

# Walking in truth in a post-truth world

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, we confess before you that your word is so clear and so precise, and we confess before you, Father, that there is lots within us that do not like that type of clarity and precision.

And we struggle, Father, with sin and with pride and with idols, and the clarity and precision of your word comes against the sin and the idols of our hearts.

And so, Father, we wince and then we waffle and then we forget. And so, Father, we ask that just as your Holy Spirit caused your word written to be written, we ask, Father, that in your kindness and in your mercy, you would pour out your Holy Spirit upon us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, Father, and bring your word deeply into the command center of who we are. And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, once again this week, just by coincidence or providence, I had the great privilege to be able to go on Parliament Hill and speak to the Parliament Hill Christian Fellowship on Friday.

[ 1 : 2 3 ]     They got to sort of get my early ramblings on this sermon. That's sort of the deal. And I'm not going to... If you ever go on Parliament Hill, not like in the main entrance, but to the side, where the actual Senate and some other members of Parliament, their business goes on, when you come to the security now, you're met by two...

But you come to the door, you're met by two security guards. And so, one of them asks for my ID and see if I'm on the list that will allow me to get through the first door. And the other one, and I had a briefcase with me, says, Could you open your briefcase for me, sir?

And then he says, as I'm opening, he said, If there's anything dangerous in there, you better warn me now as you open it. And I said, Well, the only thing dangerous in here is a Bible.

I said, It's banned in about 50 countries. And he, without missing a beat, he said, Well, it's not banned here yet. You should be thankful.

And anyway, we chatted while we were going in. And anyway, so we go in. This is Canada. It's not banned yet, according to the security guard. But I think he was a brother. I think he was hoping it wouldn't be banned.

[ 2 : 3 6 ]     One of my coffee shop that I went to for a long time, I don't go to it anymore because the office is moved. The guy who owned the coffee shop, really great guy, a Palestinian Muslim from Jerusalem.

And he's been in Canada for quite a few years. Very, very secular Muslim. And really great guy. I used to love talking with him. And one of the things he said to me all the time, especially if there's something bad in the news, he said, George, if you've lived where I've lived, you would say this, Canada is the greatest country in the world.

That's what he said to me all the time. If you've lived where I've lived, Canada is the greatest country in the world. And I say that because the text that we're going to look at in a moment, it's very, very un-Canadian.

In fact, it would make just about every Canadian wince. And I'm talking about Canadian Christians. We wince at its clarity.

We wince at the fact that lots and lots of Christians are very comfortable with saying, I have no problem with Jesus. It's the church I have problems with, but this is Jesus speaking.

[ 3 : 47 ] And it just would be viewed by many, many people as a very hard text. In fact, I was just thinking about that. It might very well be that this is the first time you've ever come to a church.

Maybe you got dragged here for some reason. Maybe you're on a bit of a religious quest. And the text that we're about to look at, it's on one hand a very, very stark and hard text.

It really is. In fact, the reason that I called the sermon Walking in Truth in a Post-Truth World is because, partially it's the last verse, but it's partially just that this truth is so clear and it's so against our culture and it's so against the inclination of our hearts that we want to keep watering it down or nuancing it or forgetting it or going somewhere else.

And it's even harder because we live in a post-truth world and this is a very hard text. So if you're a seeker or you've just come here for some reason, just bear with me as we go through this text.

I mean, one of the things you can take away, hopefully you'll take a lot more away than just this, but one of the things you can do is that we don't hide anything about the Christian faith. We preach through the Bible. We go through the fine print, so to speak, and you get to hear what Jesus himself has to say.

[ 5 : 14 ] So let's look at the text. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 2 and we're beginning at verse 23. John chapter 2, verse 23. Last week, we looked at Jesus, the miracle of turning the water into wine and Jesus driving all the money changers and others out of the temple because he wanted pagans to be able to know about the God that he was introducing.

And here's how the text then continues on. It goes like this. Now, when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.

And here the word signs means miracles. It's talking about the fact that miracles mean something. It's not just conjuring tricks that God has done, that conjuring tricks don't mean anything.

