

Because He Came We Must Go!
(The Greatest Verse In The Bible)

John 3:16

Introduction: 1) For centuries it has been both the most well known and loved verse in the Bible. It is the heart of Scripture and the essence of the gospel in just 25 words. It is the story of the Bible in just one verse. Here we find a “divine love story,” the greatest love story: “For God so loved the world” That simple phrase means this verse is for me. That means this verse is for you. This is a verse we must take to our neighbors and this is a gospel, good news, that we must take to the nations. Some who are here today need to personally believe this verse for the very 1st time.

2) The great reformer Martin Luther called John 3:16 “the gospel in miniature.” What is it about this verse that causes such wonder as one reflects and meditates on it?

I. “For God” reveals the greatest provider and lover.

- This verse rightly begins where the Bible begins: with God. He does exist. He is there and He is not silent. God is the one who takes the initiative in salvation. He is the true seeker.
- Romans 5:8 reminds us that, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- The one who loves us is not just anyone one. It is God. The omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, infinite sovereign Lord of the universe acted on our behalf doing for us what we could not and cannot do for ourselves.
- “For God” tells us that salvation comes from the greatest provider and lover.

II. **“So loved” reveals the greatest passion and degree.**

- “So” means to such a degree or in such a manner. It speaks of a particular way of loving. Because it is God who “so loved” the degree is infinite. The word is so small but its meaning is so big.
- “Loved.” The word “love” is an action word. It is not an abstract concept, a warm feeling or sentimental emotion. Love is a choice, a decision, an act of the will whereby you seek another person’s best interest even if it personally costs you. You put their needs first. It is not interested in what it can get but only in what it can give.
- 1 John 4:10 tells us, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins.”
- 1 John 4:19 adds, “We love Him because He first loved us.”

III. **“The world” reveals the greatest possibility and number.**

- Here we see the bigness of God’s heart and the scope of His love. It is the world: every man, every woman, every boy, every girl. It is as Revelation 5:9 affirms every tribe, every tongue, every people, every nation. Black, Brown, Red, White and Yellow. Our God rejoices in the beauty and diversity of the 16,819 people groups in our world. He weeps for the 7, 296 that are still unreached (12-9-13).
- This is why many of you will go to the nations, to the hard and dangerous places. This is why others will go to the great cities and still others to the rural and out of the way places. People everywhere must hear that Christ died for the world and that He died for them.
- Christ died for you, and if it happens to be that you die without Christ and spend eternity in hell you shall forever be haunted by the truth, “Jesus died for me” and I did nothing about it.
- 1 Timothy 4:10 reminds us, “we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.”

IV. **“That He gave” reveals the greatest proof and act.**

- Love is a beautiful 4-letter word. Sometimes it is best spelt G.A.V.E. God gave He did not take.
- He gave and proved His love for the world. He gave and showed His love for sinners who could never save themselves.

- This is what Christmas and the cross are all about: the God who gave. This is why Christmas and Easter must always be seen together.
- Because God gave we give too! We give our resources and we give our lives! The wonderful missionary C.T. Studd famously said, “If Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.” Charles Spurgeon said that out of gratitude for God’s gift, “It is our duty and our privilege to exhaust our lives for Jesus.”

V. **“His only begotten Son” reveals the greatest present and gift.**

- God gave His only begotten, His completely unique, His one of a kind Son.
- With the story of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22) casting its shadow in the background, we now behold a Father giving up His beloved Son for you and for me.
- He gave for it could not be taken! He gave His Son and therefore He could give nothing greater.
- God is the only Father who ever brought a Son into the world for the specific purpose of dying; dying a death that you and I should have died and paying a penalty you and I should have paid.

- Paul in Romans 8:32 says it so beautifully, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.”
- When God gave His Son, He gave His best. And, he gave His best to die.

