

Jesus Unfiltered

Session 8: Why God DID NOT Send Jesus

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. So Pat Leopold ... All of our area directors have been recruited from some very successful ... My theory is that the best predictor of future success is past success, so we just look for successful people in anything. So Pat's the former principal of St. Luke's Lutheran School, that big school out there on Aloma out towards Oviedo, and so Pat, you've now been with the ministry for ...Six years? How's that even possible? So Pat, would you just sort of stand up and ... First of all, this is a man who's spent the last six years helping our area churches learn how to more effectively disciple men. So why don't we just give him some love? So with that said, let's go ahead and get started into the day.

So we're gonna do a shout-out to a group called MVP, and the leader of this group is a former area director for Man in the Mirror who has taken on the role of pastor of Here's Hope Church in Kokomo, Indiana. Hey James, is that what the Beach Boys were talking about? Kokomo? Here's Hope Church, Kokomo. James Murdoch is the leader. A group of men who've started meeting, in fact they just had their very first meeting, 7 PM on Wednesdays, and James writes, "We are men of God, growing together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and inviting other men who are disconnected from God to know Him." Wow. Great, that's awesome. And so we want to welcome MVP, Men of Valor and Prayer, and would you join me in giving them a warm and arousing Man in the Mirror welcome? One, two, three, hurrah! Welcome, men. We are so glad to have you become part of the Bible study.

All right, so the series is Jesus Unfiltered. Today's message is called Why God Did Not Send Jesus. So last week, the text was ... Well, the main text was John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son that whosoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life." And so we said that that was Jesus making his message clear; that that is the message of the Gospel. And so the big idea last week was I pledge myself to never make, never make, the message more complicated than "Believe in Jesus." I pledge to never make the message more complicated than "Believe in Jesus." So now we come to this next text, John 3:17 and following, please turn in your Bibles if you would, to John chapter three, verse 17.

Every time I hear that John 3:16, my heart gets warm, tears get close to my eyes, and I feel like laughing because many of you will remember Jim Siebert, who was the administrator of the Bible study before Jim Angelakos, for 20 plus years, I guess. And Jim and I became best buddies; we would go to a lunch and a movie every Friday, and we did that for like, I think I added it up, 17 years. Well, Jim had liver problems, and not from drinking, by the way. Jim had liver problems, had a liver transplant, and the liver transplanted failed. And so when he was not in good health ... He was on like \$5,000 a month worth of medicine, anti-rejection medicine.

Anyway, real complicated situation, but he was weak. Weak. And we would have, still do, annual Christmas parties at Man in the Mirror at the home office, and we had one at the home of David Delk. We do a gift exchange and Jim opened his gift and it was a little wood box, and it had John 3:16 written

out on it. But none of us knew that and so somebody said, "Hey Jim, what does the box say?" And Jim, in his frail state, said in a very monotone voice, he looked at it, he said, "For I so loved the world." And it just ... First of all, it was the funniest thing I'd ever heard in my life. You've been tickled before where you couldn't stop laughing, I got tickled. I've only been like that three or four times in my whole life. But it was just the most precious and sweet memory of Jim; it's probably one of the three top memories I have of our beloved Jim Siebert. But he did so love the world. That was Jim Siebert. Jim Siebert, what he said, "I so loved the world," that he gave himself ... That's exactly what Jim Siebert did.

HOW SHOULD WE SEE THE WORLD?

First up this morning is how should we see the world, because I certainly know how Jim saw the world. How should we see the world? We're gonna start at John chapter three, verse 17, so read along with me if you have your Bible open. "For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him." So now we've had, in these two verses, we've seen the word "world," cosmos, four times. And let's just go ahead and read through the text, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world," the fifth time it's used, "but men love the darkness instead of the light because their deeds were evil," or bad or sinful.

You know, evil was one of those words like repent, so repent is just such a loaded term. I talked about that last week, you know, the big sign, "Repent!" Usually somebody holding it up in the wrong places. By the way, even though people hold it up in the wrong places, people do actually come to Jesus because of that sign. Did you know that? Yeah, so who am I to say, in my opinion, that it's the wrong sign or the wrong place? But anyway, evil is another word like that; it just seems so electric, it seems like such a lightning rod, it seems like such a ... Of course, until you actually see something that's evil.

"This is the verdict: Light has come to the world but men love darkness instead of the light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil," or sinful things, "hates the light and will not come into the light for fear his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light so that it may be seen plainly," or clearly seen, "that what he has done has been done through God." Now right now that probably is the most opaque passage of Scripture you could ever remember seeing, right? We're gonna break it down. We're gonna break it down.

So how should we see the world? How should we see the world? There are two ways to see the world. There is the way we see the world through our own best thinking. We see based on our nature, our nurture, our experience and all these things. We formulate our own best thinking or our opinion of the situation and then we react; our own best thinking. Here's the problem with our own best thinking: If you're standing right here and you're looking for the correct answer, you can go in literally an infinite number of directions for an infinite amount of time and you could end up being wrong, and frequently you know that you are. The second way, the second way to see the world, is based on the authority of a text, just like a judge. There are judges that make judgments in courts of law based on their own best thinking; there are other judges in courts of law who look at the law and let the law, the text, be the authority that governs the decisions that they make.

