Emailed the song. And not.

Email me about the song. Or if you painted a picture. They. They never sought you out to understand your mind behind it. I don't know anything about the science.

I was going to say an example for that. But I'll just leave that one. So. But. But the gift. Is meant to point you to. Man. How many kids did it take to paint all this?

That's awesome. The function of the gift. Is to bring about salvation to the world. That this gift will be the sacrifice made to ensure life to the world.

[15 : 14] A death through this gift. A sacrifice made. By his son. Is the only means by which the world can know life with the father. Is through the son.

The language John again uses invites us again. To consider the way. By way of analogy. Even. Even how father Abraham would.

Willingly give up his son. As an act of obedience. Now the analogy fails. Because God is not acting in obedience. God. Is acting. In his love. But you see.

The. How it corresponds. And why Jewish readers would go. Hey this reminds me of something. It was. Yeah. He was pointing. To what it is. It was just a shadow. Of what's happening in the world.

You cannot appreciate John's words. About God. Loving the world. Unless you first. Consider the great. God. Who. Loves. And the son. Whom.

[16 : 11] Is the outpouring. And. The exact. Manifestation. Of. This great love. If you read Colossians. He lays it out that way. The relation. Of this marvelous God.

To a sinful world. Is expressed. In love. Well that's a praise God. If you. If you. If you know anything. About your own sin. That. God.

Relates. To a sinful world. On the basis. Of love. I know my own heart. Too well. To not give a hearty.

Amen. To the fact that. Man. I'm the chief. As Paul says. So. So when the Jews hear. That God's love. God loves the world. Obviously. Back in the day.

There might have been some. You know. He's coming to save Israel. And. And. And. And. And yet. John. Debunks that view.

[17 : 07] By saying. No no. He's coming to save. The world. He's coming. He's coming. With a love. That can reach. Wherever you are. Whoever you are.

No matter. What you've. Done. That's why. John. The Baptist. Can say. Look. The lamb of God. That takes away. The sin. Of the world. Because.

Whatever you're expecting. It's greater than that. You cannot. Fathom. What God is really doing. But you ought to consider it. This is.

Then why we. Can understand and appreciate. How the world is so uniquely. Wedged in here. Yet. John's words here. Point out something. Even more precious.

That it's not just. Israel. At the heart of God. But it's the entire world. That. That no particular. Culture. Or. Or race. Or socioeconomic. Background. Monopolizes.

[18 : 01] The love of God. And John is now. Using the gospel message. To prove. How little. Even the most devout men. Know. About. God. Said a lot about.

Jewish particularism. But. Paul puts it this way. In first Corinthians. Four. Verse seven. He says. What do you have. That you did not receive. If then you received it.

Why do you boast. As if you did not receive it. I like that. Because it sounds lyrical. You're like. How dare you. Act as if. What you've been given. Is something. You've helped get.

You've been given this. What are you boasting about? Get on with it. One of the reasons. That the gospel. Is good news. Is because it isn't. Owing unto us.

Has nothing to do. With a particular person. In this room. You aren't the author. Of your salvation. You didn't draw up the play. The result.

[18 : 58] Of the love of God. Is. In these verses. Is the death. Of the son. Which means. Salvation. To the world. It took a death. For us. To be saved.

So that. Once we get. To the soul. Of the world. We can directly. Understand. The place. Of the object.

Of God's love. Which is the world. And what is God. Doing. In this world. For all that believe in him. They will not perish. But they. Will have eternal life. Look down at verse 17.

As John clarifies there. For God did not send his son. Into the world. To condemn. To condemn the world. But in order that the world. Might be saved. Through him.

He's clarifying even further. That the son was sent. Not to condemn the world. Not to sentence the world. But his intent was a saving. Mission. We must take note here.

[19 : 54] That the incarnate Christ. Did not step into the world. That was neutral. It wasn't like. We were. Standing there like. We don't know if we should go with you God.

Or we should go with them. We don't know. So you know. Come prove it to us. Nah. We were already. Condemned. Shaped in iniquity. Toe up from the flow up. I mean whatever else you want to add to that.

Right. You were already. Under the wrath of God. And yet Christ comes in. In the midst of that. That's what other religions don't understand.

That's. That's. That's what family members would question. But why? He's perfect. I know. Praise God. So you take note here about this incarnate Christ.

And even back up in chapter one. He was in the world. And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own. And his own did not receive him. Or why? Why?

[20 : 55] Jesus would allude to a current blindness. And a waywardness. In John chapter three. Verse 11. Truly. Truly. I say to you. As he's talking to Nicodemus. I say to you. We speak of what we know.

And bear witness. Of what we have seen. But you do not receive. Our testimony. God's purpose in the mission of Jesus in the world is to bring about salvation to all who believe. That whoever believes will not perish.

