

Series Sermon-based Growth Group Questions

August 1, 2021

John 3:16-21

Introductory Discussion:

What insight from Sunday's sermon did you find most helpful, or eye-opening, or troubling (pick any or all of the above)?

Discussion:

1. Why did Jesus die for us while we were his enemies?
 - a. What does that suggest about how you should view people who oppose you?
2. If Jesus was willing to sacrifice himself for you when you were an enemy, does that change after you accept him?
 - a. How does he deal with you now?
3. "For God so loved the **World**" means everyone. Is there anyone you have trouble believing could be or even should be saved?
4. Why does it matter that Jesus did not come to condemn (verse 17)?
5. Think about the implications of being "condemned already" (verse 18) If someone believes, they are not condemned, but they have eternal _____. If someone does not believe, they are spiritually _____.
 - a. The penalty for condemnation is death. This means that those who do not believe have already received the penalty. Does this change how you approach witnessing?
6. Verse 19 implies that the problem for non-believers is not confusion, or a lack of knowledge, but is more willful. According to verse 19, why do people reject the light?
 - a. Romans 1:20-21 says, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened." What does this add to understanding why people reject God?
 - b. If people are not honestly rejecting God on intellectual grounds, how do John 3:19 and Romans 1:20-21 help us approach people with the gospel?
7. Do you try to hide parts of yourself from God?
 - a. Can you bring all of yourself into the light?

8. Verse 21 says, "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." How does practicing the truth show that you are a child of God?
- a. Where does the practitioner of truth go?
 - b. Who ultimately deserves credit for your good works?
9. Has this series changed or deepened your understanding of what it means to be born again?

from Confessions by Augustine

Late Have I Loved You

Late have I loved you,
Beauty so ancient and so new,
late have I loved you!

Lo, you were within,
but I outside, seeking there for you,
and upon the shapely things you have made
I rushed headlong,

I, misshapen.
You were with me but I was not with you.
They held me back far from you,
those things which would have no being
were they not in you.

You called, shouted, broke through my deafness;
you flared, blazed, banished my blindness;
you lavished your fragrance,
I gasped, and now I pant for you;
I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst;
you touched me, and I burned for your peace.

When at last I cling to you with my whole being there will be no more anguish or labor for me, and my life will be alive indeed, alive because filled with you. But now it is very different. Anyone whom you fill you also uplift; but I am not full of you, and so I am a burden to myself. Joys over which I ought to weep do battle with sorrows that should be matter for joy, and I do not know which will be victorious. But I also see griefs that are evil at war in me with joys that are good, and I do not know which will win the day. This is agony, Lord, have pity on me! It is agony! See, I do not hide my wounds; you are the physician and I am sick; you are merciful, I, in need of mercy.

10. How is your experience of coming to Christ similar and/or different from Augustine's?