

5/31/20 - John 3:16-21 - "How Vast; How Precise"

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- [0 : 0 0] The title of the sermon is How Vast, How Precise. And last week, Rick preached the beginning of chapter 3, which we looked at a late night inquirer known as Nicodemus.
- I don't know what happened to that name. That name's not as popular as it may have once been, but you don't know many Nicodemuses anymore. Tragic. And I'm done having children, so it's not going to happen.
- But this was no ordinary man. This wasn't any ordinary Samaritan or leper coming to Jesus for healing, as many came to him during his earthly ministry.
- And we're at the just beginning of his earthly ministry. But this was an intelligent man. This was a teacher of the law.
- He was one of the 70 in the Sanhedrin. He knew his stuff. He knew Scripture better than many of us in this room. And we find him having a difficult time connecting the hope.
- [1 : 0 9] And we're going to kind of bring this into context. If you can look back in chapter 3, we see that we meet Nicodemus.
- He was a man of the Pharisees in verse 1. He was a ruler of the Jews. And this man came to Jesus by night. He was inquiring of Jesus at night. Even wearing a cloak.
- And from verse 1 to verse 10, we see him inquiring to Jesus about this interesting theological topic of being born again.
- And this is something known as the rebirth of inner regeneration. When you come to faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord does something within you that is marvelous and beautiful, and it seals the believer for all time until you enter into eternity with Jesus.
- And so for all believers, you have two births. You have a physical birth in this life, and you have a spiritual birth in Jesus Christ. And this should have connected some dots in Nicodemus' life.
- [2 : 2 3] He should have had light bulbs flashing as the Lord and the Holy Spirit are revealing to him all these connections of what he has memorized.
- The point that the whole Bible revolves around was this man he inquired to that night. This should have popped some light bulbs of Ezekiel 36, 26 of the Lord giving the dry bones, a new heart, breathing life into what is dead.
- But it didn't. From verse 11 and 12 in here, we see that Jesus, he's still having a hard time comprehending these things.
- All the studying of Scripture memorization revolved around the coming of this one man he spoke to, Jesus Christ, but he still couldn't wrap his head around it.
- And then in verse 13 to 15, as we approach the passage today, Jesus makes two Old Testament references, one to Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28, and then the other one of Moses and serpents in Numbers 21.
- [3 : 3 1] Nicodemus was blinded at this time. We're going to see Nicodemus later in the series, but at this point he is blind to what Jesus is speaking about.

And we're going to continue in that context as Jesus continues his dialogue with Nicodemus at this time, and we're going to see his discourse continue with Nicodemus.

And continue with the rebirth and everything, all these topics that have brought into context today. But we reach John 3.16, right?

This is the hallmark Christian passage. You see it pasted on football players' faces that are Christians that want to somehow use their talents for the glory of God, and they put it on their whatever it's called.

Any football players that I, we'll just call it makeup. I'm sorry. It might be condescending. So you put it on their little makeup areas, and put John 3.16 in hopes that the camera will zoom in on you, and somebody will turn to that Bible verse.

[4 : 44] And what a glorious Bible verse it is. You see it pasted on billboards as you drive across the country, going on family vacations. You see it everywhere. John 3.16, and it usually has something to do with God's love.

But we have to be careful at these verses that seem often common to us, that we have memorized since we were a young, young child in the faith. We have to be careful not to rob its weight and worth of its depth, of its meaning, of its context, because not many people know, if you ask people who quote John 3.16, who is Jesus speaking to?

I don't know. Well, he's speaking to Nicodemus. So the context matters as well. Martin Luther refers to this passage as the heart of the Bible, the gospel in miniature.

The heart of the Bible. Think about that. God makes it so plain and simple of proper sound theology of who God is and how he interacts with mankind.

He makes it so simple, even my, let's see, four-year-old can understand. Micah, I taught him this verse early on in his childhood. He still remembers it.

[6 : 09] He was wrestling with that word perish. He couldn't understand perish, so I just said, you know, I had him say dead, you know, for, instead of perish. So, if a little child can understand it, how could we ever forget this?

How could we ever minimize this verse, take it out of its context, lose its weight and depth, like, oh yeah, God's all about love, and that's it.

He loves everyone, and let's just go about our merry way. We're coming out of a season of the book of Judges. I think you know where I'm going with this.

