

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to John 3

I had sent a youtube link to a short foreign film to everyone on the prayer request list.

Hopefully you guys watched it.

For those of you who didn't watch it –

The name of the short film is “Most”

And the reason for the title is because “most” is the word for bridge in Czech.

And the story is of a single dad and the treasure of his life – his son,

The dad is a bridge man, he keeps the bridge raised for the traffic along the river – and lowers it for the trains to cross the river.

One day, the son comes to work with the father – and the father leaves the son fishing along the river because there is train that is scheduled to come through town –

however, the train shows up early and the son sees it and also sees that the bridge has not been lowered.

So, the son rushes to the bridge to manually lower the bridge and in the process, he falls into the pit where all gears and hydraulics that lower the bridge are located –

The dad seems him fall into the pit.

However, he has to make the decision, if he runs down there to save his son, hundreds of people will die on the train – (by the way, in the beginning of the film – the people on train were all self-centered and rude to each other.)

but if he lowers the bridge, his son is going to be crushed to death

And so what happens is that he sacrifices his son in order to save the people in the train.

And as the train is passing over the bridge, almost everyone on the train (all the jerks) – were oblivious to the sacrifice that had just been made.

They continued being jerks for the rest of the trip.

Except a drug addict who earlier in the film, had an encounter with the son – she saw the sacrifice – she sees the father holding his dead son in his arms as the train passed by – she begins to contemplate what just happened – she realizes the sacrifice that has just occurred – on her behalf.

And as she is about to get high on heroin – she drops the spoonful of heroin.

And at the end of the film – time has passed, the father has moved on and is working at a train station – and he sees the drug addict – except the drug addict is no longer a drug addict, she is clean and she is a new mom.

Her life was transformed.

She responded to the sacrifice that had been made not only on her behalf but on behalf of everyone on the train –

I want to stress that this is not a perfect illustration – Jesus didn't accidentally fall in a pit,

He didn't accidentally end up on the cross –

He tabernacle with us for a purpose – and the was the Father's will.

To make **the** way of salvation for you and me.

This morning, we are going to look at the Greatest Sacrifice ever made – and Jesus will tell us why He did it.

**Let's pray...**

In our study last week, we were introduced to an appointment at night that Jesus had while He was in Jerusalem with a man named Nicodemus.

He was a Pharisee, a strict follower of the scriptures; he was a religious man – who sincerely had tried his best to adhere to Mosaic Law and all the rules and traditions of the scribes and rabbis.

He was a good guy

But, there was a void in his heart. Something was missing.

He wanted to draw closer to God.

And seeing the signs that Jesus had performed, he concluded that Jesus had been sent by God.

So, he shows up wanting information.

What else do I need to do?

Is there something I missed?

Jesus told him that he needed to be “born again”

Nick – you need to be born from above

You need a spiritual rebirth – you need regeneration –

**This is a work of the Holy Spirit**

Nick – this is something that happens by faith.

And we saw in our study last week that Jesus provided the Old Testament illustration of the Bronze serpent on the pole.

“Nick – you want to be saved, you need to look at the bronze serpent upon the pole, you need to look at Me – the bronze serpent of a picture of Me”

You want to be born again – look at Me.

So, this brings us to John 3:16

Without question, John 3:16 is the best-known verse in the entire Bible.

Martin Luther referred to it as “the Bible in miniature” because it sums up the message of Scripture so well.

It beautifully presents the essence of God’s nature and offers us hope of eternal life.

It is the message of the gospel in 25 words.

Let’s read it together.

**[Jhn 3:16-21 NKJV] 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

This is a verse that we are all familiar with.

I didn’t have you highlight it because if by this time it is not highlighted, we need to talk.

We should all be familiar with this verse.

For some of us, this is our favorite verse -

However, if a nonbeliever were to come up to you right now, and ask you “Can you please explain to me John 3:16, what is it all about? Would we be able to give them an answer?

Why did Jesus have to sacrifice His Son?

Why couldn't there be another way?

Would we be able to answer?

Lord willing after this morning, I pray that we would.

Let's look at the first few words.

**For God so –**

The first thing we see in John 3:16 is the source of salvation –

For God –

God initiates salvation.

The question is what God? Buddha? Any of the Hindu deities?

No – the One and only true God

The eternal God

The God of Genesis 1 – the One who created the heavens and the earth

Turn with me to Isaiah 43

**[Isa 43:10-11 NKJV] 10 "You [are] My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I [am] He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. 11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD, **And besides Me [there is] no savior.****

God makes it clear in Isaiah 43:10 - that not only is He the most high God, but that there are no other gods beside Him.

There are no “junior gods.” There are no “second class gods.” Btw – the JW state that Jesus is a god but not Almighty God.

They have the opinion that He is a junior level or a JV god.

And the irony in this is that they came up with their title “Jehova’s witnesses” from Isaiah 43 – the same verse that disproves their own doctrine.

