

Sermon Notes on Jn. 3:14-21, Pentecost (we have included vss. 14-15)

1. Jn. 3:1-21 gives us the account of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel. In vss. 1-10 we have the dialogue. Vss. 11-21 give us the discourse by Jesus: Vss. 11-13 tell us who Jesus is; vss. 14-17 tell us what He came to accomplish; and, vss. 18-21 show us the result of Jesus' coming.
2. Nicodemus was not a Christian when he came to Jesus. But evidently he was converted while he was with Jesus. He is mentioned again at Jn. 7:50-52 and 19:39-42. He ~~was~~ bold and unafraid. As Jesus says in 3:21: *became* "The one who does the truth comes to the light so that his deeds become evident because they have been worked by God."
3. Jesus says in vs. 3: "Unless a person is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In vs. 5 He says: "Unless a person is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus explains in vs. 8 that this rebirth is a great mystery. Human beings cannot convert themselves. People are born but they do not cause birth. People become Christians but they do not cause this conversion. Water and Spirit, the baptism with the Word causes conversion. In the baptism the Holy Spirit gives faith. Faith is not a work of man but a gift of God. Rom. 10:17 says: "Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God." It comes by the washing of the water in the Word." Eph. 5:26. In vss. 14-17 Jesus explains it in another way. It is not the works of man that save him but the look of faith in Jesus. Man is not saved because he believes but he is saved by believing. Faith is not the cause of salvation but the way in which man is saved. Christ died for the sins of all people, even Judas and Saul. Salvation is complete and total. The means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, offer what is already accomplished.
4. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All will be sinners until they die. But Christ atoned for all sin. He invites all to become Christians. A person will be lost only if he rejects what Christ has done for him. It is not sin that damns but unbelief damns.
5. Vs. 17 reads: "For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world but in order to save the world." He says at Jn. 12:47 and 48: "The one who rejects Me and does not receive My Words has the one who judges him; the Word which I have spoken, that will judge him on the last day." Jesus is the Savior, not the Judge. But, if people reject His Word that Word will condemn them. In vs. 18 of our text Jesus says: "The one who believes in Him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is already condemned." Vs. 19 tells us that the cause of judgment is the love of the world for the darkness of sin rather than for the Light of Jesus and the Gospel.
6. The serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21:8ff) was a type in the OT foreshadowing Jesus. Those who looked at the serpent lived. Those who look up at Jesus crucified, will live forever. Other types in the OT are the Sabbath Day, the sacrifices, the priesthood of Aaron, the promised land. They foreshadowed Jesus and eternal life. See Col. 2:16,17. When Jesus came, the shadows passed away.
7. Natural man prefers the darkness of sin because he and his deeds are evil. Vs. 19. He produces inferior deeds and is afraid to approach Jesus, the Light, because then his deeds would become known. But the believer, the one who does genuine deeds, does not fear the Light. The Light shows his deeds, deeds that God Himself has produced. Redemption, faith, the new life and good works, all of them are gifts of God in Jesus Christ.
8. The judgment of God on people takes place already in this life. If they believe in Jesus, they are not condemned. But if they do not believe they are condemned. The judgment on judgment day will not be a trial. It will reveal what was true already in this life. "He will come again to judge the living and the dead." Jesus' children believe in Him and produce work that are genuine. The unbelievers reject Him and produce inferior deeds. Christians are still sinners and their deeds are imperfect but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. I Jn. 1:7.

Sermon Outline on Jn. 3:14-21, Pentecost (we have included vss. 14-19)

Theme: THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF GOD'S GIFT

Introduction: Rom. 6:23 says: "The wages of sin is death." The justice of God demanded that sin be punished. Rom. 6:23 also says: "But gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!" "God is love" says I Jn. 4:8. His love devised a plan to satisfy His justice. He punished His Son for the sins of the world. That was the plan which He carried out.

I-THE NEED FOR GOD'S PLAN

The world's greatest need is its restoration to the correct relationship to God as it was in the garden of Eden, before man fell into sin.

A-The world sits in darkness and evil. Vs. 19

1-Natural man is spiritually blind. Nicodemus was a teacher of Israel but Jesus had to reprimand him. Vs. 10. He did not know that he needed to be restored to the image of God. He did not know or see the kingdom of God. vss. 3 and 5. The worst part of man's spiritual blindness is his ignorance. St. Paul tried to kill Christians because of his spiritual blindness. I Tim. 1:13; Acts 8:3. He tried to get people to blaspheme God. He had no righteousness of his own. Phd. 3:7-8.

