

Jesus, the Son of God

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[0 : 0 0] Morning. Wow, I didn't expect an actual answer. Thank you. My name is Ed, as Sean explained. I'm a pastoral intern here. If you haven't gotten a chance to meet me, if I haven't gotten a chance to meet you, it's my joy and privilege to share with you a message that I actually prepared this time.

On John 3, verses 16 to 21, as we continue on in our Advent series in the book of John. So please turn with me in your Bibles to John 3, 16 to 21. If you don't have a Bible and would like one, please don't be shy. Just raise your hand up really high and one of our greeters can go and get you one. Again, that's John 3, 16 to 21. Let's pray before we get into the text.

Heavenly Father, God, I am your humble servant. I plead and I ask that you would use me as your steward. I would only say the things that you want me to say, that I wouldn't add anything to your word or take anything away from it.

God, you would give me the heart today that is more concerned with what these people think of you than think of me. Would our eyes be on you, Christ, today? Be magnified, be glorified, be treasured, be **Jur** wild? As you so rightly deserves. Give us eyes to see, hearts to understand that area **oldu** Nós temos to understand the breadth, the length, the depth, the width of your love that surpasses knowledge.

[1 : 5 7] God, help us today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Let's stand, if you are able, for the reading of God's word. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

I'm going to read that again. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

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. 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. People love 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.

[3 : 1 8] But whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

You may be seated. John 3.16 has to be one of, if not the most widely known verses in the entire Bible.

For many of you, it very well might be your favorite verse. It's not without good reason as Martin Luther, the famous performer, has called it the heart of the Bible, the gospel in miniature.

John 3.16 is the number one popular verse on Bible Gateway every year. It's on bumper stickers, posters, mugs, children's arts and crafts, even athletes' tattoos.

But the danger of its popularity is that it can be so commonplace that we lose the wonder of this beautiful truth. Back a few years, I have a memory of walking past some Christians in New York City who are evangelizing in the street, who held up these big posters that just said John 3.16 on it.

[4 : 3 9] And they were saying to the people passing by, God loves you. God really loves you. And I don't know, maybe I was in a sour mood that day.

Maybe I was just still in a cage stage of being a Calvinist, meaning that I really should have been locked up in a cage. But I remember not being encouraged or challenged, but instead of my immaturity, I'm ashamed to say I scoffed at them, thinking that I graduated to some greater, wiser theology than just saying God loves you.

And I said to myself, how elementary. Do they really know what they're saying? And really, if I'm honest in my heart of hearts, I'm ashamed to say that I was really thinking God doesn't love these sinners.

But as I was praying and prepping for the sermon, I'm reminded of that time and realized how much more biblically and theologically correct that they were with those simple words.

That we never graduate from this verse in John 3.16. So my prayer today is that our Heavenly Father would show us again the profound, unbelievable truth that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[6:09] So today we'll break down our passage of John 3.16 to 21 into three simple points. Talk about the love of God. Then we'll talk about the Son of God.

And then finally, our belief in God. To begin to understand the context of our passage today, we read earlier in the chapter that Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, who was a ruler of the Jews.

This Nicodemus had come to Jesus to speak and learn from him. And he did this by night in fear of getting caught by the rest of the Jewish leaders, who, let's say, would be not the happiest to find out that Nicodemus was doing this.

It's to this man with all the stature and accolades in this Jewish society to whom Jesus teaches that their Heavenly Father loves the world, the entire world.

And to understand the full weight of this claim to Nicodemus, let me give you some words that Jesus did not choose to say here. Jesus did not say to Nicodemus, the Jewish leader, that God loved Israel.

[7:18] It was common Jewish belief at the time that God loved Israel and then opposed the rest of the Gentile world. Back then, they must have held closely to their hearts like in Isaiah 43, in which God says this to Israel.

But Jesus teaches Nicodemus, the law-abiding Jew, that God loves the world with no strings attached, no prerequisites, any race, any history, regardless of whether they upheld the holy standards of God's laws.

And in this moment, Jesus is teaching Nicodemus that God loves the Samaritans, the half-blooded Jews from the diaspora that Jews despised and strongly disagreed on matters regarding the proper worship of God.

