

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THAT THE WORLD MIGHT BE SAVED

JOHN 3:16-17

I. God’s Love for the World

- A. God loves the world.
 - 1. This love is *not* an acceptance of/agreement with its evil.
 - 2. This love is an intense concern for the eternal wellbeing of human beings.
- B. In time, God showed this love to the world by giving his Son to be its Savior and Lord.
- C. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus would not perish but have eternal life.
- D. John 3:17 is almost a restatement of John 3:16: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (v 17).

II. The Reason God Did Not Send His Son

- A. What does it mean that God loved the world in his Son? Negatively, it means that “God did *not* send his Son into the world to condemn the world...”
- B. When we hear God’s love stated like that, it can have two effects for us.
 - 1. It refreshes our love for the Father.
 - 2. It energizes us for an active, holy engagement with our fellow human beings.

III. Be Non-Condemning as God is Non-Condemning

- A. God calls us to be holy as he is holy (Lev 19:2).
 - 1. We are called to become as loving as God himself.
 - 2. We can’t imitate God’s hatred of sin yet not imitate God’s love for sinners (cf. Eph 5:2).
- B. Could it be that we do not evangelize as we should because some part of us has already given up on the world?
- C. Yes. We heartily affirm that...
 - 1. God will do all he pleases (Ps 135:6; cf. Rom 9:19).
 - 2. God elects some to salvation and others to destruction (cf. Rom 9:14, 15, 18, 22-23).
 - 3. God’s love is ultimately for that segment of the world he has chosen for salvation.
- D. Yet, we must also affirm that God finds far greater delight in saving the repentant than destroying the unrepentant (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11).
- E. Just as God did not send his Son to condemn the world, he did not send the Church to condemn the world either.
 - 1. As people of Jesus, our hearts must be fundamentally for the salvation of sinners. We must be fundamentally for the re-connection and re-union of sinners with God himself.
 - 2. But too often, we love the things of the world, rather than its people.

IV. YHWH, the Savior Son

- A. Lessons for personal discipleship aside, John 3:16-17 is not primarily about how you can love the world more, or how you can become a better evangelist.

- B. The main/initiating subject in this passage is not the Church and its good works in evangelism. It is God and his Son, the Lord Jesus.
 - 1. It was *God* who first loved the world.
 - 2. It was *God* who gave his Son to be its Source of Life.
 - 3. The *Son* is the focus for salvation.
- C. John 3:16-17 is not a call to look back into ourselves, but to look upward to God and to the Son of his own love.
- D. What is the only hope of all sinful flesh? *It is the Son of God.*
- E. Isaiah 43:11: “I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.”
 - 1. There is only one savior, the Lord YHWH.
 - 2. The Son of God is the Lord YHWH in human flesh.

V. Christ Jesus, Our Only Hope and Our Main Message

This continues to be our hope and our message. God loves the wicked and broken world. He shows his love for this world by giving his Son, not to be the condemner of the world, but to be its Savior. Those who believe in the Son will have eternal life and be reconciled to God. The Son is the Savior that the world desperately needs. The Son must remain the central and primary message of the Church, just as he will always be the only hope of the world.

- A. Of course, the world will not naturally admit that it needs salvation.
 - 1. The natural tendency of the world in all of its communities is to seek salvation in itself, by itself—and for its own glory.
 - 2. Which is why even the good works of the world stink to God.
 - a. They do not proceed from faith in God, but faith in man.
 - b. They do not end in God’s glory, but in man’s self-affirmation.
- B. But this concern for the glory of God is why God gave faith as the only way we connect to his salvation.
 - 1. Faith does not boast in itself. Faith looks out of itself to another.
 - 2. By its nature, faith gives glory to the one who saves, not the one being saved. (e.g., when a patient trusts in a doctor for care, credit goes to the doctor, not the patient.)
 - 3. When I put my trust in Christ, I am saying I cannot save myself. I have abandoned hope in myself and put it all on God and his Son.
 - 4. When I do this, I am saved. I enter into the realm of God’s favor, God’s delight.

Questions for Reflection

- 1. Was there anything in particular about today’s sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
- 2. Was there anything that you found difficult to accept?
- 3. What is God’s priority toward the world?
- 4. What is the nature of God’s love for the world? What is it not?
- 5. How does “God did *not* send his Son into the world to condemn the world” underscore God’s love for the world?
- 6. How does God’s not wanting to condemn the world affect our idea of God?
- 7. Read the Ezekiel passages. What do these passages teach us about how God feels toward punishing sinners?
- 8. “The natural tendency of the world in all of its communities is to seek salvation in itself, by itself—and for its own glory.” Discuss.
- 9. Why does faith give glory to God as the source of salvation?