You guys are probably very relieved at this point. Man, we're, finally, we're talking about something. God's love, book of Judges, was so sinful.

Oh, such a big cycle of sin. However, we see something profound in the text today. But we have to understand something.

[7 : 11] We have to be careful, because where there is good news, and there is good news in this passage, there is actually bad news. And we're going to be looking at both sides of that today. So, if you're relieved, don't get too ahead of yourself.

We're still going to be talking about the bad news, because the gospel is also bad news as well. You have to understand the bad news, so you can marvel at the good news.

And so, I'm just going to lay it out for you today. The aim of the message today is that we would be marveled at the scope of God's love. And we would be marveled at the scope of God's love through its vastness of God's love, but also His precise focus of His love in two different realms.

Let's pray for a moment before we get into His word and read it. Please join me in prayer. Father, we come to You right now, and we turn to You, and God, we need You to make this text come to life.

We need You to make this text become something new and refreshing in our lives. As many of us know this verse, we could refresh it.

[8 : 36] We could say this verse almost backwards. We know it so well. And Father, let us dig into Your word today.

Let us be changed by Your word. Let's not just come in for a little lecture and go about and head out to Bob Evans. Let's take this moment and really zero in to You speaking to Your church right now.

Let's not set aside this time as this time of just teaching. But Father, this is the source of life in Your church.

This is the word of God that sends us out and equips us. Let this be a huddle of Your church to equip us for the next play that You have for us this week.

We pray this in Jesus' precious and His holy name. Amen. Please turn with me. I'm assuming you're there already. John 3.16-21.

[9 : 34] We'll read the text in its entirety. Let's see here. It says, Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and the world loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed.

But whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that the works have been carried out in God.

This is the word of the Lord. Such a great passage. I was so excited this week spending time praying and reflecting in this passage.

How I'm going to do this this morning as we're going to be marveling at the vastness of God's love but also the precise focus of God's love.

[11 : 05] I want to break John 3.16 down into a couple different sub points and then I'm going to continue in the context in two different sections. So for the first section today is the hope of the world.

John 3.16. There it is. It says, For God so loved the world in your Bibles. Meaning that the degree of God's love is so vast in number.

God's love for the world is so vast. If anyone has spent any time, any amount of time in Sunday school growing up, it's not a surprise to you these words.

You knew these words before you even came to the verse. These words echo Paul's words in Romans 5.8. But God shows his love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us in Romans 5.8.

And also in his letter to the Ephesians. Ephesians 2.4. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love of which he had, which he loved us.

[12 : 20] These are common words. We see this all through Scripture. And maybe even the simple childhood tune that you sing, Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

It's a popular one in our household with all our young children. But it's one that reflects and proclaims the same truth that we read about today.

The reality of God's love is something so commonly acknowledged as truth. Yes, God loves us. But few ever experience this truth that penetrates any deeper than surface, superficial skin level, changing the heart, kind of reflecting back upon Nicodemus, talking about the rebirth, which is a very deep, internal working of the Holy Spirit, of changing our lives from the inside out.

And Nicodemus was quite aware of these words, for God so loved the world. After all, he is a Jew. He's part of the chosen nation of Israel.

He knew this very well that God loved him. He's a Jew. Just as Exodus 4.22, when the Lord spoke to Moses to tell Pharaoh, to let my people go, the Lord told Moses to tell Pharaoh, Israel is my firstborn son.

[13 : 44] This is the first in rank, not the firstborn created, but obviously, this is talking about ranking. Israel is the highest rank of all.

In Deuteronomy 14.2, when the Lord told the people of Moses, or the people of Moses, the people of Israel, you are a holy, people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession.

Nicodemus knew that God loved the world. However, at this point in time, he thought that his love was focused upon the Jewish nation. He saw it in a different light than what he would have ever comprehended at this point.

In fact, John says that the world rejected the light. That it, his love extended to all people, not just the Jewish nation at this point.

It extended outside of this historic God's chosen people and spread out to the Gentiles. It brought the whole world in.

[14 : 55] God loved the world. He still does. But the world rejected the light. Doesn't that ring a bell from the beginning of this book in John 1.9?

The world rejected the light. The one of whom which God loves so dearly rejected the light. But God still loves the world, even the wicked.

Isn't it marveling, church, at the vastness of God's love? That it is distinguished because it is to the unworthy.

