

John 3:16 - Everyone's Verse

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to John.

John chapter 3. It's on page 1070. John chapter 3.

And I just want us to look this morning at one verse, probably a well-known verse. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. John 3, 16 is everyone's verse because it applies to everyone.

[1 : 06] And it's for everyone. It's for everyone in our congregation. And it's for everyone in our community. Whether someone is in church for the first time, or they haven't been for a while, or they're here every single week, or some people watching at home, whoever you are, wherever you're from, whatever has brought you here this morning, this verse is your verse.

Because John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. John 3, 16 is everyone's verse because it includes everyone. And it excludes no one.

Whoever you are, wherever you're from, whatever your background, whatever has brought you here, this verse is your verse. That's why we've labeled this Sunday as Back to Church Sunday. Because we want everyone in our congregation and everyone in our community to come to church. As we said earlier, we want everybody to be in the habit of coming to church.

Because it's a good habit to have. We want everyone to hear the good news of the gospel. We want everyone to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

[2 : 19] And we want everyone to know that John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. In fact, it was once said that John 3, 16 is the heart of the Bible and the gospel in miniature.

John 3, 16 is the heart of the Bible and the gospel in miniature. You want to know what the whole of the Bible is about? It's John 3, 16. And that's why John 3, 16 is the most memorized, most preached, most quoted verse in the entire Bible.

Because John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. It's your verse. John 3, 16 is your verse.

It includes you. It doesn't exclude you. It includes everyone. It excludes no one. So John 3, 16 is your verse. And it's your verse because it presents to you a declaration, a demonstration, and a desire of love.

John 3, 16 is your verse because it presents to you a declaration, a demonstration, and a desire of love. There are three headings this morning.

[3 : 35] A declaration, a demonstration, and a desire of love. So first of all, a declaration of love. John 3, 16 is everyone's verse because it gives to us a declaration of love. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Now the text of John 3, 16, it finds itself within the context of this nighttime meeting between Jesus and this man called Nicodemus.

And the thing about Nicodemus was that Nicodemus was a Pharisee. Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel. Nicodemus was someone who knew his Bible inside out and back to front.

But the thing is, Nicodemus only knew his Bible in his head. He didn't know his Bible in his heart.

Nicodemus was someone who was very religious. And he had grown up with this religion all around him.

But it was only when Nicodemus met Jesus that he realized very quickly that his religion couldn't save him. He needed a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

[4 : 47] Which is why Jesus exhorts and He encourages Nicodemus saying, You must. You must be born again. Because unless you're born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

So you must be born again. And as Jesus explains to Nicodemus, sin has left you in ruin. And it has left you in need of a remedy. Therefore, you need a new birth.

You need a new beginning. You need to be given a new heart. You need your heart to be cleansed. You need to be born again. Nicodemus, you must be born again.

But you know, at this point in John's Gospel, we're only in chapter 3. There are 21 chapters in his Gospel. At this point in John's Gospel, we don't know what happened to Nicodemus.

We don't know if he was born again. We don't know if he became a Christian. If we read through John's Gospel, which I'd encourage you to do, you'll discover that Nicodemus was born again.

[5 : 50] He did become a Christian. But at this point in chapter 3, we're not told. John doesn't tell us that Nicodemus was born again. But there's a reason for that.

John doesn't tell us so that the question will just hang there. We'll read this and think, well, was he converted? Did he become a Christian? Was he born again? But you know, the question, the reason John writes it this way is so that we're not actually thinking about Nicodemus.

We actually start thinking about ourselves. The question isn't about Nicodemus. The question is actually about you. Because John didn't write his Gospel for Nicodemus.

John wrote his Gospel for you. That's what he says at the end of his Gospel. John says to you, at the end of his Gospel, he says, these things are written. My Gospel is written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you will have life in His name.

And so, my friend, John's Gospel is written for you, so that you will believe, so that you will be born again, so that you will become a Christian. John wrote this Gospel for you, because this Gospel is good news.

