

So Loved - John 3:16-21

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[0:00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast.! I will walk by faith and not by sight.

What a blessing, man, to come into the Lord's presence with thanksgiving and just courts with praise. Amen. Amen. And turn your Bibles to John chapter 3, as we will potentially, Lord willing, get through verses 16 through 21.

We'll finish Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus this week. You know, I don't know if you've heard this saying. I've heard it ever since I was a kid growing up in the church. It's a lot of times said about scripture or specifically about the gospel of John.

The gospel of John is shallow enough for a child to wade in, but deep enough for an elephant to swim in. And in studying through this portion of John, I have felt that so much.

Just like, Lord, I feel like there's so much here. There's so many different directions we could go. I mean, John 3, 16, we could spend a month on that, but we won't. But there's so much there.

[1:37] It's so rich. It's so deep. But then it's like, but Lord, what do you want to speak to us through this? And I'm reminded of how John, what he wrote in John chapter 20, at the end of the book, in verse 31, he says, These things are written that you might believe.

That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name. So, man, when we leave today, I had to take this course through work, like a management course. And it was like, after a talk, it's not what you want people to remember, but what you want them to do. So as we leave, what do we want to do? Man, we want to leave here and say, I believe. I believe in my faith has been strengthened going through this section of scripture.

Is it familiar? Yes. Is it going to be all brand new stuff? Well, no, because it's the same. It's the same thing. But every time we come to it, it's fresh and it's alive. So praise God for that.

Lord willing, we will see in this section of scripture, God's heart for us. I'm sure we will. So last week we got through verse 14. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

[2:48] And we went back to Numbers 21. And we saw that there in Numbers 21, the serpents came into the camp and the serpents bite and its venom brought death and God provided a cure.

And the cure was simply to look, to look to the judgment that was upon the pole. In verse 15 of John chapter 3, that whosoever believes in him, whoever would look, would not perish, but have eternal life.

And the crazy thing is God did not remove the serpent. When they prayed, Israel prayed and said, please take away the serpents. He didn't remove the serpent, but he gave a cure, a cure which they could look to over and over and over.

And so as we've been going through John, we've seen how Nicodemus has come and he's kind of stated to Jesus. He said, well, Jesus, you're just like me. We're both men of God. We're both men from God. We both do God things.

And Jesus said, well, Nicodemus, you need transformation. You need something more than you have as just a man of God and from God and chosen by God as the nation of Israel, as a people, God's people.

[3:50] And Nicodemus makes that statement that we all know how can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter again into his mother's womb? Can I redo this? Can I undo this? Can I start over? What's the difference?

I'm going to still end up old Nicodemus. No matter how many times over we do this, sin is still present. And so Jesus explained that transformation is apart from sin. And last week we saw that it was possible. It was attainable because Nicodemus says, how is this so? And so this week we're going to ask two questions.

We see it's possible. We see it's so we see it's attainable. But why? Why would God, why would God go to all of this trouble for a bunch of snake bit people?

Why? Well, we're going to see that because he's so loved as we just sang about. So let's pray. Father, before we even get into this scripture, Lord, we're sitting here.

[4:47] All of us, I believe, because we know that you have so loved us. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you for the love that you displayed so perfectly from the Father. Thank you, Father, for giving us your Son who would forgive us of our sin.

Thank you for the word that edifies and strengthens us and brings life and allows us to go out into the world and say, hey, I believe and so can you. We pray that, Lord, through this text today that we would see and understand your heart.

We wouldn't get too lost in the depth. But, Lord, that that depth would just remind us of how deep you are and how deep your love is for us. We thank you. We praise you. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. So, as we jump into this, you know, I just quoted John 20, 31. These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you might have life through his name.

And as we approach the Gospels many times, I, growing up in the church and growing up as a kid in a Christian home, I thought, well, it's Jesus. It's all to the church.

[5:50] That's what it's all about. It's about Jesus. And it is. And it is. Many of the things he's writing, we apply to ourselves, and they are truths and principles that we hold on to and hold dear. But we need to remember, Jesus, his conversation with Nicodemus was not centered around Nicodemus' need for salvation.

He didn't come and say, Nicodemus, you need to be saved from your sin. His conversation centered around Nicodemus' need to enter God's kingdom. He said, hey, Nicodemus, you need to be a part of this kingdom.

Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, in John 3, 3, he cannot see the kingdom of God. In Mark chapter 1, Mark starts off just with the ministry of John the Baptist.

John here gives us accounts of Jesus in his ministry, some of the very first accounts we have after his birth, when Jesus first comes into his ministry. So when you look at like a harmony of the gospel, you look at the chronological order, a lot of what we're reading about now in John with Jesus are the first things in his ministry.

We're going to see next week, very appropriately, we're going to be talking about baptism. As we go back, the narrative shifts back.

[7:03] The focus shifts back to John the Baptist. And John will, after this time, be put in prison and then eventually beheaded. But in Mark chapter 1, it tells us this about Jesus.

It says that after John was put in prison, so after the events we're reading about here, Jesus then comes into Galilee and preaches the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent you and believe the gospel. This would be accounts that John, the gospel of John, does not give us. His ministry is mainly focuses on Jesus's ministry in Jerusalem and Judea.

