

## So Love The World

Franklin Church of Christ  
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PM Worship

### Introduction:

Perhaps the most well-known Bible verse in our society is **John 3:16**:

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

However, because we so often hear it in the argument against the gospel message on baptism, I am afraid we may often overlook the powerful message it presents. As we take a look at this verse, however, we must not just think about God, but also about us. We must never forget that God is our role model. If we are going to do the work He has given us, we have to feel what He feels and act as He acts. If we can grasp the import of this one verse, then all of our desires to evangelize and grow will rise up and overcome our fears, conquering the enemy and spreading God’s kingdom.

### Discussion:

- I. “For God so loved the world...”
  - A. Allow those words to sink in for just a moment. “For God so loved the world.” That is, God loved the people in the world. This does not contradict **I John 2:15-16**, in which loving the world does not refer to the people of the world but to worldliness as opposed to spirituality. When God looked down here, what did He see? He saw sinners. He saw liars, murderers, fornicators, idolaters, rebels, thieves, homosexuals. He saw the ungrateful, the arrogant, the apathetic, the legalistic, the moralistic. He saw what Paul described in **Ephesians 2:1-3** as people dead in sin, following after the course of this world, following after Satan, indulging in the desires of the flesh, living in the lusts of the flesh.
  - B. How did that look to God? Amazingly, **Matthew 9:36** describes how God in the flesh viewed this same scene. He was not filled with epithets against the world and the worldly. Rather, He was filled with compassion. He saw sheep who needed a real shepherd and He stepped up to the plate to fill that role. He did that because He loved the people He saw. That includes us.
  - C. The important question for us right now is do we love the people in the world? What about the people who are not like us? What about the people of a different race? What about the people of a different culture? What about the people who look different? What about the people who sin? What about the people who have hurt us? Do we love them as God loves them? Our duty is to love (**Matthew 5:44-45**).
- II. “...that He gave His only begotten Son...”
  - A. God’s love was not just an emotion. It was not just an attitude. It led Him to act. God so strongly loved all of us sinners that He gave His Son, not just any Son but His only begotten Son. John further described this gift in **I John 4:9-10**. I am not sure we can fathom the unity of fellowship and relationship enjoyed between the Father and Son in heaven. Therefore, we will perhaps never fully grasp what an amazing gift it was that the Son became flesh and came into the world. We will perhaps never fully grasp the intense agony and suffering endured by the Godhead in the moment of Jesus’ sacrifice and separation from God. But God loves the world so strongly He was willing to take that measure. Paul also described this love and put it in perspective in **Romans 5:6-9**.
  - B. God loved all those people we were talking about a moment ago so much He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for them (for us). I think at times we may struggle with that. Sometimes we can hold an us vs. them mentality. God sent His Son for us—but for all those weird and sinful people? Surely not. As though John anticipated this very problem, he said in **I John 2:2** that Jesus was not just our propitiation but the propitiation for the whole world.
  - C. The important question for us right now is do we love the people in the world as strongly as God loves them? God loved people so strongly He gave His Son. Do we love people strongly enough to take the message of salvation through Jesus to them? According to **Romans 10:13-14** explains that none of the people out there will be saved if we do not give them the message of Jesus. What are we willing to sacrifice to get this message to them? Anything? God was willing to sacrifice His only begotten Son. Are we willing to sacrifice time? Effort? Money? Pride? Relationships?

- III. "...that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."
- A. God did not love the world in order to make everyone wealthy. God did not love the world in order to make everyone healthy. God did not love the world in order to fill our hunger. God did not love the world in order to entertain us. God loved the world in order to give us eternal life. As John continued, he wrote in **John 3:17**, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." God loved the world and gave His Son in order to save the world.
  - B. God's goal through Jesus' first coming was to deal out life. When we are involved in taking the gospel to others, what is our goal? Please, do not misunderstand what I am about to say. I certainly recognize that to teach the gospel, we will have to expose error, we will have to judge the nature of doctrine and we will have say and do hard things. However, in our teaching we need to have the same motivation that God had in sending His Son. We must be motivated by passing life on to others. Why do we evangelize? Do we evangelize to put others in their place? Do we evangelize to show everyone else how wrong they are? Or do we evangelize simply to bring the life-giving message of Jesus' death to others?
  - C. As we look at all these people around us, we need to see people who are dead in sin (**Ephesians 2:1**). We need to see people for whom Jesus died so that they do not have to die but have eternal life. We need to take them that message. Then we need to let them decide whether or not they will follow it.

**Conclusion:**

God so loved the world. Do we?