



John
3:16-21
(NRSV)

¹⁶“For God

so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Connect Guide

How Sweet The Sound: Nothing You
Can Do About It

Week of Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023

Opening

1. **Pray:** God of all grace, you love us without warning and without condition, even when we are unaware. Help us to deepen our relationships with you and one another, as we experience your grace and share it with one another. Amen
2. **Share:** Share of a time when you were anxious to start something new (such as a new job, new school, move, etc.). Were you worried about everything that could go wrong, when in retrospect, things turned out going much better than you had anticipated?

Dive Into the Text

1. When do you remember first encountering John 3:16? What did it mean to you then?
2. How does it change how you hear it if you read only the first half of verse 16 and pause at the word "world"? How does the emphasis shift?
3. The Greek word for "save" (*sozo*) in verse 17 literally means to rescue, heal, and restore. How can Jesus restore our relationship to the unconditional love of God that has been present with all things since the beginning of creation?

Read the following quote from Julian of Norwich.



"And in this vision, he showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, and to my mind's eye it was as round as any ball. I looked at it

and thought, 'What can this be?' And the answer came to me, 'It is all that is made.' I wondered how it could last, for it was so small I thought it might suddenly disappear. And the answer in my mind was, 'It lasts and will last forever because God loves it; and in the same everything exists through the love of God.'

In this little thing I saw three attributes: the first is that God made it, the second is that he loves it, the third is that God cares for it. But what does this mean to me? Truly, the maker, the lover, the carer; for until I become one substance with him, I can never have love, rest or true bliss; that is to say, until I am so bound to him that there may be no created thing between my God and me."

Go Deeper

1. What prevents us from trusting the love and care of the God who made us and holds all things in the palm of God's hand?
2. What is one way in which we have experienced the grace of God, in which we encountered love as unmerited, unexpected, and unconditional?
3. Share of a God sighting or unexpected way in which God showed up in your life this week.
4. In what ways can you intentionally be reminded that God loves you regardless of shortcomings, mistakes, or doubts?

Close in Prayer

1. Close your time together in prayer:

"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

Julian of Norwich