

## Season 4, Episode 7: Glorious Son (3:22-36)

*The following is an uncorrected transcript generated by a transcription service. Before quoting in print, please check the corresponding audio for accuracy.*

**Sarah:** This podcast is sponsored by Ten of Those.com, ten of Those.com handpicked, the best Christian books that point to Jesus and sell them at discounted prices. Notation Of Grace by Tim Chester is an opportunity to enjoy the depths of God's glorious grace through length with a collection of daily meditations and prayers from great writers across church history, each bringing a special focus to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is such a treasure trove as you journey towards Easter with fellow believers from the last two millennia and a wonderful way to lead up to Easter. Go and grab your coffee at tenovo's. Com.

**Felicity:** Welcome to two sisters in the cup of tea My name is Felicity and I live in the US and this is my sister Sarah and she is in the UK. Hi, Sarah.

**Sarah:** Hi.

**Felicity:** Nice to see you. What's in the cup? What's the brew today?

**Sarah:** Oh, I've got a lemon. I mean, not a whole lemon, but I have got a hot water and lemon. It's not technically a brew, sorry about that. But I do have it a fighting biscuit, which I think makes up for it. So it turns out that our church family's love language seems to be biscuits and lots of them. So we're just continually getting through biscuits that we've been bought around over the last weeks and months. So today I've got a cadbury roundie.

**Felicity:** Have you heard one of those? Is that like the kind of fox's chocolate roundy? Kind of like is it solid milk chocolate with biscuit in the middle?

**Sarah:** No.

**Felicity:** All right. Okay.

**Sarah:** No different and interestingly. It came in a box of Oreo selection and cadbury selection. So very exciting. Tin of biscuits. No, it's like wafer and chocolate and more chocolate round the edge. It's very good, but the wafer doesn't really taste of anything. So you're more just eating chocolate?

**Felicity:** Yes, which is never a bad thing. I've gone for a chocolate one myself, actually, although mine has the slight twist of it's a chocolate hobnob, but with the twist of sticky toffee pudding. Oh, I know.

**Sarah:** I bought one of those packets, but I haven't been round too, because we keep getting given all these biscuits.

**Felicity:** How is it so good? So good. Like, genuinely like sticky toffee pudding. I mean, it is a hobnob, but also that and especially over here, sticky toffee pudding, not a thing. So I feel like I'm introducing people not only to biscuits, but to an outstanding level of pudding. While we're thinking about such things, on a totally different note, let's think about how when we're reading the Bible with friends, I was thinking sometimes it just feels like it's an impossible feat because we have noise and distraction and children and any such thing that can get in the way. Sarah, what's your thoughts on whether that is still a viable kind of environment for getting the Bible open? Sometimes it feels like it's an impossible thing.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I think it's really important to kind of just bust that miss, isn't it, that this is normal for us, as in, this is especially curated time where my children are often turning their own lights off. Whether they do that or not, it's another matter. Your children are kind of meant to be having some kind of quiet time and it kind of hangs in the balance for us when we record, doesn't it? But when we're reading the Bible with other people, of course it's not like this. And that's just brilliant and okay. And I think you're reading the Bible. You're getting the Bible open in the midst of real life. And however much you manage to get through a passage or not, I think it's okay because it's the intention of saying the bread like, Jesus is the bread of life, and he's going to nourish our friendship and he's going to nourish us. So even if we just read one verse together and just pray brilliant, I think just kind of having expectations that kind of acknowledge that you want to have this and you want to do this, but realistically, it's okay if it doesn't go to plan. Yeah.

**Felicity:** And the likelihood is that it won't. But God is still going to be at work and it's still going to.

**Sarah:** Be Him that nourishes us, isn't it His Word that will do that? And you might get some times where you open it up with a friend and you're like, this is brilliant. We've really had deep chat here, surprisingly. And there'll be other times I can't even remember what we've just read. And that's just okay, isn't it? I think the intention of just wanting to get it open is precious enough. Absolutely.

