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# JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

## *THE PROFOUND LOVE OF GOD*

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A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter  
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on April 16, 2017

### INTRODUCTION

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The best-known verse of the Bible is likely John 3:16. One major reason for this is the verse's focus on the love of God. God's love is wide and selfless, available and welcoming. And yet, it is very likely that the love of God many people think about when they think of this verse is far less profound than the love of God truly explained there. John's Gospel sets God's love on spectacular display. In this message, we shall investigate and marvel at the profound love of God.

### **JOHN 3:16-21 (ESV)**

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only 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 3:16-21 (MMV) Marc Minter Version**

16 **God**, motivated by an *active* and *purposeful* and *decisive love*, gave the gift of His *perfect* and *unique Son* to *those who would believe* or *trust in Him*. Through *what Jesus does* and *who Jesus is*, guilty sinners who trust Him do *now have eternal life*.

17 The work of Christ's *first coming* was not to bring *final judgment* to humanity, but instead, Jesus came to be the once-and-for-all *Deliverer* of blameworthy rebels.

18 For those who *believe* or *trust* Christ, there *is not now* nor *will there ever be any condemning judgment* from God. But, for those who *do not believe* or *trust* Christ, they have *already been judged* as *guilty*, and they shall *remain* under *condemnation*, because they have *neglected* the *only* way of *escape*.

19 The *reality of condemnation is confirmed and increased* by those who *hear this news* and *do not believe*, for the *reason* people *remain condemned* is that *they* (actively and decisively)<sup>1</sup> *love* their *evil* and the *darkness* that keeps them from being *exposed*.

20 Those who do *sinful* and *wicked* things *hate* to be *exposed*, and so they *hate* the *light of the Gospel*, which *exposes them*, and they *avoid* the *light of truth* with violent and active rebellion.

21 But, whoever *believes and practices truth* comes into the *light and is exposed*, so that it may be *revealed* that *any good he or she has done* has been *brought about through* the *power of God*.

## THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY:

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**The Love of God is profound indeed! Do you believe?**

## MESSAGE OUTLINE:

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**(1) THE PRESENT REALITY**

**(2) THE EXCLUSIVE AND GRACIOUS SAVIOR**

**(3) THE PROFOUND LOVE OF GOD REVEALED**

**(4) DO YOU BELIEVE?**

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<sup>1</sup> There is bitter irony here. The same word (*agapaō*) is used for sinners loving their sin as is used for God loving sinners.

## (1) THE PRESENT REALITY

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**.

- The things you naturally think, say, and do are evil/wicked
  - Wickedness is defined by Scripture, not by feelings or pop-culture
    - “Now the **works of the flesh** are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that **those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God**” (Gal. 5:19–21).
      - **Three words deal with warped sexuality**.
        - *porneia* – **sexual immorality**; broad perversion
        - *akatharsia* – **impurity**; deviant sexual practices
        - *aselgia* – **debauchery**; unrestrained sexuality
          - Do you ever have a generally less-than-holy sexual thought in your mind? Does it feel unnatural or natural to you?
          - When you are watching TV or a movie, and a sexually explicit scene appears, do you feel as though you have been violated or stimulated?
          - We are naturally wicked my friends...
      - **Two words deal with false religion or spirituality**.
        - *eidololatria* – **idolatry**; the worship (fervent pursuit) of anything or anyone other than God
        - *pharmakeia* – **sorcery**; in this case it is the use of drugs to provoke a pseudo-spiritual experience
          - How many hours a week do you spend on knowing God better? Is there anything you chase harder than a better understanding and awareness of your Creator and only Savior?

- Do you prefer dialing into what God has revealed about Himself in His Word, or simply imagining God to be whatever you feel He is?
  - Does anyone or anything force you to focus your attention elsewhere?
  - We are naturally wicked my friends...
- **Four words deal with relationally-destructive attitudes.**
  - *eritheia* – **rivalries**; self-seeking motive, competitive
  - *phthonoi* – **envy**; desiring what others have
  - *zelos* – **jealousy**; zeal that comes from a hungry ego
  - *echthrai* – **enmity**; hostility
    - Do you ever feel that others have gotten a better shake than you? Do you celebrate the success and blessings of others, or are you disappointed that such things are theirs and not yours?
    - Does your jealousy and competitive motivation ever turn into hostility? Is this something you have to consciously decide to do?
    - We are naturally wicked my friends...
- **Four words deal with dysfunctional relationships.**
  - *eris* – **strife**; argumentative and seeking to pick fights
  - *thumoi* – **fits of anger**; outbursts of rage
  - *dichostaiiai* – **dissensions**; divisions between people
  - *aireseis* – **divisions**; warring groups
    - When you are wronged, do you tend to gather people to your cause?
    - Are you given to regular disagreement with others?
    - Do you ever burst out with angry words or actions you later regret?
    - Does this stuff feel unnatural to you? Or is it quite easy to travel this angry path?
    - We are naturally wicked my friends...

- **Two words deal with purposeless pleasures.**
  - *methai* – **drunkenness**; addiction to pleasure-creating substances
  - *komoi* – **orgies**; literally “partying” in the sense of unbridled passions; addiction to pleasure-creating behaviors
    - Do you chase after or indulge yourself substances designed to make you “check-out”?
    - Are you known for running with the “party crowd”?
    - Does anyone have to force this upon you? Or do you notice a strong desire all by yourself?
    - We are naturally wicked my friends...
  
