

For God So Loved!

John 3:1-21

Welcome to The Log Churches Summer of Love sermon series. This summer we will be looking at love throughout the Bible. We will only scratch the surface of all Scripture has to say about love. So, let's get started:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

This is probably the most quoted, most loved, most recognizable verse in the entire Bible. Did you know why Jesus spoke those words? Do you know who He spoke them too?

Today we will answer those questions with one simple Bible study technique, context.

So, let's begin by opening up to John chapter 3. John 3:16 sits in the latter half of a conversation that Jesus is having with a Jewish Pharisee named Nicodemus. As we approach John 3:16 I want to really set the stage well for this beautiful verse so I am going to read the first 15 verses and then we will watch a video depicting this scene from Scripture. So pay attention and see if you can imagine for yourself how this conversation played out.

John 3:1-15

"Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

4 **"How can someone** be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

9 **"How can this be?"** Nicodemus asked.

10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 **Just as Moses** lifted up the snake in the

wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

(WATCH SCENE FROM THE CHOSEN)

John 3:16, “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.”

When Paul was writing to the Corinthians in his second letter to that church in chapter 9 Paul is encouraging them to be generous and in doing so Paul makes this declaration about God’s gift of salvation as we see in John 3:16. Paul tells the Corinthians that the gift of God is indescribable.

So, how can we even scratch the surface of this verse? How can we describe the benefits we receive due to Jesus’ sacrifice in paying for our sins? If Paul says it’s indescribable, how can we try to describe it?

Well, let’s try to scratch the itch.

I. For God so loved the world

What does this mean? It means God loves the evil, sinful, fallen humans that live on this small blue planet. We know the reality that we are all utterly sinful, completely lost without any ability to redeem ourselves and that is where God meets us.

You see, God loves us because He choose to love us. There was nothing about us that would draw God to us. He choose to love us. He choose.

Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

God choose to love us not after Jesus cleaned us up, no, He loved us while we were still covered in the filth of sin. Now listen, how do we love those around us? Do we require the ones we love to be perfect, without fault, before we love them? Do we make those close to us jump through some mythical hoops to gain our love and approval?

What would it be like if God required us to earn His love? That would be pretty difficult wouldn’t it. Because God’s standard is perfection. So, why would we require others to earn our love? Love is a choice, love is unconditional. So, who will you love and how will you love them? Will it be unconditional?

Now let’s look at this:

Titus 3:4-6, “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,”

This indescribable gift God gave us cannot be earned. God saves us by the sacrifice Jesus made for us and then God seals it with our rebirth sealed by the Holy Spirit whom we received with a generous portion. We have all of the Spirit given to us when we receive Jesus as Saviour.

1 John 4:10, “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

1 John 3:1a, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

INDESCRIBABLE!!!

II. That He gave His one and only Son

God’s one and only son. The King James Versions calls Him the only begotten son. This phrase shows us the uniqueness of Jesus.

This was the price God paid for our redemption, our salvation. This was the price God paid for your redemption, your salvation. So, how much did God really love Jesus?

Later in this chapter:

John 3:35, “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.”

When Jesus was baptized by John we see this declaration from the Father:

Matthew 3:17, “And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

When Paul writes to the Philippian church and tells them of how Jesus humbled Himself to the point of dying a death on a cross Paul points out how the Father, as a result of this sacrifice, has honored Jesus.

Philippians 2:9-11, “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

So, what exactly did the Father ask of His Son?

2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

This was always the plan. It wasn’t a surprise to God that Jesus would be sacrificed. Look at this prophecy written over 700 years before Jesus’ sacrifice:

Isaiah 53:5-6, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

God, when He created us knew we would rebel and sin against Him, but His love for us was so great that in His creation of us He planned our redemption.

How can we describe this kind of love? I’m going to create a being that I will love, and they will hate me, spit on me, crucify me and through it all I will love them. **That’s a crazy kind of love man!**

How do we respond to this kind of love? IT’S INDESCRIBABLE!

III. That whoever believes in Him shall not perish

Why did Jesus come? After those words in John 3:16 we find verse 17:

John 3:17, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Later in John we read:

John 12:47, "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world."

He didn't come to condemn, He didn't come to judge, so why did He come?

Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Not only does he come to save us, but He was also actively seeking us out. That's indescribable love!

IV. But have everlasting life

God's love is so complete, so healing, so full of mercy, so full of grace that the gift He wishes to give us is everlasting, it's eternal.

It's the original gift that keeps on giving. We can't even imagine eternal life, it's indescribable!

But what happens if we don't believe, don't accept the gift?

John 3:18-21, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 **Everyone who does evil** hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God."

You will see this theme throughout the New Testament. If someone doesn't believe in Jesus their fate is eternal separation from God for eternity. Being removed from the presence of God's love is just as indescribable as is the presence of God's love. Your choice is simple, do you want eternity separated from the love of God or with God and His love for you? You choose!

This is the message of John 3:16. It is the message of hope embodied in the very love of God for you. This was Jesus' message to Nicodemus. So, what did Nicodemus do with this message?

John recorded this encounter and later in John when the Pharisee's are debating Jesus, we see Nicodemus being the reasonable voice in the room.

John 7:50-51, "Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, 51 "Does our law

condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

Then later at Jesus’ burial we see Nicodemus again:

John 19:39, “He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.”

From these observations from John, it is implied that Nicodemus did come to a believing faith in Jesus.

So, how about you? Have you placed your faith in Jesus?