

For God So Loved

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Preacher: Wayne Schuller

[0 : 0 0] by my page. I'm going to have to move this Bible, I think. Well, John 3.16, a classic verse, maybe the most famous verse of all time. I think so.

Why don't we say it together, friends, off the screen. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3.16. This verse has had a special place in the lives of, I would say, thousands of Christians throughout the world.

It's helped many people come to faith for the first time. It's helped many people understand that God actually loves them because they're in the world and God so loved the world. For a lot of us parents, you know, you don't really know how to do family devotions or what you're meant to do.

So often stumbling parents will just teach their kids John 3.16 and it's the first verse our children memorize. It's a great one. It adorns walls and plaques and t-shirts.

[1 : 1 9] And I've got some images of this in a minute. Even I read a story this week, if you get the Church Missionary Society newsletter, there's a story in that this month about a Tanzanian pastor who was converted by walking down the street, a bit of paper blowing in the breeze.

He picks it up and reads, For God so loved the world. A nomadic Maasai African and he's converted and is now a pastor. Let's look at some of our pictures, Edmund.

So that's your classic Christian plaque that some of us probably have on the wall in some form or another. For God so loved the world. The classic King James version. But it gets more interesting than this. I've scaled the internet for pictures of John 3.16.

The next one, please. So someone's decided to put it on a telephone pole or an electricity pole. So that's a good idea for when you get home today. Make a little sign and whack it up around your street.

Maybe that's illegal. I'm not sure. Thanks. Next one. This is a huge graffiti in some American city. And it's a big abandoned factory.

[2 : 2 4] And some people, Christians I presume, have gone in and painted a massive John 3.16. So above the John is a sort of normal sized window. So that's actually very, very big. And that photo was taken from a train line.

So everyone who goes on this train sees John 3.16. Again, great graffiti for the Lord. Next one. My dad's a truck driver. I like this one. You can't quite see it.

But on the back of this tanker is John 3.16. Just so as he overtakes you and nearly runs off the road. And you're kind of about to swear.

You see John 3.16. Oh, God loves me. Next one. Here's another truck. This one's a refrigerated kind of van. And it's got John 3.16 on the back.

I know you can't read it, if you trust me. But you can see it's actually got For God to Love the World. And there's a picture of God's hands holding a truck. Isn't that good? Is that good theology? I'm not sure. I'll need to email you this one.

- [3 : 21] But it's written on someone's windmill. They've got John 3.16 at the top. And I think underneath it's got 2 Timothy 3.16, which is all scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, training, and righteousness.
- So you can put John 3.16 on your windmill. Now, this one's interesting. It might be hard to see, but this is for the kids. This is somebody at a baseball game in America, and this little boy who's in primary school, he's holding a sign that says John 3.16.
- So he's obviously going to wait for someone to hit a home run out of the field up to him, and he's going to hold up the sign and share his faith at a massive sporting event.
- So that's a good one for the kids. And imagine doing that at the footy. You go into the golf square. You sit somewhere around there, and you put up the John 3.16 every time a goal is kicked. I know this is another graffiti.
- It's a bit harder to see, sorry, but somebody's written all kind of normal graffiti. Then in the blue, it's got, Smile, Jesus loves you. John 3.16, read it. So that's good advice, I think.
- [4 : 25] I think this is the last one. A church has paid a lot of money. They had so much love, John 3.16. They've paid a lot of money to get it put up on a massive advertising sign on the freeway, except there's two typos on it.
- But we'll overlook that. They've misspelt whosoever and believeth, but that's okay. But maybe we should make a big John 3.16 sign on the East Link when it comes out.
- Are there any more there, Edmund? No, okay, good, blank. I had another one, but it didn't work on the computer. But there's a fast food chain in America.
- It's not McDonald's or Hungry Jack's. It's a smaller fast food chain. And all their cups have John 3.16 on it. So there you go. It must be an important verse for people just to quote it and put it anywhere and everywhere.
- Now what I would like to do is open it up now. And if you just have something to share about what this verse means to you, now's your chance.
- [5 : 27] So is this working? So I'm just going to take a risk here and invite people. Does anyone want to put up their hand and suggest why this verse is special to them?
- Any kids? Got one over here. Yes? Julie, why is it special to you? I think it's just an amazing verse because it speaks to both children and, you know, people all the way through their lives.
- You can read it and just something new will pop out to you. And God really speaks to people through it. I think that's what makes it cool. Yes. It appeals to all ages. I think probably there's a lot of people who have been converted in their elderly or their deathbed just by this verse suddenly making sense.
- And, I mean, of course, that's God's spirit at work. Anyone else like to share what's special about this verse? Alison, can we pass this down? As a young child who went to Sunday school, I was given an end-of-year prize, which was this verse on a little plaque.
- And it sat on my dressing table for many years. But I wasn't told to learn it off by heart, but I did. And I know for many years have believed that God used that at the right time to enable me to come to faith.
- [6 : 51] Is there anyone else who would say this is the verse that helped them come to Christ? Tony?
- Yeah, I think for us, the verse was sort of important theologically, but it took a whole new meaning when we became parents and just realised what that parental and child love actually is and how deep it is.
- So, in that sense, it became even more special as we grew in our faith with our kids. Yes. It's the fatherly love of God, the parental love of God for the world.

