

God So Loved the World

Gospel According to John

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Bible Text: John 3:16

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This is going to be a very familiar portion of Scripture to most of us, probably most of you could quote by memory the verse that we're going to be looking at together here in John 3:16. This is a special message that I'm delivering today in view of our partaking of the LORD's Table, and yet I have to say that even though this particular verse is probably one of the most well-known throughout the world, it is also one of the most misunderstood. So that is why I want us to come and take a look at it together today.

Now just in the context of John 3, Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler among the Jews came to Christ by night, you can see there in verse 2. A lot of people make a big deal about him coming at night as if he would have been cowardly and therefore came at night, but if you've ever lived in a Mid-Eastern culture, that's the time you visit. It's not during the day. Isn't that what you would do if you go to see somebody, if you've got a work schedule, you go see them at night, so I think there's been much, too much given to the fact that he came at night. I'm thankful he came. He came to Christ, he came inquiring. Obviously he came in ignorance but we don't find the LORD belittling him for coming, and I would encourage any of us that are here, to come to Christ. There are things that we may not understand about Him but we come, and we come with a desire to learn of Him. That is how we come but come. Come to Christ.

So, again, he was, at this point, dealing with Christ as his equal. He calls him Rabbi. That would have been a term that Nicodemus took for himself. He was a rabbi. It's like I deal with some people sometimes that are pastors of other congregations and they'll address you as pastor. They'll say, "Pastor, I've got to ask you something about what you preach." Well, that's how Nicodemus was coming. He said, "We know that," in verse 2, "that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And again, you can belittle him all you want to but he was just simply declaring what he knew to be so at that particular time.

And Christ in verse 3 goes right to the heart of it. He says to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And you might have this marginal reading where it says, "Except a man be born from above," because that is really the sense there of being born again. I know we went through a phase here in this country where everybody was talking about having had a born again

experience, and what it really meant was they turned over a new leaf. It might have been somebody that had been on drugs and now they'd left drugs, or someone had been an alcoholic and now they'd stopped drinking, or they hadn't been to church in a while, now they were attending, and so that was the sense, really, which most people in our generation today came to understand what it means to be born again. But again, there's a lot of misconceptions with the way men perceive things and what the Word of God says, and I'm here to tell you today, dear friends, that to be born again means to be born of God; that means that there is a life-giving work that the Spirit of God does in the heart of a sinner whereby that sinner can "see," notice, "the kingdom of God." That word "see" means to perceive, not in a visual way, not in a vision but in understanding as to what the kingdom of God is all about.

And again, sadly, there's a lot of misconception about that today, people talking about a kingdom yet to be established, that when Christ comes, He will be King. I'm here to tell you that He's King right now. God said, "I have set My Son, My King upon My holy hill." And when He came, when He came to this earth, He came as King. He came to conquer. He came to conquer the law because what is it that condemns sinners? It's the law of God. He came to overcome sin. He had to be tempted in all ways just as we are, yet without sin. He came to render the death knell to Satan in accordance with what was written all the way back there in the garden, that Satan, the seed of the serpent would bruise His heel but He would crush his head. You say, "How did He do it all?" In His death upon the cross.

You know that we sang that song, "Remember me. When you come in Your kingdom, remember me." Remember who said that? That was the thief on the cross. Here was an example of a man who had been born again, born from above. His hands were tied, he had nothing to commend himself to God, in fact, the Scriptures say he was railing against Christ initially just like that other thief, but then suddenly he saw who the LORD was and the LORD granted him repentance. He said, "Remember me when you come in your," what? "Kingdom." So he saw a King. He saw what these Jewish religious people couldn't see, didn't see, and this is the Word that's addressed here to Nicodemus.