[7 : 08] That's what the word Gospel means. It means good news. And John is saying to us here, the good news of the Gospel, it can be summarized and just summed up in one verse.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life. And that's why I'm saying to you this morning, this verse is your verse.

John 3, 16 is everyone's verse, because it gives to us a declaration of love. For God so loved the world. Which means that He doesn't just love this world.

God so loved. God so loved. A world that He had created with such detail, and created us with such dignity. A world that He supports, and He sustains by the word of His power.

But also a world, as we know only too well, has been ruined and ravaged by sin. And yet God so loved this world. God so loved the world.

[8 : 17] And you know, this verse, it actually undermines the message of the media. Because the message of the media is that the God of the Bible, this God whom we were reading and singing about, the media will tell us that He's heartless, and He's hardened, and He's harsh, and He just sends people to hell.

But my friend, it's not God that sends people to hell, it's sin that sends people to hell. But John is telling us here, the good news of the gospel is that God loves sinners.

And God saves sinners through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. That's why God is telling you this morning that God so loved this world.

It's a declaration of love. It's a declaration of love. And the thing is, in a world with so much hate, and we see it on the news all the time, hate and hostility and heartache, a world where everybody is wanting to be loved.

We all want to be loved, and yet what we're seeing here is that no love, no human love, can compare to God's love. Because no one can compare with God's love.

[9 : 31] No one can compare with the length, and the breadth, and the depth, and the height of God's love. Because the Bible tells us that God's very nature is love.

You might think of God as an angry God. You might think of God as a harsh God. You might think of God as a God of judgment. But I tell you this morning, the God of the Bible is described to us as a God who loves.

He's also described as all these other things. But His very nature is loving, and gracious, and merciful. God not only loves, God is love.

It's who He is. It's what He's like. It's His character. It's His nature. It's His whole being. God is love. Now, we describe love towards our children, or our family.

We describe that. But the Bible says that God's love is infinite. God's love is eternal. God's love is unchangeable.

[10 : 41] God's love is wise love. It's powerful love. It's righteous love. It's good love. It's glorious love. It's true love. God's love is faithful love.

Steadfast love. Covenant love. Unconditional love. Unrestricted love. Unfailing love. Undeserved love. Unmerited love. My friend, love is who God is.

Love is what God is like because God is love. And no one can compare with the length and breadth and depth and height of God's love. It's not what we often teach our children.

Maybe you learned the children's hymn when you were a child. God's love is so wonderful. It's so high, we can't get over it. It's so deep, we can't get under it.

It's so wide, we can't get around it because it's wonderful love. And it's wonderful love. And this is the point. It's wonderful love because you are the object of God's love.

[11 : 48] You are the object of God's love. That the God of heaven would love you and me. You are the object of God's love.

That's why this verse is your verse. That's why John 3, 16 is for everyone. It's everyone's verse because it begins with this declaration of love. For God so loved the world.

For God so loved the world. And my friend, God so loves you. Not because there's anything attractive or appealing in you. Not because you're this good or gracious or great person.

Not because you've worked or even you're worthy of God's love. No. God so loves you. Because God so loves you. God so loves you.

Because God so loves you. There's an American pastor and author. He's called Max Lucado.

[12 : 47] He once tried to describe the love of God. And this is what he said. If God had a fridge, your picture would be on it.

If he had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Face it.

He's crazy about you. Max Lucado's words, they're helpful because it's so hard to describe the length and depth and breadth and height of God's love.

But the truth is the only way a declaration of love can be fully described is when it's demonstrated. It's when it's a demonstration of love. Which is what we see secondly.

So there's a declaration of love for God so loved the world. And then a demonstration of love. A demonstration of love for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[13 : 55] I love the author J.C. Ryle as many of you know. And J.C. Ryle once said, God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. God is not willing that any should perish.