And he gives his son to die for us. Anybody else want to share? Anyone in the crying room? This work's in there. Okay. We'll keep going.

Now, I'm going to give you the verse in four easy-to-remember phrases that you could talk about over your lunch. And here's an easy way to explain the gospel from the verse using these four phrases.

[8 : 00] And see if you can remember these. The first one is, God loved. Yep, that's up there. So, we need to know that God is a God of love who loves the world. And remember we sang with Julie before, Jesus loves me, this I know.

And how do we know? The Bible tells us so. And where does the Bible tell us? Well, we can say John 3, 16 promises that God loves us. It tells us that God is a loving father.

He's not an impersonal kind of emotionless rule maker, but he's a loving father who loves the whole world. So, God loved. Second point of the gospel, God gave.

God loved. God gave. So, friends, you know that real love is not actually just the sentimental feeling in your heart. Real love is shown in action. And so, God's love is seen in the very specific action that he sent his son to die on the cross so that we might not perish but have eternal life.

And so, God's love is actually makes us his forgiven children. So, it's interesting. So, my kids who are here have two dads and we all have two dads really.

[9 : 10] We have our human father. And because of the gospel, because God gave his son, we are now adopted as children. We now have a heavenly father. So, we have two fathers.

Now, someone may ask, why does God love you? And I think Tony alluded to this as he shared. Why does God love us? Is it because we are lovely? Because that's how I love my wife because I think she's lovely.

But that's not how God loves, is it? God loves more like a parent that even when children hear, I'm sorry to say, sometimes you're a bit snotty and grotty and not that lovable but your parents love you.

And that's how God loves every one of us. Not because of our loveliness but because of his mercy love that he pours out on us from his own well of love within himself.

Now, there are some bad ways people look for God's love. I've got some illustrations of this. Somebody gave me this before church. They were very kind. This is a mirror.

[10 : 14] And you can have a lot of fun with mirrors but I think the best thing people do with mirrors is look at themselves. And what some people try and do is read God's love in a mirror. So, they try and look in the mirror and look for things that God might love.

So, they look for good works or they look for a good personality. And they look within themselves to find God's love. But that's not where you'll find God's love. Because you will only see your failures.

If you think about it, you'll think about how you've rebelled against God and you won't feel loved by God looking in a mirror. Another way people try and see God's love is in their bank statement.

So, this is one of my bank statements, National Australia Bank. For some reason, one of my girls has written on it with crayon. I'm not sure how that happened. But some people try and look for God's love in their bank statement or even their school report card.

So, they'll say, I'm getting more money. Life is good. God must love me. Or I'm losing money. God mustn't love me. Or I'm getting poor grades at school. God doesn't love me.

[11 : 20] I'm getting good grades. God does love me. Clearly, friends, that won't work. You cannot look to your earthly blessing as a measure of God's love. Because sometimes God sends suffering to actually bring us to his loving care.

So, we cannot rely on our personal circumstances. The only way we can know God's love is to look in the Bible. And the Bible makes us look at Jesus and his death on the cross.

So, how do we know God loves us? Because God gave. God gave his one and only son. Now, third point. God loved. God gave. Now, it's up to you.

I believe. The promise is that for whosoever or everyone, if you believe in Jesus, if you will worship him and trust him and come to him, then you are counted among the recipients of this promise.

To believe in Jesus doesn't just mean to not change your life. Because later in John chapter 3, he'll say, you have to come into the light and stay in the light and have your deeds exposed and not hide in the darkness of evil anymore.

[12 : 31] And so, to believe in Jesus means to come into the light. And then you can say, which is the last point, I have. If you believe in Jesus, you have the most special gift. You have the greatest treasure in the whole wide world.

You have eternal life. We deserve God's condemnation. In fact, Jesus says that in this verse. He says, I could have come to condemn the world, but I haven't. I've come that you may have eternal life through my rescue.

And so, friends, I want to encourage you that this is the meaning of life. Life, eternal life with God our Father and Jesus is why we were created.

And we can have this as a gift through believing in Jesus. So here's the gospel and here's how you can remember it or explain it to a friend. God loved. God gave. I believe.

I have. Why don't we say that together? God loved. God gave. I believe. I have. And let's say the verse together again on the next slide.

[13 : 32] For God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3.16. This is the most important message in the world. Friends, may we never stop marveling and wondering at the great gift of God in Jesus.

Let's bow our heads and pray. Dear God, we thank you so much for your love, your gift of Jesus, and we receive that gift and believe in him.

And thank you, therefore, that we can claim the promise of eternal life. Dear God, help us to love what you love. Help us to love your son. Help us to love the world that he died to rescue.

Help us to seek to share with our neighbor and school friend the love of Jesus and the gift of Jesus. Amen. Now, friends, we're going to sing of God's great love.

[14 : 37] How deep the Father's love for us. That's...