

John 12:44-50

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[0:00] It's good to be here this morning. Nice to see you all. Let's see if these slides are working here.!

Yes. Good morning. Merry Christmas to you all.! I'm Matt, if you heard. I want to show my elders. It is always a blessing to bring God's Word in this fashion.

So what an exciting time of year this could be for Christians. Especially to celebrate the coming of our Savior and birth. Today's sermon won't look quite like maybe what you're expecting the day before Christmas.

We aren't going to talk. We aren't going to be reading the story of Jesus' birth. The shepherds, the wise men, the star. We'll continue our study through the Gospel of John. As Brad just mentioned, where we've been for actually almost exactly one year here at Shoreline.

And although John chapter 12, where the preaching landed today, isn't a passage you would typically choose to preach the day before Christmas. By God's sovereignty, this is where we wound up.

[1:07] And I think you'll find what we'll see in this passage pairs really well with Christmas. Today's text is Jesus' final words of public ministry before his death on the cross.

The next five chapters of John are the private interactions Jesus had with his twelve disciples. And we know this because John 12, 36, we read that Jesus had gone away and hid himself.

So at this point in John's Gospel, Jesus is no longer speaking with the masses. Therefore, the discourse that is today's text could not have been spoken immediately following chapter 12, verse 43.

We had to get on last week. But this is John's edition that concisely summarizes Jesus' earthly ministry thus far. Though likely spoken at a completely different time.

Without a doubt, these last words of Christ were purposeful and intentional for the unbelieving Jews of Jesus' day. When they were written and for us now as modern day Christians.

[2:15] Now although none of the concepts we see in our verses today are new to John's Gospel. We should nonetheless pay careful attention to what the Holy Spirit inspired John to include in this brief summary.

As these verses include the most critical thing we've seen so far. And so as I studied this text, I felt like the main idea that John was trying to emphasize in these verses is why Jesus came to earth.

Why Jesus came to earth. Why Jesus came to earth.

Number three, Jesus came to speak God's words. Ultimately, I trust that God might use this text and these points in each of our hearts and minds today.

That we might choose to live like we know why Christ came to earth this Christmas and beyond.

That's our goal statement.

[3:41] That each of us might glorify God with this knowledge and what we think, say, and do. Please pray with me.

Please pray with me. I'll take you again. God, would you soften and open our hearts and minds. Renew and reestablish yourself.

God's king of our hearts and lives. Maybe even for the first time ever. God, speak to each of us and grow our affections for you today.

Through the teaching of your word and the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. But why did Jesus come? Jesus came to show us God.

Let's read verses 44 and 45. And Jesus cried out and said, Whoever believes in me, believes not in me, but in him who sent me.

[4:40] And whoever sees me, sees him who sent me. So on these slides, I'm going to have little points like this. Just kind of an easy way to follow along.

Kind of sub points. Jesus cried out. The first thing that John mentions in his final address of Jesus is the way in which he spoke.

Jesus cried out. The Greek word for cried out, I found, not that I really know Greek, I found this out, means a loud cry or utterance. A strong word expressing deep emotion.

This type of speaking catches the ear and attention of the listener. It says that Jesus is saying, pay special attention to this. This type of utterance was timely for the crowds listening to Jesus speak. After three years of ministry and countless public addresses to the Jews, showing them he is their long-awaited Messiah. This is his final notice.

[5:44] So their paying attention to these words was essential. Sadly, many to whom Jesus came to save ignored his teaching and were too scared to confess it as truth.

At last week's, which we saw last week's, is the passage. These words are important. They were for John and the early Christian readers, and they're for us too, for you and I as we're in.

So what is Jesus' final message before the cross? Here's what he says. Whoever believes. Jesus' first words are whoever believes.

And these words should remind us of two things. First, that Christ came, that mankind might believe. Not acknowledge. Not just acknowledge. But believe.

And number two, that this belief is intended for all and any who might choose. Remember the key verse of John, John 20, 31. These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

[6:49] And that by believing you may have life in his name. The you in this verse is far-reaching. And any who read the text of Scripture are accountable for the words written in it.