They're just a matter of impressing. John is trying to emphasize that if it really is a miracle, it has meaning. And it also shows here that, as all of the gospel writers tell us, all of the biographies of Jesus said that Jesus performed lots and lots and lots of miracles.

They just record a few of them. And that's what we see here. Jesus has actually only performed one miracle, and it wasn't even in Jerusalem. But here we see that even in Jerusalem, he performed lots of other miracles that they just aren't recorded.

[ 6 : 36 ] So we'll read that again. Verse 23. Now, when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about human beings, for he himself knew what was in human beings.

Now, did you notice this? This is just the mildest little bit of non-Canadian stuff in this text. In fact, what we're going to see with this text is that Jesus keeps doubling down.

We think, wow, that's very un-Canadian. And then he doubles down. He makes it even more un-Canadian. And then he makes it even more un-Canadian. And then he makes it more un-Canadian. And why is this sort of an un-Canadian thing to say?

Well, what is the thing that we want to say about people? You know, I might want to say to my kids, I believe in you. You know? What do I want to maybe say to my staff? I believe in you. You know? I believe in you.

But what does the text here say about Jesus? Jesus says about people, I don't believe in you. Look, that's what it says here.

[ 7 : 48 ] Verse 24, But Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself. And the word, we're going to talk about this a little bit later, but the word entrust himself is another way of translating the word believe or faith.

It's another way. It's going to be very important later on that we sort of, it's sort of very interesting to understand that part of the meaning of having faith or believing in Jesus is to entrust yourself to him.

And so when it says here in the text, but Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself. He did not believe. He did not have faith in the people because he knew all people.

And he needed no one to bear witness about human beings for he himself knew what was in man. Sounds like a cynical thing. As you'll see by the end of the text and what you would have seen if you'd been looking at the earlier weeks, if you could put up the first point, that would be very great.

Because Jesus knows me, he does not believe in me. Because he loves me, he gave himself to save me. See, this is what stops it just from being a cynical text.

[ 8 : 55 ] Because all sorts of us don't believe in people. But it's a very Canadian thing to say. It's a very power of positive thinking. Say, I believe in you, I believe in you, I believe in you.

It's sort of a shock to see that Jesus doesn't believe in us. He knows us, and because he knows me, he doesn't believe in me. But he knows me, doesn't mean, and he does something far better than believing in me.

He knows what's in me. He knows I have idol issues. He knows I have sin issues. He knows I have darkness issues. He knows I have all sorts of things that betray people, that betray myself, that are self-centered.

And so rather than believing in me, he gives himself for me and dies for me to save me. All I can say is, thanks be to God, he doesn't believe in me. And thanks be to God, he's not a cynic.

Now, this is, this is just sort of a, I've taken something which could be very un-Canadian, it's still sort of a hard thing for us to maybe grasp.

[ 10 : 09 ] And because I've sort of told you the end of the text, we've sort of taken some of the sting out of it. And that's going to be a bit of a pattern all the way through this text is if you just bear with it, it's still going to be very, very stark.

But some of the sting is taken out of it. But Jesus is going to keep pressing into this particular issue in very, very stark ways. And in fact, it comes up very next because although he's called a Pharisee, really what you see in the very next little bit is Jesus meets a Canadian.

Jesus meets a Canadian professor of religion. He meets a Canadian journalist. He meets a Canadian politician. You might not realize that he meets a Canadian, but just listen and you'll see.

Look at what happens in chapter 3, verse 1. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. George, that doesn't sound very Canadian. Just wait. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, teacher, in other words, we know that you are a teacher come from God for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with them.

Now just pause. That is an unbelievably Canadian statement about Jesus. If you were to say at the University of Ottawa, Jesus is a teacher come from God.

[ 11 : 33 ] They go, okay, yeah? But that turns your crank. Mohammed is a teacher comes from God, you know? Krishna, you know? You would not raise a single eyebrow in any editorial room or any university faculty by making a statement that Jesus is a teacher come from God.

Now, you know, the atheists and all might say, well, yeah, yeah, blah, blah, blah, woof, woof. But, you know, basically as long as it's an innocuous statement like that, that's a completely fine statement in any coffee shop in Canada.

