

(Grandest)

(Greatest)

GREATEST TEXT TELLS THE GRANDEST TRUTH

John 3:16

This is the world's greatest text - the Bible's greatest text. It sets forth the Bible's grandest truth and that truth is the amazing truth that God offers to mortal man the gift of eternal life. God offers to you today the gift of eternal life, life now, life for all eternity. Do you have eternal life this morning? John 3:16. ⁽¹⁾ If all the Bible were destroyed, except John 3:16, there would be enough truth in John 3:16 to bring the whole world to JC. ⁽²⁾ There's also enough truth in John 3:16 to condemn the whole world if the world will not believe.

In it there are four grand truths. I want to talk about them as quickly as I can this morning, and make it simple and yet it's thrilling and profound.

I. In the first place, this text tells us of the SOURCE of eternal life. It says, "For God so loved this world." Eternal life is a gift of God. One of the greatest sermons ever preached was preached in the belly of a whale, according to Jonah 3:10. Jonah says, "Salvation is of the Lord." What a sermon! Eternal life is from the Lord - not from man or anything that man does except to receive it.

Eternal life is not ^(a) based upon the merit of man but it comes from the mercy of God. E. L. does not come from the goodness of man but from the grace of God. ^(e) It does not come from the life of man - no matter how good - but from the love of God. There are many kinds of love in the world. We need these other kinds of love but they do not compare to the love of God. ^(a) There is personal love, or the love of a man for a woman. ^(b) There is parental love - the love of parent for child or patriotic love - the love of a man for his country. ^(c) There is the love of a mother but the love of a mother in its noblest and highest expression does not even approximate. The love of Mother does not even approximate the love of God for us today.

(d) Perfect love - God's love for human kind.

The love of God is unconditional. A mother's love is conditional to an extent. A mother will say, "You be good and do what I tell you and I will love you." God never says this one time.

Rev. B. S.

He says, "I love you whether you are good or whether you are bad." Isa. 1:18 says, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow and tho they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." The love of God is unaffected, it's unmotivated, it's absolutely unconditional. God loves his chosen people, Israel, but not just his chosen people Israel, our text says he loves the world. He does not just love those who are lovely or those who love him or those who are believing *or those who have kept all the rules or those* The text says God loves the world and the Greek word is cosmos. This means the God-defying, ungodly, unbelieving, dirty, ignorant world. God loves it. *who go to ch.*

God loves you today. Anybody in this world who will believe John 3:16 will never despair. There's enough hope in it for everybody today. He loves the entire world. I read this week that 30% of the adult people of the world are illiterate and can't even read. God loves that world. I read this week that 3,000,000,000 people in this world are lost and *many are* anti-God and anti-Christ but God loves every one of them. God loves the world. God loves you.

God loves Saddam Hussein, though he is a murderer & starver of little babies
But the text comes down to "whosoever." The focus of the text is on the individual. He loves you. As St. Augustine said 1600 years ago, "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us." Will you see yourself today as one person that God loves and loves you beyond my ability to tell and the Bible's ability to ~~say~~ say. God loves you and that's the source of eternal life - the love of God for man.

But that's only the tip of the iceberg of the text.

to purchase

II. In the second place the text tells us of the sacrifice God has made for eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." The world's greatest gift required the world's greatest sacrifice. Just think about it! It says he gave his son which indicates that the gift was unconditional with no strings attached. God gave Jesus. He didn't have to do it. No one put any pressure on him to do it. He did it voluntarily. It was his own free will. He gave him. But it says he gave his only begotten. That doesn't mean that Jesus was created as some false interpreters would say. The word "only begotten" is only one word in Greek and it's the word monogenes. But it means the only son of his kind. God has a lot of sons, *with little sons*. Many of you are the spiritual sons of God but he had only one son like Jesus. Only one

There were a lot of wonderful ^{creatures} ~~creatures~~ in the world when Jesus was given. ^{Te} There was Lucifer. Lucifer, who guarded Jesus in heaven. I believe according to Isa. 14, acc. to Ezek 28 that Lucifer, who became the devil, was the guardian angel of Jesus in heaven at one time. But he could not be the sacrifice.

^{Te} There was Michael, which means "like God." The great guardian angel of Israel. There was the angel of the annunciation, Gabriel, but none of them could be the sacrifice. It had to be one and that was the only son of his kind and the only person who's ever lived in the universe who could have been the sacrifice and paid the price and purchased eternal life# for you and for me.

^{Te} Now God offers His son and laid our sins upon him. Somebody is asking the question, "But I've sinned and my past is all messed up. My life is in shambles." The Father did not simply send Jesus, Virgin born, to the world but the Father-God laid upon Jesus all our sins. There is a song I used to think was a wonderful song until I began to study the Bible more closely which says, "I lay my sins upon Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God." Oh no, we don't lay our sins upon Jesus. That is not the right of any mortal man. You could never have done it, I could never have done it. It was the Father who laid our sins upon Him in order that we might come to him and receive forgiveness. But the Father lays them.

