

John 3:16

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. There's a great dialogue going on in this chapter between Jesus and Nicodemus, and it really is a crucial section of the whole Bible because it expresses just so clearly the truth of this word regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

It expresses so clearly the fact that it's by the secret, personal, powerful operation of God the Spirit applying the work of Jesus on the cross to you.

That's when we understand and experience being born again, this regeneration. And the words of our text here, this section is really the conclusion of this dialogue between the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus.

And they're probably the best known words in the Bible. And they really are a masterly and they are such a moving summary of the gospel in terms of God's love for each one of us.

Luther called this wonderful verse the Bible in miniature because it tells us everything that we need to know. These words that we have here, they express the most important message of the gospel, that this salvation is available, that this salvation is freely offered, that this salvation is a precious gift of God.

[1 : 5 3] But yet it can only be received by believing in Jesus, trusting in him, and placing your faith in his finished work on that cross at Calvary.

And we're told at the beginning of the verse, for God so loved the world. And that word so that is in that verse, it really emphasizes to us this, the unfathomable depth of that love that God has for each one of us.

The mighty pity and compassion and mercy with which God regards the whole of the human race. Now we have to be clear, he doesn't and he cannot love our sins in any way, shape or form because sin is an abomination to God.

But he loves our souls and he has mercy and compassion on us. Just as we were singing there in Psalm 145, the Lord is good to all and his mercy is over all that he has made.

And it also highlights and stresses to us the deep sense in which God loves this world that he has created. And this love is a world that reaches out to the whole world of sinners without exception.

[3 : 2 2] He just so loves the world. And it's that deep love for us that motivated God to send his son Jesus Christ into this world.

God had to make the move because human beings could do nothing for their own salvation. And isn't it amazing that he has done that for us?

And we have to ask why was this necessary? Why was all the suffering of our Lord on the cross necessary? Because human beings were the very pinnacle of God's creation.

Made in his own image and with life being breathed into man by God himself. Special pinnacle of his creation. God made man.

But as we know from the account of the fall. And man chose to sin against him. And at the fall mankind lost all closeness and communion with God.

[4 : 32] And Adam and Eve at that time who were representative of the whole human race. They were cast out of God's presence. After the fall. After their blatant disobedience before God.

And they were sent down into a world that had now become sinful and dark. Because of their actions. And because of their disobedience. And because of that.

Every one of us who is born into this world. Is born a sinner. That's according to God's word. We are lost sinners.

And if we read Ephesians chapter 2. Then I think that gives us a very clear picture. Of every person standing before God.

How they are born into this world. And if they haven't come to faith. And if they haven't. If they haven't believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what he's done at Calvary. This is still your standing before God.

[5 : 35] And it's so solemn. Paul tells the church in Ephesus. He reminds them. From the beginning of the chapter. And you were dead. In the trespasses and sins.

In which you once walked. Following the course of this world. Following the prince of the power of the air. The spirit that is now at work. In the sons of disobedience.

Among whom. We all once lived. In the passions of our flesh. Carrying out the desires of the body. And the mind. And were by nature. Children of wrath. Like the rest of mankind.

And Paul's emphasis on this. Is so strong. That he repeats it again. In verses 11 and 12 of the chapter. He says. Therefore remember. That at one time.

You Gentiles in the flesh. Called the uncircumcision. By what is called the circumcision. Which is made in the flesh by hands. Remember. That you were at that time. Separated from Christ.

[6 : 31] Alienated. From the commonwealth of Israel. And strangers to the covenants of promise. Having no hope. And without God. In the world. That's what the Bible sees.

Our standing before God is. If we haven't come to faith. Very serious. Lost sinners. Enemies of God. Under this wrath and curse.

And with no hope. In ourselves. In ourselves. But God was not content. To see mankind lost to sin. He wasn't content.

To watch humanity. March off. Into. An endless torment. Because God declared man. Worthy of his love. He saw value.

