



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
Richard Cimino
December 27, 2009

The Gospel of John

For God So Loved the World

John 3:16-21

Related Topics: The Gospel in Miniature; The Measure of God's Love; Unto Us A Child Is Born, Unto Us A Son Is Given; How Does God Feel About You?; Eternal Life; Why A Man or Woman is Lost and Condemned; Revelation; The Light of Creation; The Light of Scripture; The Light of Jesus; Rejecting the Light;

REVIEW

Last week eyes dropped on a conversation between Jesus and a man named Nicodemus.

In that conversation recorded for us in **John 3** we discovered that God Incarnate came to engage men and women — not just in masses — but as individuals — because we need him to speak to us individually.

REMEMBER — Nicodemus comes to Jesus with a great yearning — how can he truly know God. Jesus began the conversation by saying — *I TELL YOU THE TRUTH NICODEMUS. [John 3:3](#)*

In a world filled with lies Jesus tells the Truth. Jesus ALWAYS tells the truth because Jesus IS the truth ([John 14:6](#)). Jesus CHALLENGES mankind to BELIEVE His Word as opposed to the lies of Mohammed or Krishna; Buddha or Joseph Smith; Madison Ave and Hollywood!

Jesus the broached the subject of the Kingdom of God — [John 3:3](#)
Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

As we noted last week — At the present there are two domains in the universe. One is under the rule of God and is characterized by life and light; love and truth. The other is under the rule of Satan and it is characterized by death and darkness and lies.

SO FROM THE ANSWER OF JESUS WE KNOW THE QUESTION that weighed heavily in the heart of Nicodemus — *“How can I to get into God’s Kingdom? — Will my religion make me righteous enough for God to accept me?”*

AMAZINGLY Jesus ANSWERED Nicodemus — **with FIVE WORDS. *You must be born again!*** Nicodemus is blown out! So Jesus restates the truth in *Verse 5* and in so doing told Nicodemus **WHY** we must be born twice

The first time you were born it was a physical birth. Your mom’s water breaks and out you come. You’re born into this world through water. The Bible says that in **THAT** birth you came into the world **physically alive** but **spiritually dead**. The Bible is very clear on this point. (*[Romans 5:12-14](#) and [Ephesians 2:1-3](#)*)

UNTIL we experience that **SECOND BIRTH** and a **NEW NATURE** we can’t even **SEE** the Kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer — *No kingdom can understand another kingdom. You must be born into life to know life.*

UNTIL we experience that **SECOND BIRTH** and a **NEW NATURE** we can’t get **IN** to the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is where God rules. **EVERY** descendant of Adam came into this fallen world **AT WAR** with God

Romans 8:7 NLT *For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will. That’s why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.*

Eph. 2:1-3 *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

Jesus is saying to Nicodemus — **I TELL YOU THE TRUTH** Nicodemus — **The ONLY way OUT of the kingdom of this world is the ONLY way IN to God’s Kingdom. *You must be born again!***

If you are Christian, you **ARE** the greatest **MIRACLE** in God’s universe! The very language used by Jesus tells us that **SEEING** and **ENTERING** the Kingdom is **BEYOND** the capacity of man! It is something that can **ONLY** be wrought by God. So

Jesus described the WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in bringing about this Second Birth. Jesus told Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit is like the wind. He comes at us from a direction we could never predict — Works on us in ways we never expected. If the Spirit of God is in you — there is change, there is life. When you see the trees bowing you know the wind is blowing! When the Holy Spirit works this SECOND BIRTH in a man or woman's, life you see hearts bowing before Jesus

Nicodemus, the most renowned Biblical Scholar in Israel is still amazed. In **VERSE 9** he asked again *How can this be? You're making it sound like this is something that God does. Surely it can't be that God moves upon our hearts and God fixes us and God heals us. How can that be?*

Then Jesus told Nicodemus that the only way that man CAN be BORN AGAIN is to look at the Son of God lifted up from the earth on a cross — slaughtered in YOUR place — paying the penalty for all of YOUR sins; past, present and future.

AGAIN — I TELL YOU THE TRUTH

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH — You must be born again — tells us that we need more than a Teacher, we need a LIFE GIVER

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH — The Son of Man must be lifted up — tells us that we need more than a teacher, we need a SAVIOR.

