

PM John 3 Be convinced - God Loves You

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Preacher: Mr John Wilson

[0 : 00] .

And once again it's good to be with you on this Lord's Day. And for anyone who wasn't out this morning, my name is John Wilson, a visiting speaker. Recently been licensed in the Northern Presbytery.

And it's just been great to be with you today and I hope you were encouraged by hearing God's word this morning. We're going to begin this evening's worship by singing from the Psalms.

Psalm 84. As we come into God's presence, we do so seeking the Lord. And in this psalm, the psalmist says, How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. He recognizes his dependency and his need for the Lord in his life.

[1 : 20] And so we're going to sing about that just now as we praise God together. From the Psalter, Psalm 84, verses 1 to 6. It's found on page 338 in the blue books.

Let's stand and let's sing to God's praise. Let's sing to God's praise.

Thanks hanging. sleeveya donne. ■■■■■vemya holdoor, ■ Central, aurus six- faints. kurva. Thank you.

Thank you.

[3 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[5 : 21] For you alone are our God. You alone are the God who is unchanging. From everlasting to everlasting. And because of this fact we your people can put our trust and our hope in you.

Knowing that you are a solid rock beneath our feet. You are a firm foundation. And in this troubling world even as the Psalms say in Psalm 46.

If mountains were to be lifted up and thrown into the heart of the sea. We your people need not worry. Because you are in our midst.

Help us to understand tonight Heavenly Father. That even though we may be small in number. That where two or three are gathered together. There you have declared a blessing.

And so we come tonight Heavenly Father with a level of expectation. That you are going to reveal yourself to us. As we feed on your holy word.

[6 : 23] And the words of scripture. We ask that you would forgive us of our sins. And we ask that you would continue to lead us in the way everlasting. Thank you for this church family Father.

Thank you for their hospitality. That they have shown to me on this Lord's day. And I would ask Lord that you would continue to bless them. In their time of vacancy. And that you would continue to provide for their material and spiritual needs.

In Jesus name I pray these things. Amen. Amen. Yes. Before we read again from God's word.

We are going to sing. This time from the Sing Psalms. Psalm 16 verses 8 to 11. Psalm 16 verses 8 to 11.

It is found on page 17 in the blue books. And in this world that we live in. With its many trials and difficulties and temptations.

[7 : 24] We might wonder how the saints are to maintain joy. David the Psalmist was no stranger to trial and difficulty in his life. But he had a secret.

And he says in verse 8. Before me constantly. I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand. I'll not be overthrown. And therefore my heart is glad.

My tongue will sing. David's secret is that he always keeps his eyes fixed on the Lord. And so we're going to sing about that now. So please stand and sing with me.

From Psalm 16 verses 8 down to 11. And I'll present this psalm. And I'll see you next time.

Psalm 16 verses 8 to 11.

[9 : 07] Psalm 16 verses 9 to 11.

Psalm 16 verses 9 to 11.

Let's hear the word of God together.

Tonight's reading is from the book of John. Tonight's reading is from the book of John.

In the New Testament. John chapter 3. The gospel of John. Chapter 3. A very famous passage of scripture.

[10 : 54] In fact, I was talking about this passage with the children this morning. We'll read all the way down to verses 21.

Now there was a man of the Pharisees. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. A ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher come from God.

For no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. Jesus answered him. Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.

[12 : 09] 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. Nicodemus said to him, How can these things be?

Jesus answered him, Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, 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 of earthly things, and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who is descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his 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, 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.

[13 : 35] And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world, and people loved 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 work 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.

We'll stop there for now, and we trust that God will bless this reading of his holy and inspired word to us on this Lord's Day. It's good to see the boys and girls out this evening.

I wasn't expecting you out this evening, so I didn't prepare a talk initially, but I actually do have a talk, and it's linked into what we were talking about this morning. So I'm just going to pull something up on my phone, and I wonder if you could tell me who this is.

