

On Believing

John 3:16-21

Objective: Reinforce and explain necessity for believing in Christ.

Reading: John 3:16-21.

Memory: John 3:16., ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”***

Introduction:

1. Read verse; One of the first verses people become aware of, memorize. See at football games. It IS an extremely significant verse. Maybe the most profound statement ever made!
2. We usually read this verse with an emphasis on comprehending the extent of God’s *love* for us. But, a big part of the emphasis of the verse is on also on “*believing*”. Here is where God’s love come to fruition. But “believing” is much more than simply admitting that there was perhaps a good man by that name who once lived. The benefit of the promise is for ***“whoever believes in Him.”***

We need to understand what it is to “believe” in Christ. (WHAT?)

In this section of Holy Scripture, the Apostle, John, by divine inspiration, communicates some very *vital concepts pertaining to “believing” in Christ.*

Whatever it entails, we need to understand that...

I. “Believing” Is Essential To Salvation.

A. Without believing, people stand lost!

1. **John 3:17-18,** ***“¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”***
2. This includes a lot of people. There are a lot of people, including a lot of very religious people who don’t “believe” in Jesus.
3. It is NOT some disobedience to one they never heard of that condemns people, *they are already condemned.* It is their own personal sin that makes people stand condemned!
 - **Romans 3:23,** ***“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”***
 - **Romans 6:23,** ***“For the wages of sin is death,”***
4. Think up one thing you have done wrong and know that you deserve death. That is your wages.
5. Most of us can come up with a long list over the years. Some of us with a list from just last week.
6. God made His “only begotten” available as a sacrifice for our sins because we were already lost! Folks are already lost. They fail to be saved when they do not believe in Jesus..

B. Christ is **the** God-given plan of salvation.

1. Christ is salvation. He IS the love of God. He is the way and the truth and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through Him. (**John 14:6**)
2. Like you have already gotten yourself out in the middle of the ocean and you are drowning, but you fail to be saved because you do not accept the life preserver that is tossed to you.
3. Christ IS the Righteousness of God. It is because folks stand condemned that God in His love, sent Christ! They need to come to belief in order to be not condemned.

Whatever else this “belief” entails, we need to understand that...

II. “Believing” Involves A Proper Concept Of Jesus.

A. The “Name” is vital.

1. **John 3:18,** ***“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”***
2. “Name” is everything He stands for. It is an indication of Character and Nature and Capacity. Even authority!
 - As in “Stop in the “name” of the law!
3. “Name” is more than five simple letters J-E-S-U-S. It is the concept those letters stand for!

B. Grasp a true concept of who Jesus is.

1. A lot of things that Buddha can never be. That Muhammad can never be. Confucius ...
2. He is the light of the world.
3. He is the very word of God which became flesh and blood on our behalf. (John 1:14)
4. He is the Love of God, manifested in the flesh
5. He is Immanuel – “God with us”. (Matthew 1:23)
6. Colossians 1:15, **“He is the image of the invisible God...”**
7. Colossians 1:18, **“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”**
Absolutely supreme in all things.
8. The one in Whom all the fullness of deity dwells. (Colossians 1:19)
9. He is **“...the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being “** (Hebrews 1:3)
10. He is the Savior and the only savior. The one and only way to reconciliation with God.

God’s one and only, Jesus, is the light of the world, and this introduces another very vital concept;