The other gospels focus on Jesus's ministry in Galilee. But you read that and you think, okay, he's preaching the gospel. What is the gospel? The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, I delivered unto you that which first of all I received, how that Jesus was died, that he was buried, that he rose again the third day.

That's not the gospel Jesus is speaking of here. The gospel here is just the good news or that God speak. What is he speaking? The good news of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of the reign of Messiah that he is bringing, saying, hey, the gospel of the kingdom is here.

[8:16] We all know this scripture. There's a lot of text up there. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall

be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

How can you read that in a dull voice? It's like, man, it just gets you. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, to establish it with judgment, with justice from henceforth, even forever.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. Did that happen? Literally, historically? Yes. So the rest will happen. Then why? Why does Jesus then, who's coming and preaching the gospel of the kingdom in Mark, who's telling Nicodemus, you must be born again to enter the kingdom, he stands before Pilate in John 18 and says, my kingdom's not of this world.

If it was of this world, then my servants would fight for me. But now is my kingdom not from hence. Why is he saying that? What is he talking about? Will Christ set up a kingdom on this earth?

Yes, he will. He will return to set up a physical kingdom on this earth. But even at that time, though the kingdom of God will rule at that time over the earth, to be a citizen of the kingdom and to enter the kingdom still needs a spiritual transformation.

[9:39] God's kingdom is still spiritual and for spiritual citizens. When he says to Pilate, my kingdom's not of this world or else would they fight? That's how kingdoms of this world do it.

How do you become a king in this world? You fight. You become the most powerful. Jesus says, my kingdom doesn't originate here. It originates somewhere else. Will it at one day, at one time, will Jesus come and set up his kingdom here?

Yes, he will. But even at that time, the only way to be a part of the kingdom of God, you have to be a spiritual citizen, spiritual transformation. Unfortunately, there will be many, even as we've looked at it in Revelation and Wednesday nights, at the end of the thousand year reign, there'll be many who say, I don't want this.

I don't want to be part of his kingdom. I'd rather go and try and bring it down because I want to have my own kingdom. So what is the problem? Why can't I just enter his kingdom?

Why couldn't Nicodemus? Nicodemus is saying, hey, not only am I chosen people of God, a Jew, I am the teacher in Israel. Like there's nobody else who's passed as many of the you are a righteous person exams as me.

[10:48] Well, the issue that Nicodemus had is the same as all of us. Sin has brought separation from the life of God. It's then only new life that allows fellowship to be restored.

Sin has brought, it doesn't matter what we do or don't do. We all are already in a state of disfellowship because of our sin. So Romans 8, 3, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, the brass serpent upon the pole.

He was not sin, but he was in the likeness of it, declaring for us that judgment has taken place. God sending his own son, the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned it in the flesh to remove that separation.

You know, we think of the moment of our salvation, of being born again, of entering into the kingdom. It's a glorious event. Essentially, when we do baptism, it's almost like celebrating that, right?

It's like you're celebrating your spiritual birthday. Like, man, that's what we're there to do. We're there to celebrate that moment. But that moment is not meant to be the end.

[11:57] It's meant to be the beginning. We are entering into a kingdom, into a way of life, into something we've never had before. 1 John 5, 11 and 12 says, And this is the record that God has given to us eternal life.

And this life is in his son. He that has the son has life. He that has not the son of God has not life. God has given us eternal life in his son.

The gospel of the kingdom, then, it encompasses what we call salvation. Yes, we have to be saved. We have to have spiritual renewal and transformation. What we call salvation, though, our salvation experience, being born again, is simply the process by which we are fitted to take part in the kingdom.

Right? We enter the kingdom through new birth, through spiritual transformation. That then fits me now to take part as a member of the kingdom. That's not the end. That's the beginning of all this.

In John 3, 15, as we ended last week, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life or will have kingdom life. It's not just unending life.

[13:08] It's a quality of life. We have kingdom life now. It's the kingdom of life that's enjoyed. It's the type of life that's enjoyed in eternity. The type of life enjoyed in God's kingdom.

And it's something we can experience now, that we enter into now. Romans 5, 10, for when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son.

There it is. Being reconciled. I've been born again. I've been saved. I've been forgiven. Much more. Being reconciled.

We shall be saved by his life. Am I living that life? Or am I just content with, hey, I made it in. I'm in. And that's the end, right? That's the beginning.

The beginning of something wonderful that will last from now and into eternity and beyond. Why did God go to all that trouble for a bunch of snake bit people?

[14:10] Verse 6, 16. For God so loved. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

How many of you, that was like your first verse ever memorized? Other than like, you know, Jesus wept. I was like, yeah, yeah, I got that one. You sit in Sunday school or, you know, when you're a kid or children's ministry and it's like, can someone recite this verse?

Ooh, I got that one. And someone's like, can someone recite Philippians 3, 13? John 3, 16. I got that one. We all know that one. The majority of our study today will be looking at this verse, but we will get through verse 21.