Now, I'm not going to come too far because of the rules and things, but I'm just going to come down to the front here, just so you can see it. It's quite far away. You might not know who this is, because I don't know if you watch cartoons or not, but do you know who that is?

[14 : 47] No idea. I wonder, do any of the adults have any idea who this is? No? Well, if you've ever seen a cartoon called Toy Story, then you'll know that this guy is called Forky.

Now, Forky has a little bit of an identity crisis. He doesn't know if he's a fork. He doesn't know if he's a spoon.

And he feels like absolute rubbish. But what Forky doesn't know is that he's actually a toy. And if you've ever seen the film, one of the things that Forky's always trying to do, because he thinks he's rubbish, is he's always trying to jump in a rubbish bin.

Whenever he sees a rubbish bin, he tries to jump in it. And all the other toys, they try to stop him jumping in the rubbish bin. What Forky doesn't realise is that he has actually been made by someone.

He's been created by someone. And he's not just rubbish. He's not just any old toy. He is this person's favourite toy.

[16:03] He was created by a little girl called Bonnie. And he was made to bring her great joy. Now the reason I tell you that little story is because we were learning this morning that actually we are fearfully and wonderfully made by our Creator.

But just like Forky, a lot of people go around in life just believing that they are absolutely rubbish. And I wonder if anyone has ever made you just feel like rubbish.

Well what I want you to remember is next time you feel like rubbish, you say to yourself, no I'm not rubbish, I am fearfully and wonderfully made by someone.

And the person that made me loves me very much. In fact, I was made to bring them great joy.

Okay? So you remember that. Next time you feel like rubbish, you remember Forky, that you're not rubbish, that you're fearfully and wonderfully made.

All right? Adults, we remember that as well. Let's pray briefly and we'll ask God to bless this word to us.

[17:22] Heavenly Father, as we mentioned this morning, all the treasures of wisdom are found in your holy word. And as we come to this famous passage in John chapter 3, we remember that nobody ever spoke like Jesus.

Nobody ever spoke with the authority of Jesus. And so we pray that we would handle these words carefully and that they would be food to our very souls. We ask it in his mighty, precious and powerful name.

Amen. I wonder if you've ever heard of the concept of love languages.

It's a fairly modern concept in kind of, you know, popular psychology. And it's the idea that expressions of love need to be communicated according to a particular person's love language.

So, for example, in order for some people to feel and experience love, it has to be communicated according to their way of expressing love.

[18:36] So, for example, for some people to experience and know love, they actually need to hear the words, I love you.

And so their love language, according to this theory in pop psychology, would be called words of affirmation. It's like when you see new couples going out or they're on the phone or at least they used to be.

I suppose they text now. I love you more. No, I love you more. That would be words of affirmation.

But for some people, their love language isn't words of affirmation, but acts of service.

So it's not what you say to me that communicates how much you love me, but it's what you do for me. I tell my wife, Anna, that I love her all the time.

But I think most of the time, she would rather I just helped her around the house a little bit. Her love language would be acts of service. Still, for other people, it's neither of these things, but their particular love language is touch.

[19:41] So for some people in this world, in order for them to feel loved, they just need a hug. They need touch. They need affection. That's how they experience love. For others, it's quality time.

It's not what you say. It's not what you do. It's not how many cuddles you give me. I just want you to sit and spend some time with me. Still, for others, it's none of these things, but their love language happens to be gift giving, whereby they associate the costliness of the gift or the present that you get them with how much you love them.

Now you might be thinking, hey, I speak a few of those languages. Well, you may be like me, high maintenance. But the big idea I'd like for you to grasp this evening, the big takeaway, is that God, in giving His Son, Jesus, for us, expresses to us His love.

Or maybe put better another way, the giving of God's Son is the ultimate expression of His love towards us.

Okay? The giving of God's Son is the ultimate expression of His love for humanity. Now my aim tonight is to convince you, God willing, from the Bible, that God loves you.

[21 : 08] But I also want you to know that I'm not doing this to make you feel warm and fuzzy inside, and gooey on the inside. I think after the last couple of years, everybody would like to know that there is someone out there who loves them and cares for them, but that's not what I'm trying to do.

