

## **17 - John 3:16**

### **God So Loved The World**

#### **REVIEW / INTRODUCTION**

Last week we covered the serpent in the wilderness that was lifted up so that all who looked upon it were healed of deadly poison. They lived because they looked in faith to that which was lifted up. And this was a foreshadow of the cross in which Jesus was lifted up. And all who look to the cross in faith will be saved from the poison of sin. This week we are beginning in John 3:16. The most famous passage in the bible.

#### **READING THE TEXT**

##### **John 3:16 ESV**

***16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not***

***believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 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.”***

## **PREACHING THE TEXT**

### **John 3:16 ESV**

***<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world,***

## **GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD**

GOD so loved the world. Does that mean God loves every man woman and child, even those that hate Him? Yes, God loves all those created in His image. He does love the faithful differently than He loves the unfaithful. Let's illustrate that point.

Many of us have children that have had periods of rebellion or in some cases have gone astray. We see

them making decisions that will harm themselves or their future. Do we love our children? Yes of course. That is why we pray for them in tears and rejoice when they return to the Lord.

So also, God loves all His children. Some walk in His love and others reject His love. But God loves us even when we hated or rejected Him.

**Romans 5:8**

***<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

GOD "SO" LOVED

God so loves you dear person ...who has been holding Christ at arms length..

*verse 16 continued* ***...that he gave his only Son,***

He so loved you that He gave that which was most precious to Him for you. God loves you and if you are hiding in shame know that His Son paid enough for anything you have done so that you can approach the throne of grace today. God's love gave to you.

A LOVE THAT GIVES

God loved, therefore God gave. *When God loves God gives.*

God loved Abraham and approved of the faith of Abraham. Therefore God gave Abraham a covenant promise of land and kids. God loved David. David had a heart after God's heart. Therefore God gave Him a promise that He would always have one of his relatives sit on the throne of Israel. God loved Job. Job was greatly tested. But he did not deny the Lord. And at the end of his test God gave great blessings to Job.

When God loves, God gives! What a generous God we have. We deserve nothing but God loves therefore He gives. And if we have the love of God in our heart we will be generous people who can't wait to give and bless and encourage others. God's love gives.

### **STORY: LOVE IS CALLING (LIBERIA WITH LOVE)**

Last year I attended the annual Teamwork Africa banquet. As I heard the videos play and testimonies spoken I got that feeling in my spirit that I sometimes get

when God is going to move in power or reveal something to my heart.

Suddenly I found myself thinking of the words of the lead pastor in Africa which he spoke to me on several occasions. *Please come to Africa and teach us the word of God.*

I had been pushing it out of my mind for quite some time. I was content to send them material and let them figure it out on their own. I know that a plane ride to Africa will be so painful I can't even think about it. Chronic pain and 16 hour plane rides do not mix well.

But suddenly, at this banquet the love of God came over me. I found myself so much in love with these Godly pastors in Liberia that my eyes welled up with tears. In my mind I could see them crying out. "Come and teach us the word of God." And God's love for my brothers compelled me to say; *"send me Lord, I will go."* Godly love gives. God's love acts.

LOVE THAT TAKES BUT DOES NOT GIVE

If you have God's heart you will give generously to others in whatever way God calls you to do so. But there are times when we are not renewing our love with God. There are times when we are not getting filled daily with The Spirit of God as Ephesians tells us to. And when we are operating in the flesh apart from The Spirit our love is often reduced to words with no action. We say; "I love you" but we are slow to encourage or support or participate or help someone in need. God's love gives and God's love takes action.

I can think of dozens of occasions in which someone said to a fellow believer; "I love you." Those are wonderful words to hear. But when that person needed help they were alone in their struggle.

**James 2:16 (ESV)**

***<sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.***

Love that does not act is not complete. God's love when it is genuine compels people to act. God's love gives. He gave His Son and He gives us blessing after blessing.

God's love compelled Him to give His Son to be the Lamb of God that takes away our sin.

*vs 16 continued* ***that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.***

WHOEVER

The great qualifier is the word "whoever." God, out of His great love. He does not usually remove the consequences of sin. He does not automatically send everyone to heaven. He made a way out for those who qualify. What do you have to do in order to gain eternal life from our generous God?

BELIEVES

One must believe in order to obtain eternal life. In order to receive the gift of this God who gives, one must believe. And the consequences of non belief is that you will perish.

What does it mean to believe in such a way as to obtain eternal life? We know belief that leads to eternal life is more than just mental ascent. It is more than just believing the facts about Jesus.

***James 2:19<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!***

So this belief that leads to eternal life is more than just knowing the facts about Jesus our Savior.

## CONTROL BELIEFS

There is factual belief and then there is something deeper called a **control belief**. If you believe the facts of the resurrection of Jesus that is good. But demons believe in the historical fact of the resurrection. Control Beliefs however, are beliefs that turn into action.