That is what Isa. 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him." It was a divine transaction. We cannot at any point humanize salvation or take credit in any way. The Father in heaven laid our sins upon Jesus, the holy sacrifice.

Isa. 53:10 is bold to say it pleased the Father to bruise him. How in the world could the Father do it? Could you bruise your son? Could you give your son? Could you lay the sins of the world upon your son? Could you offer him in death? No, and I could not. The Father did. What a sacrifice he made when he offered his son/. If we lose sight of it we've lost sight of the core of Xtn commitment. Paul was overwhelmed at the price God had paid for ~~@@~~ him. So often evangelicals cheapen salvation and cheapen the gospel by running around saying, "It's free." It's not free.

It cost God everything. The extent to which we understand this is the extent to which we live for His glory and we pray and we give and we serve when we see that it cost him everything. It cost him the greatest thing of the universe - his only begotten son. No one like him and no one who would ever be like him in the history of the world.

1 Pet. 5:1 - Peter said he & a mt. of sufferings on the cross.

The apostle Peter lived with him and probably saw part of the crucifixion and the suffering. In his first epistle he tried to share with us something of the cost that he paid. SM I believe Peter one day passed by a human slave market where they were selling people like we sell cattle at the stockyard today and he saw men bidding for human lives and often so much gold and silver and the one who could offer the most gold and silver bought the person to be their slave. Back home in the old south the slave markets still stand - maybe in this state - in the state of NC the slave markets stand where people were purchased like you purchase ~~at~~ ~~000000~~ groceries, animals for the high bidder. Then Peter puts this in spiritual language and imagines man being auctioned off to the devil and then he shows that Jesus came and was the highest bidder and paid the greatest price and bought man out of bondage, bought man into liberty through the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus.

That is what he says in I Pet. 1:18-19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain way of life received by tradition from your fathers but by the precious blood of Jesus as of a lamb without spot and without blemish." That was the price of your soul and my soul. He gave his life - he gave his blood and it took as much blood to save you as it takes to save me. Your life is as precious as any life in the world because he has bought it with his own blood. Don't let the devil have it. Don't ever think you don't have something to offer.

SM - A couple recently said "We'd like to join N.W., but we don't have to offer the church."

SM I was talking to a couple in my class this morning who said, "We want to join the church but we don't have anything to offer the church." I said, "Don't say that. It took as much blood to redeem you as to redeem me." You are important this morning. Jesus has bought you with his blood. We need to realize it in the church of God and if it's to move our membership, to come, or to do anything, to realize we are purchased with a price and let us live like purchased individuals, because God has paid the price for us. We must not take this thing lightly. It is the

supreme fact of our experience and the supreme fact of Xtnity that we are purchased by the blood of the Lamb and we ought to live like it and act like it. The text tells of the SOURCE ~~of~~ of eternal life and then it tells us of the SACRIFICE for eternal life but then in the third place

III. It talks about the SIMPLICITY of receiving this wonderful gift of eternal life. One of the greatest evidences in the world that God is compassionate and loves you and me is not that he ^{just} made a way, but that he made a way in reach of everybody here this morning. There's nothing intricate or complicated in the gospel. Not at all! "That whosoever believes into me." Suppose the Lord had said, "You must understand the theology of John 3:16." Not many people could be saved.

Or just suppose he said, "You've got to be able to quote John 3:16." Most people can't even do that in our world. Or suppose he said, "If you can run around the block you can have eternal life." There are thousands of people - hundreds in Ft. Smith who could never have eternal life. They can't run around the block, they can't get to a church. The Lord knew that the masses of people would never attain to great intellectual heights. God doesn't require that. God doesn't require an education, God doesn't require credentials, God doesn't require that you understand theology. God does not require these things for you to have eternal life. God comes to you at the most practical, concrete point of your life - something you exercise every moment you live faith. Something we have already exercised this morning.

He said, "You've got to have faith in me. Something you are already familiar with to a great extent. You must have that - and that's all." That's open to everyone to have the wonderful gift of eternal life. Now he says, "Whosoever believeth into me." Simple, but not shallow. "Believe into me" indicates faith unites us with Jesus. This is not just an intellectual thing of just saying it in the mind and saying, "I believe Jesus exists and I believe Jesus died for me." That's not what this word means.

This word means ~~to~~ ~~to~~ ~~to~~ to lean upon Jesus and to commit our souls, our all to Jesus, to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus, until we are united to Jesus. In its root meaning it means UNION.

Simple enough that a child of 8 or 9 can do it but profound enough that the greatest theologians
wrestle with it and John 3:16 is inexhaustible. You know that this is more than just joining a
church and being baptized or saying a ~~poor~~ prayer or just saying "I believe in God or believe in
Jesus."

