

His Own Did Not Receive Him

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[0:00] Well, great to see you. Yeah, if you don't know me, my name is Niels. I'm part of the staff team. And yeah, I'll be preaching in a moment. But I guess there's a lot of visitors here today from Young Life. It's really great to have you.

But then you're kind of dumped in the middle of this series. And also last week we had a guest speaker. So I thought, let me just set the stage again and introduce where we are. I thought that's helpful before we do the reading.

Of course, the most helpful thing we can do before anything is pray. So why don't we first bow our heads and pray. Jesus said, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

Father, thank you that we have Jesus' words here. We pray that we would keep them. We pray that you would speak to each of our hearts today, no matter where we are at. No matter how far we are from you, would you speak to us and say, yeah, show us Jesus and give us life.

In his name we pray. Amen. Great. Now, if you know me, I actually like fixing things. I'm a dad. Dads fix things.

[1:05] That's what I learned when I was young. My dad was always fixing things. It's very helpful, right? So the vacuum cleaner, oh, it's broken. We need a new vacuum cleaner. Well, no, no, no. Look, here's a fuse. And you just replace the fuse and it works again, right?

That's all that happens. And that saves us a new vacuum cleaner. That's really great. Or there's a fan and the fan doesn't work because the rabbit bit through the cable. Well, you can put on a new cable and it works again, right?

That's how I think. But sometimes I'm just too optimistic, right? Because I like a car. That's really beyond my expertise. And so maybe our car has trouble.

And I go to the mechanic and, you know, he comes back to me and says, okay, man, this is going to be so expensive. You need a new car. And I always, oh, come on.

Can't you just take it apart and put it back together, right? Clean it a bit and that should solve it. Isn't that enough? Well, what does he do? Then he opens up the bonnet, right? He opens it up and says, okay, look at that.

[2:02] Look at that. Look at that until I kind of, okay, I accept the bad news, right? I wish it was different, but now I can see, okay, I really need a new engine.

Well, we're in John's gospel, and I think today is going to be a little bit like that. Now, John's gospel has been great, right? Because Jesus is here. The Christ is here. He's offering eternal life to all who believe in him.

It's been wonderful. But, of course, it implies some bad news, right? If he's offering us life, it's because we currently don't have life. Because we're going to die and we need life.

That is the thing. And it can be hard to accept. Many people find the message of Christianity pretty hard. And you may wonder, is it really necessary? Well, today, John will open up the bonnet.

And are things really that bad? Yes, they are. Now, we are in John chapter 7 and 8. And the thing is, there are kind of two chapters.

[3:00] That is one section is a problem. So, you know, the Bible is different genres. Sometimes, you know, you have a letter, and it's really a verse-by-verse thing. Actually, these are just two chapters that give us a picture of, you know, Jesus meeting the Jewish people when Jesus was there.

And it's not like, okay, this is one long argument that we go through verse-by-verse. It's more like one big point that, you know, every paragraph makes the same point, just louder and louder and louder.

And so that's why I'm not really going to go through everything verse-by-verse. We're certainly not going to read two chapters. What I did is that two weeks ago, I kind of preached on Jesus, right?

Here's Jesus. He's from God. He is the one who can bring us eternal life. So we need to hold on to his word. But then today, we're going to look at the other side. We're going to look at, yeah, the Jewish people and how they respond.

And, yeah, it's not going to be happy. If you were in, well, in chapter 1, when John kind of gives his prologue, he says this. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

[4:08] All right? That is kind of what we're going to see today, how Jesus was not well received. That's what we're going to do. So as we listen, don't, you know, it's not a verse-by-verse thing, but I hope you just feel the drama.

I hope you feel the heat and the tension, as Oscar and Celeste will read. But also listen out. Okay, what does Jesus think of these people? So Oscar, Celeste, yeah, I'd love to hear God's words.

Good morning. This morning's reading comes from John chapter 8, verses 12 to 59. If you're using the church Bible, it's at page 840. Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So the Pharisee said to him, You are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true.

Jesus answered, Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true. For I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

[5:19] You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true. For it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

In your law, it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.

They said to him, therefore, where is your father? Jesus answered, You know neither me nor my father. If you knew me, you would know my father also. These words he spoke in the treasury as he taught in the temple.

But no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come. So he said to them again, I am going away and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin.

