

For God So Loved the World

Jn. 3:16

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Martin Luther called Jn. 3:16 "the heart of the Bible--the Gospel in miniature."
 - 1. Luther was right—Jn. 3:16 really is the heart of the Bible.
 - 2. This morning, we want to examine this text to understand its meaning.
- B. Many Christians don't understand this text; we know they don't understand this text, because they don't show love in their lives.
 - 1. Many husbands don't treat their wives the way Jesus would have them to—they might easily become angry when supper isn't on the table by 6:30.
 - 2. Many Christians don't treat the lost properly—they may never speak a word about Jesus.
- C. This morning, let's examine Jn. 3:16 so that we can understand it better.

GREATEST BEING IN THE UNIVERSE--GOD.

- A. God is the One who created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1); therefore, he is the greatest Being in the Universe.
- B. There is none like God.
 - 1. God is greater than anything.
 - a. God is greater than and more powerful than the President.
 - b. God is richer and wiser than kings and queens.
 - c. God is greater than any god man's mind can conceive.
 - 2. The Scriptures show that there is none like God.
 - a. Moses told Pharaoh, "There is no one like the LORD our God" (Ex. 8:10).
 - b. "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:17).

GREATEST POWER—GOD SO LOVED.

- A. God's love stands behind all of his other actions.
- B. Many think of God as being vengeful, just waiting until we mess up to condemn us to hell.
 - 1. It is true that God executes vengeance on those who refuse to obey him--"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).
 - 2. Although God is vengeful, God also loves.
- C. The Scriptures affirm that God loves.
 - 1. "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)--God loved us when we were in rebellion to him.
 - 2. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 Jn. 4:9).
 - 3. "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:16)--God doesn't just love; his character is described as being love.
- D. It is so good to have people who love you.
 - 1. It is good to have parents who love you—who reared you and sought your best interest.
 - 2. It is good to have a spouse who loves you—one who will stand beside you in life's difficult hours and love you unconditionally.
 - 3. It is good to have children who love you—after Tammy and RJ got back from Gatlinburg, RJ sat in my lap for the longest time.
 - 4. Yet, it is greater to have a God who loves you.

E. Illustration about Karl Barth, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p. 377.

THE GREATEST NUMBER--THE WORLD.

A. God loves everyone in this world; there is no one God does not love.

1. God loves the vilest of sinners.
 - a. God loved Adolf Hitler; Jesus died for him.
 - b. God loves the abortion doctors; Jesus died for them.
2. God loves the most despicable people on earth--those who are in extreme poverty, those who stink, those whose teeth are rotting out.

B. The Scriptures affirm God's love for everyone.

1. "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (Jn. 10:16)—This refers to the Gentiles; Jesus would bring them in.
2. "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him" (Rom. 10:12).
3. God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

C. God loves you.

1. He sent his Son to die for your sins.
2. Regardless of what you've done, God can forgive your sins.

D. Illustration about Romans having no number zero, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #4498.

THE GREATEST GIFT—HIS SON.

A. God's love did something--it sent Jesus into this world to die for sin.

B. All true love does something; it is not merely a feeling.

1. 1 Cor. 13:4-8 describes love in actions.
2. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).
3. "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Eph. 5:25).

C. God gave his only begotten Son for man's sin.

1. I love you, but I'm not going to give my son for you.
 - a. You might not be appreciative.
 - b. You might not change your behavior in light of that gift.
2. Yet, God willingly gave his only Son to die for man's sin.

THE GREATEST CONDITION—WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM.

A. In order to go to heaven, we must have faith.

1. "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).
2. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk. 16:16).
3. "So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved'" (Acts 16:31).
4. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).
5. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 Jn. 5:1).

B. The faith we must have acts.

1. Some say that all we need is faith, and we will be saved.
2. Yet, the Bible teaches the faith that saves is an acting faith.
 - a. "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (Js. 2:17).
 - b. Heb. 11:4-40 contains many examples of people who acted in faith and were rewarded for it.

C. Illustration about preacher talking with professing Christian, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p. 141.

THE GREATEST TRAGEDY WHICH CAN BE AVERTED—SHOULD NOT PERISH.

- A. God does not want anyone to perish.
 - 1. God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - 2. The good news is that we don't have to perish.
- B. We can perish in our sin right now.
 - 1. The prodigal son was perishing in his sin (Lk. 15:11-32).
 - a. A son asked his father for his share of his inheritance; his father gave him his share.
 - b. He went to a far country and wasted his possessions.
 - c. When his money ran out, there was a severe famine in that land.
 - d. He fed swine and wanted to eat what he fed the swine.
 - e. Then he came to his senses and returned to his father.
 - 2. Those who live in sin have hard lives.
 - a. ""The way of the unfaithful is hard" (Prov. 13:15).
 - b. "Destruction and misery are in their ways" (Rom. 3:16).
 - 3. Some people perish in some particular sin.
 - a. Adultery ruins families and brings heartache.
 - b. Alcohol ruins families and ruins One's health.
- C. We can perish in eternity--Hell is described as a horrible place.
 - 1. In hell "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 8:12).
 - 2. Hell is a place "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched'" (Mk. 9:48).
 - 3. The rich man was tormented in Hades (Lk. 16:23).
- D. If you go to hell, you will perish throughout all eternity, but hell can be averted.

GREATEST BLESSING—THEY MIGHT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

- A. We currently have eternal life; eternal life is not something just to be realized in heaven (Jn. 3:36).
 - 1. Jesus promised to give us meaningful life--"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10).
 - 2. This means that I can live in peace— I don't have to worry, because God has saved me.
- B. We will have eternal life in heaven.
 - 1. Our home in heaven will be eternal--"the righteous [will go away] into eternal life" (Mt. 25:46).
 - 2. Heaven is a wonderful place to spend eternity.
 - a. This home was built by God— "He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).
 - b. In heaven, God will wipe every tear from our eyes (Rev. 7:17).
 - c. In heaven, we will have the right to the tree of life (Rev. 22:14)—we will never die again.
- C. Illustration, "Beautiful on Wrong Side," *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #4960.

CONCLUSION.

- A. God's love prompted him to act--to send his only Son into the world to die for us.
- B. If we love God, we will act.
 - 1. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15).
 - 2. Do you love God? Are you keeping his commandments?