It's all these things but these things come as a result of the very heart of what faith is.
Faith is the commitment of the will # to Jesus. It's bowing before Jesus. When you do it you
are united to Jesus and that gives you the life of Jesus and everything that he offers. That is
something anybody can do but it's the greatest thing anybody can do on earth. The simplest and
yet the profoundest thing that anyone has ever done this side of heaven, is to trust Jesus with
all your heart and commit your will to Him. Simple, but have you done it?

But the text does not stop with the source and with the sacrifice and with the simplicity. The
text climaxes with describing the

~~000~~ IV. SUBSTANCE of eternal life which he offers. "Should not perish," the text says
That means that God does not want you to go to hell and eternally perish. We are in death until
we receive eternal life. We will die physically and beyond physical death we are going to die
eternally unless we have eternal life. But he says ~~000000~~ those who receive eternal life are
delivered from eternal death which is hell. Is hell to be avoided? It indeed is! Men are either
going to heaven or they are going to hell. They have eternal life or they have eternal death
written in their soul. But once you trust Jesus you don't have to worry about going to hell.

Did you ever worry about going to hell? I spent months and maybe years of my life worrying about
going to hell - spending sleepless nights afraid of the second coming of Christ. I was afraid ~~000~~
of going to hell at one time in my life. I was afraid to close my eyes. There's someone here
this morning that's afraid of ~~going~~ to hell and you ought to be afraid because without eternal
life you are going to hell if you die.

But this is the least worry the believer has today. This is the least worry I have on earth today
is going to hell. I'm concerned that I serve Jesus but I am not one bit concerned about going to

hell. I am not going to hell. I know this. I have eternal life.

But then he says you don't have any fear of going to hell when you have eternal life because you have eternal life and once you have eternal life you don't need to worry about ~~going~~ to hell. What is eternal life? The KJV calls it everlasting life. It is everlasting ^{there is a} quantitative aspect to it. It will last forever. It begins today and it will last forever. It lasts as long as God lives. But if it were just everlasting but not eternal I may not want it and you may not want it. It's not just everlasting life - it's eternal life. You could have everlasting life that would not be eternal life.

SM I read of a ^{mythological} figure who had a wish granted add that wish was that they would have life forever and it was granted and they found themselves in such misery they said, "Oh we are sorry we ever prayed that prayer. We are in misery - we want to die." If it was just everlasting existence that wouldn't mean too much. It's not immortality we are talking about - the lost are going to live immortally but through Jesus, the gift of eternal life is offered to us. Why is it called eternal? That's the adjective that's used to describe the character of God.

What is chief end of man? to know god & to enjoy Him forever.
In the final sense, the only person who's eternal is God. What is eternal life? It's the life of God given to us. It's the life of eternity that comes into us. The life of heaven that comes into us. It's the life that God himself put in Jesus and which comes to us through the HS. It's the very life of God and eternity. Everlasting but also eternal - filled with love and hope and joy and power in heaven right here on earth. There's nothing like it in all the world.

We talk about the deeper life today. That's what I'm talking about today. You'll never get deeper than I am today. Nothing's deeper than eternal life. Nothing in this world is greater than e. l. The fullness of the HS and all the gifts are not as great as eternal life. This is God himself, his character, his life, given to mortal man. To summarize it in the simplest form, it is the gift of God. Do you not see that it has to be a gift? How could it otherwise be? Can anyone here - is anyone so blind and prideful as to think you can earn this? It has to be the gift of God when you understand what it is.

Not only is it the gift of God but it is something that comes through His precious son and it's only in his son. It's never through works, ~~never~~ through the church, never through man. "He who has the Son - I John 5:12 - has eternal life and he who has not the Son hath not life."

It is received by FAITH. It cannot be received by works. It's only by faith - that sixth sense that's placed in our hearts as the word is preached and we just take it by faith. It begins the moment you take it. You don't have to wait until you die to know you are going to heaven - it's now and it lasts forever.

There's not anything on earth that compares with it. Do you have eternal life? If you don't, receive it. Trust Jesus this morning. You've got to DESIRE to trust. It's like love - if you love your wife you desire to love your wife. It's out of the desire of the heart. Do you desire to have eternal life? Do you desire to escape hell? Do you desire to have this wonderful life of God in you? If so, tell the Lord. He's not out to pull any tricks on you - just say it to the Lord in your heart - "Lord, I want that. Give me that oh Lord#." Trust him with the deepest thing in you and come and tell me. He will honor # that today. He has come to give us eternal life - not eternal death. That's his business and it's not a matter of your theology. It's not a matter of your understanding. It's a matter of your heart's desire today. You can receive it today.

I. Singularity of E.T. Life - "Whoever."
Just forget that God loves the "He" focus on one fact: God loves you. "He loves each of us as if there's only one of us." He loves you. He gave Jesus just for you. He shed his blood for you. You are the one He wants to perish for to have eternal life. Will you receive it?
5M - Check written by John D. Rockefeller
Wp. "Whoever" gives me more assurance than if name Bill were here for I - let's say who have it - Bill + I would be "He loves" of