But have eternal life. And what God's doing in the world is providing a means of escaping the condemnation you justly deserve. Through him.

As verse 17 ends. Through him. If the means of salvation is a question. The father provides the answer. Giving up his beloved son.

Showing that the means of the mission is love. While the world is the object of God's love. The gospel begins with God's love resulting in eternal life.

- [21 : 55] In light of what God is doing in the world. What does it mean for the world? Promise you I won't spend that long on this. Two things. One. Simply put. Some will rediscover.
- And some will reject. That's what's happening in the world. What does it mean for the world? Some of us will rediscover. And some of us will reject.
- He's distinguishing here, John is. Between those who believe. And those who don't. This non-condemnation. John spoke of in verse 17.
- Is for those that believe. Christ came into the world. To save the world. Through himself. But for those who do not believe. He needs not judge them.
- Because the text seems to allude to the fact. That they are already judged. Christ doesn't have to even come in. And say. All right. Who needs it?
- [22 : 54] Who doesn't? Who's getting it? Who ain't getting it? He's saying. No, it's clear. There's a judgment already on. Those that don't believe.
- Rejection of the son. Says more about the rejecter. Than that of Christ. But for those who do not believe. He needs not judge. Because they've already judged.
- By their unbelief. They've already been judged. And they've already cast judgment. By their unbelief. The one who does not believe.
- Is sitting around. Is not sitting around. Waiting on sentencing. They are already sentenced. Why is John. Saying this? Because they. They have not believed.
- In the name of the son of God. That's what he says. It's a. It's a moral issue. They choose not to believe. In the name. Of the son of God. In other words.
- [23 : 48] He. They refuse. The best gift. That God can give them. Utter. Disrespect. And disregard. John makes no apologies for us.
- Because. The truth is. Ladies and gentlemen. It's in believing. It's in believing. That we find. Life. That we find.
- Salvation. The son. The son. Is the value. Of your faith. Not how long. You believe. Not.
- The lofty. Prayers. We give up. It's. It's. Simply. The son. Who makes your faith. Valuable. Does that make sense? The one that rejects the son.
- As. As. It seems to. Show here. Is fixed. In unbelief. Will not accept. The perfect gift. Cannot see. The God's gesture. Of love. Is love.
- [24 : 49] Is loving. And. What does rejection. Mean for the world. Is that. The God. Who is at work. In the world. By way of genuine. Self-giving love.
- By. By having sent. His only son. It's a small factor. To them. It's an insignificant feat. In rejecting him.
- You would rather. Another way. It's as if you're saying. No. I. I got this. God. I don't. Your gift is not. That.
- Good. For. For. For those of us. Who might be. Rediscovering Christ. And I. I would. I would say. That it's. It's a lifetime.
- Of rediscovering. Who Christ is. I heard somebody. Say one time. The moment. You think. You got it. Beware. Because. That's probably. When you. Have it the least. Those of us.
- [25 : 42] Rediscovering. Christ. We're speaking. Of the word. Made flesh. Who dwelt. Among us. Good news. They take on. The perspective. Of the father.
- For. For the son. And the perspective. Of the son. As obedient. To the father. In other words. You. Honor. Christ. As the father. Honors. Christ.
- And you. Obey. The father. As the son. Has showed us. How. As our. Big brother. It. It. Means. Living in light. Of knowing. Who has taken. Your condemnation. Who has taken.

Your sin. Your shame. Your guilt. You're discovering. God. As the initiator. Of your love. First. John. Four. Nine. Through eleven. This. Is the love. Of God.

Who was. Made. Manifest. Among us. What it. What it means for the world is that you have either rejecters or rediscoverers.

[26 : 35] God's love draws out the distinction in the world. And then lastly. The last question. I would have you consider is. What's keeping you. From getting on.

About this love. That God has. Shown. What's keeping us. From getting on in the world. John goes forward from verse 19 through 21.

With how the essences of the rejection and combination. Is pictured. He's bringing back the motif of light and darkness as he did in chapter one. In him was life.

And the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it. John. John means. John's means of expressing what keeps man from knowing this great love.

Is the verdict. That their desire isn't for. The author of that love. What keeps you from. Knowing the God of love is. The lack of your desire from him.

[27 : 35] Someone told me one time. Your will is the tail of the dog of your desire. What you do. It's just. The tail. Of the dog.

Of who you actually are. Of what you actually desire. What you really want. It points to who you are. You know. You see somebody get angry. Stuck their toe.

I've been the guy. So. And. And. Or someone who's hungry. And is like. Sorry bro. I was just hungry. Or. Sorry. I was just. Frustrated. And it actually reveals who they actually are.

Right. So. What happens here is. If you're. If you're. In quarrel. In a quarrel. With. Knowing that God is.