It doesn't matter if it's a Bridgehead or a Tim Hortons. It doesn't matter. It's just, it's a very, very Canadian statement. Nicodemus comes to Jesus and says, Jesus, you're a teacher.

You're a teacher comes from God. You do mighty things that only God can do. And we'd all say that's, I mean, what could you say to that? What does Jesus say to it?

Jesus, well, Jesus goes in a very, very, very odd direction. Look what he says in response to it. And it's very interesting. It says, Jesus answered him.

[ 12 : 45 ] And you might say to yourself, one moment, Nicodemus didn't ask a question. But what Jesus is doing is answering the claim.

He's answering the claim. He's not answering the question. He's answering or responding to the claim, the good Canadian claim that Jesus is a teacher come from God.

and he says, verily, verily, or truly, truly, it's a very important statement in John's gospel. It can also be translated as amen, amen. It means, pay attention to what I'm about to say.

This is the solemn truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. This is world-changing, absolutely important stuff that I'm about to say to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Could you put that up on the screen, please? That's the next point. And we need to have the artwork in between as well, right? But Jesus says, truly, truly, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[ 14 : 04 ] Do you sort of notice that's an unbelievably, from a Canadian point of view, that's an unbelievably angular, absolute, exclusive statement.

Now, those of you who come to the church more than once know that often I'll say when we come to a very difficult text that if you know the original language, the Hebrew or the Greek, it gives it a bit of a different nuance or a flavor.

And this might be the place where I would say that if you knew the original language, it gives it a different flavor, but actually, it's, that's a, if you could go back to the point, that's a, that's a perfectly accurate translation of the original language.

Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. that's just a very, very hard stain to say in Canada.

And it's hard for us to want to almost keep that in our mind when we think about loved ones who under no reasonable way or expectation would we think that they would be born again.

[ 15 : 31 ] Whatever that text means, we probably wouldn't think it was them. For maybe our parents or our brothers or sisters or our best friends or our co-workers, for people of different religions, it's a very, very, very stark absolute statement.

unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Now, some of you might say, okay, well, George, that's really interesting. I mean, that's wow, whoa, whoa. And that's Jesus, right?

That's not like these weird monks in the Middle Ages who got sex-starved and didn't eat enough and got delirious and came up with really, really kooky, crazy doctrines that we still foolishly believe, like this is Jesus speaking.

But maybe this is just the beginning of a conversation and as the conversation goes on, Jesus is going to nuance it in different ways and bring in other ways of looking at it.

He's just trying to catch our attention, George, the way you often try to catch our attention. Well, let's see what he does. Jesus is trying to catch our attention, but the hard part about this text, for us as Canadians, is that he keeps doubling down.

[ 16 : 49 ] Look at verses 4 and 5. Jesus says unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. So Nicodemus in verse 4 says to Jesus, now by the way, the word born again, it's one of these times when some of your versions might say born from above.

And in the Greek, the original language, it can be translated either way. It has a dual meaning, a double meaning. And so Nicodemus, rather than taking it that means being born from above, in other words, that God somehow gives you a birth different than your birth that you already had, Nicodemus takes it in this born a second time sense.

And, you know, it's hard to know whether Nicodemus is just being a little bit picky here about, Jesus, why are you going off on this weird tangent? Listen, what you're saying doesn't really make any sense.

And that's what Nicodemus in effect says. verse 4, Nicodemus said to Jesus, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time in his mother's womb and be born?

And at this point in time, Jesus said, yeah, I'm just joshing you. I don't mean it like that, you know, good on you for catching it. What does Jesus say? Jesus says in verse 5, Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[ 18 : 26 ] Notice that again? The unless and the cannot, he repeats himself. He says, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Now, at this point in time, what a lot of us do is say, George, is that referring to baptism? Is he saying here that, is that like are the certain denominations and churches right, that you have to be baptized and at the same time that you're baptized, you receive the Holy Spirit and then you see the kingdom of God?

Or is it just referring to the fact that water is a bit of an analogy for birth? And, and, I mean, just very quickly, it can't be referring to baptism for two simple reasons.

There's more than that, but there's two simple reasons. In one of the, in the synoptic gospels, there's a very parallel type of phrase, identical phrase, but with a different word. Rather than water and the Spirit, it says fire and the Holy Spirit.