It is to the people who reject him as well. This is what the passage indicates. God's love is vast. It stretches all people, all time, no matter ethnicity, no matter your race, no matter your political status, no matter your social status, no matter the money in your bank accounts, or lack thereof, if you're in my camp.

However, this is God's love, though. His vastness is God's love in a common sense. It's vast. It stretches to all people, sinner or saint.

[16 : 13] But we will soon see in this passage, and I don't want to spill the marbles too soon because we still got to get into how he demonstrated this love into the world.

But his love was different in a salvific sense. It was vast in a common sense that God still gave breath in everyone's lungs, even the ones that worship Satan or worship Allah.

It is the same God who gives breath. This is a common sense of his vast love. But he also has an expression of his love in a salvific sense, which is less vast and it's more pointed, it's more focused.

But God gave the unworthy world a gift. Continue with me as this verse continues. It says, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son.

This means that God's greatest act was giving his greatest gift. Think about that. That the motive of his salvation was derived from his love for the sinner or saint.

[17 : 28] pivots. The contingency upon God's love for the world and love for his elect pivots upon one simple truth. There's one truth in the balance here is what do you do with the greatest gift of God?

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son. This begs the question, what do you do with Jesus? If this was God's gift to the world, what do you do with Jesus?

Or, to put it another way, what in the world does the world do with Jesus? This is something that often brings contention with the Muslims, with Muslim faith, because the thought of God giving a son is completely unheard of.

Completely unheard of. That is the contention with any conversation you will have with Muslims. Muslims. And it's quite offensive, actually, to their God that they know to be true.

But not only did God give his son, this text says that this was God's only son. This was a distinguished gift. Meaning that there is no equal.

[18 : 48] There is no plan B. It is radically distinctive. And this takes us back to the introduction section of the book of John. Go to the left a little bit in your Bibles.

Just to chapter 1. You see this distinct gift, don't we? In chapter 1, verse 1.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

And then also to verse 14, it says, and the Word became flesh. So there's no question who the Word is. What is the Word? The Word is Jesus. This means that God's gift is very distinguished.

This means that He existed all before anything came to be along with God. And He dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[19 : 56] Man, this is mind-blowing. This shatters a lot of faiths of what you do with Jesus. Because not only did God give His Son, it was His only Son radically distinctive.

This is mind-blowing reality and doctrine which distinguishes the Christian faith. You want to know what distinguishes what we believe from what other religions believe? It's Jesus.

This is something that we coin as a term of the Trinity. This means that God is co-equal with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all are co-equal and exist all at the same time.

They're all equal in authority. And Trinity is an interesting word. It's not a biblical word, but it's a coined word from a Latin theologian named Tertullian. Back in the day.

You want to know how the Old Testament and the New Testament came to be? Well, Tertullian coined Old Testament and New Testament. It's not a biblical terminology. It's not a biblical reference. This is all a way of explaining this very truth and doctrine of the Trinity that God is one in essence and three in person.

[21 : 06] All are equal in authority and united in essence. Now, we kind of covered that in depth a little bit earlier. I don't want to go into a theological dissertation on the Trinity because we don't have enough time this morning to get through that.

But plainly to see in this passage and within the Christian faith is that the Jesus whom God sent to the world, church, makes his love for the world all the more distinguished, not because of anything that we do, but because this was a radical gift of grace and an act of mercy to send anything to help an unworthy world.

Don't we get God's love backwards many of the times? We were talking about this as pastors here this week. We sort of attribute our earthly experiences to God's love.

Like, oh, I had such a loving father that this actually helps me understand God's love in a certain sense. You know, because my father would do anything for me regardless of what has been given, even if I'm a spoiled brat.

You know? But there's a problem with that because what happens if this is true, if our earthly experiences define something that is divine, don't we always fall short?

[22 : 34] Because what if somebody didn't experience a loving father? Does that mean that they have a lesser understanding of who God is to experience him?

Of course not. Just because your father abandoned a family at a certain young age in your life doesn't mean that you should struggle with the Christian faith. But instead it should bring the opposite.

You should understand what your father's lack was because scripture defines a fatherly love, a God love, agape, sacrificial, charitable love.

And that is to define and shed light. It's not the other way around. And yeah, we try to explain things in different ways to various people, but we're always going to fall short of comparing anything created on this earth to something that is eternal and existing for all time.

