The Gospel of John
**3.3—RESPONDING TO THE LIGHT – JOHN 3:16–21**

**INTRODUCTION**

HAVE YOU EVER SAT IN A WAITING ROOM WHILE SOMEONE VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU WAS IN A VERY NECESSARY, BUT RISKY SURGERY? IMAGINE IT GOING LONGER THAN EXPECTED … A LOT LONGER. AND THERE YOU SIT, NOT KNOWING WHETHER THEY’RE ALIVE OR DEAD … WHETHER THE SURGERY WAS A GREAT SUCCESS OR A MISERABLE FAILURE. FINALLY, THE SURGEON WALKS OUT INTO THE LOBBY AND CALLS YOUR NAME. YOU’RE NOT GOING TO SAY, “HOLD ON, LET ME FINISH READING THIS NEWS ARTICLE.” YOU’RE GOING TO DROP EVERYTHING YOU’RE DOING TO GIVE THAT SURGEON YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION.

SO HERE WERE THE JEWISH PEOPLE… THEIR ANCESTORS HAD BEEN HEALTHY AND BLESSED BY GOD IN TIMES PAST, BUT NOW THEY’RE CONTROLLED BY THE ROMAN EMPIRE… THEIR TAXES ARE OUTRAGEOUS… THEIR FREEDOMS ARE LIMITED… AND THEY WONDER IF THEY’LL EVER AGAIN ENJOY THE PROMISES GOD... AND THE HONEST ONES WONDER HOW THEY’LL BE SAVED FROM THE SINS THAT PLAGUE THEIR LIVES… AND THEN COMES JESUS FROM THE REALM OF ETERNITY… FROM GOD HIMSELF WHO KNOWS ALL THINGS... YOU WOULD THINK THAT EVERY JEWISH PERSON WOULD WANT TO HEAR HIM… WOULD BE HANGING ON EVERY WORD HE SAID… AND MANY DID… BUT MOST DIDN’T. IN TODAY’S LESSON, JESUS IS GOING TO TELL US WHY… WHY THEY DIDN’T… AND WHY THAT’S SO CONSEQUENTIAL.

**NOW REMEMBER… JESUS IS HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS.**

**LET’S FIRST READ JOHN 3:1–3… AND THEN VERSES 16–21:**

**John 3:1–3, 16–21 (ESV)** Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2** This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” **3** Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **… Verse 16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to **condemn** **[krino (*verb) kree´-no*]** the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. **18** Whoever believes in him is not **condemned [krino]**, but whoever does not believe is **condemned** **[krino]** already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. **19** And this is the **judgment [krisis (*noun) kree´-sis*]**: **the light** has come into the world, and people loved **the darkness** rather than **the light** **because** their **works were evil**. **20** For **everyone** who **does wicked things** **hates the light** and **does not come** to the light, **lest his works should be exposed**. **21** 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**.”

V19.1 – “this is the judgment”

* “judgment” = Gr. “krisis” (**kree´**-sis) = the act of judging or assessing a person, situation or event… especially a moral or legal determination.
* So God has assessed and judged an event … a situation … and these three verses are going to explain His assessment.

V19.2 – “**the** light has come into the world”

**ILL – Sometimes I’ll walk into certain restaurants … and it’s dark. I don’t mean that the lights are dimmed for a relaxing ambiance … I mean they’re dark. I want to ask … “Hey, what is it that you guys don’t want me to see?”**

**FUNNY — Ordering Thai food in LA**

* not just “light,” but “the light” … what does that mean?
	+ **John 1:1–9 (ESV)** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was **the light** of men. **5** **The light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness, to bear witness about **the light**, that all might believe through him. **8** He was not **the light**, but came to bear witness about **the light**. **9** **The true light**, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10 He was in the world**, and the world was **made through him**, yet the world did not know him.
* By Jesus saying “the light,” He is speaking of Himself
* So a judgment has been made about “Jesus the Light” coming into the world… so let’s see how God has judged this event and situation

V19.3 – “people loved the darkness rather than the light”

* Jesus said, there was a clear choice between Me, “the Light,” and “the darkness,” and the people of this world chose “the darkness.”