Where I am going, you cannot come. So the Jew said, will he kill himself since he says where I am going, you cannot come? He said to them, you are from below.

[6:19] I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.

So they said to him, who are you? Jesus said to them, just what I have been telling you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.

They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the father. So Jesus said to them, when you have lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the father taught me.

And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

[7:25] They answered him, we are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say you will become free? Jesus answered them, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.

I speak of what I have seen with my father, and you do what you have heard from your father. They answered him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, if you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did.

But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your fathers did.

They said to him, we were not born of sexual immorality. We have one father, even God. Jesus said to them, if God were your father, you would love me.

[8:37] For I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot hear, you cannot bear to hear my word.

You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin?

If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. The Jews answered him, are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

Jesus answered, I do not have a demon, but I honor my father and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it and he is the judge.

[9:41] Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. The Jews said to him, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets.

Yet you say, if anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? And the prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be?

Jesus answered, if I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my father who glorifies me, of whom you say he is our God. But you have not known him.

I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

He saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to him, you are not yet 50 years old and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.

[10:43] So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. This is the word of God. Great. Thanks so much, Oscar and Celeste, for reading so well.

The dialogue. I hope you enjoyed that. Right. You can feel the tension. It's a drama. But I hope you also can see that it's a bit of an ugly picture.

Right. The people who are confused and divided and more and more hostile to Jesus. And I think, well, what is the big point that we should get?

The big truth. Well, is that the Jews can't believe because they are from the world. They can't believe because they're from the world. That is the big thing that I hope we've heard.

And from the world, that means they're not from God. Now, from the world, I don't know what you think when you hear that they're not from the world. They're from the world.

[11:45] It sounds like, oh, they're not aliens. They're not extraterrestrials. That's not what it means. So the world in the Bible. Yeah. And especially in John, the world is kind of, you know, humanity in rebellion against God.

Right. Here is God. And here is, you know, mankind that ever since Genesis three has been rebelling against him. But where would you think the Jews are?

I say the Jews, by the way, sometimes it means the Jewish people. Sometimes it means the Jewish leaders. I'll just say the Jews because that's what John says. But why would they be?

Yeah. But they're from the world. But you wouldn't expect that. Right. Because God has rescued them from the world. Right. He made them his own and he gave them his law. He gave them his words.

He, you know, he gave them a land and they had him living with us. They should be, you know, here's the world and here's God. You'd expect them to be with God, except that they are, they are not from God.

[12:44] They are in the world. Right. That's a very unusual thing. In a way, we should have already noticed that when back in chapter seven, which was a very weird verse.

I mean, if you go all the way back to seven, verse seven in your Bibles, you know, this is at the start of these chapters. It's happens at a feast, something, a feast called the feast of booths or tabernacles.

And Jesus brother say, hey, let's go to the feast. That'll be good for your ministry. And seven, verse seven. What does he say? Well, the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that his works are evil.

Now, we read over that, but we don't think about it. Actually, it's a very weird thing for Jesus to say. Right. Because he is not going to the world. He is going to God's city where God's people are in God's temple celebrating God's festival to remember God's rescue.

And yet he says, well, the world hates me. It's weird, right? But that is what we see. And yeah, as you read through these chapters, I guess Jesus is a bit like a doctor.

[13:48] There's the diagnosis, sorry, the symptoms and the diagnosis. Right. What is the big symptom? It's that they reject his words. Again, in seven, verse seven. Right. They hate his words because, yeah, he says that they are evil.

But, yeah, in so many other places. Right. Eight, verse 37. You will notice. What does he say? Well, end of verse 37. You seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.

That's the problem. Verse 43. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because, yeah, chapter eight, verse 43. Why do you not understand what I say? It's because you cannot bear to hear my words.

That's what we see. Right. Whenever Jesus says something, they do the X factor thing. Right. And you have a demon. And you. Right. That's how they respond. It's very tiring. But, of course, what's the diagnosis behind that?

Well, they are. Well, they're from the world. And they're not from God. Right. I mean, eight, verse 23 is very explicit. You are from below. I am from above.

[14:54] You are of this world. I am not of this world. And all those times where he says, well, I'm going to God and you cannot come there because, you know, there's this chasm between world and God. And, well, you can't come to God because you're part of the world.