God would have all men saved. God loves the world. And we must not hesitate to tell any sinner that God loves them. He cannot love their sins but he loves their souls.

He cannot love their sins but he loves their souls. And you know that's the thing about preaching on the love of God. It's difficult to declare to you and to describe the love of God for sinners.

But it's not difficult to demonstrate the love of God for sinners. Because Jesus is the one who demonstrates the love of God for sinners. That's why Jesus said greater love.

Greater love has no man than this. That a man lay down his life for his friends. We mentioned earlier to the children that my prayer when I was 18 was, please Jesus, create in me a clean heart.

[15 : 05] The verse that spoke to me at 18 was John 15, verse 13. Greater love has no man than this. That a man lay down his life for his friends.

It was one thing knowing the declaration of God's love. But it's another thing completely understanding the demonstration of God's love. That God so loved that he gave his only son.

And greater love hath no man than Jesus. That Jesus would lay down his life for his friends. My friend, the cross of Jesus Christ is God's declaration and demonstration of love for a lost world.

Because as you know, love is not just an emotion. Love is an expression. Love is not just an affection. Love is an action.

Love is not just a declaration. Love is a demonstration. And the good news of the gospel is that God has demonstrated his love through the death of his son.

[16 : 13] He has demonstrated his love by giving to us the gift of his son, Jesus Christ. God's love that's the wonder of God's love towards us. You know, we said earlier that John wrote his gospel for you.

It's personal. He's speaking to us personally. John wrote his gospel for you so that you would believe in God's demonstration and declaration of love. But you know, what's remarkable is that the

theme of John's gospel, when you read through it, the theme of John's letter is all about God's declaration and God's demonstration of love.

In fact, John, this apostle, he's often described as the apostle of love because he wants everyone to know. He wants you to know God's declaration of love and God's demonstration of love through the gracious gift of his son, Jesus Christ.

Christ. That's why John writes, just picking out a few verses, he says, love is from God because God is love. John also says, behold what manner of love.

Look to the cross, he says, and behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and that he sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

[17 : 38] And we know and believe, says John, that the love of God has towards us. We know it and we believe it because God is love. My friend, John is the apostle of love.

He wrote about God's declaration and demonstration of love so that you would know, that you would know that God so loved you and that God gave his only begotten son for you.

He gave, as it says there, his one and only son, his unique son, his one of a kind son. There's no one else like Jesus. There's no one else in the whole of history like Jesus.

And yet he gave him. And this word gave, it speaks of selfless giving, sacrificial giving. It's giving with the greatest cost to the giver.

It's giving with the greatest cost to the giver because those who love much give much. And a love that gives everything spares nothing.

[18 : 46] It's a selfless and sacrificial love. And that's how great God's love is for you. He gave his only son for you. And not just for you, in place of you.

instead of you. As a substitute for you. You know, this is the glory of the gospel. This is what it's actually all about.

The clean for the dirty. The righteous for the unrighteous. The godly for the ungodly.

the savior in place of the sinner. My friend, Jesus, the lamb of God, this is the gospel. He sacrificed, he substituted himself in our place in order to take away our sin.

And the wonder is, as it says in verse 17, God did not send his world, his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

[19 : 55] God sent his son. God did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all. God demonstrates his love towards us, says Paul, in that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died on the cross for us.

This is the beauty of the gospel. Jesus was the man of sorrows who was wounded for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities.

And you know, it's no wonder the hymn writer says, man of sorrows, what a name for the son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah, what a savior.

Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned, he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah, what a savior.

You know, my friend, this is God's declaration and demonstration of love for you. You might think no one loves you. You might think, I don't know, you might struggle with the thought that God would love you at all.

[21 : 08] But God is reminding you and saying to you and reassuring you this morning, that he has declared his love for you. He has demonstrated his love for you.

But he also requires a response. John 3, 16, it doesn't just leave it there. It doesn't leave it hanging. It requires a response because as we said, John 3, 16 is everyone's verse.

