

# Sermon Outline

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

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### JESUS THE CENTER: THE EMBODIMENT OF DIVINE LOVE (JOHN 3:1-36)

#### I. “Am I Loved?”

○ Jeremiah 2:13: “for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

○ Jeremiah 31:3: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.”

#### II. Divine Love: New Life from Above (John 3:1-15)

- A. John 3 began with Jesus’ dialogue with rabbi Nicodemus.
- B. Jesus explains to Nicodemus that the only way anyone can gain eternal life is by being born of Heaven, being regenerated by the Holy Spirit (v 5).
- D. The Scripture in the background is most likely Ezekiel 36:25-28.
- E. When Nicodemus’ asks how these things are even possible, the Lord rebukes him for his unbelief and tells him (albeit indirectly) that his words can be trusted precisely because he is the Son of Man “who descended from heaven” (v 13).
- F. Jesus says, just as “Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (vv 14, 15).
- G. Two lessons from verses 1-15.
  - 1. Eternal life is ultimately the gift of God and his Spirit.
  - 2. Eternal life comes to us when we put our faith in the Son of Man.
- H. How are those two things connected? Ans: Being born of the Spirit enables us to look to the Son of Man for eternal life.
  - 1. When God calls our hearts, he creates the response he requires.
  - 2. On the one hand, we will develop a growing distaste for the sinful, rebellious life that we have been living.

3. On the other hand, we will find a new desire to return to God, a new taste for holiness (not merely “morality”).
  4. This change of heart which God creates is called “repentance.”
  5. Having the attitude of repentance, we reach out and trust in Jesus for salvation.
- I. How does God love us? *God loves us by giving us eternal life through Son.*

### III. Divine Love: The Gift of the Son of God (John 3:16-21)

- A. Why are repentance and faith even possible? “For God so loved the world” (3:16).
- B. How has God shown his love for the world? He gave his very best, his only-begotten Son to be the Savior of the world.
1. God “gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (v 16)
  2. “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).
- C. Those who love their sins so much that they spurn God’s ultimate gift of love will remain condemned (v 18, 20).
- D. Those who naturally want to come to the light of the Son are those whose works are already pure and “carried out in God” (v 21).
- E. But since no such person actually exists, God works in our hearts to give us a disposition to turn to the Son.
- F. Question: If God’s call is the reason why anyone comes to faith in Christ, why does God call some and not others?
1. God is free to pardon and love whomever he chooses.
  2. But once God sets his love on a human life, he never changes his mind.
  3. You know that you are one of those whom God loves if you repent and put your faith in Christ. You re-orient your life around the Son of God’s love.
  4. While this re-orientation is not perfect on this side of glory, it will be present.
  5. Once your heart has been ignited by God’s love, you will become a new human being and grow in the direction of God’s love.
- G. How does God love us? *God loves us by giving us his Son.*

### IV. Divine Love: The Arrival of the Bridegroom (John 3:22-30)

- A. The theme of divine love reappears in the discussion between John the Baptist and his disciples.
- B. When John's disciples were jealous about people going to Jesus, John tells them that this is only to be expected because Christ is the long-awaited One (v 28), the heavenly bridegroom (v 29).
- C. By equating Jesus with the Bridegroom, John is identifying Jesus with YHWH himself, the divine Lover, the divine Husband of the Church.
- D. In Jesus, YHWH has come to rescue his Bride-people from their sins and the abusive powers of the world.
- E. How does God love us? *God loves us by giving us the Bridegroom, the true Lover of our souls, to heal us and restore our dignity.*

## V. **Divine Love: The Father's Ever-Love for the Son (John 3:31-36)**

- A. The song of divine love explodes in full glory in verses 31-36.
- B. Why is salvation possible? Because God loves the world (v 16).
- C. Why does God love the world? Because "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand" (v 35).
- D. The world's redemption, your and my salvation, is rooted in a covenant that was set in place before creation.
  - 1. In the fellowship of the Trinity, a delighted Father makes an astounding promise to his precious Son.  
He promises him the whole universe.  
He promises him a people that would find in him their greatest happiness.
- E. We are all products of that great promise before all promises, that love before all loves. We are gifts from the Father to his Son.
  - 1. God is at work through his Holy Spirit to creating repentance and faith wherever the Gospel is preached, binding people to Jesus.
- F. *God's love for us springs from his love for his Son.*

## VI. **"I Have Loved You with an Everlasting Love"**

If we have repented of our sinful life and put all our hope for salvation in Jesus, we are deeply loved by God. And since we are deeply loved by God, we can come home to him. We can leave our idols behind. We can come home to where it is safe and warm, where we will no longer be rejected, abused, or starve. "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Ps 16:11). God has heard your cry. He has heard those secret prayers of pain. He has sent the true Bridegroom of your soul, Jesus

**his Son. Do not be afraid. Go to Jesus. He will bring you back to life. For he has loved you with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3).**

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Based on Jeremiah 2:13, how should we think of idolatry?
4. How does Jeremiah 31:3 describe God's love for his people?
5. How is the possibility of being born of the Spirit a manifestation of God's love?
6. How does birth from above relate to our repentance and faith in Christ?
7. Based on Jn 3:16, why are repentance and faith even possible?
8. According to 3:16, how does God show his love to the world?
9. How can you know if you are one on whom God has set his love? Do you need to have perfect faith or perfect obedience?
10. How does divine love appear in the person of Jesus the Bridegroom?
11. How does the divine Bridegroom love his broken, battered bride? How does this speak to you?
12. How is the Father's divine love for his Son the fount of our salvation?
13. What results from belief in the Son? What is consequence of not believing/disobeying the Son?
14. Now that you are loved by God, how should you relate to him?