And, yeah, they're not from God. You see both together, in a way, in verse 47, right, at the end of that paragraph. Whoever is of God hears the words of God.

The reason why you do not hear them, why do you keep rejecting my words, is that you are not of God. They are not from God. They don't know him.

You know, knowing God is a relational thing. It's not knowing about him, but having a relationship. And he says that all the time. I mean, I'll put them here quickly, right? He who sent me is true. And him, you do not know. You know neither me nor my father.

You say he is our God, but you have not known him. They don't know God. In fact, he says they're children of the devil. And you might think Jesus is a bit of a bully. He never apologizes, right?

[15:54] They prove me wrong. And instead, they just shout abuse at him. Yeah, Jesus seems to be right as the chapter goes on. Now, let me just talk you through one passage.

Because, I mean, this is kind of high level. But just, you know, let's see this worked out. As we, you know, that famous passage, verses 31 to 47. Right? I mean, we see all these themes come together.

So, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him. So, again, it's worth thinking, right? These are not just the Pharisees. These are people who've heard his miracles. They've seen his miracles.

They've heard his teaching. You know, hey, I'm going to follow Jesus. And now he has a discipleship follow-up meeting. So, verse 31. If you abide in my words, you're truly my disciples.

That's what we saw two weeks ago, right? We need to hold on to Jesus' words. So, that's what Jesus says. Hold on to my words. And then, right? You will know the truth. And the truth will set you free. Now, you expect them to write down notes.

[16:53] Okay, Jesus, please tell us more. I want to follow you. Now, what do they say? Hey, we are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say you will become free?

Right? Hey, you're saying we will become free. Well, then you're saying we're currently not free. Well, almost how dare you, right? We are Abraham's children. We've never been enslaved. I mean, I thought they just celebrated that God rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

I know. And, you know, there's been the Babylonians and the Persians and the Greeks and the Romans. They've spent a lot of time being oppressed by others. But, of course, Jesus says, hey, I'm talking spiritually, right?

So, verse 34. Jesus answered them, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. That's what I mean.

But, you know, hey, you say you're from Abraham. Actually, well, verse 37. I know you're Abraham's. I know you're offspring from Abraham. I mean, you have Abraham's DNA.

[17:56] Absolutely. But Jesus says, I see a problem, right? You seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. And so he says, you have a different father, right?

Abraham is our father. Well, if you're Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did. And the big thing in the Bible is often that children are like their fathers. Like I mentioned at the start, I fix things because that's what my father did, right?

Sometimes my kids, they say to me, you sound just like granddad. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but, right? I'm like my father. Back then, certainly, if your dad was a farmer, you would be a farmer.

Children are like their parents. But he says, well, you don't seem to be acting like Abraham, right? Maybe genetically you're from Abraham, but, right?

You're not doing the works Abraham did. Verse 40. You seek to kill me. Emmanuel has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You're doing the works your father did.

[18:59] And again, they said to him, we were not born of sexual immorality. Maybe that has something to do with Jesus' birth, right? Hey, you know, your mother. But we have one father, even God, right?

You know, God is our father. And again, Jesus, if God were your father, you would love me. For I came from God and I'm here. That's quite a statement, right? Do you dare say that to anyone?

Right? Hey, if you're from God, you would love me. But you don't. But, yeah, they don't love him. And now instead, right, you are of your, verse 44.

You're of your father, the devil. Why? Well, he was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth. Because there's no truth in him, right?

What are your actions showing? You're not from Abraham, right? You are from the devil. The devil tries to kill people, get people killed. And that's what you're doing. And he is a liar and he hates the truth.

[19:57] And that's what you are doing. You are, right? You are from the devil. And instead of any kind of conviction, verse, right, again, verse 47, summarizing it, hey, the reason you don't hear them, my words, is you're not from God.

And they say, well, aren't we right in saying that you were a Samaritan and have a demon? They just don't listen, right? But it's so clear, right? There's something wrong with them.

They're not from God. They can't hear his words. And it's ugly. But it's also so desperate, right? Because the thing is, people need Jesus' words.

We thought about that two weeks ago, right? Jesus' words bring life. Jesus' words save. But they are just repelled by Jesus' words. I mean, what I think is, I think of two magnets, right?

You have two magnets and you try to bring them together. Two North Poles or two South Poles. That doesn't work, right? You put them together and one just repels the other. And you just can't bring them together.

