

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

12.10.2023

LOVE FOR THE WEARY

John 3:16-21

16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

I. GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE

- There is probably no greater love in this world than the love a parent feels for their children.
- Parents express their love for their children in the things they do for them. They would do anything for their children. They want to give their children everything they possibly could because they love them.
- But we read that God gave his Son to the world as a display of his great love.

- God’s gift of His Son is a gift of His love.
- And he gave that gift of his love not to anyone who was deserving of that gift.
- It’s a gift precisely because it is unearned, undeserved, unmerited, and unlooked for.
- We will look at this familiar passage of God’s great gift and marvel at the range of God’s love, understand who are the recipients of God’s love, and how we must respond to God’s love.

1. THE RANGE OF GOD'S LOVE

- One could say that the quality and costliness of a gift expresses how much one loves a person.
- The gifts you give to those you love most are of a greater cost than typically given to others.
- And you also know what it feels like when someone gives you what you might consider to be the perfect gift. A gift that was thoughtful, kind, considerate, generous, and what you needed. You probably felt deeply loved for being the recipient of such a gift.

- That's why this passage is so glorious because it reflects God's giving the perfect gift.
- What gift could possibly express the extent of the way God loves you?
- *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."* - God gave his only Son.
- John declares that, "God is love." (1 John 4:16)
- It is the very essence of God's being.
- He does not possess love, He is love. Love is at the core of his being.
- What has God: Father, Son and Spirit been doing for all eternity? Being exactly what God is— loving.
- A perfect love flows between the persons of the Godhead.
- The Father has eternally loved the Son, and the Son has eternally loved the Father.
- John 17:23-26 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."
- God has revealed himself as a loving Father who delights in his Son, having perfectly loved him from all eternity.
- Jesus took great pains to teach and show his disciples the love of the Father.
- Love can only be truly comprehended by the love of God in and for himself and the love the Father has for the Son.
- It is precisely because of this great love the Father has for the Son that this gift is so astounding, stunning, and shocking.
- The Father gave what was most precious to him, what he most delights in—his Son.
- Have you considered what Christ's birth signifies in God giving his Son and how it demonstrates his love?
- How much did God love us? He gave his Son.
- 1 John 4:9-10 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- No greater gift could be given to demonstrate the love of God than in the giving of his beloved Son.

2. THE RECIPIENTS OF HIS LOVE

- Who are the recipients of such a glorious gift?
- John tells us, *"For God so loved the world..."*
- The world is the object of the love of God in the giving of the gift of his Son.
- When we hear the term "world," our mind usually goes to thinking about the whole planet and all of the people in the world.
- We think of the "world" as a numerical concept. That God loves every single person in the same way.
- We run into some challenges then because that would imply that Christ's work would extend to every single person such that all are saved without distinction and that is not the case. That is the heresy of universalism.

- John in his gospel uses the term “world” to mean something very specific.
 - What John means to convey by “world” is the mass of humanity that is in rebellion against God and has rejected God.
 - It’s not about numbers of people, it is a moral and ethical concept.
 - John 1:9-10 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.
 - John 3:19 the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
 - John 7:7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.
 - John 15:18-19 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
 - Who is the world? It’s those who have rejected God, who do not know God, who are bound and lost in sin, who do not worship the Creator, who stand condemned and under the wrath of God, and who loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
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- Now John is saying these are the recipients of God’s scandalous love.
 - Not deserving people but rather undeserving people.
 - God loved such a world that he gave his Son for us!
 - We don’t give gifts to people who hate us. But that’s exactly what God did.
 - There is absolutely nothing in us that would compel God to love us in such a way.
 - The great and glorious gift of Christ, his Son, is given to a world filled with rebels like you and like me.
 - Romans 5:6-8 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - That’s the love of God!

3. THE RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

- How does one respond to such a gift?
- 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- The only right response is to receive this gift by believing in Christ.
- The love of God manifested in Jesus Christ is yours, you need only take it by faith in him.
- John 3:16 is connected to what just came before it.
- The conjunction “for” tells us it is connected to the previous thought. This chapter contains Jesus’ discussion with one of the religious rulers, Nicodemus.
- Jesus tells him he must be born again, that is, he must experience a new birth in order to see the kingdom of God.
- This is shocking to a Jew like Nicodemus who believed that because he was a son of Abraham, an Israelite, that meant automatic entry into God’s kingdom.
- Jesus deflates that notion by telling him that only those who believe in the Son will have eternal life.
- John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
- You can read the account of this in Numbers 21.

- Jesus is drawing a parallel with that story which was very familiar to Nicodemus. That story is a type of Christ and his work.
- The adverb "so" means, "in the way indicated," or "in this way." It doesn't mean, "For God so greatly loved the world..."
- Again, the parallel is made between the account of Moses and the lifted up serpent and Jesus who would be lifted up on the cross and raised from the dead.
- Just like those who fixed their gaze on the uplifted serpent lived, those who gaze upon the uplifted Christ will also live.
- God demonstrates his love to the undeserving world in this way, in the giving of His Son, and everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.
- Those who believe will not be condemned, they will have true and lasting life.
- Have you received the gift?
- Have you looked to Christ, believed in him, trusted in him, placed your faith in him?
- If so, you have received the greatest gift ever given.
- 1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
- We are now God's children.
- And now we can reflect that love to one another and demonstrate that love to a weary world who needs to know the true love expressed in the greatest gift of Christmas.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?