But ultimately, Jesus has made it a goal in his earthly ministry that those who listen or read his word would not simply acknowledge them, but believe and receive them. But who is this belief in?

Certainly in Christ the Messiah. But also by association with God. If you've seen me, you've seen God, Jesus says. Jesus is God in the flesh.

God incarnate. As the Christmas song declares what we say. Veiled in flesh that God had seen. Hail the incarnate deity. So belief in Jesus means belief in God.

And this truth is central to Christianity. In the Bible's doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus being God is not a new idea in John's Gospel. It's also been seen clearly in John 10, 30.

[7:58] When Jesus states, I and the Father are one. And in John 8, 19, as Jesus says, you know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.

Charles Spurgeon commented, Christ is seeable. God is not. But when we see the Christ, we do virtually see all of God that we may desire to see.

The visible hath made himself visible in Christ. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. So Jesus shows us God.

In who he is, but also in what he said and did. Jesus did the works of God and spoke the words of God. John 10, 32 says, Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works of the Father. From the Father. And again in verse 37 and 38. If I'm not doing the works of my Father, then don't believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works.

[9:02] That you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. When a person looks at Christ, they see the very nature of God.

The very words of God himself. Christ is the revelation of God who came to earth to reveal God. God used Christ to reveal to us what he's like.

He gave us a glimpse of himself. Which is amazing. What he thinks. How he operates. What actions and thoughts he deems appropriate. And what his will is.

John 6, 38 says, I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him he sent me. John 8, 29. And he who sent me is with me.

He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. To our first point, he's his name to show us God. So what can we do with this information?

[10:00] How do we use it in everyday living as Christians? I think one of the big ways is that we get to know God by getting to know Jesus.

Jesus is the image of God whom God himself sent to show us himself. To show us. God. His words contain God's message for us.

Right? So study him. Think about him. Walk with him. Talk to him. Daily. I wonder if sometimes we're not excited about Jesus because we're not excited about what God has done.

Maybe we fail to appreciate the gravity of our sin and the tremendous grace we've been shown. By God sending Jesus as our rescuer.

Maybe we fail to see that we need to be rescued. We often think little of God because we think little of our sin.

[11:12] I think the more we look at Christ in God's word, the more we come to appreciate the chasm that our sin was created between us and God that Christ has come to repair.

So get to know God by getting to know Jesus. I think another way is to imitate Jesus. This is what we can do with his idea that Jesus came to show us God.

Imitate Jesus. His actions display God's desire for how we are called to live. Right? We have the answer. We've got it. In God's word.

And he's shown us what's pleasing to God. It's clear in scripture. Ephesians 5, 1 and 2 says, Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children. Paul wrote that in Ephesians.

The apostle Paul. He is a great man to imitate. He even says, Imitate me in as much as I imitate Christ. Paraphrasing. So also, there should be people in your life, and I hope even in this church, that you seek to imitate.

[12:29] And how they walk in righteousness. And how they pursue Christ. How they encourage and interact with others. How they care for their family and friends.

Imagine if Shoran was a church that actually tried to, as Paul charged the Corinthians, imitate others and how others imitated Christ. What would our church look like?

I also want to say, that you can't live in isolation. You can't live in isolation. So seek out Christians here, at this church.

Get to know them. Learn from them. Allow them to learn from you. There aren't members of the body of Christ without gifts. Just members who aren't using their gifts to build up God's church. Are you using your gifts? You've got them. You need help trying to figure out what those are. I'd love to talk about that. You can figure those out.

[13:35] Don't live in isolation. Imitate Christ. So Jesus came to show us God.

So church, do something about this. I implore you to live like you've seen God in Christ and live like you've heard His words and seen His actions in Christ. And do so that the church around you might imitate you and you imitate them.

All for God's glory and the edification of His church. Let's move on to verses 46 and 47, which contain our second point today. Jesus came to save God's world.

Jesus came to save God's world. Verse 46 says, I've come into this world as a light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him.

For I have not come to judge the world, but save the world. God brings those who place their faith and trust in Him from a spiritual domain of darkness to one of light.