But I want to kind of break it down. Looking at these different parts. The first is for God so loved. The world. The originator, the initiator is God.

He is the one who starts this. He is the one who brings the initiation of that love. First John 4, 10. Here in his love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation, the payment, the satisfaction, and the fulfillment of our sins.

[15:23] You know, love by definition must have an object. Has to have an object. Love doesn't exist without an object. For God so loved the world that he gave.

Substitute any other word in there. Man, God so loved that he took. God so loved that he felt. God so loved that he... How else do you express love?

Man, I love you so much. Oh, I love you so much. I'm going to let you give me tons of things. Really? Really? I mean, there's a part in there of love.

It goes, there's two ways, but love primarily gives and has to have an object to do that. And who was his object? For God so loved, as Nicodemus thought, his chosen people, the Jews.

For God so loved, really good people. For God so loved, Americans. For God so loved, churchgoers. For God so loved, people go to Calvary Chapel Charlotte.

[16:27] No, God so loved the world, the object of his love. He was in the world and the world was made by him. The world knew him not.

He came unto his own, the Jews, his chosen people, and they received him not. That's who he loves. The word love, agapeo, it means to have a preference for, to prize above all other things, to be unwilling to abandon or do without.

For God so prized you and preferred you above all other things, even as we're going to see his one and only son. He says, I'm unwilling to abandon you.

I'm unwilling to do without you. For God so loved the world. Love without limits and without interruption. God's love never ceases.

It has no point in which it wanes and which it kind of pulls back a little and goes, oh, you're so hard to love right now. And sometimes we are so hard to love. My wife is not hard to love, but she loves me when I'm hard to love.

[17:35] God so loved us. Why? Why would God make transformation possible to the world? Why the whole world? What did they do to deserve this? God is love.

Not just to his chosen people, but to all his created people. Because wherever God is, there is love. If God is love, then wherever God is not, there is not love.

You can call it love. You can slap a label on it. You can say whatever you want it to be. But if it's not God, it's not love. Only where God is, is there love. Guess where God is?

He's in all of his creation. God who is love created this creation. And he didn't create one part of it and go, I don't love that. Nope. Now God's love is a love that's also paired with what?

His justice and his righteousness. So a love that is also just and true and righteous will not allow sin to continue. So what does God love?

[18:36] Satan? Well, God loved the creation he made. He loved Lucifer. You can hear it when you read through the text regarding Lucifer. You, I had set you up. The one, you are over, you know, all of these.

You walk through the fire stones. I don't know what those are. It's one of my favorite things to find out when I'm in eternity after seeing Jesus. What are the fire stones, Lord? I want to know. God loved him.

God doesn't withhold love. Nicodemus, however, he expected love towards the people God chose. Israel. But not to an unchosen world. No way.

God did not choose Israel because they were so wonderful. Right? We think Nicodemus thought, well, of course, God loves me because he chose me.

Because I'm his chosen people, then I have his love. Oh, it's the opposite. God loves, therefore. God loved. That's why he chose. Jesus. It wasn't because he hated the world.

[19:39] It was because he loved the world that he chose Israel. In Genesis 12, when God makes his promise to Abraham and makes that covenant to Abraham, it wasn't just for Abraham.

Now the Lord has said to Abraham, get you out of your country and from your kindred and from your father's house and into a land that I will show you and I will make of you a great nation. He's promised a land. He promises him a nation, a people. And I'll bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing. I'll bless them that bless thee and curse those that curse you. and in you shall all nations of the earth be blessed. Through you, Abraham, will the ability for the world to receive a blessing come. Galatians tells us what part of the Abrahamic covenant and blessings do we get to enjoy?

That part. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham saying, in you shall all nations be blessed.

[20:41] Not in you shall all nations inherit the land. and the promises as a chosen people. But in you, through you, that promise shall go to all of us that all nations shall be blessed.

Nicodemus did not understand that God's chosen people, they also needed God's love expressed to them through salvation. Just because they were his chosen people didn't mean they didn't need God's love expressed to them in the same way through salvation.

For God, so loved, so loved means in this manner God loved. For God loved in this manner. In what way did he love? He gave his only begotten son.

The expression of God's love. And what was that expression? Sacrifice. The first time the word love is used in the Bible. Genesis 22, 2. Abraham taking Isaac up to the mountain.

God comes to him and says, hey, take now your son, Abraham, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and get you into the land of Moriah and offer him there a burnt offering.

[21:44] The first time love is used is in conjunction with a sacrifice of an only son. The expression of God's love.

Begotten means one of a kind. It means the only son or daughter. One of a kind. What did God give? How did God love? In this way, God loved. God gave what could not be replaced.

It was his only one. He couldn't replace that. He gave something that could not be undone and would never be the same again. As we're reading in Revelation, the new heavens and new earth, the lamb is still there.

It's not like, well, that was nice. Now I can put off this whole lamb thing and get back to being. No, Jesus will forever bear scars. The only scars in heaven are going to be on the lamb. For all of eternity, God gave something he couldn't replace, something that would never be the same and that would never be undone.

In this was manifested the love of God towards us because that God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him. And having studied through all this, all I keep coming to is

Lord, how dare I not live through you?

