PASTOR'S SERMON NOTES · PULPIT COPY

The Love That Saves

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 10 · November 15, 2026

Scripture:

John 3:16–21

Big idea: God loved us enough to give His Son, so that whoever believes in Him is not condemned but has eternal life.

Memory verse (all ages): John 3:16 — "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

MOTIVATION (WHY YOU NEED THIS)

Can a person know that they are forgiven and will spend eternity with God?

Much of how we answer this question is rooted in two schools of thought: either I can earn my own way, or there is another way.

What if I told you that you can leave here today knowing for certain whether you are forgiven and will spend eternity with God?

I'll do better than this. God, not me, tells us plainly that we can be forgiven and live with Him for eternity, but it's not our way but His.

Last week we began looking at the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus…

- **Nicodemus had a sin problem** – He was very religious (Pharisee, ruler, teacher of Israel), but Jesus told him his good works weren't enough. He needed a new heart that only God could give him. Jesus said, "You must be born again."
- **Jesus gave Nicodemus the solution** – Jesus took him back to Numbers 21 where Israel was being bitten by poisonous snakes and dying. Israel wasn't told to fight off the poison, but to look at what God had lifted up. Jesus said, "the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life."

Last week ended with the choice for all of us… Keep trying to save yourself or look to the Savior God has provided.

This week Jesus tells Nicodemus why God provided Jesus as Savior.

INFORMATION (WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW)

Why did God provide a Savior in His Son, Jesus?

- **God loves people**

  John 3:16 (ESV) "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 loved** (even in our sin)

  Romans 5:8 (ESV) …but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

"The shock of the pronouncement is that here God puts the well-being of the world above that of the One and Only Son." – NICNT

✓ **God gave** (God's love led Him to action, not just a feeling of love for us)

1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

✓ **We believe** (this belief is apart from our works and is in Christ alone)

"Salvation is a gift received only by believing God for it. The nature of belief is implied in the illustration of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (v. 14). Belief consists of accepting something, not doing something." – Expositor's Bible Commentary

✓ **We receive** (belief in Jesus leads to receiving forgiveness of sin and eternal life)

Ephesians 2:8 (ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- **God knows that without a Savior, people face eternity apart from Him**

John 3:17 (ESV) 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.

✓ God didn't send Jesus to condemn, but to save (power/penalty of sin)

✓ However, those who reject Jesus as the way to God are condemned *already*

John 3:36 (ESV) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

There is no middle ground here. Belief in Jesus leads to eternal life with God. Failure to believe in Jesus leads to an eternity separated from God.

✓ Those who believe in Jesus are **not condemned** (present tense – this is how you can know today)

- **God knows people love the darkness (sin) and need the Light**

John 3:19 (ESV) "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."

✓ God has not failed us – He sent the Light (Jesus) into the world

✓ But people choose their sin because they love it and would rather choose it over new and eternal life with God

✓ Whoever comes to the Light finds that God was at work

Nicodemus, the man who came by night, is last seen in daylight, openly honoring Jesus at His burial.

John 19:39 (ESV) Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes…

APPLICATION (WHAT YOU NEED TO DO)

Can a person know they are forgiven and will spend eternity with God? Jesus says that you can. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned.

God loved. God gave – those are finished. What's left is yours – believe and receive.

You have the same choice Nicodemus had. You can keep trying to earn your way to God, or you can believe in the Savior God has already given to us.

He isn't asking you to do something. He's asking you to believe in His Son.

Don't let love for your sin keep you from the God who loves you. Bring it to Jesus. He didn't come to condemn you. He came to save you.

Will you believe in Him today?

And if you've believed, don't stay silent about it. In a few weeks we're going to baptize people. Baptism doesn't save you; believing in Jesus does. But baptism is how you go public, so everyone can see what God has done in you. If you've believed and never been baptized, that's your next step.