And you can see, again, Nicodemus, at least he's an honest man. He's asking these questions, "Now how can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter the second time into the mother's womb and be born?" And then Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water," and I believe there the word "and" can also be translated or should be, "even of the Spirit," because the Spirit in John is compared to the water, a little bit later it talks about springs of water springing up within one in whom the Spirit of God has done a work. "Except a man," he's explaining how this birth takes place, it's through the Spirit of God, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That's not talking about entering into glory, it's talking about entering into the things that pertain to Christ Himself. And I have to say the same thing to you. I can lay the Truth out as plainly as I know how before your eyes, and before your ears, and point you to Christ but unless the Spirit teaches you, you're going to get up and walk out of here exactly how you came in, just as ignorant, just as rebellious, just as blind and unconverted. It takes the Spirit of God.

And that's why Christ goes on here in verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." There are those that will be born in this flesh, who are going to live all their lives in this flesh and die in the flesh and never truly know Who Christ is even though they may have sat for years under preachers who proclaimed a Christ, even though they hold in their hands the same Bible as we do, they remain unconverted because whatever is born of the flesh is flesh. And dear friends, that is not salvation just to simply come and sit and say, "I've been in church and I've heard today and so now I'm going out and going about my way." There has to be this work of the Spirit converting your heart to the LORD Jesus Christ from youngest here all the way to the oldest.

"And that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." You say, "What does that mean?" Well, we're going to read a little bit later on what that means in verse 8, but verse 7, you see what Christ said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee," and I know this verse here, too, has been applied generally, "Ye must be born again." And I could say that, I could stand and say that to you, "You must be born again," but I believe Christ was addressing this Word particularly to Nicodemus. Even at this point in his ignorance, He was telling Nicodemus, "Even though now you don't understand these things, Nicodemus, you must be born again because I came for you. You will be born again." I'm so thankful it's that way. Those for whom Christ came and lived and died and rose again, every single one of them will be born again. That's what we're going to get to. It's not some general namby-pamby offer that Christ came and laid down His life, now won't you accept Him. That is not the message of the Bible. The message of the Bible, dear friends, is that if Christ came and lived and died for you, you must be born again. That's what He told him.

When He went, in John 4 there, you see this word "must"? And we're going to see it in a little bit here but look just over in John 4. When He encountered that Samaritan woman, it says that He left Judea and departed again into Galilee. Now He's going from the southern part of the country all the way to the north, and it says in verse 4, "He must needs," must needs, "go through Samaria." Well, I'll tell you this, you can go back and read the history on this, the Jews never went through Samaria. They had a path that went up the other side of the Jordan to avoid going through Samaria all the way and then coming back again to get up to Galilee. So when it says here, "He must needs go through Samaria," it was not because there wasn't any other way but it was because there was one of His sheep there that He must needs call to Himself, for whom He came and for whom He would lay down His life and purchase their salvation. And I believe that's the same sense in which Christ is saying to Nicodemus, "You must be born again." Christ could say it because He knows those that are His. He knows every one of them. "I know My sheep and they are known of Me."

You say, "What is it to be born of the Spirit?" Here it is in verse 8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." What does that mean? That means He's sovereign in this matter. God is sovereign in whom He is pleased to call. And this is the first point of rebellion with sinners because men want to have their say,

they want to be able to say, "No, I prayed and I received Christ, therefore he received me." No.

If you look back in John 1, this has already been laid out here and I just want to come back to this for clarity. In John 1, beginning with verse 11, it says, "He came unto His own, and His own received him not." It's talking about the Jews. For the most part, they did not receive Him. They turned thumbs down on Him, and Nicodemus would have continued to turn thumbs down on Him were it not for the Spirit of God revealing Christ in Him at some later time.

"But as many as received Him," here's what I want you to see, "to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Now you can read that one or two ways. Most of the time, the way it's preached is if you receive Him, if you'll just receive Christ, then He'll make you His son. That's how it's preached but that's not what it's saying. It's an explanation. Many received Him not, but to as many as received Him, why did they receive Him? Because He gave them power. He gave them the authority. That's what that word "power" means, it means authority to become the sons of God, "even to them that believe on His name."

And if you don't believe that it's all of God, look at verse 13, "Which were born," born Spiritually. How? "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." You see, a lot of people just don't read far enough, but that's what Christ was telling Nicodemus. He's, in essence, telling him, "I'm going to do a work for you and in you that you have no understanding of right now but through that work, you'll see the kingdom of God and you'll enter in." You'll enter in.

