

John 3:16

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.

We looked at the first part of that wonderful verse two weeks ago. The greatest good who is God, out of the greatest motive which is so loved, toward the greatest evil which is the world that is hostile towards God, gave the greatest gift which is His only begotten Son.

When we say God gave His Son, we mean that God gave His unique, one of a kind, no one equal to who He is Son. He did not give Him for the purpose of life, but for the purpose that He might die. That is part of the Gospel. The Gospel or the good news is that Jesus Christ came to the earth to live, He died according to scriptures and He was raised from the dead according to scriptures to forgive us our sins, and give us eternal life.

This brings us to the second part of John 3:16, "That whosoever believeth in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life."

This part of the verse answers the question of what the purpose of God giving His only Son. The purpose of God giving His only Son because of His great love for the world is that those who trust Jesus Christ will not perish but have everlasting life.

Being a true Baptist pastor, let's look at three things regarding this part of the verse.

Great Peril

"The ones believing on Him should not perish..."

That's the great peril. What does that mean? What does it mean to perish? It means to be destroyed. In context of biblical truth, it means to receive God's final and eternal judgment. Look further into John 3, and we will notice further explanation of what it means to perish. I want to show you two verses. First is...

3:18 - He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already,

To be judged in this verse is to be in a continuous state of condemnation. A person who is condemned by a state because of a crime has been put in a position where he will be destroyed, and nothing will stop that from happening.

Add to this truth comes a further truth from Romans 8:1. There is, therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. "Condemnation" further explains the peril of perishing. It is being in the state of being condemned as if the punishment of the condemnation has already taken place.

3:36 - He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

The phrase "the wrath of God abides on him" is further description of perishing. Wrath is the burning anger God has toward sin. It is His settled, holy displeasure against sin and against the one who is in sin.

Did you notice another commonality that is found threaded through those verses. There is the connection between believing and eternal life. There is also a connection between not believing and perishing, condemnation, and subject to wrath.

So, this is what I want you to hear based on that. Jesus Christ did not come in the first coming in order to make a way for mankind to be condemned, to perish, to be subject to God's wrath. The mission of Jesus' first coming was to provide the way for forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Judgment, condemnation, perishing, and being subjected to the wrath of God are the consequences of sinners rejecting Jesus. I repeat verse 18. He who believes in Him is not judged, but he who does not believe has been judged already. By not responding to Christ in an affirmative way is to respond by saying no. You don't have to say "No." You're already in state of condemnation simply because you are a human. You by nature have already rejected Him. By rejecting Him, you subject yourself to perishing, condemnation, and the wrath of God.

There is no greater fear and dread that I know of that should strike at the heart of mankind than the fear and dread of facing the wrath of an Almighty, All-powerful God. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

Great Provision

As stated, the first mission of Jesus Christ was not to make the way for us to be condemned. It is quite the opposite. That is the message of the first part of John 3:16.

There is another verse I want us to look at that emphasizes the provision of God for forgiveness and eternal life.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Literal translation is "The one not knowing sin by the mere fact that He never experienced it He made to become sin for us. The "He" of "He made" is God. God made Jesus who knew no sin to become sin for us for the purpose that we may become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus is our substitute. The Holy, unblemished, sinless Jesus Christ, Son of God, became sin for me. He then died the death I deserved for the purpose that I may become righteousness of God in Him.

That's what John 3:16 is all about. That is the Gospel. That is the Good News!

There was once this little girl who was in need of blood. Because of the circumstances of that girl's condition in her blood, the only match that was found was her older brother. He was still an innocent child. The little brother was willing to give the blood needed. All the way to the hospital, he kept talking about it. When they did take what was needed, the way he reacted made all who saw this realize that the brother thought the sister was going to take all of his blood to live. He was willing to die for his sister.

Great Promise

The ones believing in Him will not perish, but will have everlasting life, eternal life. That's the promise. That's reality we can know and enjoy now. That is the hope we have for the future. Whether we live or die, Christ.

Eternal life is God's life in us. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly." That is eternal life. It is life lived in the presence of God. With His presence, we have purpose for living through His guidance. As we journey through the rest of this life, eternal life changes from the here and now to the hereafter. Heaven is our home. But in the meantime, enjoy the journey until we get there. Yet, so many miss that part.

One person uses the analogy of a busload of tourists heading to the Grand Canyon from the central part of the country. On the long journey across the wheat fields of Kansas and through the glorious mountains of Colorado, the travelers inexplicably keep the shades down. Intent on the ultimate destination, they never even bother to look outside.

As a result, they spend their time arguing over such matters as who has the best seat and who's taking too much time in the bathroom.

The church can resemble such a bus, says my friend. We should remember that the Bible has far more to say about how to live during the journey than about the ultimate destination.

There is a condition to the promise. It is stated in the phrase, "whosoever believeth in Him." Literally, "the one faithing or believing in Him."

Faith is needed. It is not head knowledge. Faith is a verb. It is acting in trust. Giving your all to Him while forsaking everything else. It is sitting in the seat of Jesus, allowing Him to take your life from here.

A philosopher, a scientist, and a simple man—none of whom could swim—were trapped in a cove with sheer cliff faces. They split up, but the tide kept coming in. To each one, rescuers lowered a rope with a safety harness.

The philosopher said, "Ah, this looks like a rope, but I might be mistaken—it could be wishful thinking or an illusion." So he didn't attach himself, and he was drowned.

The scientist said, "Ah, this is an 11 mm polyester rope with a breaking strain of 2800 kg. It conforms to the MR 10-81 standard." The scientist then proceeded to give an exhaustive, and entirely correct, analysis of the rope's physical and chemical properties. He talked about the rope, but he didn't attach himself to it, and he was drowned.

The simple man said, "Ah, I'm not sure if it's a rope or a python tail, but it's my only chance, so I'm grabbing it and holding on with my whole life." He did, and he was pulled to safety.

Of course other things being equal, it is better to have an enlightened faith in God than an unenlightened faith. But mere intellectual understanding that does not lead to trust and action is not what God is after. He simply wants you to put your full trust in Him.