

The Beginning of Prayer

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I. Introduction. Text: John 3:16-36.

II. There is a belief that results in life and a disobedience that results in death.

A. The problem is that disobedience appears to be fun.

B. The Bible does not speak of a cold and removed God, but one who loves the world.

C. The agony in our life is the result of our own selfish purposes—what we are is the cause of all the agony we feel.

D. God's reaction is compassion.

1. The way that God loved the world was through the giving of Jesus on the cross.

2. God's love took unspeakable shame when Jesus who was sinless took man's place.

3. Believers ought not to come to nonbelievers in condemnation therefore. (II Corinthians 5)

4. God seeks to set us free from our sins, but they do not keep us from coming to Him.

5. God has removed the condemnation and made it possible to come to Him.

III. People still have a choice.

A. The race of humanity is living under the wrath of God.

B. The reason people do not accept God's grace is because they love darkness.

1. We do not like to be shown that we are wrong.

2. If we acknowledge that our deeds are wrong, we will be drawn to the light—Jesus.

C. The feeling of God drawing a person is the desire for freedom from evil.

IV. The witness of John the Baptist.

A. Jesus is the supreme person in the universe.

B. John taught that Jesus must increase and that we must decrease.

1. All position comes only from God. (Daniel 4)

2. John knew his own role right from the start.

3. John was overjoyed at the crowds flocking to Jesus.

4. Jesus was the one who must increase.

C. Jesus speaks ultimate truth.

1. He speaks from the widest base.

2. He speaks from personal experience.

3. There is a confirming word of the Spirit.

D. We can all have love, joy and peace in Jesus.

Application questions:

1. How would you respond to someone who says that Christianity is only about condemnation?

2. Why are people condemned if God is a God of love?

3. How does John model the appropriate attitude a person is to have towards Jesus? How is this attitude sometimes missing in your own life, and what can you do to make your life point more to Jesus?