[14:42] In Genesis, God made the earth and animals and people and said everything was. He said everything was. Good. Only light existed. Because only good existed.

But where has this darkness come from? The light was split in two when Adam and Eve chose their own self-interest, darkness, over God's light in the garden.

And since then, God's perfect, original, good world contains both spiritual darkness and spiritual light. So here in verse 36, we see God sending Jesus, who is light, into the dark world.

He's done something to remedy the darkness. That mankind, you and I, the pinnacle of His creation, has caused the darkness to intrude on the light.

So Christ brings us the opportunity to move from darkness back to light. That was prophesied by the Messiah in Isaiah 19, in the most familiar passage, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

[15:52] On those living in the land of deep darkness, the light has dawned. So John paints this picture of dark and light earlier, also in his Gospel 3, 19-21.

He says, And this is the judgment. The light's coming to the world. People have loved the darkness rather than the light because of their works with evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light.

It does not come to the light unless his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light. So God's remedy to the darkness we've created isn't simply by eliminating sin, darkness, right?

If you walk into a dark room, you can't make it light by getting rid of the darkness, right? There's no way to do that. You have to expose the darkness, the light. He did this by redeeming the dark through the light, sending Christ the light.

Christ the light that we would have our sins forgiven and find salvation in Him. We see this in John 8, 12. I am the light of the world, right? He comes to a dark world by being light.

[16:58] He who follows me will not walk in darkness. We'll have a light of light. Also, Colossians 1, 12-14. Giving thanks to the Father, Paul says, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints of light.

He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. We have redemption. We'll give Him some sins. Verse 46 says, I've come into the world as light, and whoever believes in Him may not remain in darkness.

So Jesus came as light in the darkness, and He has also come not to judge, but to save. So what does Jesus mean here? One theologian said, He means that the primary purpose of His first coming was not to judge the world, but provide for the world's salvation through substitutionary death on the cross.

But as we read in John 3, 18, 21, a few moments ago, the concept of judgment is implicit in Jesus' coming. Because the light divides people into those who come to it and those who hide from it. Christ's second coming will be for judgment, as the book of Revelation makes clear. He just came to earth not to condemn through judgment, but to bring life through belief for those who trust in Him.

[18:20] So why did Jesus come, point two, to save God's world? Okay, so what? What do we do about this? We need to choose to walk in light, not darkness, which we've been rescued from.

So each day, I think, we have two things. We have a tendency, and we have a need. Each day. Our tendency is to drift into darkness.

Right? This is mankind's struggle throughout history. Sin. Darkness. And I think this can be intentional or unintentional. And here's a really imperfect illustration that I hope is helpful.

So unintentionally drifting in the darkness, long periods of driving on the road, and Jerry Koba, who just read, probably knows what this is like as he took his RV, his recreational vehicle, I think that's what it stands for, and traveled the long distance over the course of a month.

He did stop in between that month. He didn't drive straight. But Jerry would know what this is like. Sometimes we kind of daydream when we drive long distances. And we stop focusing like we ought to if we're driving a shorter distance.

[19:36] And so sometimes, I'm sure Jerry didn't do this, but we tend to kind of slowly drift into another lane. And if you've ever had a co-pilot, a.k.a. wife, or a friend drive next to you, they'll let you know when you've drifted, or maybe the vehicle next to you will let you know.

That's a route. And so it's easy to drift unintentionally. In our hearts, I think inevitably, I drift towards desire and sin.

Because we're human, and we're fallen in nature. We are redeemed, but we still resort to our old ways. And on the road, if you will, of Christian life, it's long, and it's weary, and we can drift. Sometimes unintentionally. But I think we also, our tendency is to drift sometimes intentionally, which I think is neglect. And so, like a tire that's slowly leaking, that you know is there, but if you allow it to keep leaking without fixing it, you're neglecting the problem.

Then you say, and this is from me, I hate them screaming, those little caps. It hurts my hands. It's too cold to fill up my tire.

[20:56] I don't have the time. I don't know which gas they should go to. Those are excuses. So, inevitably, drifting will happen. And making choices, set us up, making choices like neglect, set us up for failure.