So God's love as defined in scripture must take superiority over anything that we experience. It must define these things lest we get it backwards and falsely caricature God as being something that we can fit in a box.

[23 : 51] He gave his only son, the greatest gift to mankind, and the majority of earth and the world rejects him. However, for those who receive his son as their savior, the verse continues.

In verse 16, it says that whoever believes in him should not perish, would have eternal life, meaning that God's greatest invitation and greatest deliverance is simply faith, in Jesus Christ, believing in him, you won't perish, but you'll have eternal life.

Isn't this marveling, church? So we can understand that God has a vast love for the world. For the world.

But this verse also indicates at this point, this is the point of contention in this verse. Yeah, we have the good news. God so loved the world. Great. What do you do with Jesus?

This verse indicates a special love that he has for those who place their faith in him and trust in him as their Lord and Savior. And live for him in a manner that verifies that faith and decision.

[25 : 11] I'm not getting into antinomianism of just like lawlessly living your life. Oh, I'm free from sin. It's paid for on the cross. Sinners saved by grace. I know. I get it wrong all the time.

I got drunk again. No. This is foolish, church. We live in a manner which verifies our faith. This is salvific love.

This is salvation. As the greatest question hits all the hearts of the world, what do you do with Jesus? We see here that the proper response for us and Nicodemus in this passage whom Jesus is having a dialogue with is to simply believe in him.

Believe in him. This is to trust in Jesus contained in the content of the gospels revealed in scripture. A trust that has confidence, a trust that is established with faith and which is secure.

Nothing can take that away from you. For someone like Nicodemus, this was theologically shadowing. shattering. It was so shattering he was trying to connect what he's been learning and memorizing and that he just couldn't see it of what he previously understood through all of his teaching in the Tanakh.

[26 : 33] This meant that God's love would not just be available to one Jewish nation. This would extend, this would broaden, that God's love is not just to the Jewish nation, it's broadening now to outside the walls, this is the Gentiles.

And yes, it broadens, but it also, isn't it interesting how it proportionally narrows? Because if it's contingent upon what you do with Jesus, obviously, proportionally, there's going to be less people that are going to see the hope of the gospel and reject him and reject Jesus Christ.

Even his own disciples rejected him. so we can have hope and be assured in God's love. His being vast in scope, but also narrowed in focus upon those who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

I want to take a moment to step back from the text today and just talk to you. Have you ever marveled at this reality?

Have you ever marveled at this? I mean, if you take, if you think about the world in a certain sense, that there is 200 billion galaxies out in the universe.

[28 : 05] 200 billion galaxies in the universe. I just want to check my facts here. 200 billion galaxies, okay?

That's a lot of numbers for a pastor. We just say lots of numbers. When our calculator starts getting the E and all these letters in it, we cash out.

We're done. It's a lot of galaxies. And think about it, zeroing into one of those billion galaxies. Ours is called the Milky Way.

And did you know that the Milky Way has 200 billion suns? Think about this passage now.

did you know that God created all of it? Somebody do the math. 200 billion times 200 billion.

[29 : 09] The vastness of God's love. And within this same book, we see that regardless of the vastness of even outer space can be, Jesus Christ was his plan A all along.

He looked upon this one little planet called Earth within this vast depth of space and sent the greatest gift to mankind to fix the biggest mess that mankind created on this little planet.

And thinking about the narrowness now, thinking about a telescope, say the Hubble telescope, or these weird governmental telescopes that float around and spy on us.

You take a little telescope, you turn the magnification all the way off, you see this big round world, green, blue, all these different colors, and then you magnify that telescope.

What this verse is doing is magnifying that telescope and finding little Brent outside mowing his lawn, sweating, working at the church, pulling plants out. God so loved the world that he gave his only son, but he zooms in to me.

[30 : 43] He zooms in to each one of you. How vast, but how narrow, that he can magnify and focus his love so personally, so intimately into our little lives that are just a vapor anyhow.

Well, Brent, regardless of race, I mean, what if I am a Jew? Yes. Even if you're a Jew, sinner and saint, he has turned sinners and saints, sinners into saints.

Even regardless of ethnicity, he turns a sinner into a saint. Even of race, a lot of race wars going on right now is tragic.