In the human life. That he had created. And the depth of that love. Towards us. Is measured. By the value of the gift.

[7 : 29] That he has given us. In his son. Then God's love. Could not be greater. Because he's gifted. His only eternal.

Beloved son. Now he did not have loved us. Any more. Than that. In gifting us his son. And it's clear.

From the way. That John. John. Records this. In his gospel. That John himself. Is. Is. Absolutely. Astonished.

At this. Especially the fact. That. The object. Of God's love. Are the human beings. The sinful human beings.

Of this world. And this is something. That John. Consistently sees. As fallen. And rebellious. Against God. The way the people are.

[8 : 25] And what he saw. In the way. That they treated Jesus. Through his. Ministry on this earth. And what he did. To him on the cross. And John's astonishment. Comes through. In these verses.

So clearly. He gave. We're told in the verse. His one. And only son. John. John. Records for us.

In the first chapter. And in verse 14. He tells us. And the word. Became flesh. And the word. Dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory. Glorious of.

The only son. From the father. Full. Of grace. And truth. That's the way. John records it. And his incarnation.

Into this world. And in this. Giving of his son. Then God the father. Has shown us. And revealed to us. The great plan.

[9 : 19] This great plan. By which the love of God. Is going to provide salvation. For sinners. Like you and me. And that plan. Is the atoning death.

Of Christ. On the cross. It's the. The payment. Of. Mankind's. Enormous debt. To God. And that payment.

Is going to be made. By. An almighty. By. By. By. An almighty. Substitute. And representative. Of us. Christ. When Christ. Christ. Christ. On the cross.

The sin. Of the world. Was laid. Upon him. He. Was. Made. To be sin. As Paul. Records. For us. In. Second.

Corinthians. In chapter five. And by his. Suffering. And by his. Death. He. Purchased. Pardon. And he. Alone.

[10 : 13] God's son. He. He. Purchased. Death. He purchased. Pardon. And. Complete. Redemption. For sinners. For all. Who will believe. In other words.

He has brought. Through life. And the true. Spiritual. Meaning of life. Within the reach. Of lost. Mankind. The death.

Of Jesus Christ. For sinners. This is. The absolute. And the final word. Concerning God's love. For humanity. And Jesus.

In this chapter. He explains this. To Nicodemus. And he really. Brings it out. To Nicodemus. Because. It's imperative. It's imperative. That Nicodemus. Recognizes.

Jesus. As the son. As the Messiah. As the sacrificial. Sacrificial. Lamb of God. That's been promised. Throughout all of the scriptures. Of the Old Testament. He is the one.

[11 : 07] That lamb. Without blemish. Who will indeed. Be lifted up. On that cross. He is the one. Who will suffer. And die. On that cross. And he is the one. Who will rise. From the dead.

And he will. He is the one. Who is to be. Exalted. To that place of honor. Beside the father. And we're told this. Because this is.

The very. Foundation stone. Of Christianity. This is. The belief. The core belief. Of Christianity. So John tells us.

That his son. Is going to come. And do. That for us. And to suffer. In our place. As our representative. And he goes on. To tell us then. That. This. This marvelous.

Marvellous. Truth. That whoever. Will believe in him. And will believe in that. Whoever. Forever. Because the purpose. Of God. Giving his son.

[12 : 01] Was to make. God's great gift. Of eternal life. Available to everyone. To whoever. Believes in him. That is. Whoever. Personally.

Places their trust. And faith. In Jesus Christ. And his. First work. Calvary. And what we see here. Is God's pity. And God's. Compassion.

For mankind. Portrayed. In his love. Towards. This whole. World of sinners. And this whole. Congregation. Here today. Without exception. It's totally.

All inclusive. This. All inclusive. Scope. That God has. For human beings. It embraces. Every man. And every woman. And every boy.

And every girl. This is God's. Rescue mission. For fallen humanity. This is the new way.