And so, the longer you let your tire leak, air, the harder it is to keep in the correct lane. Spiritually speaking, the more you neglect, the more you will drift into darkness and sin.

And the harder and more conscious it has to be to hold yourself out. So, we have a tendency to drift. And so, I think we have a need to, and it's the need to run towards the light.

The laser pointer, once per sermon. The need to run towards the light. So, that means exposing and acknowledging the deeds of darkness.

Right? And this has to be active. You can't run passively. Okay? Even if you set up your treadmill, if you jump on it, you're going to fall.

[22:08] You can't passively run, even if you try. So, running towards the light prevents unintentional drifting because we're focusing on what we're doing.

We're being diligent, right? So, that's the unintentional drifting. We're staying focused. It also improves, running towards the light improves intentional neglect.

Like, with a car, checking your tire pressure regularly corrects imbalances from occurring. And, instead of neglecting our spiritual state, despite obvious signs.

Right? So, driving with your wheel all cattywhompous like this. Right? So, instead of like this, when your tire's leaking, you kind of have to drive like this.

So, running towards the light prevents us from having these neglectful indulgences in sin and darkness.

[23:16] So, notice your tendency to drift to darkness and know your need to run towards the light. to avoid unintentional and intentional sin.

So, great. Well, how do we do that? How do we run towards the light? So, get into the word of God. And, I wrote, early and often, and I think there's great value in getting into the word of God in the morning.

Well, maybe you work night shifts, and so you work overnight, or you work evening shifts. It doesn't matter. Okay? Get into God's word when your day begins, whenever that is, right? And it doesn't have to be, you know, an hour and 45 minutes with a notepad and all these books and resources. It could be a few minutes, right? But that's when you lay the groundwork for your day. And maybe it's people, maybe like moms, or people that have a lot going on, or maybe you work a really stressful, difficult job, and you wake up at 2 a.m., and you have to be at work at 2 a.m.

and say you've got no time to read your Bible. I don't think that's true. But, if you're really jammed, and you don't have a lot of time, or feel like you don't have a lot of time, grab one verse, and take it with you.

[24:31] Use it to fight against sin. Cling to that word. Of course, I would encourage you to spend more time if you have it, or make more time.

But even if it's a few minutes of something you can grab or write down or take a screenshot of to memorize, take God's word with you. Get in the word early and get in the word often.

We've got to fight against sin, right? And it's hard. Right? That's why I said run towards the light, not casually walk. I know running is not easy. But the interesting thing about running is that it gets easier the more we do it.

Galatians 5.1 says, for freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of stolen money.

So how else do we run into the light? We allow other Christians into our life, right? And that can be scary for some people. That makes you vulnerable.

[25:41] And this is what we would call accountability. This is much harder than running. It's hard to appreciate how dark a place is until you turn a bright light on.

And I wonder if sometimes we get stuck in complacency, right? In living in darkness, in allowing ourselves to drift. Because we don't have the light around us. Specifically, in this case, the light that others may shine into our lives, into our darkness.

So you can't be a Christian and neglect being part of God's church and God's Christian community. And you can't say you're a Christian and neglect God's word from the Bible.

That doesn't exist, right? These are our sources of light that we see. So also, another application point for Christ came to save God's world is, we've got to point people to Christ's mission to save, not judge.

And I think a lot of people, a lot of people who I've heard or talked to, get caught up, people opposed to Christ, get caught up thinking that Jesus came just to point out people's errors. And church is just for rule following.

[26:56] Well, I would not be here if church was just for rule following and that's what Christianity was. And they point out that religion has divided society. And this is not the case.

this is not the case. Although many will feel judged by Christ, this is oftentimes a feeling of guilt or shame about how they've been living. Because they realize that there's more to life than how they're living it.

And this should lead to repentance, right? Which means a turning and a changing. And they're drawing near to God. Not distancing themselves from God. God. So be intentional church.

And help people work through that. Because after all, Jesus came to save God's world. This is our last comment for today. Why did Jesus come to earth?

