

ESF, Lord's day service sermon  
10/23/2016

## **Jesus, The Son of God**

John 3:14-18

*<sup>14</sup>Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall 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> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

Some years ago a doctor in a hospital gave a pastor only 2 minutes (120 seconds) to talk with a dying woman who had called for the pastor in her dying hour. What could the pastor say in such a short time? For a brief moment, he prayed to God for guidance on how he should spend the last moments with the dying women. God spoke to the pastor's heart and said, "Give her John 3:16 and pray the sinner's prayer with her." So the pastor shared the word in John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" It was all she needed. She died in peace and at peace with her Savior.

When you need to remember just one verse in the Bible, remember this verse. When you need one passage to find hope when you are hopeless hold on to this passage. If you want to bring hope to hopeless people give them this word.

Let's see what this word means.

### **Jesus, the Son of God, is the gift of God's love for the world**

Does God exist? If God exists, who is God? The apostle John says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). God in the Bible wants us to know Him as the God of love, the God who loves us.

How does God love us? He loves us by sacrificing. Sacrificing what? Sacrificing His own son. God allowed His Son, His perfect blameless Son to die for us. God's love for us not only motivated Him to give but He gave us the best that He had, His only Son. Here we learn the important truth about the nature of God's love.

First of all, God's love is unconditional love.

We usually love others because of what they do for us or how they make us feel. This is a conditional love. But God shows us that true love has nothing to do with what another person can do for us, but rather what we can do for another person.

When you give to someone out of your abundance it is one thing, but when you give despite poverty it is quite another. If you have several cars, and give one to somebody who has none it will be seen as a noble gesture. But if you give somebody the only car you have, that will be seen as something more than noble – something above and beyond the call of duty. It will be seen as a real sacrifice. Such a sacrifice is motivated only by unconditional love for others.

When God sacrificed His Son for the world, God loved “the world” unconditionally. The Greek word for “world” (kosmos) is defined as “the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God and hostile to God.” This is the world that God loved. It doesn't say that God loved all the good people or that God loved all people who are living holy lives. It says, “For God so loved the world.” So, God's love is unconditional. It is not based on our spiritual condition or our moral status. It is not based on our behavior or our attitude towards him. Rather we see here that God's love for mankind is unconditional. He loves everyone unconditionally. And this is one of the things that sets the God of Jesus apart from every other god held up by every other world religion.

The following ad appeared in a Boston newspaper years ago.

*To my boy who left home Monday night, September 15.*

*My darling boy,*

*If you should see this, which I pray our Heavenly Father you may, please let*

*your distressed mother know where you are.*  
*Mother*

The notice was signed with one word - "Mother". That was all. No name. Nothing to let the world know who she was. Just the cry of a mother seeking her lost boy. Not a word about whose fault it was. No blame. No reproach. Just a mother's love reaching out; seeking to bring her lost son back. But even such a mother's love falls short of the love of God which is given to us through His Son, Jesus. So when you come to receive God's love, be bold and confident that God loves you even if you are the worst sinner in the world.

Secondly, God's love is a love of action.

God so loved the world that He gave - He acted. God's love produces an action. This action was sacrificing His son. If we have God's active love, we will also share of this love in action. Love proves itself by what it does. Love that does not give is a gimmick. Love that does not serve is seduction. Love that does not listen is a lie. Love that does not provide is phony. Love that does not fulfill its promise is fake.

Third, God's love is inclusive love.

No one can love everyone in the world. In fact, most people find it difficult to love their own family, their relatives or people around them. For some people, it is impossible to love the people who they think are bad. But God's love includes all people in the world. By sacrificing His Son, God shows He loves every individual in the entire world regardless of their human condition. God's love in Jesus is unlimited love (Rom 5:20; Psalms 57:11; 63:4). Your weakness does not limit His love for you (2 Cor. 12:9). Your sins cannot limit His love for you (Rom 5:8). Nothing can limit His love for you (Rom 8:35-39).

God loves the Americans- but also the Russians, Chinese, Arabs, Africans, etc.

God loves the white people – but also the yellow, the brown, the black people.

God loves the civilized - but also the uncivilized.