**Felicity:** And on that note, shall we open the Bible and read? I'm going to read John, chapter three, verses 22 through to 36. After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them and baptized. Now, John also was baptizing at Enon near Salem because there was plenty of water and the people were coming and being baptized. This was before John was put in prison. An argument developed between son of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified about, look, he's baptizing and everyone is going to him. To this John replied, a person can receive only what is given them from heaven. You yourself can testify that I said, I am not the Messiah, but I am sent ahead of him. The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens to him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice, that joy is mine and it is now complete. He must become greater. I must become less. The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, that God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the sun has eternal life, but whoever rejects the sun will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

**Sarah:** Thank you, Sifty. So we're at the end of chapter three, aren't we? So we had a massive chunk and the most famous chunk of chapter three last time, and now we're kind of back to John the Baptist, aren't we? I feel like it's a little bit.

**Felicity:** Of a surprise appearance, really. I felt like he had kind of done his job, but I think he is coming back to do a very similar job, isn't it? He even quotes himself back then, which makes me think that he's all about the same thing. Unsurprisingly.

**Sarah:** Yeah. And I think in light of what we've just seen about Nicodemus and Nicodemus not quite getting it, we're then going to get this testimony of someone who just really simply does. And I think that it's really powerful coming off the back of that, isn't it, in the context of what we just read. So we seem to be having a bit of a baptizing competition, would you say?

**Felicity:** Yeah, it seems to be sort of John the Baptist versus Jesus the Baptist, but John and Jesus are obviously not bothered about, whereas the followers, it's John's followers we're like, John, come on, you're losing here. You're losing numbers. That guy's getting everyone out here. And that seems to be the context. And then so then John in verse 27, he then goes on to say, well, it's just not about me. That you remember what I said. It's not about me. And he uses this illustration, doesn't he? Unpack that a bit for us, Sarah, those next few verses.

**Sarah:** Well, he just uses a really simple illustration, doesn't he, of the bride belongs to a bridegroom and the friend who's kind of waiting for waiting for the wedding, they're not the big deal. It's not like the bridesmaid's a big deal. And the brides just out in the corner over there. If the brides give me the bride, that's the big deal. And it's just a really simple and yet beautiful illustration to describe what's actually happening in reality with Jesus coming like he's it. He's the main deal, he's the big thing, he's the centerpiece. And so suddenly the friend is going to go into the what's the word?

**Felicity:** Background.

**Sarah:** Yeah, that one.

**Felicity:** I think that's it, isn't it? And it's amazing the way that John says it verse 30. He must become greater, I must become less. Like, there's no kind of animosity, is there? Or

envy or anything. It's just like, this is how it is. And it is quite ridiculous. If the best man was sort of like, what? It's not about me, but I thought this was all about me, that would be a ridiculous scenario. And yet here so John really does. He's just got it. And I love that. That joy is mine and it is now complete like the joy he has at seeing Jesus and knowing that the bridegroom is here. Is it worth just Karen gave us a really helpful illustration last time, didn't she, of how whether you kind of skim you got lakes, you got a lake and you can skim the stones, you're not really you can connect with the Word. And then you could just go a bit deeper and consider the Old Testament kind of background to what's going on here. I just think the wedding, the bridegroom, the bride, that kind of idea what we have there for you to go back to Jeremiah or even Isaiah, you'd get this picture of the bridegroom comes and restores relationship between God and his people. And you don't really need to know much more than that to just have the joy all the more explained and the delight that John has all the.

**Sarah:** More I think it's really helpful that, isn't it? And it's just beautiful. We're getting a lot of different images in the beginning of John's gospel and we to describe God's relationship and his kind of pursuing of different people. And again, this like the beauty of a marriage relationship here that's described is wonderful, isn't it? And as you say, I think what we're seeing as we go through this first few chapters is that we don't have loads of Old Testament verses quoted, but we do have this richness of imagery that is basically seeping out of every sentence, it feels like. And I think, as Karen was saying, it was so helpful last week, wasn't it? Just like that reality of actually as you start to swim and swim a bit more and swim a bit deeper, you start to see that richness and it only adds to what you're reading, doesn't it?

