

# Sermon Outline

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

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## **WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED**

*JOHN 3:16-21*

### **I. “Jesus” Is the Name of the Mission (John 3:16-17)**

- A. Two purposive statements in verses 16-17:
  - 1. Verse 16: God gave his only Son so that “whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
  - 2. Verse 17: God sent his Son “in order that the world might be saved through him.”
  
- B. This is why our Lord was given his name: “Jesus” means “The LORD saves.”
  - 1. Salvation is always at the heart of who our Lord Jesus is to us.
  - 2. Jesus is the Lord who is fundamentally favorable toward us, oriented to our life and wholeness.
  - 3. Is the Lord Jesus fundamentally a Lord who has your back? Is he predominantly a Lord who is committed to your good?
  - 4. Jesus is a very specific revelation of the true God of the universe.
    - a. He is not a god in the abstract, a generic all-powerful being.
    - b. He is YHWH the Savior,  
YHWH the Friend of sinners,  
YHWH the Husband of the Church.
  - 5. The main purpose of the Son’s appearance is primarily for our *salvation*, not our judgment.
  
- C. When judgment comes, it is the exercise of Christ’s holy love for...
  - 1. his people
  - 2. his Father.
  
- D. We come now to verse 18, which shows us two things.

### **II. Not Condemned! (John 3:18)**

- A. First: Those who believe in Jesus are “not condemned.”
  - 1. This is yet another angle on what we have already seen earlier.
  - 2. Those who believe in Jesus will (a) “not perish but have eternal life”; and (b) “be saved through him.”
  - 3. “Not condemned” implies...
    - a. not perishing
    - b. receiving eternal life

c. being saved

B. What condemns you today? God no longer condemns you.

C. The Christian life is a life that is to be lived without condemnation. *If God no longer condemns us, who are we to condemn ourselves?* (cf. Rom 8:34)

1. If God no longer condemns us, it follows that we are to live the Christian life without condemnation as well.
2. This does not mean that we don't address sin when it arises. It means that we deal with sin (in ourselves and others) as forgiven, and accepted, and justified, and beloved children of God.

D. "Whoever believes in him is not condemned" describes the present state of affairs for a believer in Jesus. Samuel Bolton wrote:  
Maintain your liberty in Christ by refusing to look any more to the law for justification, and by refusing to fear its words of condemnation. You are to live, in respect of your practice and obedience, as men who can neither be condemned by the law nor justified by it. It is a hard lesson to live above the law, and yet to walk according to the law. But this is the lesson a Christian has to learn, to walk in the law in respect of duty, but to live above it in respect of comfort, neither expecting favour from the law in respect of his obedience nor fearing harsh treatment from the law in respect of his failings. Let the law come in to remind you of sin if you fall into sin, but you are not to suffer it to arrest you and drag you into the court to be tried and judged for your sins. This would be to make void Christ and grace. (*The True Bounds of Christian Freedom*, 219)

### III. Those Condemned (John 3:18)

A. Second: Those who do not believe are "condemned already."

1. They are condemned because they have "not believed in the name of the only Son of God."
2. The word "already" is key, because it implies a determined state of affairs.
3. John is saying in no-uncertain terms that the fate of those who reject Jesus the Son of God has already been sealed.
4. It is not that God doesn't desire to forgive you.
  - a. It's that you don't want his forgiveness.
  - b. It's that you prefer the darkness.
5. The only way out of the state of condemnation is to believe in Jesus.
6. If you want to stay condemned, you really don't have to do anything at all. You just have to stay the way you are—and refuse to look to Jesus.

B. "Condemned" is the present state of the unbelieving world.

- C. If the unbelieving world is condemned, we must be careful who we look up to as teachers, gurus, heroes, role models, life inspirations, etc.  
—Learn what truths they have to teach. But don't give your heart to them.

#### IV. The Word of Judgment (John 3:19-21)

A. In verse 19, we hear God's assessment of the Christ-rejecting world: "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."

B. The clause "the light has come into the world" is clearly a reference to Jesus. Verses 19-21 speaks about Jesus as the Light of the world, and the two ways that people respond to Jesus.

C. Concerning those who reject Jesus the Light

1. Those who do *not* believe in Jesus the Light do so, because they "loved the darkness rather than the light."
2. They love the darkness because "their works were evil."
3. No matter what good these people seem to say, or how virtuous they appear to be on the outside, they "loved the darkness rather than the light" and "their works were evil."
4. Verse 20 further describes the evil person who rejects Jesus: "For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."

D. Concerning those who come to Jesus the Light

1. The one born of the Spirit of God and trusts in Jesus is different.
2. The works of this person are described by John as "what is true" (or "truth") and are "carried out in God."
3. Because Jesus the Lamb of God cleanses the believer from all sin, he or she is no longer condemned and has no reason to be ashamed of his or her works.
4. Also, God creates new works of true goodness in the person. They are works "carried out in God."  
—Gary Burge: "Such people live righteously because God is at work in them (3:21b), not because they have a native desire to be godly" (*John*, 119).

E. While the unbeliever hates the light of Jesus, because it exposes him for who he really is; the believer loves the light of Jesus, because he has nothing for which to be ashamed.

1. His works, though sinfully imperfect, are made true and pure in God.
2. Indeed, the very act of coming to the Light, rather than running from the Light, is what creates true goodness in the life of the believer.

—Where once there was only sin, there is now the presence of truth, the beginning of full obedience, and a real love for God.

3. John 1:4: “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Thus, to receive the Light of Jesus is to receive the eternal life that he brings—and all the good things that life contains.

## V. **Jesus Makes New Human Beings**

**There is only one path to the good and complete life for a human being; a life free of condemnation, guilt, and shame; and abounding in good works. This path is not some philosophy of life or some legal code, whether imposed by external tradition or invented by personal innovation. But as we have seen time and time again, the Path is ultimately the Person from God, Jesus Christ. Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6). The very act of admitting that you need Jesus might seem humiliating at first. It implies that you are, by nature, a hater of God and a lover of sin. But if we stick to this Path, we will not be ashamed. As soon as we admit our darkness, Jesus comes and takes our shame away. And in place of darkness, he will bring light and truth. Jesus is the Light. Jesus is the Life. Those who go to him will never be the same.**

## **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. Who is God toward us in Christ? What kind of God is he?
4. Since God does not condemn us, we must not live as condemned people, as condemnation-addicts. Discuss how this could look in your life.
5. According to verse 19, what is God's assessment of the world?
6. Why do some reject the light of Jesus, while others receive it?
7. How does God view the works of his children?