

Believers in the Father and Son not judged

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Congregation, this morning I want to preach the last sermon on a series about John 12, so this morning the verses 42-50. Let me read one verse, verse 47. John 12:47.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

So far.

Believers in the Father and the Son not judged. Believers in the Father and the Son not judged. Three thoughts. Believing in Christ, we find the word "believing" at least five times in this last piece. Believing in Christ. Think, for example, of verse 42, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him." Secondly, not judged by Christ, kind of a strange verse, you would say, John 12:47, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." And in the third place, the Father and Christ, over this chapter we read that Christ and the Father are together. The Father has sent him. So believers in the Father and the Son not judged: believing in Christ, not judged by Christ, the Father and Christ.

Congregation, you may remember the last sermon on John 12 quoting Isaiah, right, quoting the prophecy of Isaiah that they could not believe because the Lord hardened their hearts, and then after hearing that, for example, in verse 40, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. Nevertheless," verse 42, "Nevertheless," in spite of that, don't forget, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers," even, "also many believed on him." You know, you would think that in the previous verses that the Lord would stop it, nobody would be saved anymore, the Lord hardening the hearts, it's over with the people and nevertheless the Lord continues. He's still at work. In spite of the circumstances in that last week before he died, although so much hostility in the people and they would eventually crucify him, but in spite of all that hostility, nevertheless many believed on him. And of course, when you think about that today, we hear a lot about hostility, people being upset with the Lord and saying, "Is God doing this?" And yet nevertheless many could be saved although through this. Nevertheless many miracles happen. Yes, we believe in election, in a God who converts people, but we

also believe in a God who nobody can resist. Nevertheless the Lord continues. Take that to heart, the Lord yet continues with his work.

Now a few people say that this believing of the Pharisees, of the Jews, of the chief rulers was not saving faith, that they just for a while believed in the fact that the Lord Jesus was the Savior but not from the heart, and they look at the rest of the verse, "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." So some say, "See, it was just a stroke of faith, maybe a temporary faith, not a saving faith because they did not confess him and they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. So it's clear," they say, "not saving." I would argue with that and give you a few reasons why I believe that those people from the Jews, from the chief rulers were yet converted.

In the first place, that word "nevertheless." There's a contrast. So in the previous verse we read that many did not believe, nevertheless many. Do you see that in that context? It makes more sense to believe that although so many were hardened, yet many believed. Nevertheless.

Secondly, when you look at the word "believing" in this chapter, it always means saving faith. It would be strange and it's against the rules to say, "Well, all those believing, all those times that we read 'believing' it's saving except here." It's the same word. That's confusing. It's an exegetical rule to say a word in a chapter means always the same except you have good reasons to believe it's different.

We also know examples, examples of some of those chief rulers. You remember, right, you remember Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea? They were night disciples, they came by night. "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." At night. So also converted people can sometimes be in hiding. And think of Joseph of Arimathea, "a just and good man, the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them. He was of Arimathea, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God."

It also says, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him." On him, that is, something that draws the attention on him, often refers to that personal relationship, on him. Now some say, "But minister, they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Is that not sufficient to say that's not saving?" Well, what about the Apostle Peter? He denied the Lord Jesus. Was that not kind of the same thing, that he loved the praise of men more than the praise of God? And of the same we read in Matthew 10, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father." Well, if you take that seriously, you almost would think that therefore the Apostle Peter was not saved but, you know, it's not about them that never confess him, some of God's people have no courage to confess him and sometimes they do, and they may not persist all the time but yet it's that new life in them and there is that unbelief again and they repent of that.

So I think that's enough to prove that those people, those chief rulers, believed savingly. That's God's word. In spite of all objections, in spite of all the turmoil, the Lord at work and that's what we're hoping for today. You know, the church, you're listening at home, it's a stressful time, many problems, lots of anxiety, people feeling down, nevertheless many believed on him. It would be such a wonder, believing. I think it's 85 times or so, 85-86 times the word "believing" is to be found in John. That is such a key word, that true saving faith. Although we cannot believe ourselves, although many are hardening their hearts, yet the Lord reigns and God continues to save a people for himself. Verse 44, "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me." We will come back to verse 44 and 45 in the last thought. Then verse 46, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." So the Lord Jesus is speaking a text very close to John 3:16, right? "Whosoever believeth on me shall not perish. Whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

