

Him Who Sent Me

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[0 : 00] If you could turn your Bibles to that passage from John chapter 12, page 102 of the few Bibles. We'll be looking at those verses on the bottom of the left column, verse 44 and following.

These Baptism Sundays, when we welcome new members into our family, they're wonderful days for us as a church family, are they not? It is such a joy to welcome Jennifer as she symbolically begins her Christian journey, her membership in this family, as well as Winton and Ella and their families.

And we're going to journey together now, all of us. We're all one family, and we promise to support them. And we're going to walk together on a journey.

That is our journey with Christ. And of course, the one thing that we all have in common, and it is this most wonderful thing, is a thing, really, it's a person, Jesus Christ.

It is our faith in Him. That is what unites us. He is our center. Because we have all received Him as our Savior. And we pray that Winton and Ella will grow up in that faith, so that one day they will choose Him freely of themselves.

[1 : 12] And so on a day when we think about our life together as a family, gathered around Jesus, it's so right as we come to the end of John chapter 12, we have these verses from Jesus. Because here Jesus is withdrawing now from the public scene.

He's about to go off and go into an upper room and talk with His disciples for a number of chapters, and then He's going to go to the cross. And so, in these final public words of His, He calls out for us to believe in Him.

To believe in Him, our Savior. So although we are right now still celebrating the weeks of Easter, in this passage, the cross is still often the future, but it's very much in view, as Jesus really summarizes His message, and calls us to Himself.

And as He calls us to Himself, I want to draw out just three implications of that. And they are that we regard, we respond, and we receive.

First of all, we regard. Verses 44 to 46 I'm looking at here. And that is to say, that we regard Jesus for who He is, for who He says He is, for whom He reveals Himself to us to be.

[2 : 27] In last week's passage, what we saw was that the religious leaders around Jesus in His time would not receive Him as the Messiah sent by God as the Savior, despite all of the miracles that He was performing.

All of these miracles were like flashing signs that said, Messiah, Messiah, Messiah. And yet their hearts were hardened, and they would not accept Him as the Messiah.

That's really what it means, isn't it, to believe in Jesus. You know, He's a historical figure. But He reveals Himself to us as the Messiah. See, and that's what He's doing.

The implications of that are very important. Look with me at verse 44. He says, He who believes in Me, so who receives Jesus as the Messiah, a Savior, believes not in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me, sees Him who sent Me. Isn't that the most wonderful thing that Jesus is teaching us? Look how closely He identifies Himself with God the Father.

[3 : 31] It's a teaching that runs through John's Gospel. That He and God the Father are one. That they are so utterly and completely one. That when you put your trust in Jesus, you are putting your trust in God.

You see, if it is true, as John's Gospel says, that Jesus is, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. If it is true that He is God's Word made flesh, then when you are putting your trust in Jesus, you are putting your trust in God.

He is no less than God. If it is true what Jesus says, the Father and I are one, then to believe in Jesus is to believe in God. To reach out to Him is to reach out to God.

He is saying that He Himself is God and He has come from God. He is the way to God. He has come to show us how we can be saved from our sin and give us life.

It's life He offers us. He is God graciously, lovingly, revealing Himself to us. It's not what He means when He talks about Himself as the light of the world. In verse 46, I have come as light into the world that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

[4 : 43] That Jennifer was talking about in her testimony. It's not loving and wonderful that He enters into the darkness of our lives. He enters into the darkness of the world not to condemn us, but to free us, to show us the way out.

And that's why Jesus is so wonderful, so unprecedented, so unparalleled. And He invites us to live with Him. Today, just as then, we all need to regard Jesus for who He is, for who He presents Himself to be.

Because Jesus is a figure who has much hijacked down the centuries, and that can be very confusing to us. People say all sorts of different things about Jesus. For some, He is more of a hippie figure, you know, with the long hair and the sandals and the beard and the peace and love message.

Still kind of back to the 16th and 17th. Jesus makes a good hippie. For others, Jesus makes a great stained glass window who comforts us and puts us at ease in a Victorian way, but perhaps doesn't challenge us in our lives.

But none of that really has anything to do with what Jesus says about Himself. He comes from God and is Himself God. And He calls us to live lives with Him.

[6 : 00] He calls us into relationship with Him. And it's a glorious and loving thing. We need to regard Jesus for who He is. And as we journey through our Christian lives, we don't need to be concerned about what other people say about Him.

We don't need to fall into confusion. We just need to turn back to what the Bible says, to what Jesus says, to the red bits in the Bible. Yeah. That's right.

We turn back to that. Because this is who He is. He is the Divine Son of God. He who believes in Me believes not in Me, but in Him who sent Me. It's glorious.

We regard Him for who He is. And secondly, we respond to Him. One of the things I am trying to convey to my children is that I am to be obeyed.

And when I speak, I expect an immediate and compliant response. And I am sure you all realize I am just a great big teddy bear and my children know how to work me over already.

[7 : 02] The doctors tell me that my son is going to be probably six feet, four inches tall. And I am not six feet, four inches tall. And so I am very nervous about when he is about 13 years old.

The other day, I was trying to impress my wishes upon my children. And my daughter said to me, You aren't the boss. Jesus is the boss. I was at a loss for words.

And I thought I better have a chat with that Sunday school. But you know, in a way, she is right, isn't she? Because sometimes we forget, you know, Jesus is our Savior.

And He wants to be our friend. And we are to love Him and worship Him and spend our lives with Him. and enjoy our life with Him. But He also brings us His Word.

And His Word needs to be obeyed. His Word needs to be responded to. Yes, Jesus' miracles, His signs, stand as witness to His identity.

[8 : 02] But so do His Word to us stands witness to Him eternally and unchanging. That's why He says, If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him.