Samaritans, because of their history, were originally part of Israel. But they ended up developing a synchronistic religion, taking parts of Judaism and idolatrous Canaanite practices.

And so tensions often ran high between these two groups. Jesus also teaches here that God loves the Romans, Israel's governing authority at the time, who to the Jewish eye practice such abominable, grotesque acts of polytheistic idol worship.

[9:02] For us today, Jesus did not say that God loved the church or the righteous, which of course is included, but again, the entire world.

This broken and evil world is the object of God's love and affection. Friends, do you really understand?

Do you comprehend the awesome width of God's love? Just compare your love and your heart with God's for a second. Do you see how big God's heart is?

And just how small our own hearts are? It's not hard to see in our own hearts if we're honest with ourselves that there are people, there are groups of people in our lives and in this world that we don't love, that we look down on.

To those who are rude to service workers. To the selfish and arrogant who need to control every conversation. To the racists who commit hate crimes.

[10:12] To those who've deeply hurt us and scarred us in our past. To those who openly mock and scorn the idea of a God. Scripture teaches us that God the Father loves even these.

And this love is completely unmerited, completely free. This love is given on God's initiative, His own prerogative. And just sitting in this verse the past couple weeks, I have to say that this measure of love that God has just astounds me.

How, God? How? How can you love this idol-worshipping, foul-mouthed, untrusting, dishonourous, murderous, adulterous, stealing, lying, coveting, sin-stained people?

How can you love this messiness? And how can you love me? Just look at the news on an average week. It can be depressing.

Thinking about the status of our unlovable world. And it's to these people that have made such a mess of this world that we live in. And yet God says that He loves us.

[11:33] But, but wait, hold up. Does this mean that God actually condones the sin of this world? That He approves of our folly? How should we understand John 3, 16 with passages like 1 John 2, 15-16?

Where the same author, John, he writes of the world. And he uses the same Greek word for world in our passage today like this. He says, Do not love the world.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world.

This passage says, if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. But then John 3, 16 says, God loves the world. Does Scripture contradict itself here?

Just looking at the rest of our passage today, we can clearly see no. This love that God has for this wayward world is not one that approves of sin. And it's not just disapproval.

[12:44] But the sobering truth is that God will punish unrepentant sin by condemning, by condemning these people to hell.

In fact, we read in verse 18 that those who do not believe in Jesus Christ stand condemned already. Later on in chapter 3, in a parallel statement to 3, 16 to 17, verse 36 further shows that the wrath of God remains on him.

You don't have to wait until judgment day to know what your final verdict is if you are not putting your faith in Jesus today. Neither God nor the biblical authors are blind to the folly of this world.

That's precisely why John says in 1 John, to turn away from all worldly systems and sin that go against God's kingdom. But if God doesn't approve of the world's sin, how can John say that God loves the world in our passage here today then?

I think it's helpful to really understand how we ourselves tend to use the word love in different ways, very freely, very naturally. We say that we love this and we love that.

[14:14] If I say to you that I love cheeseburgers and I love my wife, I hope you would assume that I don't have the same exact kind of love for both cheeseburgers and my wife Christine.

One is clearly a deeper, more heartfelt love. In the same ways... For cheeseburgers... No, I'm just kidding.

I thought about making that joke, but I've refrained from it. But... In the same way, Scripture speaks of God's general love for the world, but also a deeper, more heartfelt, intimate love that God has for his own children.

Staying in the book of John, we read Jesus saying in chapter 17, For I have given them, them being all who have believed and all who will come to believe in Christ, the words that you gave me and they have received them, and they have come to know in truth that I came for you.

And they have believed that you have sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me. They are yours.

[15:34] Jesus says that he's praying specifically for God's children who have faith in him. So they enjoy a specific love and unique privileges of being in Christ.

And it's not uncommon for Scripture to present God's love like this. For example, through the prophet Jeremiah, God indicts and rebukes the nation of Moab.

He says this, Let Moab wallow in her vomit. Let her be an object of ridicule. Moab will be destroyed as a nation because she's defied the Lord.

But at the same time, through the same prophet, In the same chapter, God's heart recoils within him. And he says, Therefore, I will wail.

I wail over Moab. For all Moab I cry out. So my heart laments for Moab like a flute. So while it's true that the Bible teaches that God has a special love for his chosen, his faithful, and that he doesn't condone the world's sin, we mustn't let go of any of Scripture's teaching that God does love the world.