He came as a light to the world. Oh, what a dark world we live in, what a darkness right now over the whole world, darkness, right, desperation. So many are missing a real hope and feeling the fear and the threat of death. Darkness. And even if we would all turn 100 years some day, we still all have to die. It was dark already before this. The situation is not much different because we have not found the medication against the corona virus but we have not found the medication against death either. We die anyway, oh, the darkness, and we will never find a medication that prevents death and Christ has come as the light into this world to give healing in his wings as the sun. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

So there is darkness but there's a sun, that's the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is the sun, the source of all spiritual life and comfort, such a light that you don't have to miss the way. He gives light on the path that shows the way with the light so you don't have to miss the way. He is the way and the truth and the life and he makes that way to heaven bright and clear and shows it and points to it and says, "Look, that's the way." He shines with his light so it is possible to walk that way to heaven in a cheerful way like an early morning traveler, someone walking outside when the sun comes up. What a beautiful hour of the day early in the morning, go for a walk and it's still dark and the sun comes up over the mountains, oh, that looking unto him, unto that sun gives understanding, gives the light of the heart, gives the true warmth, gives life, gives joy, gives fertility, gives sense, gives reconciliation, gives the true peace. Tonight, the Lord willing, more about that. Tonight it's about the Savior, right? Tonight it's about the name Jesus. I'm looking forward to preach that so I hope to see you tonight again.

But here the Lord Jesus reveals himself as the sun and that was the purpose of John's writings. We see that a couple of times that he explains the reason why he has written the gospel and written also his epistles. John 20, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." These are written, the book, the gospel of John is written with a purpose and that purpose is in John 20:31, that you may believe in him and might have life through his

name. So that light shines in the darkness, that light being the sun. Also in 1 John 5, the same thing, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Believing. Oh, that is that saving faith of the believing on him, of not seeking salvation anywhere else but in him, that treasuring him, that fleeing unto him and it says, "whosoever," right? Whosoever, "that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in the darkness." Because we abide in that and we stay in the darkness, we don't leave the darkness. You can't make it light. There's only one light and that is his light and if you believe in that name, then if you die, you don't die. Then you go through a door, through the door to eternal life. Oh, may the Lord makes us pilgrims. As I said in my prayer, so often God's people say, "I want to go home but not yet." May the Lord give that a different twist, it might be more of a pilgrimage life, a longing life, believing in him.

But then the second thought. Let me read 47 and 48 to you. "And if any man hear my words, and believe not," so hearing the gospel and does not believe it, "I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Let me start with the last lines, "shall judge him in the last day." He will come the last day. It's inevitable. Even if the pandemic was over today, some day there will be the last day and if we then have not received his word, we have one that judges us.

So let's think about that last day. It's a day that all the grocery stores will be closed, a day that the internet would not work, a day there is no electricity, a day there is no buying, no selling, no banks are open, bank accounts frozen, the whole machinery of creation will stop, the Stock Exchange shall shut down, the Parliament is dissolved, the sun will rise no more. That day is coming, "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." All the dead will rise. All the books shall be opened. The dead, small and great will stand before God. It's going to happen. You know, we were in denial, weren't we? "That can't happen. A worldwide pandemic? No. We will manage that. We have all the equipment and we have all the means and so many good doctors and universities. We will be fine. Maybe a few people die, but we will be fine." Apparently not. And that's the same thing when that day comes that is predicted in the Bible and God will know who we are, our hearts, we can't deceive him. He knows our deeds. And if we are not prepared, it will be quite something, then the word we have heard will testify against us.

"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not but he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words." Receiveth not my words, those words of warning, those words of prepare ye, prepare ye before it is too late, those words will testify against us, the words spoken by the Lord not received but rejected the words of invitation, the call to repent, the call to seek the Lord. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words." It's the same. Receiving not the words of Christ means not receiving him, not receiving him

with open arms, not hunger and thirst for the Savior, being on your own and neglecting such a great salvation. Oh, what will that be?

And yet something strange in this text, isn't it, 47, "if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not." If any man believe not, I judge him not. What would that mean? "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." You know, the explanation is this: not yet. "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not yet," there's still time given, "for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." When he was on earth, he came to save the world and that's still his purpose although at the end he still will also be judge, but so far he is not the judge.