To think even right now, down in downtown Youngstown, there is going to be a peaceful protest going on at the courthouse. God loves every one of them.

But what do you do with Jesus? So in a vast sense, do you know how much God loves you? But in a focused sense, do you know, no, I got that backwards, sorry.

[32 : 03] In a vast sense, do you know how much God loves the world? That his love stretches, but in a focused sense, you know how much God loves you individually.

It is marveling. In this passage, we can memorize it as many times as we want until we actually sit back and marvel at what the implications of this mean. We could just glance over this verse and find ourselves in the chapter 4 within an instance.

I want to go into the second section of passage. And if you could start flipping, I'm going to be referring to Numbers 21. I want you to turn there with me as well.

But we're going to continue in John, but I'm just giving you a forewarning because I'm going to be in Numbers. So go to the left in your Bible quite a ways into Numbers 21.

What we see in section 2, a mirror of Numbers 21. The mirror of Numbers 21.

[33 : 11] Because the verse in John continues, 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.

What's going on in this text? Well, we've got to connect a couple dots here. Rick preached last week very well the scripture which is intended to be Numbers 21.

And I want you to turn there right now at this time because I want to bring the scope of the meaning of the passage today, and especially this particular verse as being important in understanding what is being communicated to Nicodemus.

Numbers 21, verse 4. We're going to read a little bit here and set this scene up. It says in verse 4, from Mount Hor, they set out by the way to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom.

And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, saying, why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

[34 : 32] For there is no food, there is no water, we loathe this worthless food. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people so that many people of Israel died.

So, take a pause there before we continue. Just last week, Rick referred to this passage. Because what's going on in this passage is an explanation to Nicodemus at this time within a certain context of John 3 verse 14 where he talks about Moses lifting the staff.

Well, what was going on before that was the people were being judged. The people were complaining they didn't have a number one Big Mac meal from McDonald's.

They thought the food that God was divinely providing them was worthless food. Complaining that they'd rather go back to slavery in Egypt than to die in the wilderness.

So we see judgment in this passage at this point. moment. But we have to do the text justice. We have to continue. What happens next? Look with me as in verse 7 in Numbers continues.

[35 : 58] And the people came to Moses and said, we have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us.

So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole and everyone who is bitten when he sees it shall live.

So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live. So not only do we see judgment of God sending the fiery serpents to essentially judge these people, to kill these Israelites, God's chosen people, but he also provided a means of salvation through their act of repentance at this time.

Where they said, we have sinned against the Lord. Repentance. Now, going back to John, we're going to go back to John 3.

I want you to see something. during this dialogue with Nicodemus in this nighttime, Jesus was making the very same point in John 3, 14 through 15, where he says, look with me, and 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.

[37 : 41] What are we talking about here? The same exact thing. In order that the world might be saved through him. The connection within Numbers and John 3, 14 through 15, these verses that are kind of surrounding the passage that aren't directly right here, speak so much depth into what we're studying today and see today.

They truly help us understand John 3, 17, doesn't it? It brings a little bit of weight into God's divinely inspired word and brings it to life off these pages.

However, we should see something a little bit different. We should see a mirror, and I want you to see that this morning. Look with me, reflecting upon Numbers 21, of what happened.

God's judgment came and salvation. He made a way of salvation. salvation. He made a means of lifting up a serpent and saving his people.

And likewise, we see a mirror here because the means of God providing his salvation was also the means which he will intend to bring judgment.

[38 : 53] So if you can kind of see how my crazy brain operates, you have judgment, then salvation, well now you have salvation, and then future judgments. So that's what I was talking about when I was saying, like, don't think that we're talking about God's love and everything like that because there is judgment in salvation.

And it's not yet visible in his earthly ministry at this point because he didn't come into the world right now to bring that judgment. The judgment will come later, when the second coming.

Because often we hear about God's love and not judgment. You know, God loves people, man. It's just a hippie love, you know, there's peace on earth, man. Let's just be good, you know. Let's go love people, help the old lady across the street again.

This is good. But not judgment, right? The hippie generation. However, it is important to note that during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, it was a time of preparation.

Make way, make the path straight for the Lord. Right? It isn't to mean that Jesus Christ won't judge, it's just his time of judgment isn't happened yet for our own sake and for the sinner outside, the world that rejects him for their sake.

[40 : 17] Scott doesn't wish that any perish, right? So Jesus, at this time, in Nicodemus' days, there's a progressive revelation still unraveling in Jesus' ministry.

It's not bringing about condemnation of man, but an opportunity of salvation at this time. It's a mirror of Numbers 21. However, this also means for those who receive eternal life and those who will experience eternal torment in hell, Jesus Christ will judge.

We see this in Acts 17 31. He says, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness, righteousness, by a man whom he has appointed.

And of this, he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. Fortunately for Nicodemus at this time, there was opportunity for salvation.

There was time for Nicodemus to pop up again in chapter 8. And later in the later chapters of the book, we see Nicodemus again. There's still time for Nicodemus and if you're not in Christ today, there's still time for you.

[41 : 30] This is the hope that is available today in the world. The judgment of Christ hasn't arrived yet. Jesus Christ is the hope of the fallen, sinful world, that they might be saved through him in verse 17.

Verse 18 continues to allude to the fallenness of the world being separated from him because it's already condemned. This alludes to the sin that stems all the way back to the fallen rebellion of mankind in the garden.

All the way back into Genesis 3. The fallenness of man already existed. They're already condemned because of sin.

Verse 18 continues, whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe in him is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

So the logic in this passage is that if belief is contingent upon being united with God the father through faith, then unbelief is contingent upon being separated in unbelief from God the father.

[42 : 37] United with the father represents eternal life with him, as John 3.16 talks about, and separation with the father results in condemnation, this judgment that will happen in the world, just as verse 19 defines that judgment.

It says, it doesn't leave us guessing in verse 19, and this is the judgment. Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, here we are. The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

You ever get discouraged talking to your friends, trying to bring them to light of the light of the gospel, and you're just discouraged? Don't be discouraged, they just love the darkness.

more than they love the light. And there's still hope for them, for those seeds that you plant in their life. This is the reality of the gospel church. The means of salvation brings about the means of judgment.

With the good news, and what good news it is, it also results in bad news, which brings motivation to our evangelism, to talking and living for Christ outside these walls.

[43 : 50] The hope for those in darkness and evil don't need a ten-step program to help them to know Jesus. They don't need another little feel-good book off of Barnes & Noble's Christian section that helps you improve your life.

They don't need that. They need a new birth, as Nicodemus is told by Jesus. They need to understand these passages in a way that the Holy Spirit ignites something within them, and all of a sudden they're changed from the inside out.

They need a rebirth. They don't need a band-aid to repair their corrupt heart, they need a heart transplant. Ezekiel 36, come on church. Not even the most charitable act upon this earth, you could be the richest man on earth and give all your money to all these third world countries to build freshwater wells, you can give all your money to house and feed people, but if you don't know Christ, there is going to be judgment in your life.

There's nothing that you can do to earn salvation. There's no 10-step program, you need rebirth. You can donate all your riches to orphans and clean waters to third world country, but none of it amounts to the fact of what you do with Jesus.

By your faith. Oh boy, I'm going long today. What's, I'm preaching today, I knew it was going to happen.

[45 : 25] Section 3, let's finish this section as we close and have a time of worship. Section 3 is exposure to the sun.

You see what I did there? I love playing on words. If you know me, exposure to the sun. John 3, 20-21. It says, as we come to the end of the passage, for everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed.

I might jump through this a little bit faster than normal, but simply light exposes the darkness. We don't have to go into a scientific analysis of this. Light exposes the darkness.

Boom. Let's understand that and move on because this is what this passage is talking about. It illuminates the flaws in our lives. It illuminates the sin in our lives. This is a bright light to us painters in this church.

You put a bright light in a room and you see all the flaws that you thought this paint was perfect and then you put that stinking light in and now all of a sudden you've got to put another coat on. You know what I'm talking about.

[46 : 37] You see things clearer. And the closer you are to Jesus, the more your sin is brought out of hiding. And something interesting is that if you are truly in Christ and truly being repentant of your sins, this is refreshing when your sins come exposed.

You desire your sins to be exposed. Maybe God intended it like this for a reason. Maybe so that we can expose our sinfulness so that the world will know who to direct the glory, honor, and praise because we're unworthy of the salvation we receive.