It applies to everyone. It's for everyone. This verse is your verse. Therefore, it requires a response from you. That's why we see, lastly, a desire of love.

A desire of love. So there's a declaration of love. For God so loved the world. A demonstration of love that he gave his only begotten son. And then thirdly, a desire of love.

A desire of love. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever or whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[22 : 14] John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. And I want you to take that home with you today. It applies to everyone here and everyone who's not here. It's for everyone.

It's for everyone in the congregation. It's for everyone in the community. This verse is your verse. Because as we've discovered, God has declared his love to everyone through the gospel.

And God has demonstrated his love to everyone through the death of his son, Jesus Christ. But this declaration, this demonstration of God's love, it now requires a response.

God desires a response. It's a desire of love. We're in response to God's love. God requires that we love him back.

We respond in love to him. That's why John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. It includes everyone, excludes no one. My friend, God's declaration and demonstration and desire of love is for whosoever.

[23 : 28] I love that word. Whosoever. And there's no one that used the word whosoever more than Jesus. Whosoever.

And as you know, the word whosoever, just like John 3, 16, it includes everyone. It excludes no one. That's why John 3, 16 is everyone's verse.

It's for whosoever. God's loving offer of salvation is as wide as possible. It's as wide as his love itself. It's for whosoever, whether religious or not, whether good or bad, whether male or female, whether rich or poor, young or old, whether you're here in person or you're watching online, whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever you're going through in life.

Jesus is for everyone. Which means, my friend, you have no excuse for not coming to this Christ. Because this is a full and free offer of salvation to whosoever.

The offer is as wide as possible. Psalm 103 talks about the east to the west never meeting, describing God's love. That's how wide it is.

[24 : 44] The offer is as wide as possible. Whosoever. But then you'll notice it becomes as narrow as possible. Whosoever believes.

Whosoever believes. There's one condition. There's one condition on accepting this full and free offer of salvation. You must believe.

You must believe. But you might be saying in your mind, well, Mardo, I do believe. I do believe. I believe in God.

Mardo, I believe in the Bible. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for sinners. But you know, when the Bible calls us to believe in Jesus, it's not about intellectual ascent.

It's not about our knowledge. because many of us know what I'm talking about this morning. We all know about John 3, 16, or we should know.

[25 : 49] But you know, believing, believing is when it changes our behavior. Many people say that they believe in God.

They believe in the Bible. They believe that Jesus Christ died to save sinners. sinners. But sad to say, believing doesn't change their behavior. Believing doesn't change their behavior.

That's why when the Bible says you must believe, it means that you must respond in love to God. You must respond in love. God has declared His love.

God has demonstrated His love towards you through the death of His Son. And now He desires for you to love Him. And the Bible says you're to love Him with all your heart, with your mind, with your soul, and with your strength.

You're to love God because He first loved us. And you know, that's what the hymn writer Isaac Watts, he came to discover that when he considered this declaration, this demonstration of God's love on the cross.

[26 : 56] He said, when I survey the wondrous cross upon which the prince of glory died. Do you know what Isaac Watts said as he concluded that hymn?

He said that God's love is not only desired, it's demanded. When I survey the wondrous cross upon which the prince of glory died, and then he says, this love, it's so amazing, it's so divine, that it demands my soul, my life, my all.

It demands my soul, my life, my all. My friend, God's declaration and demonstration of love for you, it desires and it demands your love in return.

It desires and demands your soul, your life, your all. It demands and desires you to come and to confess and to commit your life to Jesus Christ.

It desires and demands your love. That's why Jesus says to us in the gospel, do you love me? Do you love me?

[28 : 08] My friend, Jesus is asking you this morning, do you love me? Do you love me? And this is where it becomes very, very personal.

And the thing is, it is personal. It's always personal. There's no one else who can believe for you. There's no one else who can confess your sin for you. There's no one else who can take that step of commitment, committing your life to Jesus Christ for you.