[12 : 57] The new way of salvation. For anyone. Who places their faith in Christ. And. That in itself. Is what. It seems.

It's what. What threw Nicodemus. In his thinking. Because. He couldn't understand. This. And. No wonder. Because. It was so different. To. To the scripture.

She had been so highly trained in. It was so different. To the scripture. She had. That he knew so well. And probably knew of by heart. He was one of. One of the leading rulers. In Jerusalem.

And now he's been told. To believe. And trust. In this man. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And his sacrifice. Of Calvary. It was an astonishing statement.

In that context. Because. The Old Testament writings. That Nicodemus had. Spoke only. Of God's love. For his own people.

[13 : 51] Israel. And this word. Whoever. Must have thrown Nicodemus. Right off his pedestal. He just couldn't understand it. And.

All Nicodemus. Was aware of. Was of. Of following. The commandments. That God had given them. In the Old Testament. And. All the other. Richards.

Of adhering to. The sacrificial system. And doing all these things. And obeying all the ordinances. That God had given through Moses. And I hear. Of something.

Brand new. And totally different. And it's thrown him. Because. Now it's not just. One chosen tribe. Israel. Or. One chosen people.

Because this is. This is offered. It's freely offered. This gospel. This salvation. Is freely offered. To everyone. To whoever. We're told.

[14 : 49] In. John's first. In the first chapter. Of John's gospel. Again. That. Marvelous words. That we have there. He actually came. To his own. To his own people.

And his own people. Did not receive him. But the next part. Is a wonderful part. But to all. Who did receive him.

Who believed in his name. He gave the right. To become. The children. Of God. Isn't that marvelous. Whoever.

Whoever. All. Who will. Who will. Receive him. And all. Who will. Cry out to him. Whoever. Will.

Believe in him. See. Faith. Is the same. As believing. Having faith. Is the same. As believing. Jesus. And Jesus.

[15 : 46] Repeats. This glorious. Truth. To Nicodemus. Three times. In this section. Because. This faith. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. Is the key.

To salvation. So. He has to make clear. To Nicodemus. That. That. This is the way. That we are all sinners.

But Christ has suffered for us. We deserve death. Spiritual death. But Christ has died for us. We are guilty debtors. But Christ has paid our debts. With his own blood.

And that really is. That really is. The real gospel. This is. The good news. Of this great gospel. That we have.

Christ has been lifted up. On the cross. And he has. Thrown open. The gates of heaven. Thrown open. To all. Who will believe. And Jesus also states.

- [16 : 44] Very clearly. We are told in. Chapter 14. That he is the way. And that he is the truth. And that he is the life. And that no one.
- Can come to the father. Except through him. By believing. And trusting in him. And placing their faith. And hope. In him. And his finished work.
- In other words. Jesus is saying that. Nobody. Will ever return. Into close. Fellowship. Communion.
- And relationship. With the father. Except by believing. In him. And by placing their trust. And faith. In his finished work. In Calvary. In chapter 4.
- Of Acts. Peter tells us this. In verses 8 to 12. Then Peter. Are filled with the Holy Spirit. Said to them.
- [17 : 39] Rolish of the people. And elders. If we are being examined today. Concerning a good deed. Done to a crippled man. By what means. This man has been healed. Let it be known. To all of you.
- And to all the people. Of Israel. That by the name of Jesus Christ. Of Nazareth. Whom you crucified. Whom God raised. From the dead. By him. This man is standing. Before you well.
- This Jesus. Is a stone. That was rejected by you. The builders. Which have become. The cornerstone. And there is salvation. In no one else. For this.
- There is no other name. Under heaven. Given among men. By which. We must be saved. Peter. Who spent that three years. So closely with the Lord Jesus.
- This makes it. Very clear for us there. In that statement. And so we have to note. Very careful here.
- [18 : 34] That God has given. Every single one of us. A choice. We either believe in Jesus. Or we don't believe in Jesus. It's one of the two.
- And there's no middle ground. And there can be no sitting on the fence. We believe in him. Or we don't believe in him. And that's our choice to make.
- And you have a choice. To make here today. And whatever you or I. Whatever any of us. Choose in this life. With regard to salvation.
- It will ultimately determine. Your eternal destiny. And God's word. Is very clear in this. And he asks us. And he pleads with us.
- To accept this precious gift. Because he tells us. He tells us that. Whoever believes in him. Shall not perish. What does that mean? What does it mean to perish?
- [19 : 35] Well. The Bible reveals. So much of that to us. It tells us. It tells us. God loves you. And he's willing to save you.
- But the question is. Do you love the darkness. Of this world. More than. The light of this word of God. That's a comparison. The darkness of the world. And ourselves.
- And the evil. And the sin that's in us. And the light. Of the word of God. That's a two comparisons. Light and darkness. Because it tells us.
- If you will not come to Christ. Then you will not inherit. This eternal life. That he is willing. To offer you. And if that's the case.
- On the day of your death. Then ultimately. Christ will deal with that. And I ask. Are you one of those people. Who keeps.
- [20 : 31] Refusing this gospel offer. Despite coming under the word. Perhaps week on week. Or perhaps just occasionally. But yet you don't accept it. For what it's. For what it's telling you.