The reason I want to convince you from the Scriptures that God loves you is because I know that there is a power that comes. A supernatural power that comes from comprehending something of the love of God.

In fact, the Apostle Paul, he writes about it when he's speaking to the Ephesians, and he tells them that he's praying for them, that they would know just the breadth and the width and the depth and the heights of the love of God so that they would be strengthened in their innermost being.

There seems to be a causal connection between comprehending something of the magnitude of the love of God and being strengthened as a Christian.

Okay? So that's what we're aiming tonight. We're aiming at strength and encouragement as we comprehend something of the love of God. And the reason that you should care is because God cares for you.

[22 : 30] God cares about you. That's why he sent Jesus into the world. Now the context of tonight's sermon is John chapter 3. And in this chapter we see that a man called Nicodemus encounters Jesus.

Nicodemus is a fascinating character. It seems that he is intrigued by Jesus. But he only comes to Jesus at night. It's as if he doesn't really want anyone to see him hanging out with Jesus.

He's hiding in the shadows. And Jesus tells him that if he is to enter the kingdom of heaven he must be born again by believing in Jesus and looking to Jesus' coming sacrificial death on the cross.

And this is alluded to in verse 14 when Jesus says and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the son of man be lifted up. So what I want to do tonight is give you and please don't freak out about this.

It won't be as long as you're thinking. I want to give you seven reasons from John's gospel here that I believe demonstrate that God loves you. And we're going to go through these pretty quickly.

[23 : 49] But the first is this. Reason number one. If God so loved the world then it follows that God loves you.

It's important to notice here as we read this passage particularly in verse 16 that God has loved. What is the object of this love?

Well we read in the Bible here that it is the world. For God so loved the world. Now in the Bible the world can mean many different things.

We talk about the world the flesh the devil so it's important to distinguish what are we actually talking about here. The Greek word is kosmon and according to BDAG which is a very very well respected Greek lexicon world here refers to the inhabitants of God's creation and especially of believers as the objects of God's love.

So it has humanity in view here. You see humanity are not just the result of some random cosmic accident billions of years ago we are so much more than just molecules in motion.

[25 : 10] But as we said this morning and I would remind you that we have been created by God for God to find our joy in God and there is intentionality behind our existence.

And God cares about us very much. but if we were just to read this passage and assuming that this is the word of God that this is God's revelation to us then we can determine A as our major premise that God loves the kosmon that is what it says in the Greek.

The minor premise that you and I as human beings having been made in God's image are part of this kosmon we are the inhabitants to which the text refers and the conclusion therefore we draw is that we are loved by God but let's be honest anyone can make that claim now it should be enough for us that God has declared it in his word that God has said that he loves the kosmon but what if your love language isn't just words of affirmation what if your love language is acts of service or what we talked about gift giving well reason number two that I believe the Bible here teaches that God loves you if God gave his only son for the world which he has loved then it follows that God

loves you you see

God didn't just tell us that he loved us but he gave he acted decisively in human history by sending Jesus into the world Jesus was literally God's gift to humanity now I don't know what your particular love language might be maybe you don't even know but if your love language is gift giving whereby you associate your esteem and your value and your worth with the costliness of the gift then that's amazing good news for you this evening because what we see here is that God in sending Jesus into his creation bestowed upon you the supreme value and worth when he gave what was most valuable to him in the whole world his one and only son he bestowed upon you incredible eternal worth now I don't know about you but I always think that the best gifts in life are not necessarily the most expensive they're not necessarily the biggest presents under the Christmas tree but sometimes the best gifts are the ones that are personal the ones that are thoughtful the ones that come from a person's very heart and what we need to understand here is that when God gave us Jesus he was giving to us his very self his very heart he was giving us the best that he had to give there was no greater gift there was no more expensive treasure that he could give to us in giving us his very self this was his best this was his heart in the person of his son but those of you who are more experienced in life will know that giving yourself away to another person always involves an element of risk rejection of a personal gift is often so very painful and hurtful because it feels and often often can be a rejection of our very selves and yet this supremely personal and valuable and expensive gift from God's very own heart his very self in the person of his son this light and truth from God given into the world is frequently rejected by many daily like something beautiful like a beautiful flower like a beautiful rose that is given that is just trampled underfoot we're told in the beginning of John's gospel he came to his own and his own did not receive him so that's reason number two if God gave his only son for the world which he has loved then it follows that he loves you reason number three if God sent

[29 : 57] Jesus to die for your sin then it follows that he loves you and as much as I am trying to convince you this evening that the giving of God's son communicates how much he loves you there's another side to that coin that we also have to understand as much as it reveals the magnitude of God's love to us it also reveals the magnitude and the horror of humanity's sin that God's precious gift would not only be rejected but crucified by humanity that's what we did to the son of God nailed to a cross for sinful humanity that was the price of our redemption before a holy God there's something about it that makes us go it's just not it's not right that is so deeply wrong and make no mistake this was the most wicked horrendous act in all of human history the crucifixion of the son of

God and yet we're told that this was part of God's plan that it pleased God to crush him the prophet Isaiah tells us and that it pleased Jesus to submit to the father's will and willingly lay down his life it was Jesus that said no one takes my life from me I lay it down of my own accord I've been given authority to lay it down and authority to raise it up again Jesus went to the cross as our substitute to bear the wrath of God against our sin and Jesus said interestingly for this reason the father loves me agape love for this reason the father loves me I lay my life down for the sheep greater love has no more than this than a man lay down his life for his friends love and the reason the father loves the son with an agape love is because the son lays down his life for his sheep for God so agape love the world that he gave his only son so that was reason number three if God sent Jesus to die for your sins then it follows that he loves you reason for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life reason number four if God loves that which is perishing then it follows that God loves you some people get very offended by this idea that without God we perish they're very offended by the idea of hell and things like that but when you think about it everything in life is perishing it's falling apart it's why we paint our walls it's why we put moisturizer on our skin everything in life is falling apart and without God we perish now I don't know if well I'm sure you will it wasn't that long ago only a few years ago do you remember the old fivers tatty fivers before the new controversial plastic ones so I used to work in some shops and every so often we get handed a tatty dirty fiver usually hanging together by a bit of sellotape and occasionally I would keep one of those fivers in my own wallet and you know whenever I dropped that fiver I would always pick it up and the reason I would always pick it up was because it was valuable to me take a guess how valuable was that fiver to me well it was it was worth five pounds that scabby tatty dirty fiver hanging together by a thread was just as valuable to me as if it was a fresh nicely newly printed fiver from the mint similarly

God has loved a world that is perishing and just because something is perishing before the sight of God doesn't mean that it is any less valuable to him and God is so committed to his creation that he is going to renew this fallen broken world because it is valuable to him reason number five if God sent Jesus not to condemn not to condemn but to save the world then it follows that God loves you verse 17 for God did not strong emphasis in the Greek God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him

[36 : 00] God doesn't desire that anyone should perish Jesus did not come to condemn but to save it follows that God loves you reason number six verse 18 if God warns you about your true condition and your relationship to him it's because he loves you it's because he loves you we read that 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 what we read here is sobering what we read here is a loving warning Jesus warns us because he loves us and it can be hard to hear the truth about ourselves sometimes can't it but the bible would teach us that the wounds of a friend are faithful the wounds of a friend are faithful the bible would teach us that love delights in the truth and the church are to be a people who embody and who speak truth in love if your house was on fire and I was your neighbor and I didn't do all that I could having seen it coming to warn you about the danger or do all that I could to save you you wouldn't think me very loving but God has warned us on his coming judgment on sin he's warned us through Jesus his teaching he's warned us through scripture through our