III. “Believing” Involves Coming Into The “Light”.

- A. Those who will be saved are attracted by “light”.
 1. John 3:19-20, **“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”**
 2. Like bugs to light. Beautiful, gentle moths are attracted to light. Cockroaches, flee and hide.
 3. Which are you? Drawn to godliness, openness, honesty, truth, or seek shady things?
 4. “Verdict” means this is the essence of the matter. Here is the very basis upon which judgment takes place. This is a deciding factor.
 5. Those who will be saved are attracted by God. By openness. By Truth, by “LIGHT”.
- B. Understand some of the ways folks tend to cower in darkness;
 1. Anger. I don’t have to deal with it if I get angry enough – folks will leave me alone.
 2. Avoidance. I don’t want to talk about it, It is none of your business. Who made you judge?
 3. Professed ignorance. “I didn’t realize...”
 4. Fear. Shame. We need to work up the courage to face things and bring them into the open
 - Light often hurts our eyes, coming out of darkness may be painful at first!
 - Coming into the light requires a great deal of courage. Where do liars go? Deceivers? Twisters of the truth? Should they enter the realm of Light, or the kingdom of Darkness? They go with the COWARDS; Revelation 21:8., **“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.””**
 5. God clearly and repeatedly condemns folks throughout scripture because they are ever seeing but not perceiving. We can choose to close our eyes to the Truth if there is something we don’t WANT to see. In John 9:39, **“Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?” ⁴¹ Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”**
 6. Another way is to try to hide in a crowd! “Everybody does it!”

Related to this concept of coming into the light, we need to also recognize that ...

IV “Believing” Is Reflected In Deeds.

John 3:21. **“²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”**

- A. One’s belief is identified by their behavior.
 1. A believer cannot simply go about life as usual.
 2. Their believing makes them different than they were. Different than other people.
 3. If you believe a flood is coming, you make preparations
 4. If you believe a truck is coming, you get out of the road.
 5. If you believe in the name of Jesus, you follow Him. Listen to Him, Trust Him, Obey what He says.
 6. If you say you believe in Jesus but it hasn’t altered your life, you are pretending.

7. If you say you believe in Jesus but it doesn't govern your life, you don't really have a clue as to what you are "believing" in or what "believing" is! .

B. Believing involves the concept of Obedience.

1. Actually making Him "Lord" and "Master".
2. Striving to actually do what Christ would do and what Christ would have one do.
3. Believers "die" to their own lusts and natural desires and "live" to whatever Christ desires.
4. John 3:36, "**Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.**"
5. (KJV) "**He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**"
6. (NAS) "**He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**"

C. Believing involves the concept of Living by Truth.

1. Believers study to know what corresponds to the will and spirit of Christ.
2. They constantly seek to correct and improve their heart, attitude, actions, motives.
3. If they find something/anything incorrect, they immediately discard it and seek TRUTH.
4. If "religion" teaches something they learn is not right, they change it, bring it to light and correct it to show that what they do is done through God.
5. Believing involves the concept of Repentance. Coming to the light entails recognizing, admitting, openly apologizing, and correcting. Actual life transformation! A change of habits.

So What?

I want to encourage each one this morning to examine yourself in the light of this passage. Ask yourself if you really are a believer and living as a believer. Are you continually coming into the light as He is in the light? Do all of your deeds continually reflect that you are a believer?

God loves you so much. He wants you to be saved.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

But to be a recipient of His love, we need to believe in his name (with everything that believing entails)

Closing Prayer:

On Believing

John 3:16-21

Reading: John 3:16-21

Memory: John 3:16.

“F_G_s_l_t_w_t_h_g_h_o_a_o_S,t_w_b_i_h_s_n_p_b_h_e_l.”

We need to understand what it is to “believe” in Christ.

Vital concepts pertaining to “believing” in Christ.

I. “Believing” Is Essential To Salvation.

A. Without believing, people stand lost! John 3:17-18 Romans 3:23 Romans 6:23

B. Christ is **the** God-given plan of salvation.

II. “Believing” Involves A Proper Concept Of Jesus.

A. The “Name” is vital. John 3:18

B. Grasp a true concept of who Jesus is. Colossians 1:15 Colossians 1:18

III. “Believing” Involves Coming Into The “Light”.

A. Those who will be saved are attracted by “light”. John 3:19-20

B. Some of the ways folks tend to cover in darkness; Revelation 21:8 John 9:39

IV “Believing” Is Reflected In Deeds.

A. One’s belief is identified by their behavior. John 3:21

B. Believing involves the concept of Obedience. John 3:36

C. Believing involves the concept of Living by Truth.

So What?

Ask yourself if you really are a believer and living as a believer.