

But That The World Might Live Through Him

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[0:00] John chapter 3 verse 16 is of course a very familiar verse to us all.! But I wonder how deeply we have thought of this word.

! God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might live through him. There are three spoken of here.

God, the Son, and the world. Let's think of these three one after another. God. God, this eternally glorious one who has no need of any and yet loves all.

God. A God who did not create this world out of any need because he is the all-sufficient one to whom nothing can be added, from whom nothing can be subtracted.

[1:19] He is what he is, ever was and ever shall be. Eternal, glorious, perfect, terrible in holy majesty, beautiful in his holiness, eternally happy, at peace with himself.

A happiness that is not contingent. With a strength that is not derived from any source but his own glorious essence.

With a wisdom and a knowledge that encompasses all that is, was, and ever shall be. The greatest of the nations know all the nations put together are, as Isaiah put it, but just the slight film that is left in a bucket when we pour all the water out.

Less than, less than a grain of sand in comparison with all the sands and all the shores of the seas of the earth. God.

Scripture often employs imagery in order to give us a sense of what it cannot explain. And some things are so beyond our experience, they are beyond our comprehension, we can only get a sense of them.

[2:52] When the glory of God appeared to Ezekiel, he describes not the glory, but what the glory was like.

And he so constantly says it was in the appearance of, it looked like, it seemed to be. And the picture was so glorious, so beautiful, so majestic, so horrific that he fell on his face as dead.

This is the God spoken of. So pure that nothing could be compared to him, he finds in the very angels' fault.

And they cringe before his awful holiness in fear, covering their faces with their wings lest they look upon it. earth shakes at his appearance.

The very mountains quake. The heavens darken and nature responds with fear and with wonder when this God makes his appearance.

[4:04] When he gave his holy law to Israel, I read there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud over the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.

Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace. The whole mountain trembled violently and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, Speak to us yourself and we will listen but do not have God speak to us or we shall all die.

This is not a God to be trifled with. He is compared in scripture to a consuming fire.

a furiously jealous God who brooks no competition and he demands of us that we should love him with our all, our all, our all, without compromise and without reserve.

[5 : 26] This is the God who created heaven and who created hell and who stokes the fires of hell with the righteousness of his anger and who will cast the unbelieving, the morally defiled and the cowardly sinful into a lake of scorching punishment that will burn forever and ever.

Such is the father who so loved the world that he gave his only son. think with me for a moment about that gloriously ever beloved son equal to his father in everything.

As we said this morning there is not an iota of deity that the father has and the son does not share. Like the father he is from the beginning in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

Like the father he has life in himself and gives life to all. Through him all things were made and without him nothing made was ever made.

In him was life and the life was the light of man. All the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge are to be found in him so that nothing can be properly understood except in relation to him.

[7 : 07] Like the father everything that does or ever will exist or ever did exist came from him and is for him.

In other words he is the reason the rationale the goal the purpose for everything in creation whether material or spiritual earthly or heavenly finds its purpose in this son.

Like the father he is holy so that sinners shrink before his all seeing eyes and Peter would not hesitate to say even in his humanity depart from me O Lord for I am a sinful man and none could condemn him of sin.

John John saw him in his glory and reported what he saw and his terminology is somewhat reminiscent of Ezekiel's.

He saw someone like a son of man dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His hair and his head were like wool as white as snow and his eyes were like the blazing fire.

[8 : 26] His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.

His face was like the sun shining in brilliance and when I saw him I fell at his feet as though dead. Later on John describes him as waging war with this title on him the Lord of Lord and King of Kings.

Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which he will strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty and this is the son that the father gave for the world.

But there's more that needs to be said about this wonderful son. He is God's one and only begotten son.

Others are sons by creation or by adoption but Jesus is not included in that order of things. He holds in relationship to creation a position of primacy that none can share and to which none have a right.

[9 : 56] He is son by virtue of his eternal deity and Paul sorry John uses this strange remarkable and thought provoking expression he is says John the only begotten God.

Jesus was not adopted. He was not deified. He did not obtain some kind of special infusion of the spirit by which he became a son of God.

And the wonder of Jesus' saviorhood has to do with God stooping down to assume humanity. not otherwise. Being by nature God he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing taking the form of a servant being made in human likeness.

And this is the father's eternal delight. son whom the father gave for the world.

The world. Let's think for a moment about the world. Tearing ourselves away from contemplation of this beautiful wonderful one.

[11:26] Let's think about the world. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. The word is described here as the object of God's love but we need to recognize that in John particularly the word world often has a pejorative sense.

sometimes it means simply material creation sometimes it means the world of mankind but John describes the world as that I quote which is in opposition to God which declined to acknowledge the son when he came into the world.

The world is that which hates God and hates Christ and hates his disciples and is ruled by Satan and will be judged by God. The world is that which cannot receive the spirit because it does not know Jesus.