[16:54] We have to hold on to that biblical tension faithfully. And my earlier analogy that I used fails here because God's love for the world is greater than my own trivial love for cheeseburgers.

Peter writes in 2 Peter 3-9, God does not wish for any to perish.

That's not mere sentimentality. That is God's genuine love for the world. That's exactly why he commissions us to go and make disciples of all and every nation, every people group.

That's God's heart for us to be saved. And we ourselves should be thankful. We should praise God for this amazing truth.

Because every one of us Christians, we are part of this evil world. We were dead in our sins. Dead in our trespasses.

[18 : 05] That all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But at some point in all our testimonies, the simple truth captured in three simple words.

God loves you. Was the catalyst to your radically transformed lives. Sure, you're not perfect now. But before, you wanted nothing to do with God.

You didn't care for living for him, to be pleasing to him, to die to yourselves. But now, by grace, you want more of Jesus.

Even if you don't feel that right this moment, you still want to want him. You're a new creation. The old is gone.

The new has come. So, brothers and sisters, be absolutely biblically and theologically confident that you can say, for the broken and lost in your life, God loves you.

[19 : 07] God really loves you. That is a biblical truth that we can absolutely be assured of. For a lot of the people that we may evangelize to, because of their past sins, or the distance from the church, or whatever reason, many have a tendency to believe the lie that God must hate them, that God doesn't want anything to do with them.

That is not what scripture teaches. This Christmas season, wherever you are, whoever you're celebrating with, may this be the greatest gift you bring them.

For the invitation to come to believe in Christ is universal. It's open to everyone. No matter who you are, what you've done. Of course, don't just stop at God loves you, leaving them with the impression that they don't have anything to change.

But instead, we must lead them to repentance from sin and idolatry. But still, it's God's love. It's God's love and kindness that lead us to repentance.

The modern definition of love has been reduced down to full acceptance or approval of someone's actions. The common sentiment is that the most loving thing to say is just, you do you.

[20 : 36] But just like a father of a son who's losing his path, who's squandering away his life, a genuine fatherly love doesn't just say, you do you. And condones of the child's behavior, but instead longs for him to change, to grow, to come to an experience, an abundant life.

And church, I know that there are those in your life that you so earnestly desire to come and see the grace of Christ and the love of God for your parents, children, siblings, grandparents, your best friends.

I know you've poured out your tearful prayers, pleading the Lord to save these. John 3.16 shows us that you are not alone in your love for them.

God the Father loves them too. Let us continue to wait in this Advent season for Jesus to come to change their hearts. Let us persevere in praying earnestly that as D.L. Moody, the American evangelist in the 1800s, has once described the gates of heaven, that they would read from the outside the words, whosoever will may come.

And after being compelled by the love of the Father, that they walk in and they read on the other side, chosen, chosen before the foundation of the world.

[22 : 09] If you have yet to put your faith in Jesus and you've joined us today, well, on behalf of our entire church, we just want to say we're so happy and excited that you joined us today.

Honestly, I think there is really a short list of things that are more exciting than on a Sunday morning to see you join us. And if it's your first time in a while to come to church, you might have a lot of questions.

Please, please come talk to us. Learn more about this historical faith and person of Jesus. And if there's anything that I pray you leave this sermon with, is that you know God loves you.

He created you in love. He longs for you in love. That is his posture towards you. We pray that you would come and see that his faithful love is better than life itself.

And you might ask, well, that all sounds well and good, but how do I know that God loves me? Well, I thought you'd never ask. Come to our second observation in that God so loved the world that in this way, he gave his only son.

[23 : 17] Wait, wait what? Does God have a son? Muslims would hear that and scoff. Protest. How lowly of God to have a physical relationship with Mary, have a son in Jesus.

Greeks might be reminded of their Olympian gods like Zeus and his demigod offspring. Even throughout church history, people have often struggled with making sense of what this means, as shown by the need for the councils of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

and Chalcedon in 451 A.D. that dispelled heresies about this very doctrine. So what is it, what does the Bible teach us about this given title of son of God?

