

Condemned Already John 3:14-21

Our Lord's words to us in these scriptures are so very rich and full of meaning, able to convey so many varying messages of love and concern for us as His beloved children, loving assurances of His watchcare over us, and loving instructions of guidance as we navigate our way through all the many difficulties of daily life.

In these words for today here in John chapter 3, our Lord tells us about the wonderful eternal salvation that He has brought with Him into this world, and He also gives us the reason why His salvation is so necessary, that each of us was born into this world with a lost and corrupt soul, loving the darkness of this world and desperately in need of the salvation He is providing for us.

That while this lost and dying condition was not originated through sinfulness that we had done, but was inherited from those who came before us, it is still nonetheless present within us and it is terminal. And we really must do something about it during our lifetime, else we are condemned already and will surely perish.

And here, thanks be to God, He gives us the remedy, the solution to our lost and perishing condition of soul. Here, our Lord tells us that He has come into this world to bring a "light" that will enable us to see through the confusing "darkness" and to show us the way out of it into the salvation of His eternal "light".

I call it a "confusing darkness" because in our natural condition of soul we don't even know that we are living within a world of "darkness". But we are, dear friends, we really are. And only the Lord Jesus has the remedy, the solution, the "light" that will enable us to see through our condition of darkness.

Recall in chapter one of this Book of John, that our Lord spoke to us at length about how as He came into this world, He brought with Him His special kind of "Light", a Light that can enable us to see the real "realities of life" in this otherwise dark and dangerous world, a "light" very different from the kind of light that comes from the sun, a "light" that instead enables our senses to see through and within the ever-present darkness and to know about the realities of

such things as "sin and righteousness and judgment", the realities of morality and immorality, good and evil.

And there in our study, we recognized and accepted that that "darkness" really does exist, a special kind of "darkness", the kind described for us in the Book of Ephesians chapter 6 where we are warned to,

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

Let's pause for a moment and read these words of our passage for study today and we'll talk more about it. Here, beginning in John chapter 3, verse 14 we read,

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ 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." (John 3:14-21)

Each morning as we get out of bed, we most often begin our day with at least some small degree of natural confidence. We've lived and worked our way through all the other days that have come before, and we assume that we will do the same with the one in front of us. And that is probably so!

To the unbelieving world, the day and the things of the day is all they recognize, and in a very real sense, it truly is all that they have. So, they try to make the best of their opportunities and then they move on through the day.

As believers in Christ though, you and I know that there is so much more. We know that hidden behind the fabric of this visible world of ours is another world, another reality altogether, a realm of the unseen that continually interacts with us and influences us and causes us to do things that we would not otherwise do.

Our Lord speaks about that invisible world in the Book of Ephesians chapter 6, telling us about those realms of darkness and the fearful beings that reside within it, realms of darkness that are governed by the forces of evil. And all the people who have a disposition of heart towards evil go there in that darkness to hide.

But thanks be to God, there are realms of light that are governed by the power and the presence of the Lord Jesus. And He has brought His light into the world to dispel that darkness.

And folks, please know that that realm of darkness should never be thought of as passive. It doesn't just sit there quietly and wait for you and me to intentionally or unintentionally wander into it. No, the realm of darkness is active and it is predatory. It is the realm where sin lives and has its being. And sin never waits on its victims. As God told Cain in Genesis 4, "Sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you".

Sin is in no way passive. It will at every opportunity lure you and me into its haven of darkness.

But folks, you and I can't simply claim the role of being a "victim" of sin. We have our own role in all that takes place. As you and I are reminded in today's passage, we have been born with a predisposition to love that darkness and to try to hide within it.

But thanks be to God, He loves us and He doesn't want us to be there. And He has sent His Son into the world to change us and to provide us a way out of our darkness.

Oh dear friends, this scripture is so very clear and it must not be allowed to be misrepresented. The simple truth is, you and I are born into this world "dead already" and on our way to hell.

And if something dramatic does not come into our lives to change us, we will go there. Listen! Verse 18,

¹⁸ . . . he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)

We come into this world lost because we come into it not believing in the only Begotten Son of God. Listen again!

¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸He that believeth on him (Jesus) 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. (John 3:17-18)

This is pure and unsullied truth folks. Contrary to what many people want to believe, you and I were born into this world completely lost and in need of a Savior. "I am a sinner in need of a Savior". "You are a sinner in need of a Savior".

We may not like that concept. We may want to be able to think of ourselves as having at least some form of goodness within us. And perhaps in some secular moral sense, we may.

But here in John 3, God is not dealing with the secular human side of our existence. He is dealing with the spiritual side, the "eternal" side of life. And He wants to save us from the condemnation of it.

Listen again! Verse 18,

¹⁸He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already. (John 3:18)

And God repeats that condemnation a few verses later in verse 36, by saying,

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. (John 3:36)

Folks, those words are emphatic. The words "God's wrath remains on him", bespeaks a truth that a trial has been held, a verdict has been reached and a sentence has been handed down, the sentence is the "wrath of God". And anyone who reject the Son, the wrath of God will remain on him for an eternity. Wow! Wow!

But folks, please know that God doesn't want this to take place with us, that God's wrath would remain upon us and that we be condemned. He wants us to be saved! Verse 17,

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

Unfortunately, most of the people across our world don't have any idea what being "saved" means. If you walk up to the average unbeliever on the street and say, "You must be saved!" They would probably say back to you, "Saved from what?" . . . "Saved from what?"

Folks, a person who is not saved and does not have the Holy Spirit within them can't perceive their need. 1 Corinthians 2 clearly tells us that truth. Listen!