2-Natural man's deeds are evil. Vss. 19 and 20. Read Rom. 3:10-18.

Not one of them is just. Not one of them understands. Not one seeks God. Their throats and tongues are poisoned with evil. Their mouths are full of cursing. There is no fear of God in their eyes. Our text says that they do inferior deeds, love the darkness, do not want their sins revealed and love darkness more than light.

B-The world is condemned and headed for death.

1-The world is condemned. Vs. 18. Read Numbers 21:4-9. The children of Israel rebelled against Moses. They were dissatisfied with their food and drink. They began to complain. They were finding fault with God. This brought on God's condemnation. They did not believe God. Jesus says: "He who does not believe is condemned already."

2-The world is headed for death. And so the Lord sent fiery snakes among the people. They bit; the people died. "The wages of sin is death." Before sin came into the world there was no death. Sin brings death.

II-GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE AND ITS RESULT

A-It is the plan of the ages. Immediately after Adam's fall, God promised the Savior. Gen. 3:15. Moses spoke of Him. Deut. 18:15. His crucifixion was hinted in Deut. 27:26 (see Gal. 3:10). David spoke of him in Pss. 22 and 69. Isaiah 53 speaks of Him. Our text, Jn. 3:14 sees a picture of the crucified Christ in the snake on the pole in Num. 21:8. When people looked at the bronze snake they lived.

B-God's plan was a demonstration of His love. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Mt. 4:16; Is. 9:2. Jesus is the Light of the world. Jn. 8:12. God freely gave light to the world by sending His Son, a gift to the world. This gift saves the whole world.

C-The purpose of this plan. Its purpose was not to condemn the world but to save the world. Christ did not come as a judge merely to find fault with us. The law of Moses does that and it is necessary so that we might confess our sins as did the children of Israel. Num. 21:7. Christ took the sins of the world on Himself. Jn. 1:29; Is. 53:8. 11. 12. II Cor. 5:21.

D-The result of this plan. Jesus says: "He who believes in Him is not judged. He who does not believe in Him is already condemned." There is no third possibility. One either believes in Jesus or does not believe in Him. Furthermore, Jesus says: "This is the judgment that the Light has come into the world but people loved the darkness more than the light because their works were evil." Some people prefer their lost condition to salvation and light. Then read vss. 20-21. Unbelief produces inferior deeds and fear of being exposed. Faith produces true deeds and acknowledges that these deeds are gifts of God.

Sermon Notes on Jn. 14:23-29, Pentecost

1. Jn. 14 could be called the question or learning chapter. In vs. 5, 8 and 22 the disciples ask questions or seek further information. Thomas wished to know the Way. Philip wanted to see the Father. Judas, not Iscariot, wondered why Jesus was showing Himself to the disciples but not to the world. They realized that they were in further need of learning. They still harbored earthly ideas of the Kingdom of God. Jesus gives them enough information to tide them over until Pentecost would come. The Holy Spirit would do two things: a) Remind them of al that Jesus had said; and b) Teach them all. Note that "all" is used both times in vs. 26. Is. 42:3 had prophesied about Jesus: "A bruised reed He will not break and the smoking flax He will not quench." That is quoted of Jesus at Mt. 12:20. Jesus is very gentle toward weak and floundering believers. That includes you and me.
2. The New Testament uses two words for "love". The love of the world is an emotion of pleasure. That is indicated by the English word "like". People "like" their friends because they please them. They "like" their work because it gives them pleasure. That idea is almost nonexistent in the N.T. There we find the word "love" which is a deliberate actio going far beyond emotion and pleasure. And it must always be understood in its own relationship. For example, Mt. 22:37, quoted from Deut. 6:5, tells us "Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind." That means to cling to Him as the true God, no matter what the circumstances. That kind of love is simple faith and confidence. In our text in vs. 23 "If you love Me" means "If you believe and trust in Me". Then it says "My Father will love him". This does not mean only to like or derive pleasure. It means "My Father will claim him as His own". In vs. 24 understand it this way: "The one who does not believe Me". In vs. 28: "If you would believe Me". They did not yet believe as they should have and therefore they were sad. Jesus is doing everything He can to strengthen the disciples' faith. At Mt. 22:39 Jesus, quoting Lev. 19:18, says: "You will love your neighbor as yourself." That means far more than liking him or getting pleasure out of the relationship. Jesus explains: "as (you love) yourself". In other words, do for your neighbor what you do for yourself. At Eph. 5:25 Paul says: "Husbands, love your wives just as also Christ loved the Church and gave Himself in her behalf". How do husbands love their wives? By living for them and, if need be, dying for them. At Lk. 6:27 Jesus says: "Love your enemies". How does one do that? He explains: "Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who treat you shamefully." In the Bible the word "love" must always be understood only in its own context. The greatest is found at Jn. 3:16. You can figure it out.
3. Jesus and His Word are co-relative ideas. Where the Word, there Jesus is. Note the emphasis on this in vs. 23, 24 and in 26 He speaks of the Holy Spirit teaching and reminding. He does this with Words. In vs. 27 peace comes only through Jesus' Words. In 28 He says: "You've heard". What? Words. At Jn. 8:31-32 He said: "If you continue in My Word then you are My disciples indeed and you will know the Truth and the Truth will make you free." It is wrong to seek Jesus in dreams or revelations by tongues. Tongues were for proclaiming, not revealing.
4. Jesus always spoke about the Triune God, the only God. Where the Word of God is preached and believed, there the Triune God makes His home.
5. The true, spiritual Kingdom of God brings the peace of God, the forgiveness of sins for Jesus' sake. In this final sermon of Jesus (Jn. 14-16) Jesus began with peace, vs. 27 of our text, and again at 16:33. Only the peace of God can quiet the heart and make the frightened courageous. See Php. 4:7.

