



Week 4: Love

Monday, December 21, 2020

John 3:16-19

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. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ 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.

John 3:16 is one of the best-known verses in the Bible. You see it on placards held up at football games. It's printed on shopping bags from *Forever 21*. You'll find it on the bottom of your soda cup from *In-N-Out Burger*. It provides a succinct summary of the relationship between God and man – God loved the world so much that he sacrificed his own Son so that we could have the gift of eternal life. What is lesser-known are the following verses that elaborate upon this – Jesus was sent not to condemn the world, but to save it; but those who choose to reject this gift are condemned by their evil deeds.

God wants us to know that He is a loving God who truly wants to be connected to His people. He wants to be connected to us so much, that he was willing to give up his own Son to bridge that gap. It wasn't something He found on our *Amazon* wish list and shipped to us overnight via *Amazon Prime*. It wasn't something He received at a white elephant party and passed along. It was something far more precious, better than the valued treasure that sits in the hands of the holder of the last number at a pirate gift exchange. God gave us something more valuable than a material item. Because of our sin, we owed God a debt, a debt that only God had the resources to pay. Genesis 22 describes Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only son to a God he knew and who requested it. Imagine how much greater it would be to sacrifice your child to a total stranger, who might not acknowledge it. God's gift shows His love.

Christmas is a time of giving. Parents buy gifts for their children. People gift their time at food pantries and homeless shelters. Families fill overseas gift boxes for *Operation Christmas Child*. Shoppers drop spare change in *Salvation Army* kettles. But God gave us the ultimate gift – His own begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall have the gift of eternal life. Because of this gift of Love, we have Hope, Peace, and Joy. We have Hope for a better future. We have Peace, knowing that God will provide for us. And we have Joy knowing that God's Old Testament promise has already been fulfilled. *

By Richard Wong