

“God’s Gift”  
John 3:16  
(Preached at Trinity, October 18, 2017)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time we began looking at the marvelous verse, **John 3:16**. It is probably the best-known verse in all of Scripture. There are few Christians who don’t have it committed to memory.
2. Nicodemus had come to Jesus by night. He was impressed by the teaching of Jesus. Nicodemus was a man of position and influence. He was a Pharisee, a teacher, and a ruler of the Jews. Although he was a teacher, he had never heard teacher like Jesus. And he had never seen anyone do the miracles that Jesus was doing. He knew Jesus had to be a teacher sent from God.
3. Nicodemus believed in Jesus as a mighty teacher and amazing miracle worker, but he didn’t recognize Jesus as the Christ sent from God. He didn’t know Jesus as Savior. Jesus began teaching him about the Kingdom and the necessity of looking to the Savior who would be lifted up.
4. The great need of Nicodemus and all men is deliverance from the poisonous sting of sin and death. Jesus is the only way of salvation. We must look to Him and Him alone.  
**John 3:14-15 NAU** - "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."
5. **Verse 15** speaks of the necessity of faith. Continuing the thought of **Verse 15** Jesus continues with **Verse 16**. Here Jesus directs our attention to the object of our faith and the wondrous love of God in sending the Savior.
6. As I pointed out last time, **John 3:16** is rich in truth. I’m dividing it into four sections—four sermons.
  - A. First, the amazing love of God – “For God So Loved”
  - B. Second, the infinite gift of God – “That He Gave His Son”
  - C. Third, the objects of eternal life – “Whosoever Believeth”
  - B. Finally, we’ll look at the outcome of their belief – “Eternal Life”
7. Last time we looked at the first phrase, “For God So Loved.” Although God has a general love for the whole world, demonstrated by His goodness displayed, He has a marvelous, particular love for His elect—those He set His love on from before time began. They are the objects of His redeeming grace and those for whom Christ came to die.
8. Tonight, I want to continue by looking at the second aspect of John 3:16 – “The Infinite Gift of God.”  
The Father sent forth His Son as a gift of grace to redeem His people from the curse of sin.  
I want to set it before you under two heads:
  - I. It was Personal
  - II. It was Particular

- I. It was a Personal gift
- A. We saw last time that there are elements of God's gift that are universal. The phrase "God so loved" has both general and particular application.
1. Every blessing enjoyed by fallen man is by God's grace and made possible through God's gift of love in the sending forth of Christ.
  2. God's redeeming grace has a benefit upon all mankind
  3. In addition, this gift is freely offered unto all – "Whosoever believes"
- B. But it is also a very personal gift
1. In eternity before the world was created God looked upon humanity and witnessed universal corruption.  
**Psalm 14:2-3 NAU** - "The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one."
  2. It would have been consistent with God's perfect justice to consign all of mankind to the eternal punishment of hell. We would have been born, lived our life, and then we would have been cast forever into hell.
  3. This is what we have earned. It is what we deserve.
  4. God determined to show mercy upon a multitude of God despising sinners. The Father entered into an eternal covenant with His Son which we have labeled the Covenant of Redemption.
    - a. In this covenant God chose from among the fallen race of humanity a remnant of those He would adopt as His own children.
    - b. The Father pledged to give these elect people to His Son as His inheritance and He determined to give His son to His elect people as their Redeemer.
- C. Instead of our just condemnation God chose to give the gift of eternal life  
**Romans 6:23 NAU** - "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
1. Eternal life is an act of grace  
We deserve death – that is what we have earned and justice demands that we receive our wage.
  2. God has provided a gift – **John 3:16**  
**Romans 5:15 NAU** - "But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many."
  3. This was the free choice of God to put His love and mercy on display. It was unconditional—in other words, we did nothing to earn it. The nature of a gift is there is no merit in it
    - a. If you tried to purchase a gift it would no longer be a gift but a purchase or a transaction.
    - b. If you tried to earn a gift it would no longer be a gift but a wage
    - c. A gift is something that is voluntarily given without any expectation of payment in return

- D. And who are the objects of this gift? **John 3:16** tells us it is reserved for those who believe
1. But who are they who believe? This is an important element of this gift. Fallen man has no interest in it.
    - a. The nature of a gift implies that it is something of value, something that one would be willing to receive.
    - b. The problem with fallen humanity is they see no value in the gift. In fact, they are offended at the very thought of it. They despise the gift.
    - c. God has to enable us to receive it.
  2. This makes it very personal.
 

**John 6:44 NAU** - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."  
**John 6:65 NAU** - "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."  
 δίδωμι- "to give"  
**KJV** - "no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."
  3. God has granted this grace to His elect people
 

**Ephesians 2:8 NAU** - "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;"
  4. What comfort! God has chosen me unto salvation.

## II. It was Particular Gift

- A. God has given His people eternal life but only through the gift of His Son
- John 3:16 NAU** - "He gave His only begotten Son"  
**1 John 5:11 NAU** - "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."
1. As an infinite display of His love God chose to send forth His Son. You can't appreciate the love of God in **John 3:16** without comprehending the love between the Father and the Son in eternity. It is truly beyond comprehension. The love God has for us is a reflection of the love He has for His Son.
  2. The Father and Son shared in perfect, infinite, eternal love
    - a. On one hand God is immutable—He is unchanging. He remains unchanged by anything outside Himself. God's love is not affected by anything outside Himself. It is hard for us to understand what is known as the Impassibility of God. In other words, God's love is not an involuntary expression of emotion but a voluntary sovereign display of Himself upon a particular people He has chosen to love.
    - b. We must understand that God's gift of His Son was voluntary. His love is voluntary.
    - c. God is not reactive. There is nothing that happens that He has not ordained. Nothing takes Him by surprise. His wrath is simply an expression of God's holiness, His Divine justice, and His righteous judgment. It is not an uncontrolled outburst. Likewise, His love is an expression of His divine attribute of love. He sovereignly chooses to love whom He wills.

- d. When we speak of the impassibility of God we are not diminishing the extent of His love. It is infinite. You might say it is of infinite passion, but it is a sovereign passion.  
The Love between the Father and the Son was infinite.
3. The love between the Father and the Son was in harmony with their perfect union and harmony with each other. There was perfect fellowship. There was a perfect filial relationship between the Father and Son.
- a. It was a transaction that involved the Father looking upon His beloved Son, the Son of His infinite love and declaring to Him, “You must lay down your life for the people I have chosen to love.”
- b. God the Father gave what was most precious to Him in order to save His people from their sin.  
Leon Morris – “His love is not a vague, sentimental feeling, but a love that costs. God gave what was most dear to him.”<sup>1</sup>
- c. The Father declares of His Son—this is the One in whom I take delight. This is my beloved Son.  
**Matthew 3:17 NAU** - "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
- d. If you fail to understand the eternal love of the Father and the Son you won't fully understand or appreciate the richness of the Covenant of Redemption.  
And you won't understand the Father's judgment upon the Son at the cross.
- e. The fullest measure of God's wrath at the cross was the breach of the eternal fellowship of love between the Father and the Son. The Cross was an infinite curse upon sin and the Father turned away from the Son. Only when you understand this can you comprehend the words of our Savior.  
**Matthew 27:46 NAU** - "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
- f. It was a cry of eternal love and union being breached.
- B. This is God's ultimate purpose in history
1. He has sent forth His beloved Son to redeem His elect people from their sin.  
**Galatians 4:4-5 NAU** - "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,<sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

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<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 203–204.

2. The prophets saw His day and foretold it  
**Isaiah 9:6** – “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”  
**Isaiah 7:14 NAU** - "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

#### Conclusion:

1. So how can a person obtain this gift of eternal life? What must I do? On one hand, you can do nothing. A gift cannot be earned. It can only be received.  
**John 1:12 NAU** - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,"
2. On the other hand, we must trust Him. But even our faith is a gift. The entirety of our redemption is a gift from God.  
**Ephesians 2:8 NAU** - "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;"
3. The question before you tonight is do you see this as the greatest of all gifts, the greatest of all treasures? You can't earn it but you have to desire it.  
 The bottom line is this. If you have the least desire for forgiveness of sin; if you have the least desire to abandon your life of sin and desire to follow Christ, then look to Him. God says, come, receive this gift.  
**Isaiah 45:22 KJV** – “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.”
4. God offers this gift of grace to sinners today.  
**John 3:16 NAU** - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."  
**Acts 16:31 NAU** - "They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."  
**Revelation 22:17 NAU** - "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."
5. Jesus was sent forth as God's love gift to accomplish all that the Father sent Him to accomplish—to save His people from their sin. He went to the cross as our perfect substitute. Have you trusted Him? Are you living for Him?