GUYS — GOD HAS DONE ALL OF THIS so that you can be BORN AGAIN — and as a result SEE the Kingdom of God and ENTER the Kingdom of God. God has come for you. God has died for you. God has risen for you. God has given you a spirit. God has given you His Word. God has given you the Truth.

I could ask the question — How do you feel about God? But that is not the PRIMARY question. The PRIMARY question is — How does God feel about you? Because when you understand that — you would in a heart-beat say, *"I know how I feel about God — I LOVE Him!"*

This morning — the Sunday after Christmas — we are going to look at what John tells us about what is in the heart of God toward you. It is very likely the most well known verse in the Bible. For those of you who are Christians — I hope that it rings as true to you this morning as the first time you heard it and believed it with your heart. I hope you never get tired of hearing this verse. I hope it never becomes cliché. It would be the greatest joy for some of you to hear it this morning and have it ring true for the very first time — that you would hear it in such a way as to move you to love God.

Here it is!

¹⁶"For God so loved the world,

How many do you love? How many people do I love? Jesus says that God loved the whole world! We need to be very clear on this point

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle — *The love here spoken of is not that special love with which the Father regards His own elect, but that mighty pity and compassion with which He regards the whole race of mankind. Its object is not merely the little flock which He has given to Christ from all eternity, but the whole "world" of sinners, without any exception. There is a deep sense in which God loves that world. All whom He has created He regards with pity and compassion. Their sins He cannot love--but He loves their souls. "His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psalm. 145:9.) Christ is God's gracious gift to the whole world.*

I tend to love people that love me! It doesn't say that the World so loved God.

I tend to love people that are somewhat lovable. John declares that **God loves the world!** We've already seen that this fallen and from birth in rebellion against God. God loves this world that's at war with Him. **AMAZINGLY** — He loves you and me in it. **AMAZINGLY** — he loves you and me **out** of it. And then He sends us back in it so that other people will know that God loves them.

HOW MUCH does God love the world? HOW does God DEMONSTRATE His love for the world?

16"For God SO loved the world, THAT he gave his only Son,

700 years earlier Isaiah declared — **Unto us a child is born; Unto us a SON is GIVEN.** Given for what? He didn't give His unique and only begotten Son to be a religious figure / moral example / famous teacher. He GAVE His Son to be the sacrifice for our sins!

We came into this world physically alive but spiritually dead. We sin by nature and by choice. The wages of sin is DEATH. God loved us SO MUCH that He sent His Son to die in our place. God loved us SO MUCH that He sent His Son to taste the death that we deserve because of our sins (**Heb. 2:9**). God loved us SO MUCH that He sent His Son to pay the penalty that we had stored up for ourselves. God loved us SO MUCH that He sent His Son to endure the wrath that we deserved because of our sin and rebellion (**1 John 4:10**).

that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

ETERNAL LIFE! FIRST — Most people hear this term and they immediately go to the DURATION wrapped up in the term. It is breathtaking — it is mind blowing. But it is much more than an eternal existence. The CRUCIAL part of the term is LIFE!

Eternal life is not something that begins after death and continues for eternity. LIFE is what we were created to know and experience in relationship with God, Who IS our

life. Sin destroyed that — separated us from God, Who is our life. Because of sin, man merely exists! He exists merely on the level of the physical and emotional. He goes from one physical or emotional gratification to the next — thinking that is life. When Jesus said — “I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly” — He was speaking to men and women who were breathing —they had brain waves and heartbeats. But they were not really living. They were existing.

Jesus defined **ETERNAL LIFE** in the 17th Chapter of John’s Gospel.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

REAL LIFE CONSISTS in fellowship with God! It begins HERE on this side of heaven and CONTINUES through all of eternity!

We need to understand that every human being is going to EXIST forever. At the cessation of physical life we enter into the realm of eternal existence. The question is — WHERE will you spend eternity? Heaven or Hell? The question is — HOW will you spend eternity? Eternally separated from God with the capacity to experience pain and torment forever without dying? Or will you spend eternity in the presence of God — enjoying life derived from Him in a new heaven and new earth where there is no more sin, no more sorrow; with a glorified body that will never get sick or die — a body that has the capacity to appreciate the unveiled glory of God’s presence?

