

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK SIX: THE GIFT OF JESUS

READING

16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. 18 “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.” John 3 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this story, Jesus is having a late-night conversation with a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a religious leader who wanted to learn more about Jesus. He believed that Jesus was a miracle worker sent by God to teach the people, but he didn’t know the real reason God sent the gift of Jesus. In John 3:16, the most well-known verse in the Bible, we learn the reason behind the gift and the result of the gift.

The reason God sent Jesus into this world is because He loves the world. He loves all the people in the world and that includes you, your friends, your family, and even those you don’t get along with. God’s heart is for you and he wants your heart to be full of joy and peace and hope.

The result of the gift of Jesus is that “everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” There are two important things to notice about this wonderful promise:

1) “Believe in him” means more than head knowledge. Believe means to trust in Jesus (who He is and what He did) with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. It means to build your life and center your heart on God.

2) “Perish” doesn’t mean natural death; this is about spiritual death – separation from God. Those who trust in God will live forever with God because of the new life of the Spirit within them. This is why Christians are sometimes called “born again.” (You can read more about that in the first 15 verses of this chapter.)

RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- What is the best gift you’ve received recently? What did you love about it?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

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- Who did God send to this world as a gift?
- Who does God love?

CHILDREN:

- How do we know that God loves the world?
- Why did God give us the gift of Jesus?
- What does it mean to believe in God?

TEENAGERS:

- How would you summarize John 3:16 in your own words?
- How is head belief different from heart belief?
- What hope do we have for beyond this life?

ADULTS:

- How does the promise of eternal life help us live God honoring lives here and now?
- What is one area of your life in which you need greater trust in Jesus and his plans and purposes?

PRAYER

God,

Thank you for the gift of Jesus! I had no way to earn eternal life on my own. I did not deserve eternal life on my own. But you sent Jesus to live the life I should have lived and to die the death I should have died. Jesus thank you for giving your life FOR me and giving your life TO me! I believe in you. Help me to believe in you more deeply and more consistently. God, thank you for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

According to verses 19-21, one of the clearest indicators you trust in Jesus is that you love the light more than you love the darkness. This means you are willing to bring even the sinful things about yourself into a place of openness and transparency for the purpose of forgiveness and restoration. When you are struggling with a behavior or wrestling with a decision, be sure to pay attention to your willingness (or lack thereof) to seek counsel from other Christ followers. If you find yourself avoiding that conversation with trusted Christian friends, it is likely that you are trying to excuse the behavior or justify a decision that you already know doesn't glorify God. Remind yourself that you are fully accepted by God because of Jesus' work on your behalf. Experiencing the freedom found in that truth will give you the strength to be transparent and repentant.