Well, Jesus' birth narratives in both Matthew and Luke make it clear that Jesus is not literally God's son in the sense that he had a physical relationship with a woman, as is common in pagan literature.

Instead, the title of son in our passage today is being used the same way that the ancient world used this idiom of being the son of X.

[24 : 27] Being called the son of something or someone was a way of signifying likeness. Since back then, it was thought that a son would so closely resemble his father, like his attributes, back then his occupation.

Renowned New Testament scholar D.A. Carson is helpful here. As he explained, being called a son of worthlessness was an extremely harsh criticism because it didn't signify that your parents were worthless, but that you yourself were so worthless, you must have come from such a worthless family.

This definition of a biblical idiom helps because Jesus, in fact, is not the only person in all of Scripture to be called son of God in Scripture.

For example, we find that Adam, Israel, David, peacemakers in the Beatitudes, even angels, are all referred to as a son or sons of God.

So in each use, in some way, these people are all reflecting at least some attribute, one specific attribute of God. Adam is called the son of God in the genealogy in the beginning of Luke because, like the rest of humanity, we are all made in the image of God.

[25 : 49] We mirror God by just being made in his image. In the Beatitudes, when Jesus says, blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

When we make peace among our relationships here, when we pass the peace as we do every Sunday, we reflect that same peacemaking attribute of the Father.

So we are bestowed that same title of a son or daughter of God. But in our passage today, it says that God so loved the world that he gave his only son.

Meaning that Jesus is uniquely God's son. in the sense that only Jesus embodies the exact fullness of the Father. Hebrews 1, 3 says, the son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being.

In other words, Jesus is equal to the Father. Jewish leaders understood this phrase too in John 5 for John writes, this was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

[27 : 08] The Gospel of John in many places makes it clear that the Father dearly loves the Son. For example, verse 35 in chapter 3 later says, the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

Moreover, this title of Son of God is so biblically rich and multilayered and just as a side note, it's a great case study of why Christians gain so much by understanding all of Scripture because you just see the astounding beauty of how all 66 books of the Bible across 40 different plus authors just mesh.

Nicodemus might have heard this title of Son of God and likely connected this to the foretold king who would fulfill God's promise in David, to David in 2 Samuel 7.

Here, God promised David that he would raise up an offspring after him who would establish the throne of his line, his kingdom, forever. God promised to David that I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.

I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. And when you're reading through 2 Samuel 7, if your nose is trained for it, you can just smell the aroma of Christ all over that passage.

[28 : 34] How would a biological descendant of David eternally reign? Unless, of course, he is the divine. Now, this idea that David's biological descendant would be the coming Messiah is not just spoken to David, but this idea is propagated to other Old Testament prophets, as Isaiah 9 so beautifully puts it, and I think I have this up here.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it. Jesus is God's only son, the sent and prophesied Messiah, the one to take over David's eternal throne.

He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. And for the biological son of David who would have the title of Everlasting Father, the faithful Israelites waited. And it's this waiting that characterizes this Advent season that we celebrate together with the rest of the global church. To be honest, I really never understood the significance or the importance of celebrating Advent really prior to prepping the sermon.

[30 : 09] And I know maybe some of us feel similarly. So, so for those of us who are unfamiliar with Advent or the four weeks leading up to Christmas, Advent, which the word itself is derived from the Latin word which means coming, and Christmas specifically became associated with the winter solstice, the day in which we have the shortest day and the longest night of the year in the northern hemisphere.

And that just feels poetically fitting, right? That the light of the world is born on the darkest day. Just like the saints before Jesus' first coming who are waiting for the light to come, we also find ourselves waiting.

Because for us today, who now live between Christ's first and second coming, this Advent season really has a dual meaning. We celebrate that Christ has come to take away the sins of this world. And we, along with the rest of creation, we still wait. We wait together for Christ to come again and to make this wrong world right. To make our own sinful hearts right.

As the 20th century Christian martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, the celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect and who look forward to something greater to come.

[31 : 46] To the broken and contrite, to those longing for something greater to come, only then will Christmas take its full meaning. So during this Christmas season, with these reminders to wait for Christ, the question begs, what are you waiting for in your life?

Who are you waiting for? If you can believe it, it's already almost the new year. 2023 is soon coming and I know that many of us have very exciting plans and expectations for this new year. Like going on vacations, getting married, finishing school, maybe having children. All amazing blessings from God.