So that's the time we live in, "for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." To save sinners. To save people. So that's why you're alive, that's why you may listen yet to the means, by the means, by the internet, by church telephone, because that salvation is still possible and the Lord is still stretching out his arms unto people, it's still the time of grace. "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." He came to save the world. Amazing.

So what words did he speak? "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth the word that I have spoken, the word I have spoken shall judge him in the last day." Let me quote you a few verses, a few words of the Lord Jesus that will judge you in the last day if you're prepared. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." All that will come back some day, that we have heard that word, "Come," and it will be a condemnation of that word. The Lord will remind us and say, "I have called you. I have said, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden. Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the world, for I am God and there is none else." And then to hear that word and reject that word, not receive the word, and the word will come back. "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Oh, "everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. And he that has no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." That word will judge us at the last day. "Incline your ear and come unto me. Hear and your soul shall live and I will make an everlasting covenant with you even to show mercy to David." All those invitations in the Bible, all those words will say, "I spoke this, and I said this, and I said so," and you'll say, "Yes, I remember that." And the Lord says, "You did not hear it. You did not take heed and now it is testifying against you."

"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." In the last day, that great day of the feast, to Jesus and Christ saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And even the children are called, right? Jesus called unto him and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of God."

So the gospel will testify against us. The Lord Jesus said, "I will not judge you yet. I preach the word yet. I let you hear my voice yet." But that same word that the Lord speaks now will come back later, "For I came not to judge the world but to save the world." That's now. The Lord is still stretching out his arms to the rebels, but reminding

us that the same word we hear now will also be against us later. So we need that true faith, that believing on him in spite of who we are. "Whosoever." Nothing needs to keep us back. It says, "whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness," will not, absolutely not abide in darkness, and that's the only thing we need.

You know, we are afraid of the word "believe," right? I can see that. There are so many people taking that so shallow, "Just believe. That's all you need to do, just believe. Just jump, only believe." But the word is misused. It does not say that it is unbiblical because it's true. What is true? That we need that believing, that believing that is the means, that's how God and the sinner connect, that's how that grace is received, by that hand of faith. So that believing is so crucial. That's why John wrote his books, the gospel and the epistles, that they might believe and believing having life through his name.

So hurry and if I may make a recommendation, pray the Bible. Pray the Bible? Yes, pray the Bible. For example, take Psalm 130, "out of the depths do I cry unto you, Lord." And pray that and lay that before the Lord and read it out loud unto him and ask the Lord that your heart may be in there, that you may be put in those shoes of them that would say dying, I mean desperate. Or think of standing before God, what do you say if your death comes, and if the Lord Jesus will be the judge one day because some day he will be the judge, right? There will be the wrath of the Lamb. Not yet. The Lord Jesus is still the Savior, not the judge yet. He's the Savior but some day he will not be the Savior anymore.

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not," no, not yet, "for I came not to judge the world," right, "but to save the world." That's true but, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him." Now what is conversion? How do you look at this? What is conversion? Coming to the deep conclusion that you have heard that voice your whole life and that you have rejected him and his word. Oh, that hurts. If you see that you have sinned against him, that's a good doing God, that hurts. Then you have no excuses anymore, that you're such a fool in your own eyes and say, "Lord, I have rejected thee. I have not received thy words and now I'm guilty of sin against the law and sin against the gospel."

When you see that, then it becomes so precious that he says, "I did not come to judge the world but to save the world," because then you feel that you are the world. You can't come any further than, "I am the world. I'm not God's people. I'm the world." Is there salvation possible for the world, for sinners, for ungodly ones, for worldly people? And then to hear when you feel condemned and judged and you have to judge yourself, and then to hear that he did not come to judge you but to save you, that's so sweet. He came to seek and to save them that are lost, and you know what a lost one is. That's you. You are lost. You feel lost. You can't help yourself. You're so desperate. You're so despondent. You're at your wit's end. There's nothing you can do anymore. You're such a helpless and hopeless person. And then to hear that he came to save the world and not to judge the world?

You know, maybe some of you are like that this morning listening along. You feel kind of like the world, and you understand that the Lord's inviting people but not you because you are kind of so hard and so worldly but, you know, I may emphatically state that the Lord Jesus came not to judge you but to save you. And of course, he does not only offer and he does not only preach, and he does not only point to that necessary faith, he also works it himself as you hope to see tonight again. He works it himself, that saving faith, and he brings it close to the heart. "I came not to judge you but I came to save you."