The world is juxtaposed to those who believe. Christians are not to love the world for such a love is a contradiction of love for God.

The whole world lies in the hands of the evil one, is given to lust and will not endure. war. This world is a sinful world riddled with lust and ambition and arrogance selfishness and pride.

[13:03] It gives not a thought to the honor of God and not a whisper to loving and serving him whom the angels delight to serve. It's a world in which the laws of God are not kept, in which every man lives for himself, in which kindness and humility and honesty and purity and justice are seldom thought, seldom cultivated.

Instead, men and women vie against each other without moral compunction except when it is, for the moment, socially unacceptable or commercially unprofitable.

the natural uses of life are corrupted by the world and transformed into means for the gratification of the lowest animal desires.

Horoscopes, actors, singers, idols, and money, these evoke more interest than the message of divine truth.

Children are sacrificed to the mollusks of human ambition while the truth of God is made into a lie. And those who dare speak faithfully in the name of God to the world are often hounded and heckled and made into laughing stocks or even thrown into prison.

[14:29] And it's not that mankind doesn't know the truth. The truth is inscribed on every human heart. And truth cries out to us as we look upon creation.

but mankind suppresses the truth that it knows and enlists all the powers of self-persuasion that it possibly can call upon to deny what deep down in its heart it knows is true.

The fool says in his heart seeking to persuade himself there is no God. And as a result the light and the hearts of men and women and girls and boys has become darkness.

This is a world in rebellion against God. A world that refuses to obey him or honor him refuses to submit to his holy just and perfectly acceptable requirements deceived by the promise to become godlike.

Man seeks to determine for himself what is good rather than hear the word of the Lord. In the pride of your heart you say I am God.

[15:47] I sit on the throne of a God in the midst of the seas. But you are a man and not a God though you think you are as wise as a God.

Are you wiser than Daniel? Is no secret hid from you? By your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasures.

By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud. What will you say then?

Will you say I am a God in the midst of those who kill you? You will be then but a man and not a God in the hands of those who slay you. God has a way of crushing the rebellious.

This sinful rebellious ungodly world is liable justly to only one thing punishment.

[16:53] Shall I not punish for this declares the Lord? Shall I not avenge myself upon a nation such as this? He asks.

And this is the world that God so loved that he gave his only begotten son. Surprisingly not in order to condemn the world but that the world through him might live.

God loved this rebellious haughty dissonant disobedient sinful world. So much so that he acted on their behalf.

And yet the term so loved the world often taken to be an instrument of measure is not. It's actually an indication of the manner. God loved the world in such a manner that he gave his one and only son.

and what does this mean? Well first let's remind ourselves that God's love is not altruistic.

[18:11] He has nothing to gain. He cannot take for himself apart from us. His love is not due to any kind of obligation either.

We have no claim on him. We have no right to his love. But love is best expressed by what it gives, what it bears, what it is willing to forgive.

God loved the world in such a manner that he gave, and gave more liberally than anyone could have ever imagined in his wildest dreams.

love. He also bore more and forgave more and still bears and forgives more than heaven's angels would consider possible.

He is patient and he is kind. And although he demands of his creatures that we honor him, he does not envy us our joys and our happiness.

[19:20] God so loved the world, that is, in such a manner that he gave.

What did it mean for God to give his son? And let me take pause here and draw your attention to the fact that so often when we think of this verse, we think of it in terms of the sacrifice that the son made.

But the text actually speaks of the sacrifice made by the father, giving the son. And what did this entail?

It meant handing the son over to suffering and to death, to an ignoble death on a cross. It meant making him the beloved of the father, who always did his father's will most eagerly, most perfectly, and in whom the father had such pure and eternal delight to make him to become sin for us, and to bear the curse of our sin in his own body on the tree.

I don't think I could fathom what I have just said. The father gave the son this one who is ever in his father's bosom, cherished and loved and adored before the world was made, transformed into the very embodiment of sin, the very substance of rebellion, and everything that God the father hates, for which he created hell and its enduring fire.

[21:10] fire. And suddenly, the son becomes repulsive to the father. And the father turns himself away in holy horror.

The son is made to be a curse, the object of the father's hatred of sin and righteous anger. Is there any wonder that the heavens darkened and the earth shook and the very dead rose from their graves?

Could anyone ever imagine such love? The father killed the son so that sinners might live. The father turned his back to him whom he loved so dearly, so that he would turn his face toward us who rebelled against him.

The father emptied heaven of its choicest joy in order to inhabit heaven with folk like us.

Miserable sinners saved by grace through the blood of the father's beloved son. Is not such love amazing?

[22:30] are we not struck dumb when we remember that we and others like him are his object?

And what does this do to us? How do we respond to such love? How deep the father's love for us?

How vast beyond all measure that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure?

How great the pain of searing loss. The father turns his face away as wounds which mar the chosen one bring many sons to glory.

Behold, the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.

[23:46] It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. his dying breath has brought me life.

I know that it is finished. as