

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

This portion of Scripture is THE most recognizable verse in the entire Bible. You see it displayed at football games, baseball games, billboards, bumper stickers, tattoos, crazy people with wild hair, and God knows where else. I guess this begs the question, what is the big deal about John 3:16. For those that may not know; John is the last book of the four gospels in the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. 3 is the chapter in that book and 16 is the verse in that chapter.

So let's take a closer look at this famous scripture. “For God so loved the world.” What strikes me is the way Jesus is describing the way he feels about the “world.” Jesus uses the word “love.” Love is the foundation of the “Good News.”

1 Corinthians 13:1-8,13 describes what we are if we do not have love. Let's look at it.

I want to focus on verse 2. “If I have the gift of Prophecy and can fathom all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” This is saying, nothing can be done that is good if it's not first motivated and driven by love. So, because of this, we need a clear description of what love is. Look at verses 4-8 “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in

evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

The description of love here in this verse also describes the very nature and intentions of God. Let’s read verses 4-8 again, but this time lets insert God instead of love, “God is patient, God is kind. He does not envy, he does not boast, he is not proud. God is not rude or self-seeking, he is not easily angered, and he keeps no record of wrong. He always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, God never fails.”

So first and foremost, God was and still is motivated by love. “For God so loved the World.” I heard someone say, “It is no chore for me to love the whole world. My only real problem is my neighbor next door.”

Let’s look at the next part of John 3:16 “That He gave his one and only Son.” The question is, gave him for what? The answer can be found in Matthew 20:28. Jesus said of himself, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” God gave his only Son to be our ransom.

The word ransom means the price paid to free a slave or hostage. Christ paid the ransom price for us with his own life to free us from the slavery of sin. You may ask, why do I need a ransom paid for me? The answer is simple; we can’t afford it. We have certainly tried. We’ve tried being good enough, following the rules, going to church, being involved in religious activities but nothing we do seems to free us from the stain of sin. That’s the nature of being a hostage. We are subject to our captors; we have no power!!

Romans 5:6,9 says, "You see, just at the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Verse 9. Since we now have been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

Let's look at the next part of John 3:16 "That whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The next question is who is the "whosoever" this piece of scripture is talking about? The answer is, you and me. Listen as Jesus prays for not only his generation but for future generations who come to know him.

John 17:20-21 "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."

Jesus broke all the social molds. He ate with tax collectors, prostitutes, and lepers. That might not sound so major today but in ancient Israel it was social suicide! Even the Pharisee's (which were the religious leaders) said, "Look, he eats with tax collectors and sinners."

Jesus died for all of us present and future. Jesus died for us all because all of humanity has the same issue (SIN.) From the riches to the poorest, to the educated to the uneducated, black, White, Hispanic, Jew or Gentile, from the best of us to the worst of us, sin is always the issue. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God."

Jesus came into this world to do one thing and that was to "seek and to save the lost!" He didn't come for just some people; he came for all of us!! That is the Good News!!!

And lastly, the last part of John 3:16 says, "Will not perish but have everlasting life." The writer is not talking about physical death. Jesus wasn't worried about our physical death because according to Scripture, "It is appointed unto man once to die then the judgement." Jesus was referring to eternal death.

Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost because there is a penalty for sin, otherwise His death on the cross would not have been needed. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

So the wages of sin are death and separation, but the Good News is Jesus came to set us free from the law of sin and death. Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life and that more abundantly."

So the last question is, how do I receive what Jesus did for me?

Romans 10:9-10 " If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe with your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with the heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.