For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings has a judge. The Word that I have spoken will be His judge on the last day. And you see, He just sets up a relationship here, doesn't He? An authority and a response. And He puts us in relationship to His Word, to what He has given us. We respond to Him.

We orient our lives around Him. Because in Jesus' teaching about Himself, in His sayings, all the time what Jesus is doing is revealing Himself. Revealing who He is.

Revealing what God's plan is. Speaking about the cross. It's all open communication. And in the Bible, His sayings, His Word is written down and recorded for us and transmitted to us down the ages.

[9 : 04] And of course, the whole of the Bible is God's Word revealed to us, given to us. And of course, because that's there for us, this teaching, God's Word, stands before us and compels us to choose.

Compels us to put our lives in relation to that Word. And of course, we do struggle with His Word. We struggle with it, don't we? As we come to grips with His Word, as we find out more about what Jesus is saying, sometimes we struggle with that.

And that's good. But in the end, each one of us stands in relationship to God's Word and God's Word doesn't stand in relationship to us.

And clever theologians try to make it very complicated. People will say to you, well, we don't quite know and it's not reliable and we're not sure and it was so long ago and who can be certain? And that's very confusing, isn't it?

We can get confused about His Word in this very confusing world. But Jesus here wonderfully and lovingly gives us certainty. He cuts through the confusion and He appeals to us all with His teaching, with His Word.

[10:12] And His Word stands. And so we don't really need anything more than the Bible. We want to figure out this Christian thing and we want to carry on our Christian journey.

We want to know the truth about Jesus and who He is and what He has done. We just need to turn back to God's Word and see what Jesus says about Himself. See what the Bible is saying about Him.

And you see that word is authoritative because if it is true that Jesus comes from God and is one with God then it follows in verse 49 For I have not spoken on my own authority the Father who sent me has Himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak and I know that His commandment is eternal life.

What I say therefore I say is the Father has bidden me. Is that not absolute trustworthiness and certainty? Do you see that what He is saying doesn't come from any human source.

It's not somebody that's trendy. It comes from God. There is an authority there. Jesus has spoken exactly what God has told Him to say. Jesus has done exactly what God has told Him to do.

[11:19] And when Jesus spoke and when Jesus acted He acted with that complete authority. And that is why Jesus alone is completely to be trusted.

It's a bit like flying on a 747 over at the Atlantic. One time I was sitting in the middle seat of a 747 flying over at the Atlantic in severe turbulence and I was terrified.

And the flight in the hands had to be asked to sit down and we were jolting away and the worst thing of it all was that the drinks card had just come to the row right before mine when the captain told them to sit down. So I had to sit there and be terrified and not have a drink at the same time.

It was very long. And anyways after about half an hour of this we were jolting away and of course you can't see anything in the middle of the planes you don't know if you're practically going to crash into a mountain or what.

The pilot came over and just said look I'm very sorry but we can't fly out of this turbulence because the airspace above us is occupied. And then I felt a little better about that because I thought well I'm glad he didn't actually fly out of the airspace.

[12:21] You see the captain was doing exactly what air traffic control told him to do for our safety. And we really need that don't we when 747s are flying over the Atlantic. We do want the captains to obey air traffic control.

And it's like that you see with Jesus. Jesus is doing and saying only what God has told him to do and say. His whole ministry is conducted with complete obedience and so we can trust him.

We can trust every word he says. Everything he does resonates with the authority of God. And when he went to the cross he was being obedient to God. God's word to us the whole of the Bible we hold that up on high because it is his word to us.

And because it is God's word it is trustworthy and it is true. It isn't subject to change. It does not go out of fashion. It is not superseded by some later knowledge. It is not the product of one moment in history.

It transcends history. It's a bit like wearing a German suit. I buy all my suits in Germany because my wife is German and we go there. I am wearing a German suit today. You can see it afterwards. And I always say I love wearing German clothes because they never go in or out of fashion.

[13:39] You can see later. And you see it is like that with Jesus. His teaching his word to us is not the product of time or place. It isn't a reflection of a culture.

His teaching is not a snapshot of moral or spiritual ideas from a moment in history. Jesus' teaching is not part of a larger story about how men and women have related to the God of the universe of

interest to us today but not necessarily what we believe now.

No, the teaching of Jesus is God's word to us. The Bible is God's word to us. It comes to us clearly and openly. It is definitive. It is complete.

It can be trusted. And you see that Jesus is equipping us here to get through our Christian lives together. We don't need to be dogmatic or close-minded or simplistic.

It is wonderful to tear into the Bible and study it. It is gripping on wonderful stuff. But it is always very sad in the church when we take authority over the Bible rather than bowing ourselves down before the throne of grace.

[14 : 47] And bringing our lives under his word. Because there is freedom. There is something we can trust for the whole of our lives.

It is God's word and he compels us to respond. And finally, with this I am going to close, we receive. Because with such love and tenderness Jesus says, and I know that his commandment is eternal life.

I have come to save the world. Because in the end that is what it is all about. That is the gospel. That Jesus has come to save the world. With his cross in view.

He says, I have come to save the world. That is what his cross is about. It is on that cross. He offered his life as the one sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He did as God commanded him. And it is eternal life that Jesus has achieved for us on his cross and in his resurrection. And he calls us all. Jennifer, Ella, and Winton, and every one of us here today to receive eternal life.

[15 : 57] And the posture of every Christian before God is that we come before the cross of Jesus, our hands held out in surrender. We come to that place of judgment aware of our sins.

And there we find mercy and life everlasting. He calls us to himself. We regard him the Son of God. We respond to him.

But above all, whoever we are today, whoever on your journey, whatever you might have done, whatever fears our doubts or joys, we receive eternal life.

He calls us to himself in love. Amen.