And you turn away. And you walk out these doors. Without accepting the truth. Of this gospel. Into your heart. Are you continually telling God.

Just leave me just now. Maybe come back later in my life. But leave me just now. Because I'm just enjoying life. Just as I have it right now. And I don't really want. This.

This. Jesus. To be ruler. Over my life just now. I just want to keep enjoying. The things in this world. For a while yet. Well at the moment.

Of your final breath. If that's still the way you are. God will honor that request. That's how solemn this is. He will honor that request. Leave me.

[21 : 28] For now. Just leave me. I don't want you. He will honor that request. At the time of your final breath. And you will hear these dreaded words.

Depart from me. I never knew you. That sends a shiver through my spine. I don't know what it does to you.

So we ask the question. Depart where? And this is where we need to.

To focus on. On a topic that. So many people don't even want to consider. It's a topic of hell. And we can't escape it. Because it's so clear in the scriptures.

That used today as. So commonly. Particularly as. As a swear word. That we hear. As if they're. Just demeaning. The whole. Emphasis of what.

[22 : 27] The word of God is telling us here. It's mentioned in so many casual ways. And in so many casual conversations. And other people say. Well surely this loving God.

That we have. Surely. This God who loves us so much. Surely he couldn't send anyone there. He's a loving God. That's as clear to us. As anything.

From his word. But he's also. A God of righteousness. And he's a God of justice. And he's a God of truth. And Christ will come again.

And Christ will judge this world. And judge each one of us. And I ask the question. Are you. Are you. Are you. One of these people. That thinks.

Well basically I'm a good person. And I don't do. I don't do. Half the bad things. That. That so many other people do. Even perhaps some. Of the Lord's people. I'm a good person.

[23 : 22] And I look after myself. And I'm respectful. And everything else. Just thinking. Well surely God will. Will accept that. At the time. When I die. That. That I'm okay.

And. And he'll make special provision. For me. And. And he'll allow me. To enter into heaven. Because of that. I'm a good person. Only by faith in Jesus.

And trusted in Jesus. Will you enter into that glory. That the Lord has prepared. It's nothing to do with us. It's all to do with what he's done. And our text tells us.

What's required of. Each one of us. Personally. And God's word. Gives us. Some revelations. About hell.

In the clearest terms. Hell is a place. Which Jude calls. In his epistle. The blackest darkness.

[24 : 23] Paul in Thessalonians. He calls it the place. Of everlasting destruction. Jesus himself. Tells us in Matthew 8. That it's a place.

Where there will be. Weeping. And gnashing of teeth. And John. In Revelation 14. Describes the situation.