God given consciences through which we experience the world and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit who will use our consciences to defend us or convict us before almighty God but if God has truly loved us in these different ways then why do people still not turn to him I don't know what your experience is but my experience in speaking with people is that in the end some people just refuse to believe in a God who will in the end condemn sinners to an eternity in hell if they do not turn to God in repentance and in faith by believing in Jesus it turns people off but you know it's really strange because unlike today it wasn't the idea of God's wrath and justice against sin that put people off

Christianity especially in the days of the early church you see back then human society in the Greco-Roman world could understand a God of wrath they could understand the wrath and the anger and the justice of the gods and all that stuff what they couldn't handle was the new Christian ethic of turn the other cheek mercy was for the weak what they couldn't handle was treating every human being even the slaves as if they were infinitely valuable before God and here's the thing is that we cannot understand God's wrath biblically unless we understand that it actually arises out of his great love his love for his creation for his people for justice and for that which is righteous so think about this think how we feel when someone we love and know and love and care about is ravished and devastated and undone by the unwise selfish actions of another person we don't always respond with a kind of well that's alright a kind of benign tolerance there are times when we are righteously angry because we know that there is something and we can point to something and go that was wrong that was wicked and similarly it's wrong for us to think of anger and love as being these forces that are diametrically opposed to one another because if anything

God is righteously angry because there is a cancer in his very good creation and that cancer is human sin and that cancer is evil and he wants to eradicate it he wants to remove it he needs to deal with it his anger arises out of his holy zealous burning love for that which is good and holy despite God's holy love many will just not come to Jesus and that's the bottom line and the reason they don't come is for fear of the light for fear that their deeds are going to be exposed we read in verse 19 to 20 and this is the judgment it's a way of saying this is how it is this is this is this is the authority of God this is how it is this is the judgment the light has come into the world and people have loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil for everyone who does wicked things hates the light does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed there's something within us that retracts from the light something within us that when we do not want to be exposed pushes the light of the world away have you ever been as a

Christian and I'm assuming there's Christians here tonight you ever been in a conversation with maybe relatives who are unbelievers or you're around a table with unbelievers and you're having food and the name you bring up the name of Jesus in any other context other than a swear word and there's just a an uncomfortableness in the air there's an aura in the air aura is the wrong word but there's an uncomfortableness about the situation and it's kind of all that religion stuff let's

change the subject let's change the topic let me tell you why that happens because there's power in the name of Jesus there's power in the name of Jesus and the light of Jesus when it when it comes into our life penetrates deep down into our souls and there and there's and for some people there's something in them there's something about them that says oh

[43 : 42] Jesus what have you what have I to do with you what have you to do with me this is just uncomfortable change the channel conversation shut down light everyone who does wickedness hates the light doesn't come to the light lest their works should be exposed don't expose me and ultimately that was Nicodemus' problem Nicodemus was a teacher of teachers no doubt impeccable so far as the law was concerned a well respected to do individual a prominent position in the nation of Israel but didn't want anyone to see him coming to Jesus didn't want his deeds exposed now perhaps it was too costly for him perhaps it might have cost him his position and his reputation to be a follower of

Jesus perhaps it was his sin we actually don't really know the reasons here we're not given them specifically but no doubt it's the same reasons why people will not come to Jesus today and it's fear of the light now I got a bit sidetracked so we'll try get back on track reason number seven if the Holy Spirit is moving tonight in your heart saying you need to get right with God you need to fess up you need to have your sins forgiven because there will be sins you've committed today and yesterday and the day before and even just this last week understand that that's because God loves you what what not to do is put it off or ignore it and be a

Nicodemus and skulk around and hide in the shadows come to God tonight before you lay your head on the pillow tonight say a prayer confess your need for him come into the light receive forgiveness and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit for God so loved the world that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life be convinced this evening be convinced that God loves you Amen our final psalm this evening is from the Scottish Psalter and we'll be singing from Psalm 72 verses 17 down to verses 19 and it's found on page 314 in the blue books his name forever shall endure let's stand let's sing to the God who loves us list where are 10 only to the God to open up inhes paper with the shadow I God bless you. God bless you.

[49 : 10] God bless you.

God bless you.