God, and while 2023 might still be the best year of our lives, and I pray it is, I can still make one promise to you. It won't fulfill your greatest longing.

Whatever event or milestone that you're waiting for, it won't be everything that you've been waiting for. We celebrate Advent each year as a simple reminder of what and of who we're waiting for, who all of creation is waiting for.

[33 : 08] We are waiting for the Christ. Understanding the weight and the gravitas of the title of Son of God and how the saints have longed for him to come, we see now how much God so loved the world.

We can often read that word so, thinking that this signifies the quantity, the amount of God's love for the world, and that he loved the world so much. But this word is actually used as verse 14, uses it just a little earlier.

Verse 14 says, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. This word so is more about in which way or how God loves the world.

This love wasn't reserved to just a feeling, as our modern society so often defines love, but he loved the world by taking the physical, tangible, historical action of the giving of his only Son.

And we know that God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him, as verse 17 says. This loving act of the giving of the Son of God is again parallel to verse 14, in which Jesus refers to Numbers 21, 4-9, where the Israelites once again, they complain, as they always do.

[34 : 40] They complain of their preferred food and drink, called the miraculous manna, worthless food. So, God sends fiery serpents that would bite the Israelites so that they would die.

But after they cry out for help, God commands Moses to make a bronze figurine of the serpent and teaches those who are bitten to look upon the serpent as he lifts it and live.

And so now you remember the details of the story, but let's just imagine that you were there. Just imagine that you were one of the voices crying out in the rebellion against Moses and God, just letting your anger get the best of you.

You're angry, you have to eat this manna one more time. So you're complaining and grumbling before Moses and now others are now joining in on that grumbling.

The crowd just gets larger and angrier and angrier and then from a distance you hear petrifying screams of terror among the people.

[35 : 47] You dart your eyes around, see what's the cause and then you see there are snakes. There are snakes slithering around and they're biting the people around you.

Many of your own neighbors, family members, friends are getting bitten and you see them eventually drop dead. While terrified, you're trying to now avoid the crawling snakes.

and right when you think you're in the clear, one fastens its fangs into your thigh and you know what's going to happen next. Terrified, you look around to see if there's anything to be done.

Then you hear Moses praying and you look and he's lifting up a bronze figurine of a serpent. What a strange sight. But he yells that all who are bitten look and live.

So knowing you have no other options. You trust in the power of that simple statue to save. You look. You desperately look. And you don't move your eyes off of the serpent.

[36 : 56] By the grace of God, you survive. You survive the bite. In the same way, God gave his only son, his beloved son, to be lifted up on the cross to bear the agonizing suffering of drinking whole, the cup of wrath from the father, so that all who are bitten by our own fiery serpents, bitten by the pangs of sin, that we can look upon the lifted son of God, the preeminent Christ, and we can live.

You see, this is a life or death situation. This is a life or death situation. Your eternity is on the line. So look, look and live.

find your life in the lifted lamb of God. That's what it means to believe in him so that you won't perish but have eternal life as we come to the final point of our sermon.

For the son of God, God incarnate, laid down his precious life, crushed and cursed so all who would live, all who would look and believe, would not perish under the terrible weight wrath of the father.

But we could spend eternity in loving, perfect communion with God in heaven. Brothers and sisters, this is one thing we cannot lose.

[38 : 20] We must fight for is the wonder of Christ's condescension. This is a long quote, but I think it's helpful. Charles Spurgeon, a pastor in the 1800s, often called the prince of preachers, preachers, spoke of the strong servant and of Christ in this way.

Some wise one said, why was it a serpent that did the mischief? How can a serpent undo it? Yes, and men will say it was by man that sin and death came into the world.

Can a man be the means of our salvation? Ah, says another, having the prejudice of a Jew about him, and what a man he was, no king, no prince, no mighty conqueror.

He was but a poor peasant, and he died upon the cross. Ah, so said some in the camp, they said it was only a bronze serpent, not even a golden one.

And how could a bronze serpent be of use to them? We're not selling for much if it were broken up. What was the use of it? And so men say of Christ, he is despised and rejected of man.