God loves the Baptists - but also Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans,

Pentecostals, Catholics, and Independents.

God loves the conservative - but also the liberals

God loves those who are living up to high moral standards - but also liars, murderers, gamblers, and gang members. God loves believers –but also non-believers. God loves all - all colors, all individuals, all social groups.

So open your heart to God who gives His greatest love for you through His Son Jesus. If you are a believer in the Son of God who is the gift of God's love, keep sharing the gift of God's love with all kinds of people around you. The more you share the gift of God's love, the more God will pour His love unto you.

### **Jesus, the Son of God, is the Savior**

We can receive God's love only through believing in His way of salvation. It is believing that God sent His Son to die on the cross to save us: *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life* (verses 14-15).

God let His Son be lifted up on the cross as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. What does this mean?

To understand this, we must go back to the original story of Moses and the snake in the book of Numbers 21: 4-9. One day after the Israelites had been walking through the desert for many days eating the same food without water, they bitterly complained to God. Then God sent venomous snakes among them. The snakes bit them and many of them died there. In their misery, they realized that they had sinned against God. They asked Moses to pray for them. So Moses prayed for them and God told Moses: *“Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.”* As God told Moses, he made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole and told them the promise of God: *“People look at this snake on the pole. God has promised that anyone who looks at this snake will live.”*

And everyone who looked at the snake was healed and lived. Those who did not believe the promise and looked only at themselves and those who were dying around them died without receiving God's deliverance.

Just as God set his way of deliverance through the snake on the pole, he has also set the way of deliverance for all people through his Son on the cross.

To look up to the Son on the cross is to believe that God let his Son suffer and die on the cross to forgive us of all our sins and give us eternal life.

God immediately forgives and saves everyone who looks up to his Son with faith. God gives eternal life to those who believe that he forgives all their sins through the suffering and death of his Son on the cross.

Mark 16:16

*“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved . . .”*

Acts 16:30-31

*The Philippian jailer asks, “‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’”*

There are different types of belief. There are over a dozen Hebrew and Greek words that are translated into the English word for ‘believe’ in the Bible but they all fall under one of two definitions.

The first type of belief or believing is a belief defined as, “assent of the mind, or in the opinion of.” There are many people who have just an opinion or agreement that Jesus is the son of God. In John 2:23-24 we can find the people who had such a belief:

*“Now when He (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men.”*

Did you notice that this passage stated that many believed in His name?

Notice what Jesus did in spite of their “belief.” Verse 24 says that, “He did not commit Himself to them.” In other words, Jesus did not reckon their belief to be a genuine belief. The people in this passage were those who had an opinion and agreement that Jesus was sent from God.

There is another belief. The Greek word for “believe” in John 3:16 means, “to fully commit oneself to.”

Such a belief is to believe with your heart that Jesus is the only Savior, and confess that faith publicly. This belief is a commitment to having a personal

relationship with Jesus. This belief is a commitment to following Jesus even if it costs everything a person has, even the person's life.

When you stand before God on the Day of Judgment, He will not only ask you if you know Jesus as His Son but also He will ask if you have accepted Jesus as the Savior in your hearts and have a personal relationship with Him.

Back in 1830 George Wilson was convicted of robbing the U.S. Postal Office and was sentenced to be hanged. President Andrew Jackson issued a pardon for Wilson, but he refused to accept it. The matter went to Chief Justice Marshall, who concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. "A pardon is a slip of paper," wrote Marshall, "the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged."

2,000 years ago God issued a pardon for all who would believe in His Son. But just as in the case of George Wilson, the value of the pardon is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is not a pardon.

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, you may accept him as your Savior today. If you have accepted him as your savior but never confessed your faith publicly, you must confess your faith in him publicly today. If you have believed in him and confessed your faith publicly keep your relationship with him faithfully. This faith is not something that we have just once the day we were saved – which then fades away. Faith in Jesus is to be refreshed in our hearts, minds, and souls every day. We refresh our faith by faithfully following Jesus. We refresh our faith by sharing God's love in Jesus with others. Share what God has done in Christ for you. Witness God's love to everyone you encounter.