

## Saturday 19th October



*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. [John 3:16–17]*

An often-quoted passage, and one that is often said to be the most popular in the Bible, is these verses from John 3. These words form part of a conversation between Jesus and a confused Nicodemus about being born again – or ‘born from above’. These words that so baffled Nicodemus have often been a source of inspiration and comfort to many people. This is the essence of Christian belief: that God came to earth as Jesus to encourage people back to true faith in God. This act of faith in God is rewarded by eternal life, or life in all its fullness. I have added the following verse as it is a challenge for those of us in the church and those outside the church.

Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save it; as a church we are not to condemn the world but to save it. This doesn’t mean that we should let anything go, but that we should seek to challenge injustice, to put right the wrongs of this world. Rather than saying what is so terrible in our world or in our community, we should do something about it.

It also challenges the way we portray God to the world: do we show God as someone with hundreds of rules, or someone who loves unconditionally? I’m not suggesting that we paint God as someone with a rule book, but sometimes we unconsciously give that impression by the way we act with new people in the church. It is a challenge to remember that we are showing a God of unconditional love and that our actions are often equalled with God’s actions to those outside the church.

*Loving and Holy God,  
we thank you that you came and dwelt among us,  
that you came to rescue us from the darkness of this world  
and turn our eyes back to you.  
Help us to show your love to others that we meet,  
remembering that what we show others is often how they see you.  
Let love, peace and humility grow in our world.  
Amen*