And just like there were many other people around that Samaritan woman, but Christ came for her. Then she went and called others and they came and they believed hearing His Word. But I'll tell you, the LORD has those that He came to save particularly and He's going to have every one of them. There might be some here sitting here today, one of His sheep. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Right now you're like Nicodemus, you know some things, you can say some things, "Well, he must be of God about Christ, he must be of God because he did many miracles and wondrous things." But I'm telling you, if the LORD came, lived and died for you, He's going to bring you to see what His kingdom is all about. It's His rule, His rule and His person over sin, Satan, the devil and the world because of what He accomplished there at Calvary. That's what we're going to see.

So this is the setting here. Now I say all that and we could keep going here, but I want to get to verse 14 because a lot of people jump right into verse 16. They say, "Well, I know John 3:16," but how does John 3:16 start? "For, for God so loved the world." If you came in on a conversation and someone had started a sentence with "For," you can be sitting there saying, "Well, what did I miss? He's drawing a conclusion." So don't start with John 3:16. Go back up and start with John 3:14.

Now you remember the reason why I put emphasis on the word 'must,' "ye must be born again," in verse 7, is because we see it again here. Even, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Now we don't have time to

go back there and read but when did Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness? It's back there in the book of Numbers. It's when God sent fiery serpents through the camp and these serpents were biting people and people were dying, and Moses sought the LORD as to what to do and the LORD said, "Take a pole and put a serpent up on it, a brazen serpent, and those that look will live." Any that look shall live, and that word "look" means to gaze. You know, when you're really in trouble, when you sense an urgency, when God's caused you to see a need, you gaze. It's not just a glance, there's a looking. That's why the same language is used with regard to Christ. You say, "Well, why don't more people see Christ? Why don't they seek Him?" They don't see the need. Oh, every once in a while they'll cry that they're in trouble and then they're off running again. It's like a storm comes up, you kind of jump into a little harbor for a little bit until it passes and then you're on your way. That's the way a lot of people are. But oh, to look to Christ. Where does that look come from? It comes from the Spirit of God. "Except a man be born again, he cannot," what? "See." That's what that word means, perceive, continue to gaze upon, look upon Christ.

But here's the point, "as Moses lifted up that serpent in the wilderness," what was that? That was a type and picture of the work that the LORD Jesus Christ was to accomplish. "Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Christ had to fulfill all that was written with regard to Him. There wasn't any salvation, true salvation in that brazen serpent. Now the Israelites thought there was because what did they do? They took and started offering incense to it. It took Hezekiah coming along years later to chop the thing up and denounce it. But that's what men will do, anytime that there's some little remedy, they'll put their confidence in the remedy rather than seeing how it typifies the LORD Jesus Christ. There's only one place that any that have been saved have ever looked, been caused to look for salvation and that's been to the LORD Jesus Christ. Even those in the Old Testament. They weren't putting their confidence in those sacrifices. If God taught them, they were looking to this One Who was to come.

So in actuality, verse 14, I liken these three verses to the three "R's." Not reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, but the three "R's" of the Gospel. In verse 14, you have the Remedy. You have the basis upon which God can be just and justify sinners. Even as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so much the Son of Man be lifted up. That's where salvation is, dear friends, it's in the death of the LORD Jesus Christ. That is the Remedy. Don't confuse the Remedy with the result. People are doing that today, they say, "Well, it's in my looking that I'm saved." No, it's the Savior that saves. They say, "Well, it's my faith that saves me." No, it's the Object of faith that saves. God cannot accept a sinner in His presence whose blood the LORD Jesus Christ has not from that blood has not been shed, for that righteousness has not been imputed. It's not your righteousness, it's the righteousness of Another put to your account that gives you that perfect standing with God. Do you see that? That's why He was lifted up.