[22:57] You've done all this. Who am I to say, oh, I'm not going to believe. No, I'm not going to live in that life. No. God gave Jesus his one-of-a-kind son.

He gave him to death so Jesus would give his one-of-a-kind life to you and I. Whosoever believes in him.

Here we have the recipients. We have the condition of receiving. Whosoever believes in him. Whosoever believes. Anyone? Anyone?

Just anyone could come into this? Well, it has to be anyone because we all come from the same one. We all come from Adam. We all have the same inherited condition.

You know, if there's a family that in a will and whoever passes away and it's left to all of the family that bear this name and you've got crazy uncle so-and-so that everybody pretends doesn't exist as part of the family, that's him too.

[24:07] You know, I could change my name. I could pretend that I never was a part of the family that I was a part of, but there's nothing I can do because I'm forever genetically linked to them.

Whosoever believes in him, the recipient and the conditions of receiving. Oh, I didn't mean to turn that off. Hebrews 11, 6, for without faith it's impossible to please him for he that comes to God must believe that he is.

That he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Whosoever believes in him, anyone can receive. He said that love gives and it does. Love gives and faith receives.

Love gives, faith receives. The main mode in which they operate. We see that in Matthew 16, 24. We see both of these things, these ideas where Jesus said to his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

Who are those that are going to come after Christ? They received. By faith, they believed. What God has said. But yet, if they come after him, what is it going to do? It's going to cost. Then they, in love, in response to God's love, will have to give.

[25:21] Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. How hard is it to believe? Well, it doesn't require any physical effort.

It's not like something I have to like, you know, I'm going to run in a race and I got to kind of like work up to it or, you know, I want to deadlift 500 pounds. I got to work up to it. It's like, okay, I'm going to believe in Jesus. I think in three months I could probably get there.

You know, believing, it's not something we have to really strive for. It's something we have to accept. It's not something we do. Belief involves receiving. Whenever we believe something, we are essentially receiving what is being given to us by a source.

If you tell me, hey, I'm going to give you my car. All right. If I act upon it, it's because I've received that and I believed it. We only receive from God.

There's nothing we give him. There's nothing we have to give him. Only after we've received, can we then, like I said in Matthew 16, okay, then I can go follow.

[26:23] Now I have something to give. And even that comes from Jesus. We'll see next week, John will say, no man, whatever a man has, he has received from heaven.

There's nothing that we have that's not been received. So to believe in him, what is it to believe? It's simply to recognize that God's love could be expressed in no other way. There's no other way God could express his love than through his son.

I think sometimes we think that, you know, you could have done, it probably would have been better if you did something different, God. You know, I mean, this is a little kind of out there. Sending someone to be crucified and die and rise again and put our faith in him.

Wouldn't it be easier if you just like, you know, maybe had everybody go and listen to a TED talk or something or maybe if they went and they ate certain foods, we're more used to that. Well, that's the problem because it's a spiritual cure that's needed.

And so God needed to do a spiritual work. So to believe in him is recognizing God's love could be expressed in no other way. But if I believe and if I receive that, that I will not perish.

[27:32] The result and intention of God's love is that I would not be destroyed. I would not be put to an end. I would not be ruined. I would

not be rendered useless.

I would not be delivered to eternal misery. The result and intention of God's love that we are sanctified, Hebrews 10, through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.

for by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. We should not perish. And only those, only those who recognize that they are perishing will ever seek a rescue, will ever receive a love that came to rescue.

Nobody's, you know, well, God, you could have done something else to save people. no, because step one is they have to recognize they need to be saved. They have to. God already has a world full of people who reject him.

What good is it going to do if he saves them all for eternity? Now he has an eternity full of people rejecting him. God's heart from Adam to the end is fellowship, is relationship.

[28:45] Only those who recognize they are perishing will ever receive a love that came to rescue. You know, it could end there. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish.

Thank you, God. Wonderful. It could have ended there and we would have been praising him just as greatly. Thank you, God. But have everlasting life.

The extent, the effect, and the duration of God's love for us. Not only that we don't perish, but we have everlasting life. Why did God make his son into that which represents the serpent?

Why did he put him upon that pole? Because he's a God who loves and love gives. And what he gives us is what? Himself. God can't give without giving himself.

So the extent is what? The effect and duration of God's love is this quality of life that goes on and on and on and endures, age abiding. It does not waver.

[29:52] It does not cease. It doesn't wane. And the benefits of his love, man, they far outweigh the requirements of receiving it. The benefits of God's love.

What I get in response to the effort it takes to receive it. the requirements of receiving his love. I mean, he could have said, well, you also have to be baptized.

Well, you also have to go to church. Well, you also have to at least witness to five people in your lifetime. Well, you also have to not do those really bad sins anymore. The benefit of God's love comes to me through the requirement of what?

Just like in Numbers 21. All you've got to do is look. Look. And receive the cure. And God is not a man that he should lie. Neither the son of man that he should repent.

Has he said and shall he not do it? Has he spoken and shall he not make it good? Man, that was an awesome thing he wrote to the New Testament apostles, wasn't it? No.

