

## **For God So Loved the World**

**John 3:16**

**Christmas @ RCM 2022**

Hey, good evening everyone. So good to be with so many of you tonight as we come together to worship, in this the last weekend before Christmas. This year we didn't plan through a Christmas series – but tonight I want to share a Christmas message with us – from a familiar text of Scripture.

But before we do, I want you to think about your most memorable Christmas gift as a kid. When you were, let's say under the age of 20, what's the most memorable Christmas gift you ever received?

For the parents in the room – or the grandparents – what's the most memorable Christmas gift you've ever given?

I wonder, why you make this gift the most memorable? I actually googled this week, "what makes a gift memorable" found stuff like – solve problems, don't give problems; don't be so thoughtful; give gifts they won't want to return; be practical, not flashy. Not so sure these search results were very good.

But what makes a gift memorable?

- Effort
- Thoughtfulness
- Sacrifice of the person giving the gift
- Unearned
- Extravagance
- Fills a need or desire
- Lasts longer than a week or two
- Motivations – not out of guilt or obligation – but motivated by desire
- Unexpected/surprising

Christmas though, is a time for us not just to overspend and overeat. But instead it's a time for us to celebrate the greatest gift ever given. Not an exaggeration to say that Jesus coming, is the greatest gift in the history of the world. This gift checks all the boxes, and then some. Checks the boxes we didn't even know needed to be checked. The single greatest act of love the world will ever know.

Turn with me, if you have a Bible, turn to John 3:16-18. If you are using a device, I encourage you to go to the CSB.

So if you've studied John 3 – you may remember the back story. Jesus is approached at night by this guy named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a leader of the Jewish people, and he probably

was coming at night so his buddies wouldn't see him. Gets into this theological discussion with Jesus, and in the discussion Jesus gives us these verse – John 3:16-18 – some of the most memorable verses in all of the New Testament, because of the message they convey.

### **READ John 3:16-18**

<sup>16</sup> For God loved the world in this way:<sup>[e]</sup> He gave<sup>[f]</sup> his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.

### **PRAY.**

#### **I. Motivated by Love**

For God loved. God chose to love, and chooses to love. Not because he is loving, but because He is by His character and nature love. God IS Love. Not in some sappy emotional love is love kind of way – but in a holy, and righteous, and pure way. God's very essence is love – and everything God does is an act of love – even the display of His wrath is consistent with His love. It's who He is, a part of His character – and His character is perfectly consistent all the time.

At Christmas time, we give gifts to people we at least like – or maybe in your work or family setting there's sometimes an obligation to give a gift – but most of the gifts we give are to people we at least like. But... we save the best gifts for those we love, right? The gift I will give someone that helps me at the office is WAY different than the gift I will give Victoria or the kids. Because my love for them, for Victoria and our children, I will go out of my way to show them by how I give to them. As a side note, not just on Christmas, but every day...

#### **II. For God loved the world IN THIS WAY**

In this way – there was a specific way in which God chose and chooses to show His love. There's a way. And the way in which God chose to show His love was sending Jesus.

And motivated by Love, acting in a specific way, God chose to give His one and only Son.

#### **III. God Chose to Give**

God chose to give. Giving as a demonstration of love.

Actions speak louder than words as the saying goes. God chose to give, as a demonstration of His great love. Parents, grandparents – you know that loving and giving go hand in hand, right? Victoria and I joke that marriage forces selfish people to be less selfish, but parenting forces

selfish people to be selfless – at least if you’re going to be a halfway decent parent. And that as a parent, we choose to give our kids what they need – not always what they want – but always what they need.

God giving Jesus, to offer salvation to all who believe, is the greatest demonstration of love the world has ever seen. So great that all of history swings on the life of Jesus. We separate world history by His life. Something incredible happened in His life. And Christmas is a reminder of this incredible gift,

#### **IV. A Gift With Purpose**

So that...Every time you see the words “so that” in your Bible – it’s a purpose clause. Shows us the purpose of what was just written or spoken.

This gift, that was motivated by love, that God chose to give, has a purpose – to offer us life. SO THAT. So that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

The purpose of the Gift is to offer us meaningful life now, and forever life with Jesus when we breathe our last breath – to all that believe. So that!

#### **V. To Offer Us Hope**

V18 – Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned. There’s a promise you can count on in these verses. There’s meaning to God’s gift – it gives us hope. For all who believe there’s hope, that we aren’t condemned by the guilt of our sin (because we’re all guilty, FYI).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

His love for us is undeserved and unmatched. His Gift to us is the most extravagant gift we could ever imagine.

What do we do with such a great gift?

- Receive it gladly
  - The Scripture says that everyone who believes will not perish but have eternal life. Our role is to receive God’s gift – we receive it when we believe in Jesus. Now what does belief entail? BELIEVE – LOVE – OBEY.
- Live like a son – not a slave
  - Galatians 4:4-5
  - <sup>4</sup>When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
  - The price has been paid – that’s what that word “redeem” means. The price has been paid in full, completely, and we are free to live as sons.
  - Tim Keller: “The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00AM for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access.”

- Put shame in its place
  - Romans 8:1
  - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
  
- Share it freely
  - John 20:21
  - As the Father has sent me, I also send you.
  - Matthew 28:18-20