Now verse 15. You say, "What's verse 15?" That's the result, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." That's the effect of Christ being lifted up. If Christ died for you, dear friend, then there will be, in time, Faith. God's going to grant it. He's going to cause you to see Christ, you'll believe on Him, you'll renounce any

righteousness of your own, you'll submit to Him as the way of righteousness. You'll own no other. That's the result. And you won't perish, you won't perish not because you believed but you won't perish because He died for you. It's His death that caused you to believe and, true, the result is everlasting life but that flows, where does that life come from? It flows out of Christ Himself and His blood.

So in verse 14 you've got the Remedy, verse 15 you've got the result, and then verse 16 you have the reason. You say, "Well, why all this? Why would God deliver up His Son?" Well, verse 16 tells us why, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, again, you've heard this sort of messages where a preacher will stand up and say, "For God sooooo loved the world," and they'll put the emphasis on "sooooo loved the world." Well, there's no question that God's love is infinite and it's immeasurable. I don't even know how to explain it, but keeping these verses in their context, that little word "so," if you go back up and look at verse 14, it's the same word that John used up there in verse 14. How did he use it in verse 14? "As Moses," think of, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so," or in this manner. That's what the word "so" means. In this manner, "must the Son of Man be lifted up." So the same word used in verse 16, "For God in this manner loved the world."

So it's not just talking about some general love for everybody in the world. That's how it's usually preached, isn't it? God loves every single person in the world. Well, that contradicts the rest of Scripture, doesn't it, where it says, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." You can see how this, to interpret John 3:16 the way men are doing it, it causes more problems than it does answer questions. And people realize it. I run into them all the time and they say, "Well, how could God love somebody and send them to hell?" Because it presents God as loving somebody up to a certain point and then all of a sudden saying, "Okay, now I'm going to send you to hell." What kind of love is that? What kind of love is that? Or to say that He actually sent His Son to die for everybody and yet does not send a preacher to him to tell him? You think about the millions and billions of people dying today in the world who've never even heard the name of Christ, and you're telling me God loves them? Don't you think if you loved somebody and gave your son to die for them, that you'd cause them to hear it? That's exactly right. So there's something wrong with that interpretation and it starts right here with this little word "so."

It says here for in this manner, God in this manner loved the world. What does it do? It begs the question: how did He love the world? Well, it says He gave His only begotten Son, and then the rest shows you that it's not for everybody because it doesn't say that anybody might believe on Him, it says actually in the original it's that those who do believe, that's why He sent His Son. There is a people that He is going to cause to believe and that those that do believe should not perish but have everlasting life.

So that's what I want to talk to you about in the minutes that remain here, dear friends. What is this love of God for the world? You stop and think about it, if you were to ask people what is the greatest thing God could do for them, just go out and do a survey, you will hear some that will say, "Well, I sure wish He'd give us world peace." Some say,

"Well, I wish that He would take care of all the illnesses. It would be nice to be able to just shut all these hospitals down." Yes, it would. Some say, "Well, you know, we have to deal with poverty." I get stuff across my desk all the time about how we, as a church, can help rid the world of poverty and Christ said, "You have the poor with you always." Even He said that. That's not the Greatest Gift. I don't mean to minimize people that are in poverty but I'm telling you, that is not the Greatest Gift that God can give to a man. Or technology, or riches. My text here declares that the greatest manifestation of God's love to the world is the Gift of His Son the LORD Jesus Christ.

Now do you believe that? If you even have a doubt in your mind, it's an evidence that you haven't really thought about this. What is the Greatest Gift that God could ever do for this world? It was to give His Son, to give His Son. That's why I keep going back here to the cross, dear friends. I don't care if this world goes on for another million years, there's still going to be a point of reference in this world, in this history, that above all else has been a mark, a manifestation of God's infinite love, and that is the Gift of His Son the LORD Jesus Christ. Ah, that He would teach us of that.

But just let me give you some points to consider here. First of all, consider how dear to God the Father the LORD Jesus Christ is. He might not be dear to you and you might be sitting there thinking about what all you've got to do the rest of this week and, "I can hardly wait to get through this message," but I'm going to tell you what: the LORD Jesus Christ is the Dearest Thing to God the Father. You say you worship God? If you do, you'll worship His Son. It'll be because He's caused you to see just how precious Christ is to God.

