

John – Week 13 – Come to the Light – Bible Study Helps

Title: Come to the Light: Understanding Condemnation and Salvation

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Jesus Christ's conversation with Nicodemus in John 3, focusing on the profound truth that humanity is already condemned apart from Christ. The pastor emphasizes that Jesus did not come the first time to condemn the world, but to save it, as the world was already condemned. The message contrasts "evil doers" who hate the light and avoid truth with "truth doers" who come to the light for help and transformation. The sermon stresses that eternal destiny hinges not on the severity of individual sins, but on what one does with Jesus Christ. Believers are called to understand their former condemned state to better appreciate God's grace, and to actively share the gospel with urgency, knowing that the unsaved are already sentenced and awaiting eternal punishment. The sermon concludes with a call to communion, encouraging believers to examine their lives, repent of sin, and remember Christ's sacrifice.

Key Points:

- Jesus Christ did not come the first time to judge the world, but to save it; He will come the second time to judge in righteousness
- According to Jesus, those who do not believe are already condemned, not awaiting judgment
- No person is good enough to merit salvation; Romans 3 declares that none are righteous, no not one
- Condemnation means being already judged, sentenced, and awaiting execution of that sentence
- Justification is a complete change of legal status from condemned to declared not guilty through faith in Christ
- Eternal destiny depends on whether one accepts or rejects Jesus Christ, not on the relative goodness of one's works
- Evil doers hate the light and avoid truth because it exposes their deeds and convicts them
- The Apostle Paul's struggle in Romans 7 reveals that even believers have flesh that wars against God's truth
- Truth doers and genuine believers cannot live without Christ and willingly come to the light for reproof and transformation
- Believers should regularly examine their lives, repent of sin, and participate in communion with pure hearts
- Christians have an urgent responsibility to share the gospel because the unsaved are condemned already and one breath away from hell

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Scripture Reference:

- John 3:9-21 (primary passage)
- John 3:16
- John 12:46-47
- Luke 9:55-56
- Psalm 9:8, 96:13, 98:9
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10
- Romans 3:9-23
- Romans 7:18-25
- 1 Corinthians (referenced for communion teaching)
- 1 John 1:7-9
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Ephesians 5:26

Stories:

- The story of Moses lifting up the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21), used by Jesus as a type of His crucifixion
- The woman caught in adultery, where Jesus wrote on the ground and those accusing her were convicted by their conscience
- The pastor's personal testimony of salvation on January 7, 1996, when he realized he was condemned and needed Christ
- The story from 1 Kings 22 about Micaiah, the prophet whom the king of Israel hated because he prophesied truth rather than pleasant things
- The pastor's experience of first going street preaching with Brother Earl six years prior, which transformed his perspective from self-focus to Christ-focus
- An illustration about calling a young man who was about to sin, and the phone call helped prevent him from sinning
- A reference to Mark Zuckerberg building underground bunkers in Hawaii, illustrating that the wealthy are preparing for tribulation but cannot escape God
- The pastor's first experience at a Baptist church as an unsaved person, initially thinking the preacher was crazy for constantly saying "the Bible says"
- The woman at the well from John 4, who told her town that Jesus knew everything about her

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Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that we were 'condemned already' before salvation change your appreciation for what Christ has done for you?

Why do you think people resist coming to the light even when they know they need help with their sins?

In what ways have you personally experienced the war between your flesh and your desire to serve God, as described in Romans 7?

What prevents believers from boldly sharing the gospel with loved ones who are heading toward eternal separation from God?

How can we distinguish between godly conviction that draws us to repentance and condemnation that keeps us from God?

What does it mean practically to 'come to the light' in your daily life, and what areas are you currently avoiding bringing before God?

How should the truth that our eternal destiny hinges solely on faith in Christ, not our good works, affect the way we live and witness?

Why do you think Jesus emphasized the word 'believe' seven times in John chapter 3, and what does genuine belief look like?

In what ways might Christians be guilty of loving darkness rather than light when it comes to confronting their own sin?

How does regularly taking communion help us remember our former condemned state and motivate us to live holy lives?

Small Group Guide: Come to the Light

Based on John 3:17-21

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth, and for courage to examine our lives honestly in His light.

Ice Breaker

Share about a time when you heard difficult truth that you initially didn't want to hear, but that ultimately helped you. How did you respond initially versus later?