No one else can do it because it's personal. It's a personal salvation with a personal Savior. It's a personal salvation. And you know, there's a man, John Newton.

He knew how personal salvation was. And with this, I'll conclude. John Newton, as you know, he was the man who wrote the well-known hymn, Amazing Grace, where he wrote those words, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see. But John Newton came to discover the amazing grace of God when he considered John 3.16 from a personal perspective.

[29 : 17] John Newton, he knew that John 3.16 was everyone's verse. John Newton knew that it included everyone and excluded no one. But when John Newton read John 3.16, he made it very personal to him because he read John 3.16 by saying, for God so loved John Newton that he gave his only begotten son for John Newton.

that if John Newton believed, John Newton would not perish, but John Newton would have eternal life.

John Newton knew how personal it was to come to Jesus. And so do you. Because God's declaration, God's demonstration of love, it desires and demands your love.

It's a personal salvation. with a personal Savior where you can read this morning, you can read this verse because it's your verse and you can read it and put your name into it and see what God is saying to you that he's speaking to you this morning personally.

He's speaking to you personally. He's personally declaring his love to you. He's personally demonstrating his love towards you. God is personally desiring and personally demanding your love in return because God's love desires and demands your soul, your life, your all.

[30 : 59] For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

My friend, John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. It includes everyone, excludes no one. It's for everyone here this morning.

It's for everyone at home this morning. It's for everyone in our congregation. It's for everyone in our community. This verse is your verse. So my plea to you is claim it, cling to it and confess it.

Claim it, cling to it and confess it. Make it personal because God is speaking to you personally.

Claim it, cling it, cling to it and confess it. that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever you, if you would believe in him you would not perish but you would have eternal life.

[32 : 20] That's God's declaration, God's demonstration and God's desire is that you will claim it, cling to it and confess it.

John 3, 16 is everyone's verse. Let me the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O heavenly Father, we give thanks to thee for the wonder and the glory of the gospel that order God who so loved us that thou would send thy Son the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth and that he came into this world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Help us then we pray to hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us personally reminding us that we need to come to him. We need to confess him as Lord.

We need to cling to him as Savior. We need to know him and to follow him as that good shepherd. O Lord, watch over us and we pray bless thy word to our souls.

Bless Lord this day to us. Help us to realize that the Lord's day has been given to us that we might worship the great God of the heart a God who so loved us that he gave his only begotten Son.

[33 : 42] Go before us and we pray cleanse us we ask for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake. Amen. Well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing in Psalm 116.

Psalm 116 it's on page 395 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 116 page 395 it's in the blue Psalm book. Just to remind you again there's tea and coffee after the service as you're warmly invited to stay behind for that. It's just in the church hall as you go through the door to your right. There'll be tea and coffee.

So please do stay if you can if you're able to don't rush home. I'm sure the meat can wait. So we're singing Psalm 116. We're singing from the beginning down to the verse Mark 6 and this is a

wonderful testimony of everyone who comes and expresses their love for the Lord.

Where God has demonstrated and declared his love for them and in response we say to the Lord I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

[35 : 03] I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Of death the cords and sorrows did about me compass round. The pains of hell took hold on me.

I grief and trouble found. Upon the name of God the Lord then did I call and say deliver thou my

soul O Lord I do thee humbly pray. God merciful and righteous is yea gracious is our Lord.

God saves the meek I was brought low he did me help afford. So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 116 from the beginning down to the verse Mark 6 and we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise.

I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he didn't hear.

I, while I live with all on him who unto he is here.

[36 : 16] Up ever for the sorrow's day up and become was found.

The pains of will to hold on me I grieve and trouble found.

Upon the name of Lord the Lord then did I call and say deliver love my soul O Lord I do thee only

pray God mercy full unrighteous blesses yea gracious is our Lord God saves by me my contest though he did me help afford

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen.