

**Message Notes: March 5, 2023**

**Title: “The Unmingled Gospel”**

**Text: John 3:1-16**

**Goal: That the hearers shake off inaccurate notions of Jesus for true faith defined by the Word.**

**Intro: Stephen Covey gains a little perspective on a subway**

**train.** Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Fireside, 1989), p. 30-31.

**I. Jesus Schools Professor Nicodemus--Knowledge.**

A. Nicodemus visits in the ‘dark’.

1. Pharisee/member of the Sanhedrin.
2. A moral code and ritual system.
3. Most Pharisees thought of themselves as standards of perfection and referees; gatekeepers to heaven.
4. John 3:16 in context of being incapable of keeping the Law.
5. Incapable of escaping the judgment of God.
6. “Must be born again.”

B. Nic seems to be on the fence with Jesus.

1. Life of privilege and authority.
2. Big risks to follow Jesus.
3. Like Pilate—Knew Jesus was innocent.
4. “No one can serve two masters...”
5. Fence is for cowards/not respected/doesn’t work/for or against.

6. Moving from earthly things to heavenly ones.

**II. Jesus uses something familiar to teach us something essential--Acceptance.**

A. John 3:16 moves from knowledge to acceptance to build faith in Jesus.

B. Dr. Jordan Peterson interview with Joe Rogan speaks of the cross.

1. Numbers 21 Israelites complain, God sends snakes which bite the people and many die.
2. They plead with Moses to take snakes away.
3. “Weird” answer—make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole.
4. Fundamental doctrine of psychiatry—voluntarily face your fears—bravery.
5. “God wanted the Israelites braver not safe.”
6. “Jesus’ cross is the aggregation of everything that people are afraid of.”
7. “Look harder. Look harder. Look harder. Look far enough into the abyss and see the light.”
8. Peterson’s approach is still incomplete if we are not talking about the sin that the cross removes.

9. Brave for what purpose? Hope for what purpose if not defined by conquering sin and bringing eternal life.

C. Those who emphasize love.

1. First, the proper translation of John 3:16.
2. “This is how God loves the world...”
3. The centerpiece is *How* love is done, namely, “in Him” in Jesus alone.
4. Purpose = “So those who believe shall not perish but have eternal life.”

D. “In Him.”

1. A gift.
2. Savior.
3. Transfiguring--rebirth

5. Bravery was the evidence of believing.
6. Devotion was evidence of believing.
7. Jesus was their antidote to the snakes.

B. Nicodemus still didn’t have the finished picture.

1. Serpent on a pole literally saved people from death—essentially brought them back to life.
2. Nic’s understanding stopped at the tomb.
3. The cross of Jesus is incomplete without the resurrection.
4. Imagine Nicodemus speaking to the resurrected Jesus—changing him as it did the disciples.
5. Snakes look different from the empty tomb.

C. Trust in God as a little child trusts in parents.

### III. How do we know that we are reborn? --Trust

A. Nicodemus was reborn.

1. John 19:36-42
2. Joseph of Arimathea and Nic step out to bury the crucified Jesus.
3. What they witnessed moved them from acceptance to trust.
4. Disciples hid for their safety while these two men courageously put their careers at risk.

**Conclusion:** More than anything John 3:16 often starts a conversation about things that seem weird to our world, things that only God would dream up. John 3:16 Seems familiar but tucked into its folds is the entirety of the Gospel.

#### Taking it Home

1. Would you agree that how you love people is essential to loving them? How do you love children? Parents? Spouse? Friends?
2. What has John 3:16 meant to you and your relationship with Jesus? How have you grown because of it?
3. What is most challenging for you about trusting in Jesus?
4. How has the Lord blessed you this week?

Consider Reading Numbers 21 and John 14