



**SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Tuesday, September 27, 2022**

**Scripture: John 3:20-21**

**TITLE: Light or Dark?**

What's the difference between a dead apple tree and a living apple tree? One bears fruit, and the other doesn't. Knowing that, if I brought you into an orchard in early fall, would you be able to tell me which apple trees are alive or dead? Most likely, yes. If we are able to tell the living from the dead, shouldn't we be able to do so with those who follow Jesus and those who don't?

Jesus has the answer in John 3:20-21.

“For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Here in verses 20-21, Jesus is wrapping up a private conversation with Nicodemus – a religious authority who is curious about Jesus and His message. Jesus' message for Nicodemus is that salvation comes through Himself and not by works or religion.

And then, in the previous two verses, Jesus said, "Look, salvation is here, but most will reject it. They're really not ignorant. They aren't condemned because they don't know. They're condemned because they love their sin – the darkness more than the Light."

So Jesus continues here by saying, sinners hate me because I expose their sin. The world rejects this gift because it saves them from self-destruction. They would rather stand condemned in the darkness than stand free in the Light.

And then, in verse 21, Jesus helps us understand the difference between people who are trapped in the darkness and those who have come into the Light: works. Jesus says, "it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are God's masterpiece created in Jesus for good works that we might walk in them." James said in James 2:17, "So also faith by itself if it does not have works, is dead."

Saving faith results in a life in the Light and an avoidance of the darkness. Pastor John MacArthur wrote, "Believers hate their sin and love righteousness. They have nothing to hide, thus no reason to fear what the light will reveal. The genuine believer [is] one who practices the truth."

Nicodemus was open to Jesus' message, and apparently, according to John 7, he believed.

So what about you? Are you stuck in the darkness? I promise you, the darkness is not safe. It will ultimately destroy you, your life, and your soul. Consider Jesus' offer of forgiveness and peace

with God. All it takes is turning from the darkness of your sin and believing that Jesus is the only way to God. He is the Light. Come to the Light.

If you're a Christian and you've drifted toward the darkness, come back, confess, and live in the light of Christ. There is no condemnation for you. Only freedom and forgiveness.

Friend, life in the darkness is dangerous. But life in the light is freedom.