And no denomination thinks you should be sprayed with a flamethrower so you can go to heaven. So why do you take water to mean baptism, but fire to not mean fire?

[ 19 : 37 ] It doesn't mean that. The second thing is Jesus in a moment is going to say to Nicodemus, listen, if you've studied the Tanakh, what we now call the Old Testament, you should understand what I'm talking about. And if Jesus is referring to baptism, which he doesn't make an ordinance until after his resurrection, then it would be completely unjust for him to complain that Nicodemus doesn't understand.

And Jesus is never unjust and unfair. water. So it's not referring, it's referring, it goes back to different images in Isaiah and Ezekiel, how water gives life and water also cleanses.

And unless the Holy Spirit comes into our life in a way that gives us life, unless the Holy Spirit comes into us in a way that cleanses us, and that's something that God does, unless that happens, we cannot see the kingdom of God.

But here's the important reason here, here's the big thing, here's why I called the sermon Walking in Truth in a Post-Truth Culture. You see how the devil plays us?

The devil plays us. How does he play us? In the commentary that I, one of the commentaries that I read to prepare for this, this just tried to figure out whether it's baptism or not, goes on for about ten pages.

[ 20 : 57 ] And why? Because there's Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Evangelical Anglican, Baptist, all these different battles around this, and by the end of it, if I was not doing my job, by the end of it, I'd say, so that's why the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are wrong, and that's why the Anglo Catholics and the Baptists are wrong, and that's why we're right.

And you know what we've completely forgotten? Unless you're born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. devil will use the Bible to get us way sidetracked so we're no longer sitting under the sting of the text.

And so I'm not going to talk about what the different views are. I want us to see how easy it is to get sidetracked away from this very, very, very stark statement of Jesus.

And then, if we keep reading the text, because you see, often what will happen in a sermon is the sermon will stop right there after a long, long, long sidebar on baptism, and we've completely forgotten that unless we are born again, born from above, born of the Holy Spirit, we cannot see or enter the kingdom of God.

But Jesus, he doesn't get us sidetracked. He keeps going deeper into it. He keeps doubling down. Look at what happens immediately after that. Verse 5. We'll read verse 5 again. Truly, truly, verily, verily, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[ 22 : 46 ] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Holy Spirit is spirit. That means in this case it is something of the Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.

Third time, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes, so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

He comes back to it again and again and again and again. And here, by the way, is if the devil hasn't completely sidetracked us on baptism, now with this, the wind blows where it is, that's where the devil sidetracks us again and we get off on this long discussion maybe about the Pentecostals and charismatics and baptism and what this symbolism means.

And before we know it, we've completely and utterly forgotten the starkness of the text. If you could put up the next point, that would be great.

In fact, when Jesus says that that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, in verse 6, what he's saying is that humans can only produce what humans can produce.

[ 23 : 59 ] I need what only God can do. That's the word flesh in this particular case is referring to human beings in all of our frailty. And the fact of the matter is, is that whether it's a human institution like that, lots of us human beings together, what we produce will be what humans can produce.

In a sense, a church without the Bible and without the gospel is no different than a mosque or a synagogue or the liberal caucus or the conservative caucus or the CBC newsroom.

Well, just human beings producing what only human beings can produce. And everything that human beings produce is frail. It'll pass away.

It will die. It has marks of rebellion and sin in it. And what Jesus is reminding Nicodemus, and this is, by the way, very important in just a little tiny thing, the whole social justice progressive movement in the Western world is a movement that desires the kingdom of God without God.

And thinks it knows how the kingdom of God without God will come upon us. And this text is saying, you know what? What is human will only produce what is human.

[ 25 : 21 ] Human beings will never produce a kingdom of God without God. We need God to do what only God can do because human beings will only produce that which is weak and frail.

people. Let's continue on in verse 9.

Sorry, maybe I've already... So now Nicodemus comes to the point where he now is asking a very, very honest question. He's taken back by what Jesus has said and he, in verse 9, says to him, how can these things be?

And Jesus answered him, are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Verily, verily, I say to you, we speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? Just pause. What he means here by earthly is things that have happened on earth, even if they're spiritual things.