He came to speak God's words. He came to speak God's words. Our third and final point. Let's look at our text. Verse 40 through 50. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge.

[27:59] The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father has sent me, has himself given me a commandment. What to say, what to speak, and I know that his commandment is eternal life.

What I say, therefore I say, as the Father has told me. Our third and final point. We'll look at two components concerning Jesus speaking God's word.

First, his authority to speak God's words, and second, what type of words he spoke. Words from the Father, Jesus the prophet.

Despite how angry the leader, the religious leaders, right, in these texts, he came after hearing Jesus' words, he reminds them in verse 39 that the words he spoke were from God, his Father, not words that he thought of on his own.

So not only were the words he said and spoke commanded or directed to him by God, but he also spoke to him through the authority of God, his Father. But Christ had the credentials, right?

[29:05] Credentials. And he ought to have not been ignored when he had to say. And do you see the tragic irony here? The Jews, doing this final notice, seeing our verse today's attendance, placed a really high importance on the Old Testament prophets.

the messengers from God who pointed forward in time to the Messiah, their rescuer. Just like the Old Testament prophets, Christ came speaking with authority in the words of Yahweh.

But unlike these prophets, most of the religious leaders discounted his words. They discounted his words.

but unlike, sorry, he discounted the words of the messenger, the greatest prophet, who doesn't just communicate God's will like the prophets before him.

No, Jesus is the very word of God, and God's ultimate revelation of himself. Now, Messiah, the culmination of the entire Old Testament scripture, is right before your eyes, and he discounted the word from God today.

[30:16] Jesus came with authority in the Lord. So we'll look now at the type of words Jesus spoke.

So there's two types from the Father, judgment and life. Wait, Matt, you might be saying, I thought Jesus got done saying, I didn't come to judge. That's correct.

His mission was not to judge. That's the mission behind the second coming. But all who read and hear the words of Christ are accountable for them. These words will be used as evidence either for or against all the kind of last day.

So Jesus came to reveal God's message to humanity that each and every human must make a choice to receive or reject the words of God's messenger. Words of judgment, rejecting Christ's words being condemnation.

All humans are born into the pathway that leads to condemnation destined for hell and separation from God from the beginning. And each person has a chance to be able to be rescued, to be saved from that path and placed unto the path that leads to eternal life.

[31:37] There are only two choices, friends. Reject the gift and remain where you are or accept Christ's gift and be taken off the path to death.

What does it mean as we see in verse 48 to reject Christ's words? Reject here is a present tense verb indicating not a one-time rejection but a repetitive rejection of Christ's words.

It means to nullify or set aside. This rejection can be done either passively or actively but regardless, rejection brings self-condemnation or self-sentencing.

Salvation comes through the words of God that we see in the Bible and these words contain the gospel and good news message of salvation offered by God himself and the response of men to the word will be the basis on which they are judged.

Hear these words, friends. As theologian Warren Wiersbe says so well, the written word points to the living word, Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ points to the Father.

[32:49] So rejecting Christ's words means rejecting the ability to be taken from the path leading to condemnation to the path to condemnation and certain judgment.

The fate for those who do not receive but reject Christ's words. That Christ's worth is permanent eternal separation from God in hell for eternity.

But there's hope. Each person is given the chance to accept or receive Christ's words of eternal life. Accepting Christ's words means eternal life.

verse 50 said, and I know his commandment is eternal life. What I say herefore I say as the Father has told me. eternal life. What is eternal life?

It's a mistake, one commentary says, to you eternal life as simply an unending progression of years, which many of us Christians often think. A common New Testament word for eternal carries the idea of quality as well as quantity.

[33:59] In fact, eternal life has less to do with years than we typically think, as it is independent of time. time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time as well as within time.

For this reason, eternal life can be thought of as something that Christians experience now.

Believers don't have to wait for eternal life to start. Because it's not something that starts when they die.

Rather, eternal life begins the moment a person exercises faith in Christ. This is our current possession. We see this clearly in John 6, 47.

Truly, truly, I say to you, Christ says, he who believes has eternal life. This word has is in the present tense, meaning it is a quality of life not simply experienced in the future, but now.