¹⁴The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

It's no wonder then that if you or I walked up to an unbeliever and said to them, "You are a sinner in need of a Savior!" They would think us to be "foolish".

The only thing that the unbelieving mind perceives is the natural and the secular things of this life. They can't see behind the fabric of time and events and see the ever-present hand of God. And because they can't, the next verse becomes their end. Verse 18,

¹⁸ . . . but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)

A question . . . do these words not shock you. They should! They really should shock you and me down to our very core!

The simple truth is, you and I and every other human soul is born into this world with a "defect", a defect so vile that we cannot be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of God with it. That defect is our "sin nature".

And there is no investigation needed to see if someone might have slipped through the process without receiving their sin nature. It is absolute and it will never vary. If we are human and if we are born, then we will have a sin nature and we are "condemned already".

Listen to how absolute this truth really is! Romans chapter 3 verse 10,

¹⁰ . . . "There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ there is no one who understands,
no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one." (Romans 3:10-12)

Again, simply put, you and I are born into this world as helpless sinners in need of a Savior, condemned before we are even born.

The New International Version of the Bible substitutes the word "verdict" for the King James word "condemned". Both are correct, but this particular word form is slightly different from the word condemned used earlier. This word implies a "condition", a forgone conclusion. Listen!

¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

And no, it doesn't take long for our behaviors to bear out this truth that we are born with a sin nature. Even as a small child, we begin to show that nature within us, crying when we want something, throwing a fit when we don't get our way.

And certainly as we grow, our lifestyles and our behaviors begin to declare our sinful guilt. And it is the light of God that reveals our guilt. As we step into His light, our sins become glaringly obvious.

Why do you suppose that adulterers usually hide in the darkness, behind closed doors?

The eyes of drug users dilate, and their eyes hurt when exposed to the light. So they stay in the darkness as much as they can.

And why do you suppose that barrooms are dimly lit?

Why do you suppose that you see people out mowing their grass on Sunday morning instead of going to Church? It's because the light of God's word being preached in our churches is actually painful to them!

Even worse, why do you suppose that many men and women go to the very liberal churches? They do it for the same reason! The real light of the true gospel hurts their eyes. So, they intentionally go to a church where the gospel is not preached and the preacher just tells them how much God loves them.

And those who love darkness usually pick friends and companions who also love darkness. Why, so that they can walk almost continually in the darkness where they are most comfortable.

Isn't this all so clear? God is proven right at every turn. His words again,
¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

Folks, I realize that I am repeating these words over and over again. But it is ever so important that we understand.

These words of our Lord tell us that men and women love darkness. And I know that God is speaking specifically of the darkness brought on by an absence of the light of God's Word.

But in human terms, men and women can't perceive why they "feel" guilty. They just have a sense of guilt and a need to hide their faces. And I believe that that is why much of what used to be daytime activities have moved later on into the night.

Lifestyles have developed that promote and enable more nighttime activities. Many of those activities aren't sinful in themselves. Walmart and many other stores are open all night. Many clothing stores are open until 10:00 or 11:00. None of which are sinful, but they do facilitate and make life easier for those that are hiding their lifestyles in the darkness.

Many people today stay up well past what you and I would call bedtime. It's necessary to their lifestyle. Darkness can hide a lot of things.

And no, the natural darkness itself is not the culprit, it only facilitates the culprit. Sin is the real culprit. And we are born with that culprit already deeply imbedded within our souls. And darkness simply allows it to roam a little more freely.

One more thought about these scriptures that we have been considering today. As I read them, I'm reminded of a news interview I heard recently. In that interview, a person responded to a question by saying, "I'm not a bad person! I'm a good person."

And I can agree that not everyone born into this world is a hardened criminal, a thief, a murderer, a rapist or child abuser. And very often, as people measure themselves and their lifestyles as compared to some other people, they might honestly believe themselves to be "good people". And as measured against those others, they might very well be a "good person".

But consider what our Lord is saying to us here in these words that we've been studying. These words again,

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. (John3:17-18)

Take a moment and consider exactly what our Lord is talking about here. Yes, our lifestyles and our behaviors are important. but they aren't the real problem. They are only an outward evidence of what is taking place deep within our heart and our soul.

As we mentioned a moment ago, it is "sin" that is at the foundation of our problems, "sin" residing deeply within our heart and soul, "sin" that flows out from the sinful nature that was born into us at birth.

And God is Holy. And because He is Holy, He can never permit "sin" to enter into His presence in the eternal Kingdom of God. And unless and until that sinfulness and that sin nature is dealt with and removed from us, we will be lost and condemned for all eternity.

And contrary to some of the confused thinking of most people, our doing of “good things”, our “good behaviors” will not remove, “wipe away” the sinfulness that resides within us.

No, that can never be. We are told clearly in Hebrews chapter 9 that without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sin. It requires the shed blood of the Lord Jesus on the cross to remove a person’s sin and to cleanse them from their unrighteousness.

And that is what these words are all about, removing, taking away our sinfulness and our sinful nature.

Recall that those were the first introductive words given by John the Baptist. He said of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”.

This is what must take place within our hearts and souls, else we will be eternally condemned.

And thanks be to God, here in these few words, our Lord has given us the full and complete remedy for our sins. Listen again! Verse 14,

¹⁴ . . . as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:14-17)

And all that you and I need to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus, to receive Him and to receive the gift that His shed blood provides for us, and then everything will change. We can then be the people He wants us to be. And we can have the behaviors and the lifestyles that he wants us to have. And instead of being condemned, we can then enjoy an eternity with Him in His kingdom.

Pray with me.