

Pt 17 Condemned for Unbelief – John 3:17-21

A sermon series in the Gospel of John, by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church www.pbcknox.com

John 3:17-21

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

We pick back up where we left off 2-weeks ago when we did a deep dive on John 3:16. In that message we looked at:

1. God's love, and how it is a sacrificial love.
2. We looked at the "whosoever," and saw that it is those whom God has willingly drawn to Himself.
3. We saw "the only begotten Son" is Jesus, the only one of His kind.
4. We touched on "free-will" and saw that we have as much free will as God allows us to have.
5. We talked about how the only way a person will turn from their sin and toward Christ is if God the Father draw him to do so.
6. We discussed how we must believe in Christ and His finished work on the cross to be saved.
7. And we talked about "eternal" means everlasting, forever, never ending.

This morning we are going to look at the flip side of John 3:16 and talk about condemnation. I've titled the message "**Condemned for Unbelief.**"

Let's remember this whole dialogue began with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and Ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus in the night with questions about how he could see the Kingdom of God. Jesus started out by giving him an earthly example of a baby being born and he didn't understand that. He then proceeds to give him an example from Old Testament scripture of when the Children of Israel had sinned, and God sent fiery serpents and the only way a person could live is if they would by faith look up at the brass serpent on the pole that Moses lifted up.

Then, Jesus starts pointing Nicodemus to Himself as the means for inheriting the Kingdom of God and having eternal life.

Even though this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus occurred over 2,000 years ago, the message is still the same today. We must point men to Jesus Christ as the ONLY means of inheriting the Kingdom of God and having eternal life.

Just as Peter said to the Jerusalem council in **Acts 4:12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Sadly, men today want to look to some other means besides Christ. Whether it be their own works, baptism, or religion, men do not want to accept the truth that Jesus Christ is the ONLY means of salvation.

There is a great song which was written in 2001 by two men from the UK, Keith Getty, and Stuart Townend. Listen to the first two verses of "**In Christ Alone.**"

Verse 1

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my Light, my Strength, my Song
This Cornerstone, this Solid Ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace, When fears are stilled, when strivings cease,
My Comforter, my All in All, Here in the love of Christ I stand

Verse 2

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless Babe
This Gift of love and righteousness, Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid, Here in the death of Christ I live

I don't like many songs written after 1960 but that one is a good one!

The truth is, if you are looking toward some other means besides Christ to be saved, then you will die and go to Hell for eternity. Which is that Jesus is relaying to Nicodemus in our opening text: **17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

We discussed last time what was meant by "**the world**" in John 3:16, and that was "**The ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ.**" This includes murderers, fornicators, liars, cheaters, whoremongers and any other unimaginable wicked sinner, including us.

Since the world was and is lost, we needed a way to be reconciled to God. The only way that was possible is through a sacrifice. God sent his Son, Jesus, to be that sacrifice to us so we could be saved. As our text says in verse 17, God did not send his Son into the world to condemn us, but He sent Him so that we might be saved.

That word "**condemn**," means "**to judge and pass sentence on.**" God very well could have done that and used Jesus as the means to do it. In fact, there will be a day when Jesus will do that. Listen to what it says in **John 5:22-27** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: **23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.**

We read this over in the Book of **Acts 17:31** Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

So, there will be a day when the world will in fact be judged. Salvation will be too late at that point. Judgement which results in condemnation is not a trial where a person can plead their case. It is a sentencing. That will happen to the lost world and Christ is the judge.

We as believers, will not be judged for our sins but we will appear before the judgement seat of Christ to be judged of the things we have done since we've been saved. Not for sins, but for our works.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Romans 14:10-12 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Those who believe on the Lord Jesus for salvation will NOT be condemned to Hell, which in the context of our verses in John chapter 3, is basically what being condemned means.

I saw something one of my preacher friends posted on social media this past week that was pretty good. He said, "I'm so saved I couldn't be lost if I wanted to be."

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

We need to make sure we understand that this verse is saying and not saying. The part that says "He that believeth on him," doesn't mean anyone who believes he is real or that he existed is saved.

We saw an example of that when we were studying in **John 2:23-25** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

And don't forget what the Bible says over in **James 2:19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

We know the devils aren't saved yet they believe in Him in a sense.

I get pretty irritated whenever I hear someone say, "Give Jesus a try." You don't "try" Jesus, you receive Him. Those same people are big on death bed confessions. They think if someone just yells out the name of Jesus they can be saved. They say "Well, the Bible says in **Romans 10:13** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That is very true. It does say that in Romans 10:13 but it also says something before that and after it which they conveniently leave out:

Romans 10:9-17

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

So, believing on Him entails much more than just surface belief or head knowledge.

To believe on Jesus means that you believe in Who He is, What He did, Why He did it, and Why you need Him.

1. **Who He is:** He is the Son of God, The Christ, and was sent here to be the Savior of the world.
2. **What He did:** He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins, was buried, and rose again in 3-days.
3. **Why He did it:** He did it so the world (meaning us) could be saved and not have to suffer the penalty for our sins which is everlasting punishment in Hell.
4. **Why you need Him:** You need him because you realize you are lost with no way to save yourself and He is the only means of salvation and you believe Who He is, What He did, and Why He did it and you receive Him as Your Savior.

These last 3 verses explains why men and the world is condemned: **John 3:19-21** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The Jews had been looking for the Promised Messiah for many years. He had been prophesied throughout the Scriptures. This Messiah would be referred to as "Light."

Isaiah 60:1-5 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side. 5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

This light that was to come and shine His glory on both the Jews and even the Gentiles, would be the Gospel through Jesus Christ. The "darkness" being referred to in our text is speaking of the ignorance of man. Ignorance to the truth concerning their sin. Paul mentions this in his sermon in Athens: **Acts 17:30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

But, now, the Light of the Gospel was sent to shine a light on that darkness.

Matthew 4:13-17 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That passage is referring to what is written in **Isaiah 9:1-2** Nevertheless the dimness *shall* not *be* such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her* *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Not much has changed over the past 2,000 years. Men still love darkness rather than light. The world is still under condemnation because the Light has been sent yet the world refuses to come to the light because they love the darkness which covers their evil sins.