[30:53] He's saying that to Israel. He's saying that to a people who he led about in the wilderness in rebellion. He's saying, listen, I don't change. I'm the same because the source is consistent. It's love.

How much more then can I take that and go, thank you, God, that if I believe in Jesus Christ for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that if I, a whosoever, would believe, I won't perish and I receive the benefit of God's love.

God then has given us something that we could never obtain otherwise. Nicodemus, if you would receive me, to them, I give the power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

God loved a world that did not love him. God gave the world his greatest love. God forgave the world how they treated that love. And God will receive a world that will believe in that love.

He loved a world that did not love him. He gave the world his greatest love. And then he forgave us how we treated that love. And now he's willing to receive a world that will believe in that love.

[32:06] A love that was rejected. Love that was crucified. God's greatest expression of love. And essentially, he gives us a second chance. He says, hey, if you'll just believe this, then I'll receive you.

John 17, because God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world. Really? I thought God was out to get me. I thought he wanted to like, let me know that I needed a savior.

I thought he was upset at me. God sent not his son into the world to condemn. Sent means by appointment. It wasn't, Jesus didn't come to keep an appointment of judgment for us. To condemn

is to select for judgment.

No, not for that. But that the world through him might be saved. God then did not send his son to select out those worthy of judgment. Jesus didn't come to find out, oh, you're worthy of judgment. You're not good enough. You are, you aren't. No, but to select those already under judgment to be worthy of salvation. God sent his son to select out those that were already under judgment.

[33:13] Say, hey, come be worthy of salvation. Why did God send perfection into our midst? Why did he send Jesus? To expose us? Yes.

To expose us as sinners. So that we might be judged. So we might be saved. He sent his son to expose us. He exposed me. And I realized I need this savior.

I need that love. Saved means to rescue from danger and destruction, to keep safe, to keep sound. Praise God. That the world through him, the world might be rescued from danger and destruction, kept safe and kept sound.

The whole world. God's heart wasn't to leave anyone out. Nicodemus. Nicodemus, who had probably left out many people.

It was part of his job, like to assess and like, well, you know, you're in, you're out. Do some of this. Do that. Don't. And I don't think it was in a, he doesn't seem to have a heart that is a heart of judgment and like self-righteousness or I was going to say pharisaical, but well, he is a Pharisee.

[34:21] But maybe not the spirit of it. But for him, this blew his mind that God would look at every single person I drive by on the street.

Everyone who's ruined their life. Say, man, I want to rescue that guy from danger, from destruction. I want to keep him safe and sound. Jesus came to rescue us from heaven and he is coming again to rescue us for heaven.

Isn't he? 1 Thessalonians 1.10 that we are to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivers us from wrath to come. And this is just the beginning, guys.

We're in like, we're in like, this life is like the front page where you write down all the names of your children in your Bible. This is like the very cover page of the whole story. We haven't even cracked it yet until we get there.

He that believes on him, verse 18, he's not condemned. But he that believes not is condemned already because he's not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

[35:28] God didn't come to bring judgment. Judgment already was here. Judgment already existed. This glorious promise of life to the whosoever, it hangs upon this conditional if.

God has done everything needed for life. The if is now up to us. The whosoever is not limited by God's promise or God's provision.

He's done everything. It's limited by man's pride. The if hangs on this heart. He that believes is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already.

If I will believe in God's love for sinners, God's sacrifice for sin, and my current need of rescue from sin, I qualify as a whosoever who can partake of life.

If I believe God's love for sinners, does God love all sinners? Man, I believe that. God's sacrifice for sin, it was sufficient. My current need for sin. Nicodemus, do you see that you have a need as a sinner to be rescued from sin?

[36:40] Not my need for sin. I don't need sin. My need to be rescued from sin. Then I can be whosoever that partakes of life. Unbelief does not place someone in a state of condemnation.

It doesn't send someone to hell. It just simply leaves them on a path they're already traveling. The whole world is under condemnation. They're already traveling that path.

God didn't send Jesus to condemn them. You didn't believe? Gonna get you. No. Unbelief just leaves them on that path. Nicodemus would not only need to accept that he, the teacher of Israel, needed rescue, but that he was in the same category as the Gentiles, as the unchosen world.

Nicodemus, you're gonna have to accept that you need rescue just as much as that guy. I need to accept I need rescue just as much as the person whose mind is blown out on drugs, the person who has killed and pillaged and there's no difference.

No. There is a difference in what they've done that that is wicked, that is evil. Yes, but what does it spring from? Springs from the same condition I have that I need rescue.

[37:54] God did not just make a way. He made the only way that man who was already under condemnation could be born into a life free of condemnation to be part of the kingdom of God.

So it's not just a way. Man, you know, why couldn't you have done? No, there's only one way because there's only one means by which we can be rescued, born again from this life into a spiritual life.

It required an uncondemned life to be willingly given for the condemned. And Jesus did that. He satisfied that. And only love, the greatest love, would ever give that.

Romans 5, 8 and 9, but God commends his love towards us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Only the greatest love would give that. And continue to keep us, continue to give that. Listen, I have put my faith in Christ. I've been born again.