[20:57] That's almost what seems to go on here, right? Whenever Jesus comes close to them with his message, they just get repelled. Which means that the thing they need drives them away, right?

And these are good moral people. And yet confronted with Jesus, this is what they do. And it's quite a depressing picture. Although the question is, so what are we supposed to do with that?

You know, it is pretty hard to apply. Okay, the Jews that we see here, they are from the world and not from God. So what? I want to apply that in two different ways.

I want to connect it to us in two different ways. I guess one thing that John is doing, let's go back to his purpose statement, right? Why is John writing this whole book? Well, 20 verse 31, he tells us, he says that these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

And that by believing, you may have life in his name, right? But I'm writing this so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. My guess is if you're a Jew and someone tells you about Jesus, that it's pretty, it can be a bit of a hard sell, right?

- [22:12] Because John says, well, here's the Messiah. And really, the guy they crucified. The guy that all the religious leaders rejected. The guy that the people that who knows the Old Testament knew and they didn't believe in him.

That's very hard to believe, right? Who are God's people? Yeah, it's those little groups of Christians in homes worshipping Jesus. It's not all those people in the temple over there. It can be a bit of a hard sell, right?

Well, if you see these chapters, if you see Jesus here, you know, I think one thing that John wants to say to some readers is, you know, don't let Jewish unbelief make you doubt.

Don't let that make you doubt. Because, hey, Jesus, he is here. He came to them and, you know, but they rejected. Look at their rejection, right? It's not rational.

This is not, this is, you know, there's something wrong with them. Can't you see that, right? The fact that Jesus, that many of them don't believe. That's not, this shouldn't be a problem, right?

- [23:13] It's not God's fault. It's not Jesus' fault. He really is the Messiah. Jesus makes it very clear. It's just that they can't believe, right? So that's why it's like this. I guess in the first century that that was, you know, Christianity was very small and Judaism was very big.

And so people needed to hear that. I guess for us now, 2000 years later, it doesn't really have the same impact because we can see how, you know, there's Christians in every nation in the world. And, you know, the impact it's had, I guess for us, it's much clearer.

Okay. What's the real religion? But I think this passage hits close to home in another way. And I want us to think about this question.

Does John think these people are worse than anyone else? I don't know if that makes a question, right? Are these people worse than anyone else? Does John think that?

Because some people, they read these chapters and they think, you know, John is anti-Semitic. John just hates Jews, right? He's so negative about these people and how they hate Jesus.

- [24:16] Jesus, I think it's two slides more. Are they worse than everyone else? Right? I mean, of course, John is Jewish. Jesus is Jewish. I don't think so. But think about it.

Are they worse than anyone else? Well, the answer is no. Why not? Because they are from the world. I mean, what is the world?

Again, it's not planet Earth. It is mankind. It is, you know, this is humanity in rebellion against God. They are, they're from the world.

Which means in a way, they are the same as us. And we are the same as them, right? They are from the world. You see them, you see the world. When I say us, I mean by nature, you know, without a miracle, without the grace of God.

What are people like? What are we like? Well, we are like this. And that bites in a certain way, right? Because these people were the most religious, right?

- [25:18] The most privileged people. They had the true scriptures. They had the true religion. They had God with them. They had the true God rescue them from Egypt. And yet, they still were from the world, right?

That's not what you'd expect, right? All of this that they had was not enough to bring them to God. They were still in the world, right? And that's kind of the point, right?

All these things don't bring them there. And that is, I think, a difficult message for us, right? I mean, it's a little bit like Nicodemus in chapter 3, right? Here's the most religious man in Israel. And you must be born again.

Even Nicodemus. Yes, even Nicodemus. I don't know if you were here last week. Last week, Alex McCoy, he had this great illustration about swimming to Macau, right?

He wanted to say that, look, some of us are better than others, but none of us are good enough. So imagine you're trying to swim to Macau, and there's two people, and one person swims a kilometer, but then he drowns.

[26 : 16] And then there's someone else. Well, actually, he makes it all the way to Lantau Island, which is a few kilometers further. But he still drowns. But my guess is you hear that and think, well, actually, I can do that.

Maybe some of us think I can do that. How about we take one of the top swimmers in Hong Kong, and we give them a special wetsuit, right, that regulates body temperature and removes friction.