Then there is joy. Do you see that? There is hope. He did not come to judge me. I have not received his word, I have rejected him, and now he's saying that he did not come to judge me. You know, what a verse. It does not say if any man hear my words and believe I judge him. No, it doesn't say that. It does not say if any man hear my words and believe, but it says if any man hear my word and believe not, and believe not, I judge him not. So if you don't believe, the Lord Jesus does not judge you yet. For I came not to judge the world, even though those unbelievers, right, it's about unbelievers. The world here is very clear in the context, the world is not just the elect, no, it is the ones that do not believe. "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not," and he could say, "I judge them." He could've said, "They don't believe me so I judge them." No, "They don't believe me and I judge them not." That's amazing. Do you know what that is? That's the word of God that gives you that feeling at heart this is the authority of the Bible. This is so unique. Where else do you hear that, that they that believe not are not judged, but they that believe not are called, invited?

So the Lord Jesus speaks of believing in him and the second thought was not judged by Christ but I say again, not yet, but at the end he will come as judge and it will be different. That's the Shepherd, the Lamb, that Savior. He will be furious. There will be such a wrath, incredible wrath of the Lamb because they that did not believe were told there is salvation, because those that believed not were not judged but yet they didn't take heed, and then the Judge will come. Oh, then they will say, "Mountains, hide us, fall on us!" They cannot stand what that will be.

Believing in Christ, not judged by Christ, let's go to the last one. First we sing.

There is something remarkable in this piece, this last piece of John 12. It is time and again about that closeness of the Father and the Son, about that unity between them, the unity of the Son and the Father. For example, verse 44, "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me," not on me, "but on him that sent me." So if people believe on him, they also believe in God. It does not say, of course, that the Lord Jesus is stating, "He that believeth though he does not believe on me at all," no, "believeth not on me only but also on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me." Again in verse 45 and also verse 49, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

So the Lord Jesus indicating time and again that the Father and him are one. Believing in him is believing in the Father. "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which

sent me, he gave me a commandment. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." So the unity, the remarkable unity is in the Father and Christ. What's the purpose of that? Well, the Lord Jesus is stating, "What I say is what I have heard. What I say is what I was sent for. I'm sent by my Father. My Father is behind this. God is behind me. I am God and the Father is behind me. He agrees with me. He judges accordingly and I am strong as he is." So the Lord Jesus claims to be divine, he claims to be God, he claims to be unified with his Father. "He that believeth on me believeth not on me but on him that sent me."

So why is that so important, that oneness that goes far beyond being only sent, far beyond being a friend or just a witness? No, it is his divine nature. God's Son, he is God's Son. So to make a long story short, this is why believing in Christ is building on a rock. Building on Christ is building on a rock because the Father is behind him, the Father has sent him, the Father agrees with him, the Father is as strong as he is. They are one. So there is not just the story, the Lord Jesus said, "This is true, I am his Son."

We see it also in other places. John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." So the Lord Jesus declares his Father. Nobody has ever seen him but if someone has seen Christ, he's seen the Father. John 10, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," the Lord Jesus said, but then continues with, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

So the church is safe in the hands of God, in the hands of Christ, and we cannot divide them. If someone believes in Christ, he believes in the Father. If someone is saved in the Lord Jesus, then God is also reconciled. That's this unity. You cannot separate that from one another. So you see, congregation, when someone sees Christ, then they see God. Verse 45, "he that seeth me seeth him that sent me." So if you see Christ in the Bible through the Scriptures by the Spirit, you see him with spiritual eyes, you see at the same time God who has sent him, and that's dear, that is something God's children don't always realize but that's how God reveals himself, in his Son. And he is saying to the disciples, "If you see me, you see God. If you believe me, you believe in the Father. We are together. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And he's behind this. It's the Father, God the Father behind me." So he's the Messiah to reconcile with God.

We have come to the end of the service. One more time verse 47, "if any man hear my words, and believe not." That's terrible, hear the words and believe not. It's terrible. And then to my surprise, "I judge him not." So those unbelievers are not judged? No, not yet. "For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." You know, you may put your finger there and remind the Lord of that text and say, "Lord, I have read about unbelievers and believe not, and thou hast said about those unbelievers, I judge you not," says the Savior, that's so special, take that home, talk about it, digest it, and bring it in

prayer to the Lord that there is hope for unbelievers. "I am found of them that sought me not." Amen.