

Lent 2 / March 5, 2023

John 3:17

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.”

If you ever recommend anyone to read the bible, the gospel of John is the best book to read first. The gospel of John clearly presents and explicitly describes the most important things about Jesus. His divine nature. The meaning of His words and actions. The purpose for which He came into the world. Jesus is the eternal Word, by whom all things came to be, and in whom all things continue to have existence. He is the source of life for all things living. He took upon Himself our humanity in time and became a flesh and blood human being. He became a human being and lived in the world, so that through His life, His death and His resurrection He would save the world from sin and lift the condemnation of eternal death from the heads of all who receive Him and believe in His Name. God sent Him not to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him!

He is the eternal creative word. His words have an immediate and powerful effect. His words accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He speaks them. He speaks words of forgiveness, healing and life. The dead are raised, the blind receive sight and sinners are forgiven. He came into the world that through the suffering of the cross, He would take away the sin of the world that is the cause of injury, hatred and death. He came to save the world from sin, the devil and eternal death, but the world rejected Him. He came to His own people, but His own people rejected Him. But to all who receive Him, who believe in His name, whether Jew or Gentile, He gives the power to become children of God and bestows on us, the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal salvation in the presence of His Father in the resurrection to life eternal. God sent His Son to save the world through Him!

John is the first book to read, because it shows clearly how Jesus fulfills God's saving purpose in the world, promised first in the book of Genesis, continuing through to the book of Malachi. Jesus is the offspring of woman promised to Eve and Adam in the garden, who would crush the serpent's head and release from the devil's control, all who hold Him in their hearts through faith. He crushed the serpent's head, by being bruised through the suffering of death on the cross. On the cross He took away the sin of the world, which brings death to all human beings. Moses raised the image of a serpent on a pole in the wilderness. To those who looked in faith, God gave physical healing. Jesus was raised on the cross to give healing body and spirit, to all who look on Him in faith and see Him as Saviour.

Jesus is the perfect offspring of Abraham. He fulfilled the purpose for which God made Abraham a great nation. Jesus makes God known as the only God, a God of love and the Saviour of all people. Beginning with Genesis, God has had a plan for human salvation. Jesus fulfilled God's plan, by living a life of perfect obedience as a human being and by offering Himself on the cross for the atonement of the sin of every human soul. Jesus cleanses us of our sin, so God can dwell within our hearts and walk among us through His Spirit. Jesus clothes us with His righteousness in the forgiveness of our sin so we may live in God's presence, now through faith and one day fully in His resurrection.

God promised to make Abraham a great nation and through him to bless all the nations of the world. All the words and promises spoken to Abraham, to Moses and to Israel by the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus. He brings the blessing of forgiveness and salvation to all the nations of the world. To all who receive Him and believe in His Name, He gives the right to be called children of God. In the past God spoke to the world through Moses and the prophets. In these last times He speaks through His Son, whom He gave to save the world. John leads us to the Son, in whom we have forgiveness and life with God in time and for eternity. John expressed the purpose of all the scriptures saying, “These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, that believing you may have life in His name.” God sent His Son into the world to save the world through Him.

John leads us to see Jesus as our God and Saviour. John leads us to Jesus' cross as the source of our salvation. Jesus was lifted up on the cross that all who look to Him in faith may be cured of the spiritual disease of sin and delivered from its terminal diagnosis of death. One of the major themes of the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers is the purification of sin, which allows Israel to live in the presence of God without being consumed by His holiness. Israel's sin causes fire to break out in the camp. It must be atoned through sacrifice. Israel's sin brings wrath on the community. It must be atoned through sacrifice. Israel's sin angers the Lord and He sends serpents to bite them and bring them to repentance. The Lord commands Moses to manufacture a bronze serpent and raise it on a pole. Whoever looks at it in faith is healed of the serpent's venom. The venom represents sin. Sin

is the spiritual poison that brings death. It brings eternal death, unless it is treated with the antidote of atonement through sacrifice, received by faith. The antidote for human sin is the blood Jesus shed when He was raised on the cross.

God gave healing from the physical injury of the serpent's bite through the serpent raised on a pole in the wilderness. He gives healing from the spiritual injury of the serpent's bite through Jesus raised on the cross. Sin is a venom that poisons our relationships with fellow humans. Sin brings hurt, pain and sorrow. Sin separated the man from the woman in the garden. Sin separates human beings from each other and from God. Sin is a venom that poisons our relationship with God and brings darkness to our spirits, injury and death to our bodies and condemnation to our souls. God gives healing in time and eternity from the spiritual and physical effects of sin, through the blood Jesus shed on the cross.

We receive this healing by seeing Jesus through the cross as our Saviour. We receive this healing in the washing of Holy Baptism. We receive this healing by returning to the promise of our baptism, confessing our sins and hearing Jesus's words of absolution. We receive this healing by receiving His body and blood in Holy Communion, given and shed for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus purifies our souls in the forgiveness of sins, so we may have a relationship with God through faith. Jesus covers the sin that remains within us with His righteousness so that when God looks at us, He sees not our sins, but Jesus' righteousness. Jesus purifies us body and soul that we may live with God now through faith and in eternity, in His resurrection to life everlasting. The world was under the control of sin and the condemnation of death. God sent His Son so that all who believe in Him may have forgiveness and life.

Nicodemus came to Jesus, because he believed Jesus was a great teacher. Nicodemus saw God at work in Him saying, "No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with Him." Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus shows that He is much more than a teacher. He is our God and Saviour. God did not send His Son into the world to teach the world. He sent His Son to save the world. Jesus saved the world by being raised high on the cross. Jesus saved the world on the cross, by suffering the penalty of sin for every human soul. Jesus saves the world through the blood of His cross.

He saves people in the world through the word and by the working of the Holy Spirit, who opens our eyes to see our sins and who opens our hearts to receive Jesus as Saviour and believe in His Name. Jesus saves you and me by the blood of His cross, received in faith in the washing of Holy Baptism, given and shed in the bread and wine of Holy Communion for the forgiveness of sin. Through these means, God's grace comes to us that we may believe in Jesus as our Saviour and have life in His Name, in time and for eternity. God bless us with faith to believe until faith passes into sight in the resurrection to everlasting life. In Jesus' Name. Amen