**Felicity:** I am, yeah.

**Sarah:** I think it's just powerful stuff, isn't it? So then we come on to the next part. Well, I don't know how you saw this. The speech mark ends, he must become greater, I must become less. And then it feels like we've got John kind of writing it a little editorial at the end of that, do you think?

**Felicity:** Yeah, I think that's right. It's almost John's meditation on what has come before. And to be honest, when I first read this passage, I thought, I don't know, really. Is it just as straightforward as John pointed to Jesus again? But then I think these verses 31 to 36 just give such an incredible picture of Jesus that it's been kind of warming my heart all week, really. This I love the repetition of the one who comes from above is above all, and then later on we get it again above all. It's like this one who is from heaven, like Jesus himself is from heaven, he is from above. This testimony, what is said about him, what he says, is actually better than John's testimony. And John's testimony is quite something, isn't it? But actually, because Jesus is of above, he is above all, he is of God. And this is where it's at. He is where it's at.

**Sarah:** Extraordinary. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Like, whoa, that's a huge statement, isn't it? Describing just who Jesus is. He is God's son, he is completely truthful. He gives the Spirit without limit. It's just he speaks the very words of God. We're just getting this again, this reminder of who Jesus is and why it matters. And I think do you think it probably adds weight to them, what Jesus says back in the last bit of chapter three with Nicodemus, just in terms of what you're saying about whoever has life, and he says again at the end, doesn't he, like, whoever believes in the sun has a ton of life. Whoever rejects the sun will not see life. That's a big thing to say, isn't it? You need to have the authority to say that. You need to have the right authority to say that.

**Felicity:** Well, yeah, and I think that's it, isn't it? That is such a stark statement. I don't know about you, but when I read that statement, I really just don't know what to do with it. In some ways, in terms of it's a bit too black and white. I don't think our society operates in black and white kind of way, not at all. It feels quite something for me and I love Jesus, but would I say this to someone who doesn't yet know Jesus because it's so stark? And in order to sort of stand by this statement, I think I need to be all the more convinced as to who Jesus is. And what I love about the description of Him there, as you say, the authority that's been given to Him, the fact that the Spirit was out limit, but for God loves the Father, loves the Son, and has placed everything in his house, like, again, we've seen it again back in Starch, chapter three, haven't we? This love that flows through all of this and we're

seeing more and more this kind of compelling compassion of Christ. He loves to save. Actually, that's what we heard in the last part we were looking at with Karen. And so as you then come to that statement, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, you think, yes, that is right. Jesus is the one who came to save, who came to give eternal life. He longs to give that. Why wouldn't we trust him, believe him, claim that?

**Sarah:** And John the Baptist is that living example, isn't he, of the person who's done that, whose believed God at his word and is then reaping the benefits because his joy is complete in Christ. There's nothing lacking for John like the belief leads to heart response, doesn't it? And a joy that is extraordinary and a response that then says well, I want to make much of Christ and I will go into the background because I don't need to be upfront here like Jesus is the one I want to kind of shine the light on. And I think that just gives it just gives body, doesn't it? Gives flesh to these weighty statements that John the writer is saying we then get John the Baptist living it and showing us what it looks like.