When we believe something so much that it actually causes us to make a change in the way we act, then we have taken on a **“control belief.”**

For example; if you believe it is wrong to gossip but you do it anyway, then it is just a belief. If however you have seen lives and churches destroyed by gossip and



your heart is broken over this sin, and you have been healed of gossip and fault finding you believe strongly enough to change the way you behave. That is a **control belief**.

So also, to believe Jesus Christ for salvation is a control belief. You believe so deeply that Jesus can save you that you ask God to change your desires and give you the strength to live for Him. Whatever He says you will do. Your believe changes your life and that is the kind of belief that saves people from hell. That is a control belief.

When you believe Jesus for salvation and it is a control belief that changes your behavior, then everything will become new. God will give you His heart of love for others. And God's love that is now in your heart will become a love that gives. A love that serves. A love that takes joy by encouraging others. God so loved the world that He gave! And that becomes a part of how you do life. Receiving from Jesus and taking joy in giving it away.

***<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.***

When Jesus returns the next time He will come as a loving groom for those who love Him and a Might Warrior to those who hate Him and oppose Him. Jesus came to save, not to condemn. This is the perfect time to receive His love and walk in His love and get saved by His love. His love will give you life. Please don't harden your heart toward Him. Don't wait until it is too late. Jesus came to give you life. Receive that life. Walk in that life. Believe Him for salvation.

***<sup>18</sup> Whoever **believes** in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.***

Everyone is born guilty and without faith. So we all start out condemned. Every person will sin and will prove that he or she deserves God's wrath. So we start out condemned and guilty. Failing to believe means that we

are already condemned. Doing nothing with Jesus mean you are walking dead.

If we fail to believe Jesus Christ for salvation we mock or belittle that which The Father loves most, His only Son. Just by failing to believe we belittle the Son. We come up short on what Jesus should mean in our lives.

When God gives us the faith to believe and we cooperate with what God is doing we glorify Him and we become objects of His love and grace.

***<sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.***

## THE LIGHT CAME

Jesus came full of grace and truth. He came the first time not to judge the world but to save it. But even with God's Son coming with an offer of love many loved their sin and addictions and indecency more than they loved Jesus. That is one way you know that you are not right with God. If you continue in your sin and hide from God

and His people then you are not in good standing with God.

***<sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.***

HIDING FROM THE LIGHT

**STORY: HIDING FROM THE LIGHT**

There was a time not too long after I was saved that I backslid big time. I was the party animal and a mean drunk. When I visited my hometown one of my friends was driving and she asked if I wanted to stop at Nancy Dob's house. Nancy Dobs is the woman who led me to Christ. Nancy is the last person I wanted to see. I was ashamed of my life and did not want to visit with her. I knew she would ask questions and I knew that I would be ashamed of my life. I knew better than to live the way I was living. So I hid from God's people and I tried to not think about God.

I loved the party life. I was having a blast. But the problem I could not shake was that I felt empty and dead

inside even when I was partying and supposedly having a great time. At some point I was so sick of feeling empty and dead inside that I cried out to God. I asked Him to come and transform my life and forgive my sin.

***<sup>21</sup> 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.”***

DOES WHAT IT TRUE = COME TO THE LIGHT

Notice the wording of this verse. Whoever does what is true comes to the light. This is not saying that we are saved by our good works. But it implies that love turns to action. If you see peace, patience kindness, love and longsuffering then you are looking at a saved person. God's love has transformed us so that our love for God and others turns into holy deeds.

WALKING INTO THE LIGHT = RENEWAL

Here is an account that I read as I was doing the research for this sermon. A commentary writer wrote;

*The deepest experiences of renewal I have witnessed in the life of the church have come when people have*

*opened up and revealed the dark, hidden places in their lives to one another. This always is a costly, cleansing experience in which the light is seen. Doing the truth!*

*I participated in such an experience this last year at a strong evangelical seminary. A student stood up in a time of sharing and in a trembling, emotion-laden voice spoke of his anger and frustration with one of the professors and then asked for his forgiveness.*

*The professor, who was present, moved toward the student. They met and embraced. There was forgiveness and prayer. This opened up the meeting, which turned out to be a time of confession and healing, a true renewal in the Spirit. It was the light exposing the darkness of bad attitudes and fouled up relationships. This is the opposite of rejection, an acceptance, a “believing in His name.”*

God’s love inside of them turned into action. That is what it means when John says; **“his works have been carried out in God.”** God’s love inside of a believer has turned into action. God’s love is a giving and a forgiving love.

## **SUMMARY / CHALLENGE**

Is there something God's love is compelling you to act upon today? It begins with receiving the love of Jesus. That will transform your heart and desires. God so loved that He gave you eternal life in His Son. The action of a saved person is that your love turns to action. Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants that to look like in your life today and this week.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

1. Have you received the gift of God's Son?
2. Is your belief in Jesus a control belief? Does your belief change the way you live your life?
3. Is your love for Jesus and His people turning into actions? Is your love a love that gives?
4. How specifically is God challenging you right now to put love into action?