As Christians, we're people of the book; we're people of a text. And so we should be seeing the world in the way that uses the authority of the Bible, God's word, as our text for how we see the world as opposed to our own best thinking. Now I'm not gonna spend any time on this, but you know that a lot of damage has been done, some of it irreparable, because of Christians seeing the world through their own

eyes, according to their own best thinking. All kinds of irreparable damage. I've told many stories here but the one that I always come back to, of course because she was my neighbor, was this woman Eileen who, in her 90s, I went to see her talk about Jesus and she was violently against talking to me about Jesus because she had grown up in a Christian environment where it was total legalism; she wasn't allowed to wear makeup, she wasn't allowed to go to dances, she wasn't allowed to listen to music. And so she was extremely hostile toward Christianity because she had been so irreparably damaged because of Christians acting out of their own best thinking.

So what do we mean when we say "the world"? What are we talking about when we're talking about the world? So if you want to, please keep a finger in John three, but if you want to you can turn over to first John, chapter two. First John, chapter two, verse 15. And we're gonna learn what the Bible says about how we should look at the world, and then we're gonna create a bit of a dialectic here because we have already read, in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world." So how does God see the world? God loves the world; He says, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I have longed to gather you under my wing," and so forth. But first John 2:15, we are told do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. "For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man. The lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

So we are actually ... It's interesting because we're told to look at the world in one way, we're told not to love it, but what is it that the word is talking about when it uses the word "world"? Is what sense is this meant? This would be the sinful part of the world; the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life. So that part of the world which is sinful, that is the part of the world that we are not supposed to love. The part of the world that ... And we got a little bit of a dialectic here because Jesus loves the world and then tells us not to. Okay, there's a little bit of a dialectic. There is a very easy resolution to that and that is, is that the part of the world that we're to not love is the that part which is born of the sinful nature: The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.

The part of the world that God loves are the people, are His creatures, are His creations. And so this is where you end up with the idea, it's cliché but it really works, hate the sin, love the sinner. Right? Hate the sin, love the sinner. So that's the resolution of what this means when we talk about how we should see the world.

Now to verse 17, "For God did not send His son into the world to condemn it but to save it." So I think the error that Christians sometimes make, hopefully nobody here, but we view ourselves as agents of condemnation. We are experts in the law. We understand this book to which we have given ourselves. We can explain with excruciating detail to someone why they're so off-base. We become agents of condemnation instead of agents of salvation. But if we see the world the way Jesus sees the world, then we will become people of grace and not of law.

Oh, I knew this was gonna be too theological. Oh brother. But I do think there's something here that's important for you to see, so let me go ahead and say it and get it out of the way, all right? It's in verse 18; it says ... So why does Jesus not condemn the world? Why doesn't he condemn the world? Especially, you know, when you look at some of the evil and wicked things that people do, why does Jesus not condemn the world? Why why why why? Look at verse 18: "Whoever believes in him is not condemned," here's the answer, "but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only son."

So in other words, the reason that Jesus doesn't condemn people is because the Father already condemned. To condemn the condemned is a redundancy; people are already condemned. All of sin fall short of the glory of God. People need a savior, not a condemner. Oh, that should be the big idea: People need a savior, not a condemner. It's not the big idea, but it should be, because that's one you will remember; is that Jesus is not the condemner, he's the savior and I'm an agent of the savior, not the condemner. Gosh, I wish I'd have thought of that earlier.

So here's the Big Idea: **If Jesus came to save the world, it must be worth saving.** I believe that this should have, could have ... Wow. If every Christian could stop and think this through, I believe the anger and the hatred and the vitriol that ... I mean, the world's gonna do that anyway, but in terms of Christians joining in to the anger and the vitriol that gets poured out, I just think it would dramatically impact each of us. If Jesus came to save the world, it must be worth saving. God is good, God is great, therefore we can trust him, and if he came to save the world, it must be worth saving.

JESUS CAME TO SAVE THE WORLD BECAUSE IT'S WORTH SAVING

All right, so let's take a look at that a little bit: Jesus came to save the world because it's worth saving. So Bill Bright was the founder of Cru; Cru is the world's largest servant ministry. He is famous for having written The Four Spiritual Laws, which there are over a billion copies of that little booklet in print. My question is, a billion copies? Where are all these booklets? They must have silos filled with these booklets. But, you know, I remember somebody telling me one time they saw one next to a gutter in a cold rainy street in some city in Romania, so they're all over the place.

Doctor Bright told the story ... The first law is God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The second law is that all ... Well, basically all have sinned; I can't remember the exact wording. And so Bill could not ... Doctor Bright could not figure out which of those two laws to make law one and which to make two. Should we make that you have sinned the first law, but God loves you the second law, or should he make God loves you number one, but you have sinned number two? And he couldn't figure it out, and he had his staff of a few people working on the final graphic design before it went to the printer for the very first time and they had all kinds of discussions throughout the day about it, and finally they put first that you're a sinner.

Let's see if I remember what the exact wording-Yeah, man is sinful and separated from God. Oh yeah, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, man is sinful and separated from God. Right, okay.