[ 26 : 28 ] He's really referring to the things that he's already referred to. Now, heavenly things, he's going to explain that right in a moment. No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

If you could put up the next point, that would be great. What Jesus is saying here, Jesus says that he is not a teacher come from God. He is God come to teach and save.

Remember I said he's going to keep doubling down? The typical Canadian thing will be to pay a compliment to Jesus because Canadians, we like to try to get along together with each other.

A typical Canadian thing would say, Mohammed is a teacher come from God, Jesus is a teacher come from God, your yoga instructor, teacher come from God, or however you want to put it, but we want to try to respect it.

And Nicodemus begins this whole conversation with his Canadian compliment to Jesus, and by this point in time, after Jesus is completely and utterly undermining his Canadian categories, he even goes further, and that's the point of him saying, verse 12, verse 13, no one has ascended into heaven.

[ 27 : 49 ] In other words, no human being has been able to go right up into the very councils of God and grasp God by the unaided exercise of their human mind and their human power, no one.

But he, Jesus, is one who is descended from heaven. So what we have, Nicodemus, here's this big claim, if you went back in a time machine, John, in many, many ways throughout the whole gospel is claiming that he's just telling you what actually happened, as if he's in a court of law under oath.

And you could go and you would see Nicodemus and Jesus talking at night, and Jesus, without a smile, without a smirk, without arrogance, he says, I am not a teacher from God, I am God, come to teach and save.

This is a pretty preposterous claim. If you could put up the next point, last week we looked at Jesus predicting his resurrection.

In a few moments we're going to see Jesus predicting his crucifixion. But here's the big claim, I'm not going to get into much of an apologetic around it, but this is what the whole Christian faith stands and falls on in terms of being a reasonable thing.

[ 29 : 16 ] Why should we take any of this seriously? I mean, quite literally, you could go down to the Shepherds of Good Hope, you could go down to the Union Mission and you would meet all sorts of people who would think they are somebody like Jesus or God.

I would bet there's at least a thousand people in Ottawa who think that they're God. And I don't mean any type of, you know, just the way your boss, she might think she's God or he might think he's God or acts like that.

No, I mean, they actually probably would say to you with a completely serious face, you should worship me, I'm God. I mean, there's probably all sorts of people in Ottawa. But if the resurrection of Jesus happened, then who he is and what he says is vindicated.

If he was not resurrected, what he says is garbage. Just as if you went down to the Royal Ottawa or the psychiatric ward of the civic or the Union Mission or the Salvation Army or the Shepherds of Good Hope and somebody said, they're God, you would know it's garbage.

Jesus keeps doubling down. Now, in the 10 or 11 minutes I have left, Jesus starts to unpack this in both very hopeful and very, very startling ways.

[ 30 : 33 ] He's going to talk a little bit about how it is that he can make us born again. If you could put up the next image, yeah, that's a pretty gruesome one, eh? Jesus is now going to talk to Nicodemus about a story in the Old Testament that's knock in Numbers chapter 21.

Hear what he says. It's in verse 15. Actually, we'll do verse 14, 15, and 16. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. And he's making a reference to a story when Israel is wandering in the wilderness, and they've had a time of particular complaint against God, rebellion against God, just calling God names.

And part of the judgment is that there becomes these snakes that come, and they're poisonous snakes, maybe adders. And as they bite people, they get sick and they die.

And they call out to God for mercy that God would deliver them. And so God says to Moses, in the center of the camp, put up a big pole. And on the pole, put an image, make an image of the snakes that are biting you and killing you.

[ 32 : 06 ] And anybody who looks at the serpent on the top of the pole, people, if you look, you won't die, you'll be healed.

Story in the book of Numbers, chapter 21. And that's what Jesus says about himself. And it's a very, very powerful story if you think about it for a second.

If the person who's bit by the snake looks to Moses, they will die. They look to their parents, they will die.

They look to the tabernacle, they will die. If they look to Joshua, they will die. If they look at what God has said, the serpent on the pole, they will live.

How is this very relevant for us? If you look to the church, you will die. If you look to the bishop, you will die. If you look to a ritual like communion or baptism, just as rituals, you will die.