V19.4 – “because their works were evil”

* People didn’t choose the darkness over the light of Jesus because of **ignorance** … **lack of understanding** … **or even sin** … no… they choose the darkness because they are doing evil, sinful things and they don’t want to stop.
* In some cases they don’t want to admit that their works really are evil

V20.1 – “For everyone who does wicked things”

1. Hates the light
2. Does not come to the Light
* WHY don’t they come to the light???
	+ “lest his works should be exposed”
	+ It wasn’t because of **ignorance** … **lack of understanding** … **or even sin**… no… it was fundamental honesty… they don’t their sins to be exposed… or exposed as sin.
* Notice the word, “Everyone”… why… because if you came to the light the light would change you and you wouldn’t be doing those wicked things.

V21.1 – “But whoever does what is true (or does the truth) comes to the light”

* Notice, those who are sincerely trying to live right come to the Light
* They want their desire to do right before God to be clearly seen
* Nicodemus came to Jesus … and now Jesus is clearing telling him which category he’s in … and also, which category many of his peers—the other religious leaders in the Sanhedrin—are in.
1. **DO YOU HAVE THE LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE?**

**Psalm 119:130 (NLT)** The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand.

**EX – Many church goers today are in trouble because the light in their church has grown so dim … the truth is not fully preached any more … certain parts are ignored because it’s not culturally relevant … because they could be backlash on social media … and people will literally go to hell because of it.**

1. **HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THE LIGHT?**
	1. **DO YOU COME TOWARD IT?**
	2. **DO YOU ALLOW OTHER’S PEOPLE’S RESISTANCE INFLUENCE YOU?**
	3. **DO YOU COME TOWARD IT IN SOME AREAS, BUT AWAY FROM IT IN OTHERS?**

**EX – In 2003 we launched a discipleship system called, Operation Solid Lives (OSL) … we called people to fill themselves with the Word of God through weekend services, mid-week services, listening to messages at home, reading their Bibles every day, and memorizing scriptures … the intake of that amount of light made dramatic and eternal changes in people. Tens of thousands of people have been impacted in several hundred churches across America and in 25 different nations of the world.**

* **Now God has led me to develop another system of discipleship that I’m convinced will be used to disciple exponentially more people … it’s called Walks with God … and the first one will be rolling out shortly.**
	1. **DO YOU HIDE FROM IT?**

**EX – Some time ago there was a young lady who was very involved… attended one of our campuses every weekend, went through multiple levels of discipleship, was right in the middle of what God was doing… but then she began to back off, not being around so much … and then she shared that God was leading her to another church … and then as time went on … we heard she moved in with a guy and is living in fornication.**

* **My first thought might be … That’s what can happen if you stray away from the Light… but what we’re learning from Jesus is … people who are already doing wrong things that they don’t want to give up run from the Light.**
* **Though she is responsible … I believe that the devil took advantage of her because like so many other ladies, she didn’t have a loving, nurturing father to give her pure love and confidence that God will bring her the right man at the right time.**
* **We’re not going to give up on her … we pray that God will draw her back to the Light … to believing the God is so real.**
1. **HOW BRIGHTLY DOES THE LIGHT SHINE THROUGH YOU?**
	1. **TO OTHER BELIEVERS?**

**EX – I remember many years ago going to a small pastor’s gathering … the group met on a regular basis, but it was my first time being there … and as the group talked, I noticed that they were being critical about the denomination and its leaders … talking about what they didn’t like … what they disagreed with. Well, I wasn’t about to join in on that criticism … God had taught me not to do that … and not only that, but it just so happened that I knew some of what was going on in those situations, and why certain decisions were being made. So instead of chiming in, I waited my turn and then interjected my thoughts in support of the leadership. And then I proceeded to share how important it was for us to walk in love and unity with our leaders. Ha … you could have heard a pin drop … it got so quiet. And you know what, I have a great relationship with most of those men today, but not all. I could tell that some didn’t want me to come anymore because they liked to sit around and complain.**

* 1. **TO UNBELIEVERS?**

**Listen to a few verses about our role in bringing the light to the world:**

**Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV)** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

**Isaiah 60:1–3 (ESV)** Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. **2** For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. **3** And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

**THERE ARE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD—AND MINE—WHO ARE LIVING IN DARKNESS AND ON THEIR WAY TO HELL … THE QUESTION IS … WILL THEY HAVE ANY LIGHT TO RESPOND TO?**

**I’M PRAYING OVER MY NEW NEIGHBORHOOD … PRAYING THAT GOD WILL HELP ME DISCIPLE MANY PEOPLE THERE AND PLANT MANY HOUSE CHURCHES.**