Key Scripture Reading

Have someone read John 3:17-21 aloud. Then read it again from a different translation if available.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **The Condemnation Reality**
 - What does it mean that people are "condemned already" according to verse 18?
 - How does this differ from the common belief that God will weigh our good deeds against our bad deeds?
 - Why is it important to understand our condemned state before we can appreciate salvation?
2. **The Purpose of Christ's First Coming**
 - According to verse 17, why did Jesus NOT come the first time? Why DID He come?
 - How does understanding this change the way we share the gospel with others?
 - What scriptures were referenced showing Jesus will come a second time to judge? (Psalm 9:8, 96:13, 98:9, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

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3. **Belief as the Determining Factor**

- Count how many times "believe" appears in John 3:12-18. Why is this repetition significant?
- What does it mean that our eternal destiny hinges on what we do with Jesus Christ, not just on our individual sins?
- How does this truth simplify or complicate the gospel message?

Personal Reflection

4. **Light and Darkness**

- What does Jesus mean when He says "men loved darkness rather than light" (v. 19)?
- Can you remember a time when you avoided God's truth because you didn't want your deeds exposed? What happened?
- What's the difference between an "evil doer" and a "truth doer" according to this passage?

5. **Coming to the Light**

- Verse 21 says truth does "come to the light." What does this look like practically in daily life?
- When was the first time you truly understood you were "condemned already"? How did that realization affect you?
- Share about a time when coming to the light (through Scripture, preaching, or fellowship) helped you overcome sin.

6. **The War Within**

- The sermon referenced Romans 7:18-25 about Paul's internal struggle. How do you relate to this passage?
- Why do we sometimes avoid church, Bible reading, or fellowship when those are exactly what we need?
- What "distractions" keep you from affecting God's kingdom?

Key Takeaways

Biblical Truths to Remember:

1. **Every person is condemned already** - not waiting for judgment, but already sentenced (John 3:18)
2. **Jesus came to save, not condemn** - His first coming was for salvation; His second will be for judgment (John 3:17)
3. **Belief in Christ changes our legal status** - from condemned to justified, from guilty to not guilty (Romans 8:1)
4. **Evil doers hate the light** - because it exposes their deeds and convicts them (John 3:20)
5. **Truth does come to the light** - seeking to be changed, cleansed, and made more like Christ (John 3:21)

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6. **Our flesh wars against God** - even as believers, we struggle, which is why we need constant time in God's Word (Romans 7:23)
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Practical Applications

This Week, I Will:

For Personal Growth:

- ☐ Spend 15 minutes daily in God's Word, asking Him to expose areas that need change
- ☐ Identify one sin I've been avoiding dealing with and confess it to God (1 John 1:9)
- ☐ Write down 3 ways my life has changed since trusting Christ

For Community:

- ☐ Reach out to another believer for accountability in an area of struggle
- ☐ Attend all church services this week (Sunday and Wednesday) to "come to the light"
- ☐ Join or start a discipleship relationship with another believer

For Evangelism:

- ☐ Make a list of 5 unsaved people I care about and pray for them daily
- ☐ Share the gospel with at least one person this week, emphasizing they are "condemned already" and need Christ
- ☐ Invite someone to church or a Bible study

Honest Assessment: Ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I avoid God's Word when I'm living in sin?
 2. Am I more concerned about what people think than what God thinks?
 3. When was the last time I was "reproved" by Scripture and actually changed?
 4. Am I affecting God's kingdom, or am I distracted by worldly pursuits?
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Deeper Study

For those wanting to dig deeper this week:

- Study the "believe" passages in John's Gospel (John 1:12, 3:16, 3:18, 3:36, 6:47, etc.)
- Read through Romans 1-3 to understand humanity's condemned state
- Examine the passages about Jesus' second coming (2 Thessalonians 1-2, Revelation 19)
- Memorize John 3:17-18

Closing Discussion

Final Thought: The pastor said, "We ought to be the most joyful people" because we've been pardoned from death row.

- On a scale of 1-10, how much does your life reflect the joy of someone who's been saved from condemnation?
 - What would change if you lived each day remembering you were "condemned already" but Christ saved you?
 - How can this group help each other "come to the light" more consistently?
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Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer

- Share specific areas where you need to "come to the light"
- Pray for unsaved loved ones who are "condemned already"
- Ask God for courage to be truth-tellers in a world that hates the light
- Thank God for changing your legal status from condemned to justified

Close by praying together: Thank God for His incredible grace, confess areas of darkness, and commit to walking in the light this week.

Next Week's Preparation

Read John 3:22-36 in preparation for the next study.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." - John 3:17