We next have the word “so”

For God **so** –

The word that is used here for “so” means: in this manner or thus – it is a response to something.

For the longest time, I had the misunderstanding that the word “so” here is used to describe the size of God’s love.

As if God loves us “this much” or this “much more” or even “this much”

For example,

I love chocolate ice-cream but I so love Cookies and Cream ice cream and I soooooo love Rocky Road.

However, the idea conveyed here in the Greek is meant to get us to look at what was described in the previous verses.

This is in reference to the Bronze Serpent on the pole

And we looked at that last week.

How the people were saved through the bronze serpent being lifted up on the pole, and the people looking upon and believing.

That is where the “so” comes in....

In response to what God commanded Moses to do and in the manner that the serpent was lifted on the pole, in the manner of lifting His own Son upon a cross – in that manner, God has loved the world.

The next few words are **loved the world**.

The word for love here is the word for unconditional love.

It is a love placed on choice

It is the choice that a person makes to place value on another person.

It is an unconditional kind of love in the sense that it depends not on the object to meet certain requirements, but on the lover, who chooses to love.

This is the same kind of love a husband is to have toward his wife:

**[Eph 5:25 NKJV] 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,**

The kind of love a husband is commanded to have, is a love based on a personal commitment.

It's a love that is based upon a husband's choice to love his wife, not because she can fit into a certain dress size or because she is an awesome cook, but simply because she has chosen to love her.

He has chosen to place a high value of her in his heart,

That is the way God sees us –

He has placed a high value on you and me

And so He loves us unconditionally

Now, before the wives start elbowing their husbands,

We need to be reminded that this is the same kind of love that we are all supposed to have with each other.

**[1Jo 3:16 NKJV] 16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren.**

Sometimes it gets hard loving certain people. But we need to remember that the same value God put on you, God put on them.

We need to go back to John 3:16

We learn to love by seeing how God loves us.

God so loved **the world**

Who is the world?

Is it only the nice people?

One of the main reasons that many people don't respond to the gospel is because they have the wrong mentality that somehow God grades on a curve.

They see all the bad people in their community.

As long as I try and as long as I don't murder anyone – I deserve to go to heaven.

That's not the way it works.

God loves is for the entire world. Sinners included.

**[Rom 5:8 NKJV] 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Here we see the seriousness of our own sin – as well as the object of salvation – which is the world.

**For God so loved the world that **He gave His Son****

In the Greek – the grammar conveys that the practical result of God's unconditional love was giving.

The result of God's love was that He gave His Son

It meant that Jesus had to take on human flesh.

It meant that Jesus would one day die on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins.

Remember when Abraham was taking Isaac up Mt Moriah –

Abraham told Isaac, God will provide for Himself the lamb for burnt offering

And when Abraham raised his knife to sacrifice Isaac, God stopped him.

It was a picture of what would happen on the same mountain years later.

A Father would one day sacrifice His only Son.

God would provide a Lamb.

Here we have the demonstration of salvation in the verse.

Why did God have to give His Son?

Because He saw the problem of our sin.

The Bible says that we have all sinned:

**(Rom 3:23 NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**

Now, no one likes to be labeled a sinner – but the truth is, that is really what we are.

The Bible says that there is a price tag that comes attached to our sin:

**(Rom 6:23 NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

God thinks that this pricetag for sin is higher than He wants us to pay.

So Jesus paid a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay.

This is why God gave us His only begotten Son.

He has freely given to us a priceless gift.

And get this church

He didn't do it – to make us feel guilty

He didn't do it to rub it in our face or because He wanted something in return

His purpose was to demonstrate to us His everlasting love for us is.

**[Rom 8:32 NKJV] 32 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?**

Many times, we question whether God really loves us.

Usually it is when we are going through a difficult time in our lives or during a dry season where we feel that God has not answered our prayers in our timing.

And we lose sight, that if the Father already gave His ultimate gift – His own Son, how can we think that He won't give us smaller gifts.

It is during those times that we need to go back to the basics and recall what God has done for you and me.

**That whoever –**

Who is classified as a whoever?

All people

There isn't one person here who doesn't qualify as a "whoever".

This is the purpose for which God gave His Son, that we might have a chance to believe.

Here we see the offer of salvation – it goes out to all.

Everyone can be saved, but not all of them will, but the gift of salvation is extended to all.

**Believes in Him –**

Jesus told the story about Moses lifting up the bronze serpent, the people believing, and being saved.

Now He reiterates it again.

You must believe in God's Son.

The means by which God saved us was for God to have Jesus be the sacrificial sacrifice for our sins.

The method by which we receive God's payment for our sins is faith.

You see, It's not just enough for God to give the whole world the gift of His Son.

For the gift to be of any value to us, we must accept the gift.

We must believe.

Believing is not just intellectual assent.

