

SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 01.09.24

PREACHER: PS NATHAN

THE ONES WHOM JESUS LOVED

BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

BEING, THINKING & DOING

Conviction of a Disciple: We are the ones whom Jesus loved.

Our actions flow from our identity being rooted firmly in the conviction that God chose us as His children and loves us.

OVERVIEW

Being truly loved isn't about total affirmation or acceptance. In fact, because Jesus loves us so much, He invites us to be challenged, corrected, rebuked, and taught as an act of love, as we strive to become more like Him. It's from this place that we begin to live differently and live more Christlike.

ACTION

Step 1: Reflect: How does this challenge my perception of loving and being loved? Do I expect total affirmation or am I open to growing through correction?

Step 2: Commit: How does being "the one whom Jesus loved" change the way I view being convicted by Spirit?

Step 3: Act: What practical steps can I take this week to love others better?

THOUGHT

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 1:1-4

We encounter a lot of voices that work hard to distract us from faith and tempt us, promising to give us “the secret knowledge to finding a meaningful life”. If you spend any time on the internet, you’ve most likely caught wind of these. In John’s day, these voices had a name: The Gnostics. Their teaching could be simmered down to this: “The flesh is bad, but the spirit is good”.

Now there are a couple of problems with this.

First, it gives licence to do what you want with your body because your body is simply flesh, so it doesn't matter. Second, when you believe your body is evil, you will treat it accordingly.

But then, there was Jesus - Fully man and fully God, he showed that both the flesh and the spirit mattered to him, and in him, both would be redeemed. We are wholly integrated beings - flesh AND spirit - this means what we do with our body affects our spirit and what we do with our spirit affects our body. God has a vested interest in both our bodies and spirits. **One is not more important than the other.**

John reminds us that what we see with our eyes and touch with our hands—the physical, material world—matters right now, and we are called to steward it well. “Matter” matters, because it matters to God.

John also wanted us to know a couple of other things from his writing. Specifically, that he was the disciple that Jesus loved (and that he was faster than Peter). The first statement goes for us as well. We are Jesus’s beloved, and everything we do stems from this understanding. But often, we have a skewed idea of what it means to be loved. Love isn’t about total acceptance or affirmation. True love is, as John learned, about being taught, challenged, rebuked, corrected, and convicted.

In our relationships, it’s the healthy ones that call us higher, and we can’t be called higher unless we’re stretched or pulled. When we realise what it looks like to be loved as children of God, we adopt this as our identity and begin to become more like our Heavenly Father.

But, it isn’t just enough to know about God. The New Testament is centred around objective truth anchored in heart experience. This means we need to do more than only grow in knowledge and understanding of Jesus; it has to lead to fellowship, relationship, and connection with Him.

If you only apply biblical principles and truth to your life, you'll have a better life, no question.

But when you encounter His presence and the fellowship that He wants to have with you, you'll have a radically transformed life. It's very possible to attend church without experiencing the presence of God.

John challenges us: Have we seen it with our eyes? Have we touched it with our hands? Because if we have, then we have encountered the eternal life that is Jesus, and that life begins **right now**. When we encounter Jesus, his life flows through us and his complete joy fills us. When we experience something this good, we can't resist the urge to let it bubble out from us and into the world - in other words, we become the living, breathing Church we are designed to be.

DISCUSSION

1. How can we discern between voices that lead us toward God and those, like the Gnostics of John's day that distract us from him?
2. In what ways can we encourage each other to see our physical lives as integrated with our spiritual walk?
3. How and where have you experienced the real, tangible presence of God in your life, and how has it changed the way you live?

PRAYER

Lord,

Thank You that You know us fully and yet You call us Your children, Your beloved. May we know not just Your truth but also Your presence.

Help us to encounter You, experience Your joy, and be radically transformed by Your teaching and correction that comes from a place of deep love, as we become more like You, our Heavenly Father.

Amen