[ 33 : 21 ] If you look to praise music, if you look to Trudeau, if you look to your prof, you look to your mom, you look to your dad, you will die. If you look to Jesus, you will live.

If you look to Jesus, you will live. See, Jesus just keeps doubling it down.

If you could put up the next point. In a very, very simple way, what is this looking to Jesus?

What is this believing? You go back and you read through this whole text, you will see time and time and time throughout John's gospel in this text, it keeps telling you believing in Jesus. It doesn't mean having an idea about Jesus.



Demons have ideas about Jesus that are more accurate than yours and mine, but they are still demons. In a sense, it is a believing into Jesus. That's the actual original language in the original language.

[ 34 : 23 ] It's entrusting myself wholly to him. It's believing that because of his death and resurrection upon the cross, he has vindicated that what he says is the truth.

And that if I look to him, believing what he says, if I look to him and entrust myself to him, if I, in a sense, am just entrusting myself into him, believing into him, that's all I do, and he does all the rest.

In fact, if you could put up the next point, please. I entrust myself to Jesus and what he accomplished for me, and then, that as we'll see in just this, which has already gone on, and in the next few verses, in the next few minutes, what happens?

What does Jesus say happen to us? Like the image of the looking at the serpent is it's a very powerful image that what happens is that something like a cross in the very center of the camp, that which, in a sense, is the sin, and is the punishment of the sin, and represents the sin, and by being a serpent, it even has a bit of a hearkening back to Genesis 3 and the rebellion against God.

It's sin, it's the punishment of sin, and it's put upon the on a pole. And Jesus will bear the penalty for my sins upon a cross.

[ 36 : 02 ] And so I entrust myself to Jesus, that's all I do, and what do you accomplish for me? I don't say, by the way, I've been a missionary, I've been a pastor, I've been a good dad, I'm really good looking, you know, I have a low body fat count, I have a big bank balance, I'm really cute, I'm funny, like it's nothing like that.

You just entrust yourself to Jesus, and what do you accomplish for me? And this text says, you know what happens? What is it that God does for us in the person of his Son? The penalty for all my sin is paid.

What happens when I put my trust in Jesus? I am born from above. I am born of the Holy Spirit. I am born from God. What happens when I entrust myself to Jesus? I receive that which only God can give, because my children will die, my grandchildren will die, my great-grandchildren will die.

I cannot give them eternal life. Only God can give me eternal life. And when I entrust myself to Jesus, I receive eternal life. And in John 3, 16, when it talks about, for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to the end, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life, I begin to know the uncreated, eternal, unfailing love of God.

Because that's the love of God. It is uncreated. It is eternal. It is unfailing. Jesus doesn't believe in me, but this is what he gives me.

[ 37 : 54 ] Let's finish the text. Verse 16 again. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.

By the way, when it says, for God so loved the world, what it's saying here, it has a double meaning. What it's meaning is, if you just think about this for a second, this is how much God loves you.

God loves you so much that in he and the person of his Son comes down from heaven to die like a serpent on the cross for you.

That is how much God loves you. His love is beyond the wildest imagination of the greatest narcissist.

And at the same time, when we see Jesus dying on the cross, we can see this is, this we see now, God's love for human beings. Just, you know, as an aside, you know, I'm not going to tell you a spoiler alert.

[ 38 : 57 ] Just, it's not going to be a spoiler alert, but if you've ever watched one of the best series on war, like a movie, it's the Band of Brothers. Those of you who have seen it, you'll all say that's a spectacular series.

In one of the last episodes, it's called The Final Patrol. And it's so, it's so interesting regardless to this, because what in what in the world is the normal way that things happen in the world?

Like, should McGinty have been going to jail or Livingston? Those of you who follow politics in Ontario. But the powerful people don't die, the little people die.

The powerful people send the little people to die. The Band of Brothers, the Final Patrol, the World War II is almost over, but the bigwigs send the lowly grunts out on a patrol that could get them killed and don't want to go.

I'm not going to say anything else. Watch the series. It's a great episode. But that's the way of the world. But what happens here? God himself dies, not the little people, but God dies for the little people because he loves you and loves me.