It is a timeless quality of life that God starts today, offers today. And I don't know about you, but that's a life that I want.

[35:02] Is that a life that you want? Imagine what type of life that the author and the creator of life has reserved for those who trust in him.

There are no limits, friends, to the quality and pleasure and abundance of life that God himself offers to those who trust in Christ.

Jesus said in John 10, 10, I came that they may have life and have it mediocre. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Thanks for correcting me there, everybody. Have it abundantly, Christ said. Why did Jesus come? He came to speak of words.

Christ's words are the words of self, are words of self condemnation and judgment to those who do not receive their truth or they are words of abundant life designed by God for us to experience.

[36:07] So in closing, the last application, God's words for mankind spoken by Jesus ought to change the way we live. How?

Well, first you got to make a choice. We have words of judgment and words of eternal life. You must make a choice, friend. I'm talking to you in this room.

What will you do with these words? Christ has spoken the exact words that God chose for you and I to hear. There's no mistake. There's no mess ups. There's no slip ups.

These words contain the truth and reality of God's use to convey his message for mankind. choose life or choose death. Each human is responsible for what they've heard.

All right? It's not your parents' responsibility. responsibility. It's not your neighbors or friends or spouses or pastors' responsibility. You are the one responsible.

[37:06] God's word spoken by Christ will bring you and I into judgment on the last day. As our text says, will your verdict be separation from God or eternity with him?

And if you don't know the answer to this question, seriously, please, please talk to me after this service and I'd love to walk with you through what it means to receive Christ and become a child of God by God's grace through faith, trusting in Christ's death on the cross, dying the death you deserve and resurrecting from the grave, offering you new life.

I'm going to talk about that. The shoreline, what do you do with God's words? Right? They give eternal life and they also are here to direct and sustain our life now.

They start already. So what do you do with these words? Does what you do confirm your belief or falsify it? Do you avoid them?

God's words. Do you brush them off because they're too strict or too conceptual? than they are practical or because they keep you from enjoying sinful indulgences, right?

[38:26] Or things that you deserve. You've earned this. You deserve this. Or maybe they're too outdated or too countercultural and exclusive for your taste.

And we've got to take words of Christ. Take the words of Christ seriously and understand the repercussions of rejecting them. We're accountable for these words. We've got to steward them, church.

Don't avoid Christ's words. And finally, do you cherish these words? Do they inform the way you live? Do you take time to memorize scripture, to have it on the tip of your tongue in the front of your mind?

Right? To be careful not to drift into sin and darkness. Do God's words bring abundant, overflowing life to you?

And if you're like, I don't even know what that means, then the answer is probably not. And I'd love to talk about that more. Abundant life, John 10%.

[39:31] Do you cling to Christ's promises in hardships and trial and in sadness and grief? Or in joy and happiness?

When things are going well, when we tend to steal away the worship that is Christ's for our idols, we'll seem to be making us happy.

Culturally, I think there's a competition for whose information we will take in and allow to inform and shape our thinking and our actions, right? There's this constant information overload.

Whose words do you choose to take in and listen to a word by? So Jesus came in closing to speak God's words.

a message of salvation in the term of life to us. So I beg you to live like it. Choose to live like you know why Christ came.

[40:32] That was a whole statement. If you don't know how, I'd love to help you. Because that's why church elders are here. For your spiritual growth and flourishing.

And I'll admit that we don't do this perfectly. But it's certainly our desire. So friends, this Christmas and into next year, choose to live like you know why Jesus came.

Choose to live like Jesus came to show us God, to save God's world, and to speak God's word. And would sure I'd be a church that clings to our Messiah, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us.

God's gift of eternal life for us, both now on earth and in heaven forevermore. For God's glory and for our good. Amen. Amen. We pray with me.

Lord God, would you use these words to soften and open our hearts and mind to renew and reestablish yourself as king of our hearts and lives, maybe for the first time ever.

[41:52] God, use these words in your teaching to speak to each of us and grow our affections for you. God, let us speak for your glory and for our good. Amen.

Amen.