And they swim on a day that, you know, the current is flowing to Macau, and the wind is blowing to Macau. Sorry, this way. The wind is blowing to Macau. The current is flowing to Macau. And everything is in their favor.

And they still drown. Well, now you know that, okay, no one can swim to Macau, right? Now it's very clear no one can swim to Macau because even these people, you give them everything, they still can't do it.

Right? That is, I think, part of the point, right? We see these people, actually, they are the same of us, even though we wouldn't expect that. And so here's a few statements I think we can make.

[27 : 20] One is, if they don't know God, no one does. Right? By ourselves, by nature, no one does. If they're from the world, they're in the world basket, well, that means all of us are in that basket, right?

And no one, by nature, has a relationship with God. I mean, I don't know what you think brings someone to God. It's so easy. You know, we have religious devotion and temples and sacrifices and good works and all these things.

Do they bring us to God? Well, these people, they had, you know, they had the right religion and the right festival and they still didn't know God. And they knew the scriptures from childhood and they still didn't know God.

Right? And they were, they had God's law and they were really moral people and they still didn't know God. Right? They still had no relationship with him. Clearly, all these things don't do it.

Right? Right? I mean, Jesus makes it, I mean, this is quite a scary verse, right? In 8 verse 54, he says to them, it is my father who glorifies me of whom you say he is our God.

[28 : 27] But you have not known him. They really thought they knew God and they really thought we belong to God. Right? He is our God. And Jesus says, you don't know him. You have no relationship with him. Right?

I mean, for some of us here, right? We think, hey, we, you know, I'm a Christian because I'm a good person and I go to church and all those things.

And actually, that's not the case. Other religions, you know, oh, they're very similar to Christianity. And people always think, well, surely is that enough?

Well, these people, they were not just similar to the truth. Right? They had the truth. They had the true God rescue them and they still didn't know him. Right? I mean, I know what you think.

Okay. Hey, I'm not like this. Right? I'm a nice person. These people aren't nice. The thing is, they, well, they met Jesus. Jesus isn't here.

[29:22] Remember those two magnets, right? This magnet is perfectly still unless till we bring that other magnet close. Right? If Jesus was here in person and he'd do a few miracles, like the magic show later, that would be, okay, we would think, wow.

But then he starts to talk about our sin and then we probably chase him out. No. None of us know God by nature, by ourselves. It's very humbling.

If you call yourself a Christian, right? It's nothing that you've done. It's not your religion or your good works or anything you've done. Right?

These people are far more moral than us, I think, and they didn't do it. Right? And if you're here, you wouldn't call yourself a Christian. I don't know if you think, you know, I know God.

I'm a good person. I go to church. Again, this passage would say, no, you're, you're, I'm sure you're a better person than I am, but, you know, you're, it's not enough.

[30:20] No one can know God by themselves. No one can make their way to God. In a way, in a way, of course, for some of us, that's encouraging, right? Some of us here and actually my life is terrible and I can't do anything right.

It's good to know that actually that's not the thing that gets you to God. Because what's the other side of that? The flip side. Well, if they need Jesus, everyone does.

If these people need Jesus, everyone does. John is, he's opening up the bonnet and, you know, he's saying you need a new engine. Right? He's showing the true state of humanity.

This is what we're like. We need Jesus. Right? They don't know God, so they need the truth. Right? They're slaves to sin. They need to become free. They are in the darkness. They need light.

They, you know, they, they will die in their sin. They need life. They're children of the devil. They need to become children of God. They need someone who can defeat the devil. Right? It's so, you know, they are so needy.

[31:19] And only Jesus is the answer. And again, that's the same for each one of us. Right? We are no better than them. And you see how much they need Jesus. That's the same for us.

Right? Whoever you are. This is you. Maybe all the people we know. All the people we live and work with here in this great city. Everyone needs Jesus. There's no one who doesn't need Jesus.

Right? There's no one in the world, in any of the countries where you guys are all from, who doesn't need Jesus. Every single person. Which means that if you, of course, if you have Jesus, you want to hold on to him.

Right? As Jesus said, you know, abide in my word. Hold on to my word. If you, if you've received Jesus, you don't want to let him go. Right? Because you see how desperate it is without him.