Sermon Outline for Jn. 14:23-29, Pentecost

Theme: THE MEANING OF PENTECOST FOR US

Introduction: Every Sunday is Easter. We recall that Christ rose from the dead and so we too shall rise from the dead. Every Sunday is also Pentecost because the Holy Spirit has come to remind us of all that Jesus said and He teaches us all. Pentecost is a reminder that our relationship to God is by faith in Jesus. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Eph. 3:17.

I-PENTECOST ENUNCIATES THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH Vss. 23, 24, 28.

A-To love God means to believe in Him. See Deut. 6:5 and Mt. 22:37.

The disciples were weak in faith. See vs. 28. That's why they were sorrowful. His going away made them sorrowful. It was His Father's will. The Father is greater than Jesus' human nature. Furthermore, their lack of faith in Jesus made them unable to keep His Word. Faith is fruitful. Unbelief is fruitless. Jesus stresses the need for faith in Him and His Word. Are you weak in faith? So were the disciples. But Jesus did not cast them out.

B-This results in God living in the believer. Read Eph. 3:17. At Jn. 17:23 Jesus said: "I in them and You in Me". Where there is Christian faith, there God makes His home. David prayed in Ps. 51:11 "Take not Your Holy Spirit from me." And Jesus promises in vs. 23 of our text: "We will come to him and make our home in him." The Triune God lives in my heart by faith. That's Pentecost.

II-PENTECOST MEANS THAT WE CONTINUE TO LEARN Vss. 25-26

A-The Holy Spirit would remind them of all that Jesus said.

Sinful human beings forget very quickly. That's why we have Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came and reminded the Apostles of what Jesus said. Read the sermons of the Apostles in the book of Acts. They are full of what Jesus said. Then the Spirit caused Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to write all that Jesus said and did. We have all of that.

B-The Holy Spirit would teach them everything. That's what our text says in vs. 26. The biggest problem in the early church was circumcision. The Jewish Christians said that Gentiles had to be circumcised before they could become Christians. Nyet, nyet, nyet. The whole N.T. says: "You need do nothing. Christ has done everything. He offers Jews and Gentiles full salvation without requirements." The Holy Spirit caused Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude to record the Epistles. Jesus said: "The Spirit will teach you ALL." We find this in the N.T. II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:19-21.

III-PENTECOST ASSURES US OF THE PEACE OF GOD AND STRENGTHENS FAITH

A-Pentecost assures us of the peace of God. The peace of the world only means cessation of war. The world's peace does not make our hearts courageous and brave. The world's peace does not forgive us our sins and grant us everlasting life. Before Pentecost the disciples were fearful. After Pentecost (read the book of Acts) they said: "We ought to obey God rather than man." The peace of God gave them fearless and courageous hearts. So it is with us.

B-Pentecost strengthens our faith. Jesus says in the last vs. of our text: "And now I've told you before it happens so that, when it happens, you will believe." The fulfillment of Pentecost, 50 days after Easter, and 10 days after Ascension, strengthened their faith. So it is with us. God is faithful. He fulfilled His promises. It causes us to believe in Him more.

Conclusion: Every Sunday is Easter. Every Sunday is Pentecost. We are more fortunate than were the disciples. We see all fulfilled. The only unfulfilled promise is Jesus' second coming. We prepare for that by keeping and observing the Word of Jesus.

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