That's what I see here. It says, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Now the only begotten is in the sense, some of you may have grown up in a family where you were the only child, that means all the affection went toward you. That's it. You're the only begotten. That's the image that we see here. And as the only begotten, what does that mean? You're the only heir. You're the heir to all things. How precious is that? That's the sense here. He was His only Son. He was the only Object of His love and that from all eternity, and He is the express image of His person. You realize if you're the only begotten, that means that when people look at you even if your parents aren't around, you are the one image that they have of who your parents were. That's what it is to be the only begotten.

Look over here in Colossians 1:13. And again, you know, I try thinking about how I can bring this home, but I know the Spirit of God has to do it. He's got to do it. Colossians 1:13, it says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of," you notice how it's put, "His Dear Son." In fact, the marginal reading means "the Son of His love." That's Who we're dealing with here, dear friends. When we talk about the LORD Jesus Christ, we're talking about the Son of God's love. Isaiah said, "Unto us a Child is born." That's how we saw it, as a Man coming into this world, but what else did he say? "Unto us a Son is given." Whose Son is it? God's Son. God's Son. Oh, that is the focal point of John 3:16. Everybody arguing about the world

but the focal point is that He gave His only begotten Son. You see, that's what this is all about, it's His Son, and that's what God has to be pleased to teach us, of His Son.

But secondly, here's the thing, too, that just overwhelms me. Consider to what the Father gave Him. Now it's one thing to send Him as an Envoy and to bring Him back, it's another thing to send Him as an Example or an Emissary and to come back, but it's another thing to send Him as a Sacrifice. And dear friends, when John 3:16, when it says here, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," it's in the sense that He gave Him as a Sacrifice. He gave Him to die. He gave Him to die. It was even to the death of the cross, to be made a curse for His people, to be the scorn and contempt of sinners, to be subjected to the cruelest sufferings that were ever inflicted or borne by any. I don't care how cruel the torture, none suffered as the Son of God suffered. None. There's none to be compared. And yet it was God Himself that ordained it.

You look over here in Acts 2:23. Look in Acts 2:23, this is what Peter declared on the day of Pentecost. You know, people don't understand this, even. They come up toward Easter time, everybody is just whipping out the hankies and crying about the sufferings of Christ and His physical suffering, and people putting on plays and passions, going through all these motions. You know, it's almost like a pity party. He did not come to elicit our pity. In fact, those two women that stood there the day He was taking that cross to Calvary and they wept, He said, "Don't weep for Me. Weep for yourselves but don't weep for Me." There was an understanding on His part that everything He came to do, He did for the honor of His Father. Just as He is the Dearest to His Father, the Father is the Dearest to Him. It's His Father's glory above all.

I wish we could get that into our minds even with regard to our salvation or the salvation of sinners and loved ones. It has everything to do with the Father's glory. God is not going to save your child, He's not going to save your loved one without doing it to His glory, and He can be just as glorified in condemning them as He is in bringing them to Himself. That's the point where most people have the trouble and they won't bow. They think, "No, He ought to save them. They're good people." There's your problem right there, you're thinking they're good enough to be saved. That's not who Christ saved, Christ saved sinners. Christ saved sinners.

It has everything to do with God's glory and here in Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered," how? "By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Could they have done anything to Him but what God ordained? Not a thing. Not a thing. In fact, if you read over in Acts 4 and there in the prayer of the church in Acts 4:27-28, this is what they acknowledged, this is what the believers of the first century church acknowledged. They said, "For of a truth," verse 27, "against Thy holy child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together," but look here in verse 28, "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Now was God just forcing them against their will? No, they were doing what they wanted to do, but in so doing, they were accomplishing the will of God the Father.