And so Doctor Bright decided to make "Man is sinful and separated from God" law number one, and "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life" law number two. And everybody was happy because it took into account just how bad this world is. Just how bad this world is. You know, this world needs that bony finger; this world needs to understand how sinful it is. And then in spite of that, in spite of that, in spite of that, in spite of that, God loves them. Ah, yeah, He loves them. But, they're sinful. So everybody's happy. So he said, "I'm going to bed," as it was late at night. So he got halfway up the stairs, and he turned around and he said, "You know what? Change law number one and number two. Law number one's gonna be 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.'" And the staff person that he told to do this began sobbing hysterically because she thought that he had abandoned the faith.

Well, the rest is history. Doctor Bright understood Jesus came to save the world because it's worth saving. He loved the world. He was not the condemner of the world, he was the savior of the world. And

so how about you? How about you? Are you spreading grace? Are you spreading salvation? Or do you look on people with such disdain that that person, they could never ... God could never redeem that person? What that person has done is beyond redemption. How many times have I heard, I've heard this a lot over the years from pastors, that somebody, usually a man, in the church becomes so angry at the pastor and has said, and I've heard this at least a dozen times, and walked up to the pastor and said, "You have a demon inside of you, Pastor." And by the way, it takes a demon to see a demon, I guess.

SO WHAT DO MEN NEED THAT YOU CAN OFFER?

Anyway, big idea of the day is this: If Jesus came to save the world, it must be worth saving. And then just finally, so what do men need that you can offer? We see this in verse 21: "But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light so that it may be clearly seen," or seen plainly, "that what he has been done has been done through God." So our part is to be doing things that can be plainly seen. How? Through living by the truth. So what do men need that you can offer? It's living by the truth of God's word instead of your own best thinking. What do men need that you can offer? If you want to ... I mean wow, I started making a list of all the things here and I said well this is ridiculous; basically I'm just writing down the whole Bible here.

But I thought it might be worthwhile to take a look together at Galatians chapter five, you can leave John, Galatians chapter five beginning at verse 13 and just look at a couple of verses here. "You, my brothers, were called to be free." And I was thinking, you know, Romans 8:1 says "We are no longer under condemnation," or under judgment, because of Jesus. We're no longer under condemnation, and then Galatians 5 says no, instead you're called to be free. You're called to be free. "But," it says, "do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature." And what is the sinful nature? It's to live by your own best thinking. It's to live by your own best ideas. It's to become the great condemner instead of the great savior, you see. It's to not see that Jesus came to save the world because it's worth saving. "Don't use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature, rather serve one another in love." It doesn't say that; it says, "Serve one another in love."

And a great example of, we'll come back up, but down in Galatians 6 and I've said this here before, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should shun and shame him," and make him feel like dirt and never have anything to do with him ever again in his whole life. "You who are spiritual should restore him gently." So that's the application of serving one another in love. And then look at verse 14, and then we'll call it quits there. The entire law is summed up in a single command. The entire law is summed up in a single command, and this is in multiple places in the Bible: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love your neighbor as yourself. Watch this. In Romans 13, it says "If you keep this one law, you will find you are keeping all the others." Romans 13. But it says here in verse 15, "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other."

I don't know. The times I ... Preparing this message made me sad because I just ... There's so much vitriol and anger and divisiveness in our culture now, and I think most Christians are trying to tamp it down, but there are enough believers in the fray too that you're wondering how do they get to a point where they decided to overreact and jump in the ring instead of using the wisdom of this law? The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself. I mean, there are people that you know who are believers who are just so angry at the world, at the sinful part of the world, that they just seem to be ready to burn down the whole house. But that's not what Jesus says; that's not what ... If you want to follow that strand out of your own best thinking, you can go as far as you want, but it's never going to resolve the problems that we have. There's only one strand that will help us resolve what

we're going through, and that's to make the text that is the Bible our final authority for all matters of life as well as faith. And what that text tells us is this: If Jesus came to save the world, it must be worth saving.

So this means that go into your construction job, go into your sales job, go into your professional position, go into your first responder position ... Did I say IT? Whatever it is that you do, go there as an agent of salvation. Go there as an agent of grace, not of condemnation. Not of condemnation. Because God loves this world and sent His one and only son Jesus. He did not come to condemn, he came to save. Now there is a judge and there will be judgment; it's not you and it's not now. This is the time for grace. Right now is a time of gathering, of the fields are white under harvest. There has never been a better time for there to be a distinction drawn between someone who's walking with the Lord and someone who's not. I want to be that guy, and I know you do too. So let's pray and ask God to join us in that.

Our dearest Father, if you think the world's worth saving then it must be worth saving. And help us to see what you see and think what you think so that we can do what you do. Lord, I know that every man here has felt, maybe heavily right now, but certainly at times in recent years just the gravitas of a world that seems to be coming unraveled, and wondering what role Christians can play and even seeing Christians sometimes, occasionally at least, being part of the problem, not part of the solution. And so Lord, help us to figure out how we can play the biggest role that we can play. We just offer ourselves simply to you and ask that thy will would be done in our lives and through us. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.