It means to trust in, to rely on, and to cling to.

It's putting our confidence in something.

It's not simply agreeing in our mind that Jesus died for our sins.

It's putting our whole confidence in God's plan to save us.

It's placing our entire eternal destiny in God's hands, and trusting that Jesus' sacrifice for you and me was enough to secure us a place in heaven.

This is the requirement of salvation – believe, trust in the free gift.

**- Shall not perish But have everlasting life**

Here we see the intention of God's love.

Those who reject God's free gift of salvation – they will perish.

This means that they will spend eternity in a place of eternal torment.

Isaiah 66 – the last chapter and verse

**[Isa 66:24 NKJV] 24 "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."**

In Isaiah 66, we find a contrast between those who will spend eternity on His presence and those who will spend eternity apart from Him –

One can chose to spend eternity worshipping or one can spend eternity being eaten by worms.

Here is the thing church

God's love actually saves man from eternal destruction.

People ask, "How can a God of love send someone to hell?"

The truth is that God has done the one and only thing to keep us from going to hell.

He paid the price of our sins by sending His only Son.

All we have to do is receive God's payment for us by believing and following after Jesus.

Now, I want to close with this.

Remember, we have to keep everything in context –

We have to go back to the conversation that Jesus was having with Nicodemus.

Nick – you need to be born from above and that is the work of God alone – and guess what Nick – it is available to anyone,

To anyone who believes.

There is no other way Nick.

Why would God do that?

**[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

In the end, God gets all the glory.

And God gets to show up how much He loves us.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

*I would be easy to see a holy God look down on the depravity of man and say, "I am going to break them until they come to me"*

*I am going to make them suffer for their rebellion*

*But it wasn't His anger that sent Christ. Christ didn't come to judge the world. He came into the world to save the world because what motivated the Father was not His anger, but His...What?...His love*

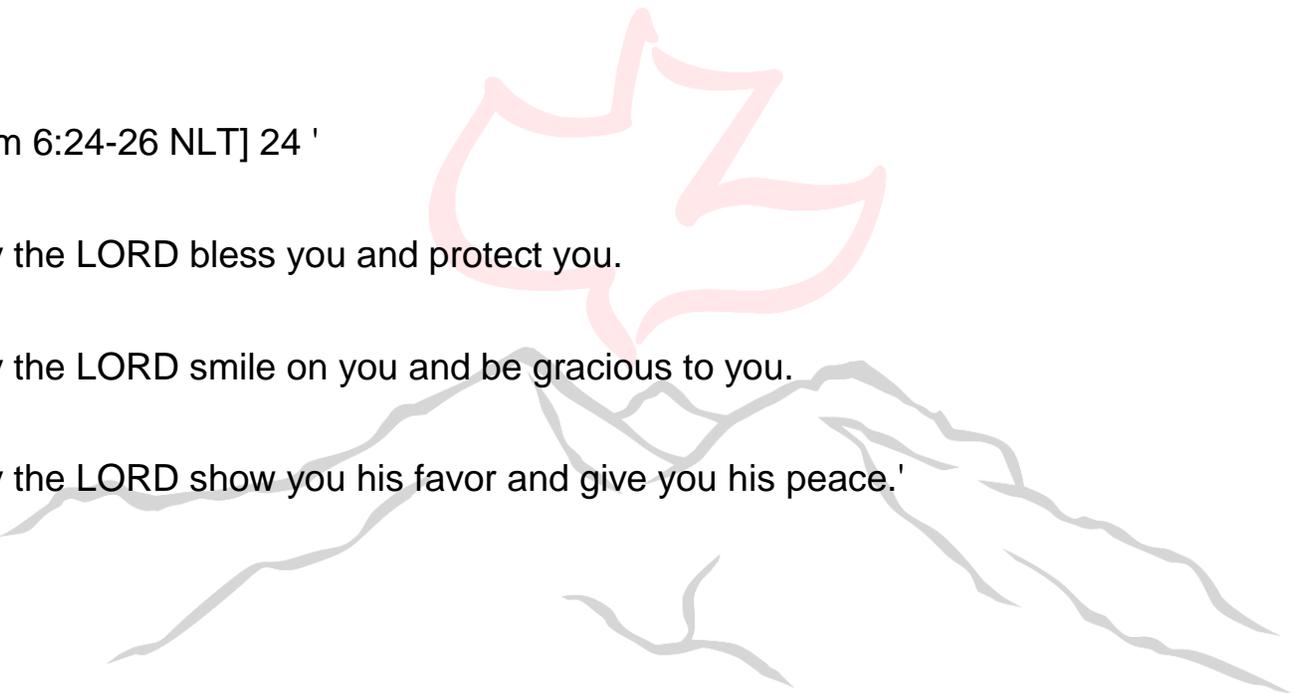
*We learn to love by seeing how God loves us*

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



CALVARY  
Santa Cruz