And the reason is because Christ had to be slain. In order for God to be just and justified, sinners, that law had to be satisfied. Somebody had to do it. The sinner couldn't do it. The law wasn't given as a means of the sinner himself satisfying a Holy God, the law was given to shut every sinner up to their own condemnation. But Christ came as the Substitute. That's the sense here, consider to what the Father gave Him just as the lamb in the Old Testament under the law was separated from the flock and set apart. Now it may have still been alive there in that time it was set apart, but nonetheless, it had been set apart and even though still living, it was consecrated to the LORD and that time had to come when that lamb should die. And that's what a lot of people don't see. They see little baby Jesus boy in the manger, they see Him raised up, they see Him going about doing miracles and good deeds, and they're all enthralled with it, but Christ even with His disciples kept reminding them, "The Son of Man must suffer and die. The Son of Man must."

And it says they didn't understand these things. It takes the LORD revealing them. You see, that's not understandable. Why would God give His Son to die? Well, dear friends, what that teaches you is just how just God is. If He spared not His Son in order to be just in saving those that He purposed to save, do you think it's going to be any thought at all for Him to send guilty sinners to hell for whom Christ did not die? God was pleased to pass them by in His justice.

You see, a lot of people have trouble with that. They say, "Well, that's not fair." Fairness ended when Adam fell. We fell in him. The trial's over. Now it's a matter of whether God will be merciful or not, whether He'll be just in how He shows Mercy. He can't just say, "Well," like you used to do with a little daisy, "I love him. I love him not. I love him. I love him not." Pull the petals and hope it falls on "I love him." That's not how God did it. God purposed to save sinners, sent His Son to die for them, but those He passed by, He justly does so. That's the God of Scripture. In Christ coming, it was to answer to the wrath of an Infinite God, in an Infinite and Holy God, and He was given to drink that cup of condemnation dry that God might be just and justify sinners.

How holy, this is the point I want you to see, dear friends, how holy and just must be the love of God, then, in those that He saves? There will be no question. He gave His Son. The Father of Mercies delivered up the Son of His love. That's what this verse is all about. It was deliverance into the hands of justice. even as condemned man by sentence of the law is given over the hands of the executioner, that's what God did with His Son.

Now consider for whom He manifests this love. Here's a third thing I'd have you consider and I'll be done here in a little bit. But consider for whom He manifests such love. I know this word "world" is what most people trip up on, they get hung up on it. It says, they say, "Well, the Bible says the world, for God so loved the world. World means world." Well, you can get a dictionary out and look at it, the word "world" is translated in three or four different ways. Are you talking about the geographic world upon which you're walking right now? The physical world? The word "world" is used in Scripture, world without end. It's talking about an age, it can refer to an age. I'll tell you this, as we come down here to John 3:16, our LORD uses this world to refer to sinners that the Jews looked upon

as sinners, and didn't consider even to be of themselves, of their own. The world was split between Jew and the rest of the world. And consider who Jesus our LORD is talking to here. He's talking to Nicodemus, a Jew, and when this Jew heard the word "world," how did he understand it? Gentiles. What He's saying is basically, "These very people that you turn thumbs down on, that's the kind of sinner I came to save." Because they were all built up in their self-righteousness but, dear friends, the Scripture says that this is the same worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

So you could read it that way. You could read John 3:16, "For God so loved the world or God in this manner loved sinners." That's a good way to put it. That's who He came for, sinners. Sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue. Not one particular tribe as the Jews thought, "Well, if the Messiah comes, it'll be to set up a Jewish kingdom." No, He came to save sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue.

If you look over in Revelation 5:9, that's the view of Heaven that we see here. Revelation 5:9, and really that's why we're here about this table. It is to celebrate the death of the LORD Jesus Christ, this One Who came. The bread that we're about to partake of is representative of that body that was prepared for Him. It's unleavened bread. Without sin. He had to be sinless. He had to be obedient unto death. And yet it took the shedding of His blood. That's what the cup's all about, the shedding of His blood.

