

Subject: *The Glorious Gospel of Christ*

Scripture: *John 3:11-21*

Today is Valentines Day, the day we celebrate love. How fitting it is for us to see what God says about His love for us and how He proved His love by sending Jesus to be our Savior.

Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth (demonstrated) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* This passage in John 3 is like a diamond ring, and verse 16 is the brilliant diamond. Just as the beauty of a diamond is enhanced by the setting of a ring, the beauty of John 3:16 is enhanced by its setting or its context. We can appreciate verse 16 so much more when we see it in relation to the verses that come before and after.

- In verses 11-12, Jesus speaks of unbelief
- In verse 14, Jesus speaks of rebellion and death
- In verses 18-19, Jesus speaks of condemnation, darkness, and evil deeds

Think of it this way. Before God created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden, He knew they would sin and that as a result every person would sin against Him. Yet He loved the world in spite of our sin and rebellion. But that's not all. Even when God sent Jesus into the world to die for our sins, He knew that most people would not believe in Him and receive Him as Savior because they love darkness rather than light. God loves the world so much that He gave His Son, but the world loves sin so much that it rejects His Son. Now let's take a closer look at this familiar passage of Scripture.

THE REVELATION OF GOD'S PLAN (vs. 11-17)

When we get to verse 11, we note a change that takes place. John is still talking to Nicodemus, but Jesus is no longer having a conversation with him, but now He is teaching a lesson.

- Jesus spoke truth that was certain (vs. 11, 13) – This is the third time in John 3, that Jesus uses “Verily, verily” to indicate something important. He spoke of things He knew and saw first hand. He spoke of things that no other person could ever know because Jesus is the only one who came down from heaven (vs. 13). No one else has been to heaven and returned to tell us about spiritual things. Some best selling books have been written by people who reportedly died and went to heaven only to return and tell us what they saw. Sadly many people will put more stock in those fiction tales than the absolute truth of the Bible.
- Jesus spoke truth that was clear (vs. 12) – He spoke of things in a way that people could understand. He described heavenly things by using earthly examples. He spoke of being born again and the evidence of new birth like the wind that blows.
- Jesus spoke truth that was rejected (vs. 11-12) – If another person tells you something and you don't receive it, that's one thing. But if the Son of God tells you something and you don't receive it, you've got a big problem.
- Jesus spoke truth about salvation (vs. 14-17) – This is one of the greatest statements about salvation in the Bible. Jesus gives us the heart of the Gospel.

Jesus revealed God's picture of salvation

Moses and the serpent on the pole was a powerful illustration of Jesus on the cross, **Numbers 21:6-9** *And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.* ⁷ *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.* ⁸ *And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.* ⁹ *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

Jesus revealed God's provision of salvation

He loved the world and gave His only begotten (unique, one-of-a-kind) Son.

Jesus revealed God's purpose in salvation

Jesus died so that we might not perish, but have everlasting life. Verse 15 is the first of 15 references to eternal life in John. Jesus came into the world to save us, not to condemn us.

John 3:16 is the glorious Gospel in one simple verse. In one verse we find the greatest giver (God), the greatest love (so loved the world), the greatest gift (his only begotten Son), the greatest offer (whosoever), the greatest privilege (believeth in him), the greatest rescue (should not perish), and the greatest possession (everlasting life).

The Gospel is inclusive because it includes everybody ("whosoever"). No one is left out. At the same time, the Gospel is exclusive because only those who trust in Him and are committed to Him have everlasting life. **John 14:6** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* **Acts 4:12** *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* **1 Timothy 2:5** *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

All who do not believe in Jesus will perish. To perish is the opposite of eternal life. To perish means to suffer God's wrath forever. **John 3:36** *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

The same chapter that tells us of God's great love and salvation for all who believe in Christ also tells us of God's eternal punishment for all who reject Christ. Some are saved and others will perish. **Psalms 1:6** *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.* Jesus taught in **Luke 13:3** *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Paul summed it up in **1 Corinthians 1:18** *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

THE REJECTION OF GOD'S MAN (vs. 18-21)

Jesus not only tells us the truth about salvation, He also tells us the truth about condemnation.

- Who is condemned? The unbeliever, the person who does not believe in and does not trust in Christ.
- When is he condemned? Already, right now. Lost people are on death row and don't even know it. God has already rendered the verdict (guilty). The only thing left is to carry out the punishment in hell.
- Why is he condemned? The unbeliever loves darkness (sin) and rejects light (Christ).
- How can you tell the difference between the condemned and the saved? Those who do (practice) evil are condemned, and those who do (practice) truth are saved. Both faith and unbelief are not revealed by what we think or by what we say, or by how we feel, but by how we live.