[39:03] But my life on a basis of deeds may be better than someone else's, but on a basis of works and deeds does not measure up to a life of what a life should look like for someone who lives in the kingdom.

Man, I need continually this life and this love to rescue me and continually to keep me. God commended his love towards me that I was yet a sinner.

He died for me. Praise God. Much more than, thank you, being justified by his blood, he keeps us. We shall be saved from wrath through him. We shall be saved from wrath.

We have been saved from wrath, being justified, the wrath of hell. And we will be saved the wrath of God poured out in judgment upon this world. So this then is the condemnation.

This is the condemnation. Light came into the world. And so now we're gonna have this comparison of light and darkness. But men loved darkness rather than light. The condemned choose darkness because their deeds are evil.

[40:06] Why won't man believe? Why would God do all this? Because he loves us. Because he's love. He just can't help himself. Why won't man believe?

Maybe they can't see? No lights come into the world. It's because they won't see. The proof of man standing with God, what is our standing before God?

The proof is how we respond to the light. Do we run to the light? Do we avoid the light? Man's response to the light, that is the means by which man is judged before God.

Not by our deeds. Not by our national heritage. Not by where we grew up. Our response to the light is the means by which we are judged before God.

Jesus said, I am the light of the world. He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The light of God's love, it's given to man a light in the darkness.

[41:07] We're a world of darkness and a light came into that darkness. It was what? God's love. Could have been God's justice. Could have been God's wrath. Could have been God's judgment.

But the light that shined into this world to reveal God to us with a light of love. What happens if there's no light? It's still dark. Without that light, there'd only be darkness.

And Jesus says, I am the light of the world. He that follows me will not what? Walk in darkness.

How easy is it to walk in darkness? Got married, so I always go back to these analogies, right?

Honey, I heard a noise. Go downstairs and check it out. Now, my house is not dark, but it's, at that time of night, it's darker than it usually is during the day and you're stumbling and tripping. But absolute pitch black darkness.

No light at all. Complete absence. Absolutely dark. How easy is it to walk? How confident are you in your walk? How assured are you of your walk? How assured are you of your direction in which you're walking?

[42:12] To pierce that darkness, to overcome that darkness, what is needed? Only one source of light. It only needs one source of light to overcome darkness.

Oh, it's a strong darkness tonight. We need a lot of lights. Super, super, super strong. All darkness responds in the same way to light. It's not like, man, it's that time of year where darkness is really dark.

No, when it's dark, it's dark. We only need one source of light. Jesus is that source. So what about Buddhism and Hinduism and Mormonism and all these other things?

They're just walking about in darkness. They're just stumbling about in darkness because there's only one source of light. But instead of receiving God's light, man chose to sow love.

Same word for love. Agapeo. God's love for love. He chose to give himself to this. How did he choose to love? He chose to sow love his evil deeds by staying in darkness.

[43:14] So the condemnation is not that man's deeds are evil, but that man chooses evil deeds over God's love.

My condemnation as a sinner is not that, oh, I've done evil deeds. We're all going to do evil deeds. It's that I choose them over God's love, over the light that shines in the darkness.

Man's choice to reject God, to reject light then, it's not because God hates them or won't receive them. People will tell you that. Oh, I don't know.

You know, me and God got our own understanding going. Really? That's not light, bro. That's darkness. Darkness. Man's choice to reject light, to reject God, is not because God hates them or won't receive them.

Man chooses to reject God because God's love exposes them. God's love exposes them for what they are. They are sinners and they love darkness.

[44:16] That's what the light does. Oh, God, I'm not kind of, no, God's angry at me. No, he's not. God doesn't like what I do. God doesn't like that I have sin. Well, God's got a cure for that. He's not just like, you know, he's got the solution here.

It's like you had a sick kid and it's like, you know, or maybe more aptly an injured one. It's like, here, let me take care of that. No, no, no, you're just going to hurt me. I'm not going to hurt you. I've got to help you.

It might hurt a little to clean that thing. You know, you just wiped out on your skateboard and you got a road rash all down you. We got to get the stones out. It's going to hurt. But it's because I love you.

The fact that man loves sin, loves his evil deeds, it proves his nature is the nature of the condemned. Not that God is condemning him, but he's already condemned.

Right? It's the old analogy. If you rob a bank, does that make you a bank robber? No. It proves you were a bank robber. Because if you weren't, you wouldn't have robbed the bank.

[45:15] I haven't robbed a bank. I'm not a bank robber. If I went and robbed one, it didn't make me one. It just proved I already was one. I already had it in my, I'm going to go rob this bank. The fact that we love our sin and our evil deeds, it doesn't make us sinners.

It doesn't make us under condemnation. It just proves we already are. For everyone that does evil hates the light. Verse 20. Neither does he come to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

You know, it's that time of year. It's getting warm. Anybody see cockroaches in their house? Man. My like biggest bug fear. Well, other than like the gigantic spiders maybe.

