

Not Condemnation, But Grace

June 9, 2026

Tonight, at church, we spent time reflecting on John 3:16–17. John 3:16 is one of the most familiar verses in all of Scripture: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” It is a verse many of us have heard since childhood, and it carries one of the clearest reminders of the heart of the Gospel. God loved the world so much that He gave His Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

But tonight, we also focused on the verse that follows. John 3:17 says, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” That verse is sometimes left out, but it is deeply important. It reminds us that Jesus did not come into the world with a message of condemnation. He came with a message of salvation, grace, mercy, and love.

This does not mean that truth does not matter. It does not mean that faith does not call us to grow, change, repent, and walk closer with God. But it does remind us that the heart of Christ is not rooted in judgment from one person toward another. The heart of Christ is rooted in redemption. Jesus came so that the world might be saved through Him.

That is a powerful reminder for the church. It is not our job to decide who is worthy of God’s love. It is our job to remember that God loves them too. Every person we meet carries a story, a burden, a wound, a hope, and a need for grace. People may look different, think differently, live differently, or understand life differently, but John 3:17 reminds us that the mission of Jesus was not condemnation. His mission was salvation.

In a world that often feels divided, the church is called to remember what unites us. Our differences may be real, but they are not greater than the name of Jesus. When we gather in His name, we are reminded that grace is not something we own or control. Grace is something we have received. Because we have received it, we are called to reflect it.

Tonight was also a little different because instead of music, we used that time for small group discussion. We spent time talking, listening, praying, and sharing the

joys that were on our hearts. It was a meaningful reminder that worship is not only found in song. Worship can also be found in honest conversation, in shared prayer, in listening to one another, and in giving thanks for the ways God is moving in our lives.

John 3:16 reminds us that God so loved the world. John 3:17 reminds us that Jesus came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Together, these verses call us back to the foundation of our faith: love, grace, salvation, and unity in Christ.

May we continue to be a church that remembers the love of God, reflects the grace of Jesus, and welcomes one another with hearts shaped by mercy.

— Pastor Cindy H. Carr
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