



ASKING FOR A FRIEND PART ONE

Asking For A Friend

How Do I Know God Loves Me?

John 3:9-21
Week of January 10, 2020

Before Connect Group

- John 3:9-21
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 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. 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. 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. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 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 3:9-21, ESV

Sermon Notes

Your core longing is for the throne room of God and nothing else will come close.

The question of love is a natural human compulsion. In December, Switzerland Community Church preached a sermon about the Love of God being perfect between Father and Son. The great blessing of the New Covenant is the full justification and adoption before God. We want to be concerned in this sermon, not with defining the kind of love that God has for you, but more concerned with walking through a Biblical understanding and thinking that assures us of the salvation love that has been poured out upon us.

The very reason that Love, or being loved is constantly a hanging question in our lives is because of the fall of man in Genesis 3. Man was created to be in perfect love relationship with God. With the entrance of sin, and the consequence of separation, the question of love entered the world. The ultimate assurance of God's love for you is His completed and sealed act of redemption.

The Redemptive Love of God presents us with the story of God loves to use throughout all history and all creation. God has loved us by:

- Opening Heaven
- Providing The Way
- Judging The Sin of the World

Opening Heaven.

- *John 3:13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.*
- Because of the sins of mankind, heaven had been closed to the presence of man. No one is able to gain entry except for the Son of Man.
- Heaven by its Biblical definition is the true location of the Throne of God.
 - When the term "throne" is used, people usually picture a gold and silver cast chair that looks uncomfortable, but it is where the kings sit.
 - Scripture uses language that directs us to think in terms of the greatest and most decorated. However, the Throne of God means so much more than that.
 - The throne of God embodies peace, love, rest, spiritual wholeness and prosperity, and acceptance and fulfillment.
- At the center of our love doubt, is the feeling of being cut off from this throne. These are the feelings behind our "being in Love". Love is not a feeling I can produce toward something, rather, love is the result of the peace, love, rest, wholeness, acceptance, and fulfillment, we have when we are in the presence of.
- This is what it means for you young people to talk with an older person about your love for a beautiful woman and the older person says, "you don't know what love is, beauty fades, but love lasts forever."
- The emotional desire of lust is not love, it promises to provide you the feelings you most desire, but it will leave you wanting in the end. This is why full satisfaction is not found in the pursuit of lustful beauty.
- If you want to experience true love, you need the presence of God as the source of all love! Those who seek true love will come to the realization that the only true love is in the presence of God's throne.
- Echoing David's longing to be in God's presence

- *Psalm 84:1-2 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.*
- *Psalm 84:10 For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.*
- Jesus tells His disciples that this is no longer a distant Spiritual desire, but is found fully in Him.
 - *John 15:9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*
- The central concern in our hearts is being "cut off" from God.
- How can we fulfill David's desire to be in the courts of heaven and remain in Love?

Providing The Way

- *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.*
- We all know this verse so well. However, I would suggest that many of us know this verse best on its own. This verse is attached to the story and conversation that God had with Nicodemus asking what he had to do in order to be born again.
- Furthermore, the other misconception comes from our isolating this verse in our memorization. It leads us to perceive the statement as communicating the capacity of God's love. When rather, it is actually communicating the way of God's love.
- The word "so" depicts the manner in which God loved the world. Thus, verse 16 must be read in conjunction and context with verse 15.
- God does love the world beyond our capacity to understand, but He has loved the world in the same way He loved Israel, in faith...
- This story is found in Numbers
- *Numbers 21:4-9 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.*
- God loved us by defeating sure death on our behalf rather than allowing us to die from the consequences of our own decisions. There is nothing that will be able to overwhelm the cross of Christ. The cross has overwhelmed everything for all eternity. Jesus Christ provides the assurance of salvation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The powerful love of God is assured by the way that He has provided for you and I to come before His heavenly throne, the very thing King David's heart longed for, through giving us His son Jesus! It is upon this work that Jesus says:
- *John 14:6-7 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

Judging The Sin of the World

- *John 3:17-18 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. 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.*
- We have already been judged. Yet, this is not the cruelty of God's intentions, but in reality, the most loving thing God could do is judge sin and destroy it.
- This is prophesied as early as sin entering the world
- *Genesis 3:14-15 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*
- God desired to destroy the thing that struck His beloved creation. Though it struck, God will judge the sin and darkness that entered into the world.
- The love makes sense not only biblically, but in our family as well. Anything that is consuming our children - drugs, etc, we desire to destroy it. If we had the power, we would rid this world of it!
- The judgement of sin was always the plan in righteousness, justice, and love of God.
- The loving work of Christ is to separate you and I from that sin so we will not be judged along with it.
- *Romans 8:1-4 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

The question "How can I know that God loves me?" is more of a question of faith and assurance from our end and not so much the love from God's end. Everything that God needs to do to love you has been completed by Jesus Christ on the cross. Our question comes from a misplaced assurance of salvation through our pursuit of other things.

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- How do we wrestle with the question of “Does God actually love me?” What causes us to doubt the love of God? Where does this come from in our life?
- What does the throne room of God provide for mankind? Where does it receive its power and strength from?
- How does it change our understanding of John 3 that the “so” is the manner in which God loves the world and not the degree? What is the difference between the two different readings?
- Sin barred the way between us and the throne room of God. How did God provide a way for our return to Him?
- All sin must be judged by God for God to remain a loving God. How does God judge the sin of the world for those who are in Him? How does God judge the sins of the world for those who are not in Him?
- In what ways is the cross of Jesus Christ sufficient for the assurance of salvation?

Challenge For The Week

The question of “How do I know God loves me?” is rooted in our questioning of the assurance of salvation that comes from God and God alone. At heart, it questions whether what Christ is done is good enough or whether we believe our sin is better.

- Take some time to consider where you struggle with sin in your life. How can you best work to battle this sin in your life?
- Who in your life needs to know that Jesus loves them? What opportunities do you have to share the love of God with them this week?