[39 : 32] A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And they hide their faces from him because they cannot see how he has adapted for their cure. Just understanding the title and the son of God earlier now helps us see that God withheld absolutely nothing in the sending of his only son.

How many gods, how many gods have you heard do this? How many kings give up their own sons for rebellious people?

How many lords step down from their thrones to wash his servants feet? I come back to this verse again and again, but Romans 8.32 brings us to such an amazing, unbelievable truth.

He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Do you guys get the logic of that verse? Our heavenly father gave the absolute highest price that he could pay, his precious own son, with whom he enjoyed love and communion from eternity past.

[40 : 48] So if he gave him up for you, what other good thing that is so much smaller than Jesus? What would he withhold from us?

This father, he gave his son, his only son for you. So brothers and sisters, we mustn't look to our circumstances then to evaluate God's love for us, or else we'll just get spiritual whiplash looking back and forth.

I know how easy it is to do this. We think I got promoted at work. God must love me. I got diagnosed with a debilitating illness.

God doesn't love me. I got engaged. God must love me. love me. God loves me. God loves me. God loves me.

God loves me. God doesn't love me. I got a clean bill of health. God loves me. My marriage is struggling.

[42 : 01] God doesn't love me. And so the cycle can go on and on and on. Instead, we must look to the cross. cross. St.

Augustine, the great theologian once said, the cross is the pulpit in which Christ preached God's love for the entire world. You see, this act of looking and this belief is the key determining factor of someone's eternal destiny.

For reading on in verses 18 to 21, why? Why are the ungodly, the lovers of darkness, condemned? While certainly their other sins are deserving of condemnation, verse 18 gives an interesting answer.

With the word believe repeated three times in this short verse, the emphasis is on the act of believing in Jesus. Jesus highlights that they are condemned already.

Why? Because they have not believed in him. To refuse then the son of God and his blood poured out for you is really to call down judgment on yourself.

[43 : 11] In a sense, this is the greatest folly that someone can commit. This is the greatest reason that someone be condemned, that they reject the son whom the father sent in love.

But why? Why do they reject the son? Read with me in verse 19 to 21. And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and the people love 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 be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

These next verses now show then the process of how one's wicked deeds and disobedience to God lead then to an outright rejection of the light.

Verse 19 to 20 show that the people choose, they choose to shut themselves in darkness because they have no desire to be disturbed or exposed.

[44 : 18] They refuse to make changes in their lives because they're too comfortable in their sin. So they live in darkness in their eyes and they grow accustomed to the darkness.

darkness so that when the light of Christ comes it hurts their eyes. They don't want to see it. In fact it's actually too weak of language to use because it's not that they don't want to see the light but they love the darkness.

They love the darkness over the light. They love the darkness because they love their evil deeds being hidden. They value their own pride, their own image rather than integrity and contrite faith.

But then verse 21 says that those who have put their faith in Jesus are radically different. They do what is true completely by the grace of God.

Those that see Jesus for who he really is seeing him as infinitely valuable as the son of God and as their source of light and as their source of life.

[45 : 34] They are the ones that act in righteousness, obedience by the power of God. So instead of running away, they step into the light, not out of arrogance or haughtiness, but in humble redirection to the glory of God.

God, so friends, as I close, I exhort again, we must keep our eyes on the light of the son of God. Put negatively, we mustn't let our eyes become fixated on the darkness. What are some things in your life that keep your eyes off of Jesus?

What do you fixate your eyes on? Is it money? Is it social media? Is it video games? Is it others? Is it yourself? Jesus himself warns of this in Matthew 6. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

[46 : 39] But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. You'll have a healthy eye. When you view Jesus, when you view him as lovely, as your supreme treasure, and everything else

just loses its value in the light of Christ.

In this Advent season, let's keep the main thing the main thing. Let's joyfully celebrate how God sent the light of the world, the son of God, to the darkness. Let's faithfully wait for the light of the world to come again.

As Hebrews 12, 1-2 says, Let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. God, I pray, astound us by your love again. May we never lose the wonder of how much you condescended Christ.

[48 : 01] You came, took on flesh to save a broken and rebellious people. How, how did you, how? How could you love in this way?

How could you love us in this way? Amen. God, amaze us. This Advent season, it's all about you. We look to you, Jesus.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.