BIG QUESTION: WHO will live in fellowship with God forever? HOW does one pass from death to eternal life?

whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life

REMEMBER — Jesus prefaces this with ***I TELL YOU THE TRUTH***

God LOVES you — He loves you SO MUCH that He GAVE His Only Begotten Son. **THE BIG QUESTION IS THIS** — Do you believe that’s true? Is Jesus telling you the truth?

Contrary to the lies of false religions — contrary to the philosophical systems of human wisdom — Jesus says that we RECEIVE the gift of eternal life by FAITH and FAITH ALONE. Jesus repeats this THREE times. Twice He says — that *"whoever believes shall not perish."* Once He says — *"He that believes on the Son of God is not condemned."* Nothing beside faith in Jesus is necessary — nothing but faith in Jesus — will give us an interest in what Jesus accomplished on the Cross.

Without faith there is no salvation — but through faith in Jesus — the worst of sinners will be saved.

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle — *If we would have a peaceful conscience in our religion, let us see that our views of saving faith are distinct and clear. Let us beware of supposing that justifying faith is anything more than a sinner's simple trust in a Savior, the grasp of a drowning man on the hand held out for his relief. Let us beware of mingling anything else with faith in the matter of justification. Here we must always remember faith stands entirely alone. A justified man, no doubt, will always be a holy man. True believing will always be accompanied by godly living. But that which gives a man a saving interest in Christ, is not his living, but his faith. If we would know whether our faith is genuine, we do well to ask ourselves how we are living.*

BIG QUESTION: If God loves us so much — HOW does one end up CONDEMNED and PERISHING forever in Hell?

¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,

God didn't send Jesus to CONDEMN the world. When Jesus entered the world it was ALREADY condemned before God. There is no need to condemn that which has already been judged. REMEMBER — Jesus says ***I TELL YOU THE TRUTH*** — Despite what secular humanists might say about man being essentially good — the world is already condemned.

but in order that the world might be saved through him.

REMEMBER — Jesus says ***I TELL YOU THE TRUTH*** — Despite what secular humanists might say about man being able to save himself and the world — Mankind is incapable of saving himself — Despite what how many people think of God as anxious to CONDEMN us and send us to hell — God sent Jesus to SAVE a condemned world.

¹⁸Whoever 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.

Jesus says — ***I TELL YOU THE TRUTH*** — this is simple. Because of your sins, you are condemned. And, because of what Jesus did in dying on the cross, you can be forgiven. So, your either condemned, or your forgiven. The issue to be settled is this — do you believe that Jesus died for you? Do you believe that He rose for you? Do you believe that God loves you?

If you say — *Well if God loves me — if God is love — then He would never send me to an eternity in hell.* (My religion teacher in Catholic H.S. said that)

QUOTE: C.S. Lewis, The Quotable Lewis — p.292 (#695) and 293 (#698)

¹⁹And this is the judgment:

This is the verdict. Here's the bottom line.

the light has come into the world,

The term *Light* here is sort of an all-encompassing concept to tell us about God's person, God's work — Who God is and what God does. Light from God's creation. Light is truth — Light from Genesis to Revelation. God IS light — and He came into this world — It refers to Jesus. *Here's the deal... light has come into the world.*

and people loved the darkness rather than the light

In our age, they're not even ashamed of it — they boast of it as if it were virtue. They make bumper stickers and have parades! Why do they do that? Why do they love darkness?

because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.”

TWO MEN: One man has broken into your home at night. You come home and he runs into the night. The police helicopter flies over head — shining its searchlight on him. He RUNS from the light for fear of getting caught. He likes the darkness. He doesn't want to be in the light — Because his deeds are evil. The other man has broken down in the middle of nowhere in the dark of night. He gets out of his car and begins to walk through a wooded area in hopes of finding help. But he realizes he is totally lost — doesn't even know which direction his car is. From above him a helicopter's searchlight shines down on him. THIS man KNOWS that he is lost and desperately wants to be found — he RUNS to that bright light. When it finally shines down on him, blinding him — he is thrilled because he has been RESCUED. Someone has cared enough about him to LOOK for him and find him!

BIG IDEA — This fallen world is in the DARK about who God is and how He might be known. Fallen man is left to SPECULATION in his attempt to discover God and the meaning of life. God did not leave man groping in that moral and spiritual darkness. He rescues man from the futility of SPECULATION by means of REVELATION — God lovingly and graciously REVEALS HIMSELF to man who is lost and rebelling against Him. He SHINES the LIGHT of who He is into this world.