Of those in hell. He puts it this way. That the smoke. Of their torment. Goes up forever. And ever. And they have. No rest.

Day or night. Hell is a place. For people. Who say about Jesus. I don't want this man. To be my king. To be the Lord over me. Hell is a place.

That. Is outside. It's outside. Of heaven. And it's outside. Of the hope. Of the gospel. God. And. It's outside.

[25 : 21] Of God's goodness. And. Nobody. Can. Can. Can. Can. Can accuse God. Of unfairness. In this matter. And that's because.

He has given. Numerous warnings. To every single. One of us. About. Ignoring. His word. It's given to us. In the clearest terms.

And. Not only that. But he sent. His son. To endure. All that hell. Could unleash upon him. In that three hours.

All he suffered on the cross. In that three hours. Of darkness on the cross. So that you and I. Wouldn't have to go anywhere near it. He went there. In our place. And endured it. And had the victory over it.

This Christ. This son of God. Who never sinned. He endured the awful. Forsakenness of hell. The forsakenness. Of the father. Of his.

[26 : 18] Of his conscious awareness. Of the father's presence. He endured all of that. So that you and I. Wouldn't have to. Such.

Is his love. For us all. He doesn't want us to be. To go to that place. He's offering this gospel to us. And he tells us. So that.

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. So that you will not. Perish. But have eternal life. And that's the reward. For those who believe. And trust in Jesus. They will spend. The endless ages.

Of eternity. In that glory. In that place. That he has set aside. For all who believe. What's it going to be like? Well again. Scripture.

Just reveals. So much of it to us. But. It's been revealed enough. To give every one of his people. That great. Great desire.

[27 : 12] To be with him. To be with the Lord Jesus. Paul tells us. In first Corinthians. That here in this world. We can only see. As if we were looking through.

A glass darkly. But when that time comes. To leave this world. Then those who believe. They will then see the Lord. Face to face. Just now we know in part.

But then we will know in full. And we will be like him. All of God's people. Will be like him. And again in Corinthians.

We are told that. No eye has seen. And no ear has heard. Nor has the heart of man. Even imagined. What God has prepared.

For those who love him. Exceedingly abundantly. More than any of us. Could ever ask for. Or even think of. That's a promise of the Lord.

[28 : 08] To all who believe. We leave this world. With nothing. If we don't have the hope. Of the gospel. Whatever eternal life.

And glory is going to be like. One thing is for sure. And we are given that assurance. That all of God's people. Who go with him there. Shall be satisfied.

Shall be satisfied. They shall see Christ as he is. Their precious saviour. Their atoning sacrifice. The one who loved them so much.

That he gave himself. For them. And he's taking them to a place. That is prepared personally. And specially. To what is called in scripture.

The new Jerusalem. God's crowning jewel. Christ himself. God's crowning jewel. Christ himself. Will descend. In a city. Unlike anything.

[29 : 08] This world. Has ever seen. John saw this. And John. Recorded this for us. In chapter 21.

Of revelation. Then I saw a new heaven. And a new earth. For the first heaven. And the first earth. Had passed away. And the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city.

New Jerusalem. Coming down out of heaven. From God. Prepared as a bride. Adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice. From the throne. Saying. Behold.

The dwelling place of God. Is with man. He will dwell with them. And they will. Be his people. And God himself. Will be with them. As their God. He.

Will wipe away. Every tear. From their eyes. And. There. Neither. There shall be death. No more. Neither shall there be. Mourning.

[30 : 03] Or crying. Or pain anymore. For all of these. Former things. Have passed. Away. And John goes on to say. And I saw no temple.

In the city. For his temple. Is the Lord God. The almighty. And the lamb. And the city. Has no need of sun. Or moon. To shine on it. For the glory of God. Gives it light.

And its lamp. Is a lamb. By its light. Will the nations walk. And the kings of the earth. Will bring their glory. Into it. And its gates. Will never be shut. By day. And there will be no night.