Our cockroaches. I've always hated them. We don't have them where I'm from in upstate New York. It's too cold. Down here, our first house we move into in the garage was one of those giant palmetto bugs. And like, I was like, and from that day to the day we moved, what was left of him was on the wall in the garage.

But they're starting to come out again. It's like, oh, and you turn the light on and there it is. It wasn't there. And then all of a sudden he's gone. And you're trying to find that thing. Evil runs from the light.

[46:27] They flee the light. Everyone that does evil hates the light. And he's not going to come to the light because his deeds will be reprov'd. They'll be convicted. They will be found to be at fault. And so they run from the light.

It doesn't say they just avoid the light. The sin nature, it doesn't just avoid light. It actively hates the light.

It hates it. It despises it. It wishes it was no more. It wishes it would perish. What does Jesus tell us that we are in this world? You are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hid. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Let your light so shine before men and do good works?

No. Just see the good works. See the good work of the life and the light that God is doing in and through you. Let them see it. But that means it puts us in a place where they hate us.

[47:27] Jesus says in John 15, 18, if the world hates you, remember guys, you know this, it hated me before it hated you. If you were of this world, the world would love his own.

But because you're not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, not just chosen, but chosen because we have believed and received.

I have chosen you out of the world and therefore the world hates you. The light will have one of two effects then. It will either draw or it will repel. Light repels darkness.

It's just how it goes. Jesus says we are the light of the world, that we're to let it shine and just let our deeds be seen. I work a secular job and I don't run around my job sites proclaiming to everyone, you know, I'm a pastor.

Let me share the gospel with you. I live my life as a light and God gives me opportunities. But what I find is my deeds, which are now of the light, without any effort in a sense of my own, just by living in the light, man, people hate it.

[48:38] People can treat you like, that's interesting. I'm just trying to work with you. What's the problem here? Well, it's like you don't realize it, but it's like you got a big headlamp on and you're just shining in their face every time you talk to them.

They're like, oh, you know, what are you doing this weekend? And they ask you, what are you doing this weekend? Well, you know, I'm going to hang out with the family, I've got to study, we've got church, and what are you going to do? Well, I don't want to tell you what I'm going to do.

I had an older guy I worked with once and they were doing a bunch of demolition and these, I know I've told this story before, but a bunch of you are new in the last year or two, so I'm going to tell it again.

And like this old beer can was dug up and I don't know, it was like, he was like, oh, look at this, it's the kind from, you know, the old ones, the flat top or whatever and however it popped, you know, the top, he goes, remember those? And I just didn't even think about it.

I'm like, I don't know, I don't drink. And he goes, well, I don't do drugs. I'm like, that's good. I don't do that either. And I've had people say, well, I know you're religious.

[49:41] You do? Who told you? I'm not religious. You know, I know you're a church person. I know. Man, I just, I've been born again. I have a quality of life that I wish you had and I wish you would receive.

If only you would come to the light. Walking in the light means a willingness to let the deeds of the darkness go when they're exposed, letting them go. Do you know the quickest way to be free of darkness?

What is it? Turn on the light. Expose it to light. Is there darkness in your life? Expose it to light. Expose it to the light. A life prone to darkness.

A life that is, gravitates towards darkness. I seem to walk in shadows a lot. You should spend as much time as possible in the light. Numbers 21.

A life that's prone to handling snakes. Right? Oh, I got bit again. You should live really close to the pole. Really close to the pole. Right? A life prone to darkness. Live in the light as much as possible.

[50:46] Man, I know, Jesus said, better to enter into life maimed than hell and destruction whole. I live a maimed life. Willingly, happily, a maimed life. I try and be in the light as much as I can because I know the darkness that's in here.

I got to keep it exposed. And our last verse for today, but he that does truth, oh, gloriously, he comes to the light. He runs to the light that his deeds may be manifest that they are wrought in God. Truth loves the light. Truth, Jesus said, I am the way. In John 14, 6, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me. No man comes to the Father but by way of truth and light and life and love.

Truth, what is truth? Truth is simply that which is only ever always true. There's no other way to describe it. True is true. It is the absence of that which is not true, which is false.

True is that which is only ever always true. He that does truth, oh man, a life that does truth. But I know what's in here.

[51:48] How am I going to do truth? Well, he has to be found in the truth. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. It's not about deeds. It's not about my actions.

It's am I someone who does truth or am I someone who does darkness? That is a condition not of my actions but of my birth. A life of truth loves the light of God's presence.

It loves being in God's presence. It loves the light of God's word. It loves the life of the spirit because the life of the spirit is a life that will always seek the light.

The spirit within us is always seeking the light. It's always drawing us back into the light. Why? That our deeds may be made manifest. They may be made visible. We might see where they come from. They're produced from God. I come to the light and I find out God, my life source is you. I can't believe this.

[52:48] This is great. Now there was a sinful deed there but the blood of Jesus Christ just washed it away. The life of the spirit is a life that seeks the light. We were sometimes darkness.

There was a day that was us. We once were darkness but now we are light in the Lord. Ephesians 5.8 we should walk as children of the light. For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

I need to try and do good and righteous things and truthful things? No. I just got to let the spirit bear that fruit in my life. It's going to bear that. And then what's usually the best atmosphere for something to grow and bear fruit is in the light.