But, of course, I guess that raises the last question. We know, yes, they need Jesus. But does Jesus want them? Well, I think one final statement we can make, actually, if we step back.

[32:20] If Jesus loves them, he loves everyone. Because the amazing thing is that Jesus still, I mean, if you see these people, would you love them? Would you want to be with them?

And would you want to, you know? But Jesus does it, right? He goes to this festival. And he, he proclaims himself the Messiah, even though they want to kill him. Right? And he, he keeps offering them eternal life.

And come in, come to me and drink and believe in me. And if you hold to my word, you will never see death. All those things. Right? He, he keeps offering them. And, and that is not a joke.

He is sincere. And how do we know it's sincere? Well, because later he goes to the cross. And he dies this agonizing death, bearing the penalty for our sins.

And he prays, Father, forgive them. Right? Jesus, he loves them. And then again, if he loves them, if they're the same as us, he loves everyone. Right?

[33 : 14] And here's the most famous verse in John or maybe in the whole Bible. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Now, we read it and we think he loves planet Earth.

No. He loves the world. What is the world? People like this. People who insult and abuse and don't want to listen. And, you know, these people, that's the people that God loved so much that he sent his son to die for them.

These obnoxious people that are, well, that's what we are like. And so maybe you're here again. You wouldn't call yourself a Christian. Jesus, he loves you and he's offering you eternal life.

Right? He says you have very big problems. You're in the dark. You will die. You're enslaved. But he is the solution to all that. And so he says, come to me. I want to save you.

Right? Now, you may wonder, could he ever love me? Again, he loved these people. He died so he could offer you forgiveness. Of course, you may wonder, how can I believe?

[34 : 19] Right? These people couldn't believe. In some way, that's true. Right? If they couldn't believe, no one can. Right? Despite all their growing up in the scriptures and all their culture engineered by God, they still couldn't believe.

In some ways, yeah, no book, no speaker, no great preacher, no message, no course is going to save people. People need a miracle.

But the thing is, God loves to do miracles. Right? Back in chapter one, we saw that verse. He came to his own and his own did not receive him. That's weird.

But, there's a but, right? But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. And there were people who receive him, who believe in him.

Of course, they were, verse 13, they were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. God did a miracle. They were born of God. But, we'll think about that more next week. For you, it's very simple.

[35 : 19] Jesus, if you can believe him, you can receive him. Right? Jesus says, just come to me. Just pray. Right? Receive him. Believe his death.

Trust him. And you can be saved. And then again, praise God that he loves you. I guess for all of us here, for whom this is a reality, for whom this is something, you know, we used to be like this.

We are, by nature, we are like this. We're so obnoxious. These people are terrible. We all are. And yet, God loves you and sent his son to die for you. Right?

He made you born again. You were blind, but now you see. And you were lost, but now you're found. I mean, in a way, I don't want us to leave here depressed how terrible we are by nature.

I want us to know the more terrible we are, the more it amazes us at how that God loves us. And so, let's, you know, we heard last week we're all debtors. Today, we can see how great a debtor we are.

[36 : 20] Right? This is us. And doesn't that make you thankful? Doesn't that encourage you? That God loves you so much that he did this. I know many of us, we have some big things going on in our lives.

And we need the assurance that God loves us. And I think from a chapter like this, and we step back and we see what Jesus would do in the end, going to the cross. He loves us.

That's amazing grace. Right? God demonstrates his love for us in that while we are still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5.8. Right? Isn't that wonderful? And wouldn't we want to share that, right, to anyone we know, anyone we see, anyone in all the nations in the world?

It's wonderful. So, why don't we reflect on that? Why don't we take 30 seconds just to reflect? And then I'll pray. And then we're going to have communion by taking the Lord's Supper.

So, maybe the stewards can come forward. Thank you. Let's pray together.

[37 : 56] Our Father, it's not easy to see the bonnet opened and see what we are like by nature. But thank you for the good news that there is life in Jesus.

That there is hope. There is light in the darkness. And, yeah, we want to hold on to him. We want to see again our sin and his love.

We want to hold on to that. And for some of us, maybe we want to accept that for the first time, Father. For each of us, help us to take these truths home. Would they not just be things in a book, but would they be something that is real for us, that is true in our hearts, and that drives us to Jesus?

And as we, in a moment, take the Lord's Supper again with you, and speak to our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.