

I. Introduction

A. John 12:44-50 . . . And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. [45] He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. [46] I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. [47] If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. [48] He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. [49] For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. [50] I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

B. Prayer

II. Jesus came to save, not to judge

A. In vs 47-50, Jesus makes it clear that He came to save, not judge, and yet judgment is still taking place and judgment will come on those who reject Jesus and His teachings.

1. In talking to Nicodemus, Jesus said something so similar it seems like the same thing. You can read that in John 3:16-18.

2. Therefore, there are two points I want to make from this.

B. First, though the day will come when Jesus will judge all mankind, from Adam to the last person born, for now, Jesus is the savior of all mankind, from Adam to the last person born.

1. In other words, the example of His life, the message of His words, His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His church, that is, the Body of Christ universal – these are all focused on saving mankind from the rule of darkness, and from the addictive power of sin, and from the selfish and sinful inclinations of our old nature, and from the deceptive and misleading ways of the world, and from immaturity – even as a Christian, and from the final penalty of sin.

2. Therefore, the current focus of the presence, the work, and the message of Jesus Christ is salvation, not condemnation. This shows the love and mercy of God toward sinners like you and me who deserve condemnation and death. So let us rejoice and take advantage of this.

- C. My second point is this, though Jesus came to save and remains committed to that task, God continues to judge – during their life-time – those who reject Jesus, and reject the example of His life, and reject His teachings.
 - 1. Now the purpose of this judgment is, first and foremost, to bring sinners to their senses, to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ that results in being conformed to the likeness of Christ and living a godly life.
 - 2. A second purpose of God’s judgment on sinners in their life-time is to warn others not to follow the ways of sinners, but to turn away from the devil, the world, and their sinful desires and turn to Jesus Christ.
 - 3. And a third purpose of God’s judgment on sinners in their life-time is to bring an end to the kind and amount of sin committed by any individual sinner or group of sinners.
- D. However you see God’s judgment, I submit to you that His judgement during our life-time is an act of love toward the sinner, the community, and those suffering because of the sin of others. And in the same way, His final judgment is loving, for it separates the godly from the committed sinners so that eternity with God will never be ruined by sin of any kind, but will remain sin-free – just as He intended from the beginning.

III. Christ is the Light that frees us from darkness and shows us the way of life

- A. We read in John 12:46, that Jesus said, “I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.
- B. This theme of light and darkness appears four more times in John.
 - 1. John 1:4-5 . . . In Him (*Jesus*) was life, and the life was the Light of men. [5] The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not (*and does not yet*) comprehend it.
 - 2. John 3:19-20 . . . This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. [20] For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.
 - 3. John 8:12 . . . Then Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”
 - 4. John 12:35 . . . So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.”

- C. And this theme of light and darkness appears a number of times in other places in the NT. For example –
1. In presenting his defense before King Agrippa, Paul said that it was God who dealt with him on the road to Damascus, and it was God who sent him to the Gentiles – to open their eyes so that they might turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Jesus (Acts 26:14-18).
 2. And in Ephesians 5:6-11, Paul writes, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. [7] Therefore do not be partakers with them; [8] for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light [9] (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), [10] trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. [11] Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.”
- D. I could go on, but that is enough to make the point that darkness is alluring and enticing to your selfishness, your fleshly desires, your passions, and the things you believe are needs but aren't.
1. Darkness blinds you to the truth, and it allows you to think or even leads you to believe you are going in a good direction when you are going in a self-destructive, life threatening direction.
 2. Darkness is a tool in the devil's hands for leading you astray – just as the serpent did with Eve.
 3. The reality is, darkness reigns in Satan's kingdom, and it reigns in whomever and wherever the devil is given power to rule.
- E. It is only in God, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in the Scriptures, in a pure heart, in a good conscience, in the people of God, and in those places where righteousness exceeds unrighteousness that we find light.
1. For example, God is perfect light, for as the scripture says, “In Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).
 2. In contrast to God, the organized church is not perfect light, for there are those in it who still live in darkness even though they claim to be living in the light.
 3. John confirms this in 1 John 2:9-11, “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. [10] The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. [11] But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

F. My point is simple:

1. Beware of darkness – in any and every form. Or as God’s words says, “Abhor what is evil” (Romans 12:9), “Flee the excessive and foolish desires of youth (2 Timothy 2:22), and “Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Why? Because the goal of darkness is to blind us to the truth, and to steal whatever we have that is good, and to kill us now and for eternity, and to destroy whatever faith, fellowship, and intimacy we have in God and with God.
2. However, being on guard against darkness is only half of the task before us. The other half, and of equal importance is loving the light, actively and thoughtfully pursuing the light, holding fast to the light, and intentionally walking in the light. Why? Because it is the light that leads us to life, and shows us the way, and makes it clear as to where we are going so that we can be certain we are not being led astray or going the wrong way.