And I'll tell you, dear friends, that blood was not shed in vain. If you think that He died for every single person in the world and yet not every single person in the world is as a result saved, what you're saying is that His blood is not efficacious, there's something else beside the blood of Christ, then, that saves, and I can't think of anything more abominable because the Scriptures say it's that blood that saves. It's the death of the LORD Jesus Christ that God looks upon whereby He put away our sin and declared us righteous before God. That's where it took place, in the death of Christ.

But over here in Revelation 5:9, you see, this is the song of the redeemed. People arguing with you on this point and yet they expect to be in glory singing this song. How on earth? "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood," notice, "out of," there was a redemption out of the world. Who is that "out of"? Well, that's those that God in electing grace set apart even before Christ came. Those for whom Christ died and those whom by His Spirit God will in time call to Himself. It says, "...Thou hast redeemed us to God." And you notice who was in view here, it was God Himself. That's what the redemption's all about. To God by the blood, by Thy blood, "...out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

Oh, dear friends, you know, if it was every single person in the world for whom Christ died, why did Christ say in His high priestly prayer, "I pray not for the world but for those that Thou hast given Me"? You know, get people saying to you all the time, "Well, we ought to be praying for everybody." Well, if the LORD lays them on your heart, that may be an indication that they are one of the LORD's, but God's not in the business of

trying to get everybody saved. Can you imagine if He is? That means He's a failure. In the end He's a failure. No, He's saving everyone that He purposed to save and for whom Christ died. That blood shall not be shed in vain. Christ said that, didn't He? He said, "All that the Father has given Me shall come to Me and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." That's why He won't cast them out because it's God doing the drawing. God did the giving and it was through the death of His Son.

Well, there's a lot more here that I'd like to say but let me just conclude with these three thoughts here. If God's love required such a Sacrifice, you stop and think about this, how great must be, then, the lostness and the depravity and the total inability of sinners. Because this is what it required. If there had been another way, don't you know God would have declared it? But the fact that it says here that He sent His Son to die means there was no other way. There is no other way. How foolish to think that Christ came just as One Way, but there may be others. Can you imagine that? Giving up your son to this sort of death when in reality there could have been another way? That's why Paul wrote in Galatians, he said, "If righteousness come by law, any law, any other rule, Christ is dead in vain. You've made Christ's death of no effect."

But secondly, I would say this in conclusion, that it's not that we loved God but that He loved us. That's what the Scriptures say in 1 John. "For God so loved the world." God in this manner loved the world, but it's God doing the loving. He didn't wait for us to love Him. He didn't condition our salvation upon our loving Him first. If we love Him, 1 John 4:10 says it's because He first loved us and gave His Son to be that Propitiation. I'm so thankful it's that way. Maybe that's something you're just discovering. You thought it was you loving God. No, it doesn't have a thing to do with that. It had everything to do with Him loving you.

And then the final thought I'll leave with you is to remember that if God has given you this greatest in all-comprehending Mercy of salvation and justification through the blood and righteousness of Christ even when you were yet an enemy, because that's what the Scripture says, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, while we were still rebels Christ died, you were alienated from Him and yet He was merciful. I ask you, is there anything imaginable that you can think of that would cause Him to deny you His Mercy even in your daily life day by day? Don't we get questioning Him sometimes in the little things, and then we have to stop and think, "Now wait a minute, He laid down His life for me. That was the Greatest Mercy I could ever, ever be shown, why would He deny me His Mercy even now in my day-to-day life?"

You see, it's so vital and that's why Romans 5 says being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. He died and rose again and ascended on high. He ever lives to intercede on behalf of His people. You know, our problem is we get that little problem up so close to our eye and we keep inspecting it. Well, you get something close enough, pretty soon you can't see anything. Get it out there where it belongs. Put it out there where it belongs. I don't care what it is, God is going to care for His own. If He's saved them, He's going to keep them and He's going to see them all the way through into glory. That's a blessed thought and that's why it says here, "God in this manner loved the world that He gave His

only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." You might feel like you are sometimes but just like those disciples in the boat, they said, "LORD, we perish." What a foolish thing, the LORD's in the boat with them. They're not perishing but have everlasting life. Look to Christ. Look to Christ.