- You naturally love darkness because you think it protects you
  - “the light has come into the world, and *people loved the darkness rather than the light because **their works were evil***” (Jn. 3:19).
    - Oh, how natural it is for us to love the darkness!
      - The last thing any of us wants to do is listen to me talk any more about what I have been addressing so far!
      - We know we are guilty... You don’t have to say it!
    - I regularly speed... When I see a police car, I slow down, but as soon as I believe the car is out of range I resume my regular practice.
      - You and I sin like that too... We feel at ease when holy people (at least holier than us) are not around. We feel as though our thoughts, words, and deeds are done in darkness... no one will know.
        - Ah, but someone does know... everything: “**If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you (God); the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you**” (Psalm 139:11–12).

- You naturally hate the light of Christ
  - The Light of Truth is naturally repulsive to you
    - “Everyone who does wicked things *hates the light...*” (Jn. 3:20).
      - What ‘light’ is John talking about but the ‘light’ of Christ?
        - John says of Jesus Christ, “*In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness...*” (John 1:4-5).
  - Spiritual/Biblical Truth is naturally foolish to you
    - “*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (moronic, stupid) to him...*” (1 Cor. 2:14).
  - It only makes sense...
    - If our goal is self-preservation, then we are not going to expose ourselves to anything that may harm us.
    - I can’t think of anything with greater potential harm to myself than to be utterly exposed (every thought, word, and deed) before God and man.

## (2) THE EXCLUSIVE AND GRACIOUS SAVIOR

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*.

- Condemnation is the present reality, therefore no Savior is deserved
  - The Bible never asks the questions: “Why didn’t God provide more than one Savior?” or “Why doesn’t God save everybody?”
  - Instead the Bible presents a picture of universally condemned humanity, undeserving of any Savior.
    - All are naturally ‘*condemned already*’ (v18)
      - Romans 3:10-12 – “*None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless [depraved, corrupted]; no one does good, not even one.*”

- A Savior was graciously sent!
  - “17 God **did not send** his Son into the world **to condemn the world**, but in order that the world **might be saved through him.**” And “18 Whoever believes in him is **not condemned...**”
    - Oh, what grace is revealed here!
      - 1) God came to the world, in the person of His Son, but not to condemn!
      - 2) Furthermore, God sent His Son to SAVE (rescue, redeem)!
      - 3) Further still, God sent His Son to undo ‘condemnation’
        - God the Son came to save, not condemn, and to do it by releasing the sinner from his/her condemnation.
        - BUT HOW?
        - This is the Gospel, my friends...
          - 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “**For our sake** (Whose?) **he** (God the Father) **made him** (the Son, Jesus Christ) **to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him** (Christ) **we** (the guilty) **might become the righteousness of God** (not condemned, but righteous).”
- There is no other Savior
  - Jesus is the ‘**only Son of God**’ through whom salvation comes (v18)
    - “**whoever does not believe [in Him] is condemned already**”
      - Hebrews 2:3 – “**How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?**”

### (3) THE PROFOUND LOVE OF GOD REVEALED

16 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’s Love is purposeful
  - God doesn’t love like teenagers love; He doesn’t love like many adults love; He loves with purpose.

- God's Love set His purposeful plan in motion – His plan to redeem sinners by the work of His Son.
  - The cross of Christ does not make sinners lovable!
  - The cross of Christ demonstrates, once and for all, that God has loved you despite the fact that you are unworthy of His love!
    - YOU ARE NOT WORTHY!
      - You are not worthy today; you weren't worthy yesterday; you won't be worthy tomorrow...
      - A million years from now, you still will not be worthy, but that doesn't change the fact that God has purposed to love guilty sinners like you!
- God's Love is decisive
  - From what we have talked about so far, there is nothing in humanity that would motivate God to love... He has decided to love.
    - God's love is reflected in a story in the Old Testament: Hosea and Gomer.
      - Hosea was a prophet, and God often commanded His prophets to live in odd ways. The purpose of their odd living was to be a picture of the message God was trying to get across to His people.
        - Hosea prophesied during a time when Israel was wealthy and prosperous, but Israel had also become idolatrous and disobedient. Israel had left God and had given herself over to worldly living.
        - God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute, Gomer. In this way, God would picture His decisive and committed love for His people. They, like a prostitute, gave themselves away to everyone but God; however, God, like Hosea, was committing Himself to love an unfaithful wife.
        - If that weren't enough, Gomer went back to prostituting after Hosea married her. She was

unfaithful continually. And yet, Hosea came again to her; He paid her “pimp” and took her home. Hosea decided to love Gomer, and acted on his decisive commitment.

- God is like that! God’s love is like that!

**Major Point: The Love of God is profound indeed! Do you believe?**

#### **(4) DO YOU BELIEVE?**

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.

- Believe
  - Believe is such a funny word today.
    - “I believe it’s going to rain...”
    - “I believe in you... you can do it!”
    - “Believe!”
- Come into the light
  - If Jesus is the Savior, who demonstrated God’s love for you, who took your sin and shame upon Himself, then believe it... come into the light.

**Major Point: The Love of God is profound indeed! Do you believe?**

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

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***The Essence of the Gospel*** by C.H. Spurgeon

<http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols16-18/chs964.pdf>

***The Admirable Love of God*** by John Flavel

<https://www.monergism.com/admirable-love-god-giving-his-own-son-us-john-316-john-flavel>

***Do You Believe?*** by J.C. Ryle

[http://www.biblebb.com/files/ryle/do\\_you\\_believe.htm](http://www.biblebb.com/files/ryle/do_you_believe.htm)