IV. Making God supreme and seeing yourself as less

- A. John begins this portion (vs 44-45), with Jesus saying, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. [45] He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.”
 1. Jesus spoke similar words in John 10:30, where He said, “I and the Father are one.”
 2. And in John 14:8-9 when Philip said, “Lord show us the Father,” Jesus responded by saying “How is it that I have been this long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”
 3. In these two portions of scripture Jesus is clearly stating His oneness with God and His equality with God.
- B. However, here in John 12:44-45, Jesus is directing all the attention to God – as if God were the all-important one and Jesus was of lesser significance than God, or even insignificant in comparison to God.
 1. Paul gives us this same perspective in Philippians 2:5-8, where he says that even though Jesus existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God something to cling to – as if losing it would make His life worse. Instead, Jesus emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and became like one of us. But He did not stop there, He further humbled Himself by submitting to God, His Father, even to the point of enduring the suffering of the cross.
 2. In other words, even though Jesus is one with God and is equal to God, what we see here is that His attitudes, thoughts, and behavior

- were that of someone who thought of himself as less significant, or even insignificant in comparison to God.
- C. For example, Jesus showed God to be supreme by pointing to Him as the source of what He said and did, and as the one who decided what He would say and do.
1. We read this in John 7:16, where Jesus said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”
 2. And in John 8:28-29, Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”
- D. Does this mean Jesus was insignificant? No, absolutely not!
1. But what it does mean is that His attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors were of such a nature that He thought of God and spoke of God and treated God as the supreme being who is superior over all.
 2. Now I want to point out that in spite of seeing and treating God as supreme and Himself as less, Jesus had a healthy sense of self-confidence, a realistic recognition of who He was and what He came to do, a straight-forward honesty with those He dealt with, an inner peace that defied the turmoil all around Him, and the conviction that He was secure in God’s hands – even though there were those who were trying to destroy His ministry and kill Him.
- E. In contrast to Jesus and to our shame, this kind of attitude, mindset, and behavior toward God and about ourselves is not the norm, even among Christian, like you and me.
1. We are far more inclined to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.
 - a. This mindset frequently translates into seeing ourselves as the most important being.
 - b. And seeing ourselves as the most important being most often leads to treating God as if He is our servant, and treating the people around us as if their role is to help us obtain the life we want, or at least not get in the way of getting what we want.
 2. And though our own inclination to think more highly of ourselves than we ought makes it hard to have Christ’s attitudes, thinking, and behaviors, the fact remains that the world, and in some cases even the church make it harder by promoting self-importance, self-exaltation, and self-centeredness as a better path to a better life than the path of meekness and humility toward God and people.

- F. However, things like self-importance, self-exaltation, and self-centeredness come from our old nature, the world, and the devil – which means they lead us to the only places our old nature, the world, and the devil can lead – the corruption of our character, the destruction of our soul, shallow, damaged, or broken relationships, emotional, mental, and spiritual immaturity, foolish choices, and added troubles in this life.
- G. Now I want to acknowledge that from the perspective of our old nature, the world, and the devil, making self the most important person seems like the best way to ensure a happy, secure, satisfying life filled with pleasures, possessions, financial security, greater power over others, a comforting sense of well-being, and praise from those around you.
1. Yet in reality, living life as the most important person leads you away from God, it feeds distrust of God, and it becomes your rationale for thinking God should serve you rather than you serve Him – all things which reinforce your decision to demote God and promote yourself to being the most important one.
 2. And beyond that, making self the most important person feeds pride and starves humility.
 3. Yet here again, things are not what your old nature, the world, and the devil make them out to be.
 - a. Pride is not a blessing, but a curse. It is humility that is a blessing.
 - b. Pride turns God against you while humility gains His grace – and all the good that comes from having God’s grace.
 - c. Pride makes you dumber, but humility makes you wiser.
 - d. Pride is the enemy of love, whereas humility promotes love.
 - e. And pride exalts self over God while humility exalts God over self.
- H. So what is the point of all this? The wisest, the most spiritually healthy, the safest, and the most secure attitude, mindset, and behavior you can have toward God is to think of yourself as less significant or even insignificant in comparison to God – and then act accordingly, toward God and toward man.
1. Such attitudes, thinking, and behaviors do not change the fact that God created you in His image, which then sets you apart and above all the other creatures He created.
 2. It does not change the fact that God loves you so much that while you were still in your sin, He sent His only son to die in your place so that you could be reconciled to Him.
 3. It does not change the fact that God has given you gifts and abilities, along with the empowerment of His Holy Spirit, for the purpose of building up the church and accomplishing His purposes in the world.

4. And it does not change the fact that a proper view of God in relation to yourself always leads to a healthy sense of self-confidence, a realistic recognition of who you are and what you can do, the courage to be straight-forward and honest with those around you, an inner peace that defies the turmoil around you, and the conviction that you are secure in God's hands – even though there are those who want to take advantage of you or harm you in some way.
5. In other words, a proper view of God doesn't change any of these important things, but what it does change, is you!
 - a. And it changes you in a way that honors God, verifies the wisdom of His will and ways, brings you to that place where you are convinced that there is no better, no safer, no more contented, no more satisfying way to live than to live for the glory and pleasure of God, and the good of others.
 - b. Now the reality is, to be changed like this is to find heaven on earth – which means you will never regret what was required of you to be changed like this.
- I. And so if you still struggle with thinking more highly of yourself than you ought, follow Jesus' example of thinking of God as supreme and yourself as less significant or even insignificant in comparison to God.
 1. And then act accordingly, toward God and toward man.
 2. And if you will do this, you will be led by the light that frees you from the darkness and shows you how to remain on the path of life.