I know there are some plants that do well in the dark but proving what does the light do? It proves what is acceptable unto the Lord.

I come into the light and I find out my life is acceptable to God. He's not out to get me. He's not condemning me. He's not upset at me. He has shown the light of the glorious gospel into my life that God the originator and the initiator would love the world that the object of his love would be something that didn't deserve it and he would give an expression of sacrifice and the sacrifice of his son we would receive love that we could not from any other source and we who would believe in him that we would receive something that the effects far outweigh the requirements for believing and receiving we would find out that the result and intention of God's love is that we would never perish the moment of your salvation that moment where you're like I realize God loves me you realize there's a life born in you of the spirit that will never perish or pass away and it never needs to diminish now the feelings will change but the reality of God's love in our life never changes what changes what is it that changes my walk first John 17 if we walk in the light as he's in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sins so the condition of me walking in the fullness of this is not that

[55:15] God is withholding or upset or condemning or no it's all a condition of my walk what does the light do the light exposes the light illuminates it gives sight without it we can't see anything can we the light reveals beauty think of the colors and the beauty because of light and what we can see the light of God's love allows us to walk with assurance I know where I'm going I can walk thy word is a lamp unto my feet a light unto my path I can't walk in assurance when I walk in darkness the light of God's love it allows us to see where we're going I know where I'm going and you know what this world has no idea where they're going they're living in darkness because they traded God's love for evil temporary short-lived deeds the wages of sin is death sin is pleasurable for a season but it doesn't last

God's love does three amazing things for us God's love gives God's love lives and God's love forgives eternal life then is a life that can only be received by a spiritual act of renewal from God as Jesus is saying all this to Nicodemus and Nicodemus is sitting there taking all of this in realizing how big and how vast God's love is I hope and I believe Nicodemus because we know he will believe but I hope it was at this moment he's sitting there realizing God doesn't just choose me God doesn't just happy with me because of my performance God loves me God has given me his life that I might live and God has forgiven me for the life that I have lived for God so loved that he gave Jesus and Jesus gave his life his love and his light that you and I might be born into a kingdom where we are free from condemnation we who have been born again of the spirit we will never

perish ever hallelujah we will never perish but there is a world out there that God gave his one and only one of a kind son for and it is perishing it is lost it is headed for destruction 2nd Corinthians 4 3-4 says if the gospel be hid it is hid to them that are perishing in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them not only are they unwilling to come to the light because their deeds are evil it tells us they are blinded what is their hope but what was our hope we know this verse quoted all the time 2nd Corinthians 5-17 if any man be in Christ he's a new creation old things are passed away behold all things are become new but if we keep reading we see what the result of those new things in our lives are meant to do and all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ thank you Lord and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them and he has now committed that to you and me the word of reconciliation for we are ambassadors for

Christ as though God did beseech to beg to entreat to exhort you by us we pray you as if we are Christ standing here be reconciled to God and I dare say each one of you and I had someone in our life who ambassaded Christ to us and said I beseech you be reconciled to God the light has gone into the world men love darkness and their eyes are blinded by the enemy and we are the ones to go to them shining the light and their eyes are closed and we say please I beg you I beseech you I am so thankful that I will never perish I am so thankful that I can walk in the light that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin but I recognize that

I'm surrounded daily by blind people who don't want to hear it what do we do just keep letting your light shine before men and intercede for them as we went through Exodus and as we looked at last week in numbers Moses over and over and over interceded for the people I can't open their eyes they may not listen to me but God has someone in this world with us who is left here to convince to convict the world of sin of righteousness and judgment to come the Holy Lord is just waiting I think he's beseeching us I beseech you would you be an ambassador would you take that glorious light of the glorious gospel and shine it for me Father that's what we want to do

[61:10] Lord Lord we want to take your word we want to shine it all around but Lord help us to first live it ourselves Lord how can I ask someone to join me in walking in the light when I'm walking in darkness how can I claim to have truth when I live a lie Lord what do I really have to offer people when I don't live in the spirit but I live after the flesh God I ask you to give us a fresh filling a fresh understanding and a fresh anointing of your spirit Lord that we would be people who run to the light that we would seek to live in the light and that we would seek Lord to welcome any who would to come and join us in the light but Lord that we would also be brave and bold people who would take the light and we would run into the darkness we wouldn't fear the darkness because we have the light and it will overcome we would not be afraid to talk because we hated we would not be afraid to shine because it hurts someone's eyes

Lord that you would do great and mighty! things through the lives of the in this way gave his love to us whosoever in what way shall we give his love to whosoever in what way will God use us to pass that on why won't man receive maybe because nobody shined a light on him maybe nobody shone them the light you think I don't know if I feel worthy!

to shine the light for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved if you haven't called upon him that's you and you've not yet entered into the kingdom life everlasting life eternal life a quality of life that comes from new birth through the spirit all you've got to do is just look to receive!

May the Lord use you today and this week to be lights in this world and now may the Lord bless you and keep you may the Lord make his face to shine upon you the Lord be gracious unto you the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace God bless you