What he does is based and fixed in his love. It's actually something you should consider about your own. Will and desire. God hasn't changed.

[28 : 36] The same yesterday. Today. And forevermore. The judgment of the world is that the world is evil. And men have rejected a good God. And. And rejected his good news.

Men prefer life without knowledge of God. They prefer to remain in darkness. They prefer to live without purity. They. They'd rather stand in opposition to God.

This is. This is. What it means to be. Waddling in darkness. As John. Puts it here. That's why he's contrasting light and dark.

The words John uses here is to express. How. Opposed to God. The world truly is. People love darkness. He's not saying people.

Kind of choose a little. No, no. People love darkness. Interesting that while God so loves the world. It's the world. It's the world that loves darkness.

[29 : 34] While God works to give the world the best gift. John says. In verse 19b. Their works are evil. John goes even further to amplify the explanation as to what keeps us from getting on in the world.

Because to live in darkness continuously. To live in darkness purposefully. Constantly. Is to hate. The light. So not only do you hate the light.

But you love the darkness. There's no mushy middle. He employs the word hate to show that the wickedness is a stark opposition and competition with God.

Wicked living means that there is strife between you and God. You got static between you and God because our desires are bent elsewhere.

It cannot be the case that one comes to the light and remains in darkness. Or just like it cannot be the case that you come to Christ and remain believing the same.

- [30 : 42] Or just like it cannot be the case that Nicodemus comes waving a religious flag. And then says that you follow after this promised Messiah.
- And he continues to wave the same flag. If indeed Christ who brings salvation. Is the one who brings it. Is also Christ that shows them.
- That he's the only one. And there are no competitors. On the other hand verse 21.
- John gladly expresses. What believing life corresponds to. Not that the believer is better than the unbeliever. Verse 21 tells us.
- But whoever does what is true. Comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen. That his works have been carried out. In God. It's not that. You are working and that.
- [31 : 41] God is shining the light on what you do. It's mainly that. Man. God is at work in you. And then he. He promotes or. Amplifies and glorifies as he sees fit.
- It actually is an astonishing thing. Because we know how prone to sin we all are. And the fact that God would say.
- Yo this is my son. This is my daughter. These are my people. The works carried out. The works carried out.
- The righteous living out. The salvation obtained. The love experience are all in God. The believers works are done. As he says. Through God.
- I'm coming to a landing. But I like the way Paul. Again states about the light in the world. For God. Who said. Let light shine out of darkness. Has shown in our hearts.
- [32 : 38] To give light. Of the knowledge. Of the glory. Of God. In the face. Of Christ. Second Corinthians 4. 6. Let the light shine out of darkness.
- God said that. And he has shown in our hearts. To give light. Of the knowledge. Of the glory. Of God. In the face of Jesus Christ. Who is everything pointing to?
- Who is the goodness about you? Exclaiming. Jesus Christ. What is the distinction. For us. It tells us. It tells us that.
- The gospel. Is supposed to make a difference. For even. In our boasting. It makes a difference. From our heart. That this love of God.
- Is meant to be. Yeah. We see it. But now. It takes a difference. In our heart. What keeps us from getting on. In the world. What keeps us from getting on. In the world. Is nothing.
- [33 : 34] It's not understanding. The believer's role. Is in God. That's it. It's not understanding. That your primary role. Your ultimate existence.
- Is placed. In God. Especially as. A believer. Getting on in the world. Means submitting to the gospel. That focuses.
- Christ. As the means for life. It's an issue. Of receptivity. We live in a world. Where we respond.
- Where your response. Does not matter. In this case. John's. It's not a matter. Of doing good. But it's a matter. Of doing. What is true. As he says.
- In verse 21. The response. Of the believer. Is that. Living by faith. Walking in the covenant. Living a life. Of repentance. Coming. To the light.
- [34 : 32] Is owing. To the father. It means that you bow. To the father. That's why. Paul in Ephesians. Chapter 3 says. For this reasons. I bow my knees. Before the father.
- From whom every family. In heaven. And on earth. Is named. That according to the riches. Of the glory. He may. Grant you. To be strengthened. With power. Through the spirit. In your inner being.

So that Christ. May dwell in your hearts. Through faith. That you being rooted. And grounded. In love. That you being rooted. And grounded. In love. May have strength. To comprehend. With all the saints.

What is the breadth. And the length. And the height. And the depth. And to know the love of Christ. That surpasses the knowledge. That you may be filled. With all fullness of God. I'll just close.

By reading. Again. John 3. 16. For God. So loved the world. For God.

[35 : 27] So loved the world. That he gave his only son. That whoever believes in him. Will not perish. But have eternal life.

With that. I just invite you to stand and sing. Or sit and meditate. And sing. How deep the father's love. For us. Z Thank you.