[ 40 : 06 ] Verse 16 again. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world.

And the word condemn here, it's not meant the way condemn is used normally in English. Condemn, I'm sorry, I know it's going to touch on some things, but you know with his whole social media campaign of Twitter and condemning people and social media, it's very powerful.

It just means that we put people down, we accuse them of things. Condemn here, it's a language of the law courts. It's a language of what happens after there's been a fair trial.

And all of the evidence has been looked at and the judge declares you guilty. That's the language. It's not the emotional name calling language. It's a language from the law court.

Talk to some of the lawyers who are present here. And even in perfect Canadian justice, but the trial has been through. All of the evidence has been presented. All of the evidence is weighed. And at the end of it, the judge says guilty or not guilty.

[ 41 : 12 ] And that's the language condemned. Read it again. Verse 17. Verse 17. 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, is declared innocent. 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. Could you put up the next point, please?

In your natural state, in my natural state, you hate the light and love the darkness. I mean, if you don't think that's true, just try to actually have a completely honest apology.

[ 42 : 28 ] You've done something wrong. And how hard is it for you or me to actually give a full, honest, unvarnished apology with no insinuation that the other person contributed to it, no excuse, no extenuating circumstance.

And if you're honest, it's something we rarely do perfectly, maybe never do perfectly.

And even if we manage to get the words out perfectly, many of us inside of ourselves are hoping that the other person will acknowledge some responsibility because at the deepest level of our heart, we haven't fully come to the light.

And so this text is saying in your natural state, you hate the light and love the darkness. So God gives you what you want and what you deserve.

Endless darkness. You have hated the light. You don't want the light in your life. When you die, you will go where there is no light. You have loved darkness and said darkness is your friend.

[ 43 : 52 ] And when you die, God says, I will send you to outer darkness. Can you put up the next point?

This text as well is saying, that's the thing here about the light coming into the world.

And it's a wonderful phrase from John. It refers to both conscience, the fact of a created order, of a moral order, of our different ways of knowing about God, all the different pointers that exist from God.

It's what Paul talks about in the book of Romans. No one will have a valid excuse before God for rejecting him. No one will be able to say that there was not enough light from God or that he did not love us enough.

If you could put up the final point, that would be great. If you could all stand. This is maybe one of the greatest verses in the Bible.

[ 45 : 00 ] It's Jesus speaking to you and me. What's just been said to us today is very, very, very, very, very, very stark.

And it is really, truly telling us that apart from Christ, we are doomed to perish, to spend an eternity in endless darkness.

But this is not God's heart for you and me. His heart for you and me is that we would humble ourselves and entrust ourselves to Jesus.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Friends, if you are here and you have not yet entrusted yourself to Jesus, there is no better time than right now, today, to entrust yourself to Jesus. Jesus is like, you know, if there was a perfect cure for cancer that was just discovered and a doctor comes and gives you and he says, I have very terrible news, you have cancer.

[ 46 : 26 ] In a sense, when he tells you that you have cancer, you are closer to health than before he told you that because before he told you that, you wouldn't have gone seeking a cure. And Jesus tells us how great is our danger and our doom.

But he only does it in the context of how great God's salvation is for even the best and even the worst.

There is no time better than now to entrust yourself to Jesus. And for those of us who have done that before, we don't have to keep entrusting ourselves to Jesus, but this is why the mission statement of this church is that God whose Holy Spirit will move in our lives so that we are disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel.

So we are freed up to live for his glory and to pray and to share to the end that our loved ones and friends will also come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Father, we thank you, Father, that these really hard words are said to us by the one who died for us, the one who came from heaven to live amongst us, to die for us, that, Father, he is sharing his heart for everyone who is here and everyone that we meet, that he is not saying this to merely frighten us or depress us, but, Father, that he is saying this to drive us to our knees, to drive us to throw our arms out wide and call out upon you to entrust ourselves to you, to entrust ourselves to Jesus.

[ 48 : 07 ] Father, may your Holy Spirit move in our hearts and lives that we will be disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory. And, Father, give us a heart for the lost and a boldness to bear witness to Jesus here in Ottawa and to the ends of the earth.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.