

Scripture's Greatest Truth

John 3:1-21

7/18/04

Intro

John 3:16 is the greatest scripture in the Bible because it contains the most important message God has for us to know and believe — that God loves us and sent His Son that we might have eternal life.

It comes out of a conversation between Jesus and a Jewish leader named Nicodemus who comes to Him under cover of darkness in search of answers about the kingdom of God.

The insights in this verse need to be completely understood by each of us because they contain the greatest insights into God's heart for us and for all the world.

In these verses we understand the heart of God in loving us and saving us.

I. God So Loved

A. The world

- > God so loved “the world” means He loved those who at that moment were **unrepentant sinners**.

Luke 6:35-36 “But love your enemies, and do good... and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

- > The principle of loving your enemies comes from the fact that God does the same.
- > In fact, God draws us to Himself by His kindness rather than His judgment; for we were already judged. (**verses 17-20**)

Romans 2:4 “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

Illus - In Africa, we teach the pastors that they should love people to Christ rather than to threaten them with damnation.

- > This is one of the greatest demonstrations of His love, that “**He loved us while we were still His enemies.**” **Romans 5:8**

B. That He gave

- > The word for love here is **agape`**; and it has the meaning of loving someone completely from a commitment of the heart.
- > Complete in itself, it does not seek to fill an emptiness, but rather to give out of its fullness.

Illus – Some people believe that God created man because He was lonely – not so. He is love and was altogether loving. In the same way, God is altogether glorious and does not need our worship to fulfill an emptiness of glory.

Illus - We tell single people we counsel that they must come to the place of being filled and desire to give out of the fullness of their heart, rather than the emptiness.

- > God loves out of the completeness of His love.

I John 4:16 “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

I John 4:19-21 “We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

II. He Gave His Only Son

A. The greatest Price

- > Scripture tells us that in giving us His Son, God demonstrated how great His love is for us.

John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this; that one lay down his life for his friends.”

- > In the same way, He held back nothing in giving us His Son.

Romans 8:31-32 “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

B. His only begotten Son

- > In what sense was Jesus the “only begotten Son?”
- > The word “begotten” in Greek is “monogenos.” *Mono* means one and *genos* means type, or kind; in other words, “one of a kind.”
- > This must be understood because some people suggest that this indicates that Jesus was created by God – not so. Jesus Himself is everlasting.

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

C. He gave His Son to suffering

- > God sent His Son, knowing that He would suffer in the hands of unrighteous men.
- > But this was love; that He took upon Himself the suffering that we deserved.
- > It was the payment required for our sin.
- > But it is interesting to understand what Jesus meant when He quoted from Psalm 22 on the cross.

Psalm 22:1, 6-8, 13-18 “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

- > In what sense was He forsaken? **For our sins.**

Illus - This was the Son of God, yet God did not save Him...

III. That Whosoever Believes Should Live

A. Whoever believes

- > Anyone who believes will be saved.
- > There won't be anyone in hell who says, "I wanted to believe, but was put on the wrong list."
- > Never stoop praying for people

Illus – unlikely people do come to the Lord. Jordi and I were just discussing that if someone would have told us that a certain person would come to the Lord, I would not have believed it. Keep praying.

- > God holds each man into account for whether or not he believes in His Son.
- > See verses 3:18-19

Hebrews 2:2-3 “For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”

B. It's a matter of faith

- > It is a matter of faith because there is nothing man can do to cause God to owe us salvation.

Illus - Nicodemus was a man who seemed to have every qualification for heaven, but did not.

Titus 3:4-5 “But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy...”

Illus - If you were to die today and God asked you why you should be accepted into heaven, what would you say?

C. They will have eternal life

- > What does it mean to have eternal life? Lounging about on our own personal cloud with a harp? Hardly.
- > We have been given only a measure of the experience of the Holy Spirit; in heaven we will have the fullness of all that He has for us in revealing His glory.

Romans 9:23 “And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.”

- > But live in Him now...

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

Conclusion

If God so loved the world, the best thing we can do is to love Him in return.