There. They will bring into it. Their glory. And the honor. Of the nations. But nothing unclean. Will ever enter it. Not anyone. Who does. What is detestable. Or false.

But only those. Who are written. In the lamb's. Book of life. There we have it. These are the people. The people. Who believe. In Jesus Christ.

[31 : 00] They'll be taken. To this glorious. Sinless life. Throughout the endless. Ages of eternity. Because.

Most of his people. Who do that. They are his joy. That's why he endured. The sufferings on the cross. Is all. For everyone. Who believes.

This faith. And I'm just closing. That justifies. A person. In God's sight. You know what it is. It's a sinner.

Simple. Trust. In the Savior. By believing. In Jesus Christ. Putting your trust. And confidence. In Jesus.

That only he alone. Can save you. From that terrible. Word. The perishing. And it's to put Christ. In charge. Of your present plans.

[31 : 57] And your eternal destiny. Because believing. Is both trusting. His words. To be reliable. But also relying on him.

That he has the power. To change you. And Peter tells us. That. It's not. God's will. That.

That any. Should perish. But that. All. Should come. To repentance. To be born again. To believe. In the Lord. Jesus Christ.

And the word. Tells us. If you confess. Your sins. Then he. God is faithful. And just. And will forgive. Your sins. And he will cleanse you.

From all. Unrighteousness. Just as we're told. In 2 Corinthians 5. And that. Wonderful last verse. That we've just mentioned. Briefly. That he.

[32 : 52] Who had no sin. He was made. To be sin. So that. We could become. The righteousness. Of God. In him. And I plead with you.

I really. Plead with you. Just now. If you have. If you have. Never trusted Christ. With. Any of that. Up to this point. In your life. And I plead with you.

Please. Let this promise. From God. Be yours. For the remainder. Of your life. And through the. Endless. Endless. Ages. Of eternity. By believing.

This precious word. That God. So loved the world. He so loves you. That he. Gave his. One and only. Son.

That whoever. Will believe in him. Should not perish. But have. Eternal life. May God bless. These thoughts to us. Let's pray. Our father in heaven.

[33 : 56] Oh how we bless you. And thank you. For the clarity. Of this word. And we come before you. Again. Just having considered.

The greatness. Of your love. And the giving. Of your son. And we truly pray. Today. That. That. Your people.

Might be encouraged. Through your word. And that any. Who are with us here. Who are still. Outside. Of that. Of that place.

With Christ. That they might be drawn. To him. Through your word. Through your word. Today. That your spirit. Would apply your word. In a manner. That would draw them. To Christ.

And that they would come. To experience. The preciousness. Of that life. That can only be found. In him. We ask.

[34 : 53] Everything. In his name. And for his sake. Amen. Well. Let's conclude. Our service. By singing. Psalm 100.

From a. Sing Psalms version. We're seeing. The whole of this section. Of this Psalm. Psalm 100. Is on page 131.

Of the Blue Psalm books. Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Psalm 100. Psalm 100.

Psalm 100. Psalm 100. And may it be. That this would be. The call of each one of us. Shout to the Lord with joy. All who to earth belong.

Adore the Lord with joyful hearts. And come to him in song. Know that the Lord is God. He made us as his own. We are the sheep for whom he cares. His people. His alone.

[35 : 50] All of this Psalm. To God's praise. Amen. Shout to the Lord with joy.

All who to earth belong. Adore the Lord with joyful hearts.

And come to him in song. Know that the Lord is God.

He made us as his own. We are the sheep on whom he cares.

His people live alone. And chat his gates with praise.

[36 : 53] His courts with thankfulness. Your praises gladly sing to him.

His name forever. His name forever bless. For God the Lord is good.

His love is ever true. His constant truth and faithfulness.

Through every age in June. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the love of God the Father.

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Rest upon and abide with each one of us. Now and always. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[37 : 58] Okay. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

I lie. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.