VI. “That whosoever” reveals the greatest privilege and invitation.

- “Whosoever” is a wonderful word in the context of John 3:16, for it indicates that the way of salvation is open and available to all.
- All sinners are the object of God’s love and the recipients of His invitation to be saved.
- All sinners, all kinds of sinners, all degrees of sinners. There are no racial or social exclusions, no national or geographical limits, no gender or relational exceptions. And, no one is so bad they cannot be saved and no one is so good they do not need to be saved.
- You ask, “How do I know this?” Listen to Jesus in John 6:37, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”
- Still not convinced. Hear Jesus again in Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
- The Bible says “whosoever.” That includes me and that includes you.

VII. “Believes” reveals the greatest path and simplicity.

- Believing, faith, trust, is the one vital link that connects your life to the saving and rescuing love of God found in Jesus.
- God’s love is sufficient to save the world, but it is efficient to save only those who believe. You see God divides the world into 2 distinct and separate groups: saved and lost; believers and unbelievers. It’s that simple. The path is that clear.
- It isn’t your “good life” or social status. It is not your I.Q. or level of education. It is not denominational affiliation, church attendance, or religious activity. It is this: do you trust in Jesus as the only Savior from sin, placing your eternal destiny into His hands?
- For Danny Akin it is simple: if Jesus cannot get me to heaven and give me everlasting life then I will not make it to heaven.
- Jesus said in John 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

VIII. “In Him” reveals the greatest person and power.

- The “in Him” refers to God’s Son. It refers to Jesus. It emphasizes once again the greatness and the awesomeness of the love the Father had for this world of sinners.

- God gave His most precious treasure – His Son Jesus. It was a costly gift. It was a bloody gift. It was a rugged and painful gift. It is a powerful gift.
- “In Him” all of life changes. “In Him” your eternal destiny changes. If any person be “in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things pass away and all things become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

IX. “Should not perish” reveals the greatest promise and deliverance.

- Romans 6:23 teaches us, “The wages of sin is death.” To perish means to die, to die spiritually and to be separated from God eternally. It is not annihilation, going out of existence. There is an existence for all of us on the other side. It is experiencing God’s wrath and judgment, a fiery hell, separation from God and punishment that is eternal and irreversible.

The more you reflect on that, the more precious John 3:16 will become: God loved us enough to give his own Son to rescue us from this perishing, from this eternal punishment.

X. “But” reveals the greatest parting and difference.

- The little word “but” turns the whole verse, it makes all the difference. It takes you from one side of the equation to the other.

- You move from the perishing side to the everlasting life side! What a change in position. What a change in destiny!
- Ephesians 2:4-5 says it so well, “ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

XI. “Have” reveals the greatest peace and certainty.

- God’s gift of eternal salvation and everlasting life is not something you must wait for. You can have it now, today. It can become yours this very moment never to be lost or stolen.
- You ask how can I have it and never fear losing it? Because the one who gives you this eternal salvation is also the one who keeps it for you. Jesus, by His work on the cross obtained our salvation, and by His prayers in heaven He maintains our salvation.
- Hear the words of Jesus in John 10:28-29, “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand.”

XII. “Everlasting life” reveals the greatest possession and blessing.

- Everlasting life or eternal life is often misunderstood. Our perspective often is too narrow. Eternal life is both a quality and quantity kind of life. It is a life you can have right now and it is a life that will never end.
- It is the God-kind of life, a Jesus-kind of life. It is the life Jesus spoke of when He said in John 10:10, “the thief [the devil] does not come except to steal, and kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

Conclusion:

- 1) This is an awesome and monumental moment in this service. It is probably not what you expected. You did not come here today expecting this would be the day of your salvation. You see if you leave today without trusting in Jesus, and you die without Jesus, when you stand before God at His judgment, you will not be able to say, “nobody ever told me this.” Sadly the Lord will say, “that’s not true.” On December 13, 2013, I planned it so that you would be at the winter graduation at Southeastern Seminary to hear my servant Danny Akin explain John 3:16. He told you. You heard him. You really have no excuse.”

2) However, things can be altogether different if you respond with a “Yes” to the greatest verse that speaks of the greatest gift the world has ever known. The love of God rescues all who put their faith in Jesus. That is why we go. That is why we preach. That is why we serve.