Yeah, we're evangelizing. People might think we're on our religious high horse of being this spiritually elite person but no, we're broken. Jesus exposes our flaws and exposes our sin.

maybe through this exposure the world will see not us but they will see Christ. I think so. The good news of the gospel is this, church, even though mankind has inerrantly rebelled against a holy and perfect God, his light shines in the darkest areas of our lives and it exposes it.

And yet he still loves us. still loves us. Our response to the gospel is what makes this good news or bad news.

[48 : 10] And at this point in redemptive history there's still time for the sinner. It would be good news for us to turn from the darkness just as the nation of Israel turned from their sin in Numbers 21.

Being completely exposed and bankrupt of any hope of their own to save themselves. So we, being on the good news side, being in Christ, we live our lives in a way that turns to Jesus in faith.

That his word is true and God's elective love is sure and renews us from the inside out. However, if this is bad news, it's if we embrace the darkness.

Fearing exposure, fearing vindication, living in bankruptcy, but having a wallet full of counterfeit bills, thinking like we're rich. Vanity.

All is vanity. We live our lives with counterfeit bills if we're not in Christ.

[49 : 21] Church, the problem that the world has with the sharpness of the gospel is not the grace it reveals, but the truth it reveals. The problem this world that has fallen, who is condemned already, has a problem with the truth it reveals.

Everybody wants grace, but the world honestly wants tolerance. They want to live life their own way, not God's way. God calls mankind to repent of their sin while there is still a chance to expose the sin in our lives so that they might be carried out in God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ who hanged on a tree.

Moses lifted the bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if God's judgment fell on anybody in Israel back in Numbers 21, and they were bit by a serpent, they would not die.

All they had to do was look upon this bronze serpent and they would live. So it is also true in the passage and context of today that Jesus Christ was lifted up upon a cross for the sins of the world that whoever believes in him will also experience freedom from their sin, of the penalty of sin, but also receive eternal life.

If you're not in Christ today, stop looking down. It's interesting thinking about the Israelites being judged by these fiery serpents on the ground.

[50 : 50] all they had to do was look at what Moses had lifted up. They saw these fiery serpents biting people, seeing their friends and family falling to the ground, dying.

Are you kidding me? All they had to do was look up? If you're not in Christ on the live streams today, quit looking down. Quit looking at your own life, at your own sin, condemning yourself, hiding, not wanting your friends and family to see your sin.

If you want change in your life and you want to come to true repentance, it should be a delight for that sin to be revealed because when you reveal your sin, you reveal Christ and they see Christ who lives within you.

There's still time to turn. Seek and set your minds on things that are above where Christ is seated, right? Colossians. There's still time.

Let your sin be exposed at this time. But if you are in Christ, I think we need a perspective shift because too often we become enslaved to our desires.

[52 : 03] We live as if we're in the world. We don't know where the church begins and the world ends. There's such a faded line between if you can look at historic Israel, the nation of Israel who was set apart by various covenants and various rituals to set them apart, to distinguish them.

The church today at large is not distinguished. We need a perspective shift, I believe, in the church today. We need to stand back and quit worrying about yesterday, quit worrying about today, don't worry about tomorrow.

Yeah, we're in the middle of a pandemic, but who cares? Jesus is on the throne. Hello. Yeah, you can use wisdom and maybe wear a mask and things like that. That doesn't make your faith futile.

That just says that you're trying to look out for your neighbor and use wisdom. But man, how often they can see our Facebook and just resounding doubt, worry, anxiety.

People talk to us and be like, you're a Christian, right? Come on, church. We need a perspective shift. We need to fixate our minds upon the vastness of God's love, but also the defined scope and the narrowed focus of God's love because it changes us.

[53 : 23] It changes this pandemic. It changes these violent protests that are happening right now. It changes everything when you realize that God loves them all.

It brings a little motivation in your gas tanks, doesn't it? It makes you want to go out there and love them. The most vile, the ones that are in prison, just makes you want to go and say, Jesus, God loves you so much.

Trust in him. So as we come to a close, let the vastness of the love of God extend from the four corners.

Let's marvel at that, that it extends to the four corners of the world. But let us understand also, let's be marveled at the fact that it's so focused that it penetrates our hearts and God seeing all the 200 billion galaxies and 200 billion suns within our one galaxy, he looks down and sees you.

He sees you and you and you. And he loves all of you. Let's get busy, church.

[54 : 39] Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you. So have we?