

Journey to Easter - Friday, March 12 (Day 24)

John 3:14-21 NIV biblegateway.com

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Discussion

Our gospel reading speaks not only of divine love, but also of divine judgment—a topic that many of us would rather ignore. But these two aspects of God's activity are not as contradictory as they may first appear. Because Jesus embodies God's love and offers God's life to a dying world, to reject Jesus is to cut oneself off from the very source of life and remain in the realm of death. This separation from God is what it means to experience judgment.

The good news is that Jesus offers true life freely and equally to all people; the light he shines brings judgment upon all forms of darkness that would rob us of this life. God's love is too great to allow hatred, violence, selfishness, and divisiveness to go unchecked. Divine judgment of these realities is, in the end, a reflection of divine love.

Today's Prayer

God of justice, expose the forces in our lives and world that do not align with your loving purposes. May the light of Christ lead us in your ways. Amen.

Source: Luther Seminary – St. Paul's, MN “2021 Lenten Devotional Awesome Mystery”

Image: Greek Cross Number three of a Series of six crosses. The design was chosen by Pastor Rod. Made by Sandy August. All the arms of the cross are of equal length representing the unity of the body of Christ (the church) (*image below*)