**Felicity:** Yes, I think that's such a good point. That joy is entirely connected to just the reality of who Jesus, isn't it? And I think that is a really helpful thing to see, that it's not just a kind of functional like oh, I better just accept Jesus because that's the way the gospel works. But actually there is a whole heart aspect to that and there is reward in that, not just in an eternal life sense, but the delight in knowing Jesus now is big. And I think that in that last verse when he says but whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's, roth remains on them. I mean, the reality there is that God's wrath is on everyone until we accept Jesus. So we're all desperately in need of Jesus and Jesus is here in front of us in these pages. He is reaching out to us, offering life in order to rescue us from that roth rather than it being those who reject Jesus get slammed. That's not it, is it? It's actually Jesus is reaching down into our broken world that is deserving of judgment and offering us eternal life. And not just the kind of functional offer, but the reality of just knowing Him and loving Him and being just with Him is huge. Any other kind of heart hits for you, Sarah, as you were in this passage?

**Sarah:** Hard hit? I don't know if I like that phrase or not. How is your heart affected by what you read? Yes, that's better. I think for me it's a living example of John the Baptist here and just the fact that he's saying that his joy is now complete in seeing Jesus kind of step up and being glorified. I guess just even that phrase my joy is now complete. The opposite of that is my joy is lacking and actually it's not lacking in any way. His joy is not lacking in any way because he's wholeheartedly satisfied in Christ. And as he does that, he can proclaim Christ and he can beautifully wonderfully exalt Christ and say he must become greater and I must become less. And I think just that kind of the connection between the heart response and then his words have been a big challenge to me. And I think it's really helpful because it just reminds me that it always flows from the heart. Always. Our Word always flows from our heart. And I want my heart to be so wonderfully satisfied in Christ. Like this.

**Felicity:** Yeah. And I think as we're walking through John kind of this slowly, I feel like Jesus is I'm being confronted by Jesus in a more tangible way than I have for a while, I think. And I can feel my heart kind of responding. I just think that's amazing. I think we see that then when he says, for the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God. I really get that sense if you're reading through a gospel like this, that as we're hearing from Jesus, we're hearing about Jesus. This is God at work, and I can feel my heart. It's an amazing thing, isn't it, really?

**Sarah:** I think we do feel that. We have felt that at every point when we've been reading any other book. This isn't the only one where we felt that there is a pandemic experience of like, we're digging deeply into this world and we are expecting it and wanting it to change us and to shape us and to mold us. And actually, as we pray for that, we're seeing the fruit of that. And I think, why wouldn't we? As we gaze on Christ, who is the light of the world, his light, as we see in that prologue again, the light shining into the darkness, of course his light is going to shine into our darkness and of course it's going to illuminate our hearts and kind of propel us towards Him. And we keep needing it, don't we?

**Felicity:** Every day.

**Sarah:** I need this. And yeah, we just need to keep praying that we would be soft hearted to receive the word.

**Felicity:** Absolutely. Do you want to pray for us on that note?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I'd have to. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just thank you for the gift of this passage that just reminds us of Christ's glory, that reminds us of how much greater he is than we can ever imagine. Thank you for John's words, that he must become greater and that I must become less. We pray that for our own hearts, and we pray that we could wonderfully say that because our hearts are overflowing in joy in Christ, we pray, please, Lord, would you help us? Would you delight our hearts in Christ? And would the overflow of our words be the same as John here? And we pray for your glory, Lord. Amen.

**Felicity:** Amen. Thanks, Sarah. Has your chocolate roundy thing gone down the hatch?

**Sarah:** Yeah. Big, though it was like the centerpiece.

**Felicity:** Of the oh, you went big then?

**Sarah:** I went for it because there was only one. It was in a special rapper, and the kids were going to totally fight over it, so I took it out.

**Felicity:** Before they even wise parenting right now.

**Sarah:** I don't know, maybe just selfish.

**Felicity:** All right, well, it's great to have you all listening. Do remember to check out our Ten of Those Partnerships store. You just type in two sisters and you'll get all our recommendations. And as ever, we'll have questions in the show notes to help you dig into this passage all the more. Anything else? Sarah?

**Sarah:** That's it. See you next time.

**Felicity:** See you next time. Goodbye.

**Sarah:** Bye. Thanks for listening to this episode. It's sponsored by Tenofoads.com. Check them out for great discounted resources that point to Jesus. Close video.