I would love to spend an hour with you just on this amazing subject. I want to encourage you to visit our web site and have a listen and look at our 2nd Credo Study — REVEALTION: God Speaks

He REVEALS Himself — shines the LIGHT of whom He is through

1.) CREATION – (Remember *John 1 — In the beginning was the Word.....³All things were made through him*)

***Romans 1:19-21** ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

***Psalms 19:1-4** ¹The Heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above There is what is proclaims his handiwork. ²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

QUOTE: John Calvin “God...has.... revealed himself and daily discloses himself in the whole creation and preservation of the universe. As a result, humans can not open their eyes without being compelled to see God.” (Inst. I, V, 1)

CREATION tells us that God must be POWERFUL. CREATION tells us that God must be BEAUTIFUL because creation reflects something of His glory. CREATION tells us something of the merciful and compassionate and loving care of God. The complexity of the immune system — the ability of the body to **fend off** disease and **restore** health — tells us of the compassion and mercy of God. God created the eye to see — the ear to hear — the hand to touch. They tell us of the love of God in wanting us to experience pleasure and joy

He REVEALS Himself — He shines the LIGHT of who He is through

2.) SCRIPTURE — God literally worked through human authors to SPEAK to us.

***2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God*

Beginning in Genesis all the way through the book of Revelation God has SHINED the light of Who He is — How He has worked in human history to bring Jesus into the World — the record of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus — and the promise of the return of Jesus to the earth.

Beginning in Genesis all the way through the book of Revelation God has SHINED the light of TRUTH — The truth about how to live — the truth about sin — the truth about our sin and our need for a Savior.

FINALLY — God REVEALS Himself — He shines the LIGHT of who He is in the person of

3.) JESUS —

John 1:1; 14; 18 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Hebrews 1:1-3 ¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

So there is this HUGE light that God shines down upon a dark world and God is calling out to every man and woman — *Everyone who wants to know the King and be a child of the King, step into the light.*

The evolutionist doesn't reject the light of revelation in creation because it's unreasonable — He rejects that light because he doesn't want to be the creature that must answer to the Creator.

The critic of the Bible doesn't reject the Bible because it's unreliable in its record or because the original documents are unreliable and can't stand up against other ancient documents. He rejects the light of revelation in Scripture because it leaves him naked and guilty before a Holy God.

The man or woman who rejects Jesus doesn't do so because Jesus was a liar or a lunatic. They reject Jesus because His coming — and the purpose of His coming — labels them as hopelessly lost and in need of a Life-Giver and a Savior.

Each of them is essentially like the first man we talked about a few moments ago. Each of them essentially say: *I don't want to know the king — I don't want to be a member of the kingdom because I love the darkness. I don't want to be in the light because my deeds are evil. If I stand in the light, then here I am with all my sins, holding it in my hands, completely exposed and I am humiliated. I don't want to come into the light because I don't want to quit sinning.*

There is only one reason that you would ever take your sin and your wickedness and your darkness and bring it into the light — **You believe that God loves you.** Like the second man we spoke about a bit ago, you recognize that you are lost and you recognize that the one shining that bright light on you loves you and has come looking for you. **REMEMBER** — **Jesus prefaces this whole conversation with** — ***I TELL YOU THE TRUTH.*** If you believe God loves you, you will let God fully expose your sin — you will stand naked before the King who loves you and died for you!

Right now, at this very moment, I want you to pray that the Holy Spirit would do His work of convicting you. If you are unable to do that, you really do not believe that God

loves you. In your heart you have taken the position that Jesus is not telling the truth — you are saying that Jesus is a liar.

You need to believe that God loves you. You also need to know that as long as you are holding on to that darkness, you can't live in eternal life. He wants to forgive you and heal you so that you can move out of the kingdom of death and darkness and lies — and step into the Kingdom of life, light, love and truth — step out of death and into eternal life.

THAT really is the ultimate reality of what we just celebrated on Friday.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

“God” — The greatest Lover
“So loved” — The greatest degree
“The world” — The greatest number
“That He gave” — The greatest act
“His only begotten Son” — The greatest Gift
“That whosoever” — The greatest invitation
“Believeth” — The greatest simplicity
“In Him” — The greatest Person
“Should not perish” — The greatest deliverance
“But” — The greatest difference
“Have” — The greatest certainty
“Everlasting Life” — The greatest possession