

April 14th, 2013
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Title: The Verse the Bible is About
Sermon Text: (John 3:16-17)

Henry Moorehead preached from the age of 16 to the age of 33, and every sermon that he ever preached, he preached from John 3:16

- It has been said that John 3:16 is the Bible in a verse. I would say the Bible is John 3:16 in Volumes.

- This verse is not the summary of the scriptures, the scriptures are an exposition of this verse.

- I cannot say anything that hasn't been said about John 3:16. But I would also say there is nothing worth saying, that is not about John 3:16

- It is the simplest verse in the Bible to remember, and the hardest one to forget.

- It is so simple that a kindergarten girl can understand it, and yet it is so profound that the greatest minds humanity has ever known, has never gotten out of it, all there is.

- it is the explanation of the meaning of it all

- it is not possible to exhaust all that this verse contains.

It stands all by itself, like a gem against any background. However in its proper setting, its beauty is even greater.

- Jesus has been teaching the teacher Nicodemus,
 - he was teaching him about the new Birth
 - and saving faith - and he has been explaining to him the meaning of that event in the Old Testament

in which God told Moses to make a brass serpent used to heal a snake-bitten people – in Numbers 21

- And it seems as though at the end of that conversation, Jesus boils the whole Bible into a verse, that even a scholar could understand.

- If you have ever wondered what the Bible is all about, here it is. – The Bible is a 66 volume exposition of this precious verse.

I. The Power that is Above it All – “For God so loved”

A. The Person of God

1.) Jesus began where the Bible begins, with God!

- When Jesus begins his summary with Nicodemus, he begins with the Person of the Creator – God! –

- a.) “theos” – it is the word for the Supreme Being!

- b.) John 3:16 is the New Testament version of Isaiah 45:22 – “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

2.) The plan of Salvation begins with the God of Creation. – When you start with God the Son, ultimately you've not backed up far enough, because the scripture says it all begins here with God the Father.

3.) To borrow a quote from the late Baptist preacher, Vance Havner, he said,

“There is much talk nowadays about Christocentric preaching . . . much of which falls short of the mark. The plan of Salvation begins not with the Christ, but with God and His holiness . . .”

4.) It is God the Creator, that man has Violated!

*Note – When you read John 3:16, you ought to be able to see, that the Person central to all things is the God of Creation.

- It is Him that we answer to.
- It is Him that we either obey, or disobey
- It is Him that we either please, or displease
- It is Compared to Him, that we have become intrinsically wicked.

*Note – Here in this verse is man's Divine Standard of Measurement for Moral Purity and Spiritual Righteousness.

- It is GOD!

- When you go to measure yourself, don't drag someone out of the ghetto, to line yourself up against, and say, "hey' now – compared to them, I'm pretty good."
- The Bible says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Friend when we measure ourselves against a wretch, all we've proven is that we may be a better wretch.
- The best wretch is still a wretch, the best of the wicked is still wicked.
- This verse tells us that God is the source of the meaning of all things, the strength behind the movement of all things, and the standard for the measurement of all things.
- therefore to understand John 3:16, you have to begin with the person of God!

B. The Passion of God – "this verse also gives us the passion and character of God."

1.) "God So Loved the world."

- a.) Those two words, "so loved" could never be exhausted:
- b.) When it comes to the Heart of God, those words tell us both "Fact" and "Feeling" both "Desire" and "Degree."

2.) This verse tells us the FACT of God's Love!

*Note – No man, can ever say that God does not love them, because no man can ever diagnose the heart of God from the outside in.

- Jesus Loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!

*Note – I want to say this – when a man knows where to look, he can't help but see the inexhaustible love of God. – However, whether a man knows where to look or not is irrelevant, because God has openly declared His Love for the World!

- You will never judge God's love by what you see, you must receive God's love by what He says!

- The Love of God is beyond your ability to fully understand, and clearly make sense.

- We know He Loves us, if for no other reason, because He says He does. – Yet we do have other reason to believe it.

a.) 1 John 4:8-9 – "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ⁹ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

*Note – God's love, is not a love that will be held hostage to man's puny understanding. God's love is a love that He defines, and displays for all to see.

Adrian Rogers said once, - "A man may go to hell unsaved, but he will never go unloved."

- No sinner can ever rightly say that God doesn't love them.

b.) Romans 5:8 – "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

If there are two things that the first part of this verse tells us, it tells us of the Person of God, and it tells us of the Passion of God.

*Note – But this great verse also teaches us the problem afflicting us all.

II. The Problem that is Afflicting All – it tells us of the Problem of “Perishing.”

This verse tells us the fate of the natural world, and if there is no divine intervention, perishing awaits us all.

- This verse asserts that this is a perishing world.

Perish – “apollomee” – to destroy fully –

- Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

- Natural man left alone, comes to a natural death, and then a permanent destruction.

- Here is what incites a loving God to react? A people that are perishing!

2 Peter 3:9 – tell us that “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Ezekiel 33:11 – “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

*Note – Why then, if left alone, is humanity perishing?

A. Present Guilt – vs 18

1.) “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already.”

*note – What was the sin of Adam and Eve? – It was the sin of unbelief. When unbelief entered the heart of the first parents, they could do nothing but birth a race of unbelievers!

2.) verse 19 – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men

loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

*Note – Men are born with one problem that has two legs. They are not born believing God, and they are born loving wrong!

B. Future Grief – “perish”

1.) There are two destinies offered in this verse: 1.) Perishing, or Everlasting life.

*Note – When you let the rest of the scriptures expound upon this verse, you find that ultimately the destinies are either everlasting life, or everlasting perishing.

- this is not annihilation, or ceasing to exist.

- it is the idea of existing in complete destruction.

*note – To borrow from Jerry Vines, “once in hell, always in hell.”

2.) Man left alone and unlearned, is headed off into an eternity of hell.

- Hell is a place of “no return”, “no relief,” and “no redemption.”

*Note - The pain of punishment will be without the fruit of penitence; weeping will be useless, and prayer ineffectual. Too late they will believe in eternal punishment who would not believe in eternal life. - Cyprian (200-258)

*Note – The greatest tragedy of it all, is that God never intended for any man to go there. – The Bible teaches us that hell was created for the devil and his angels, and when men believed the devil, there was no alternative, but for men to be judged with the devil.

*Note – No man is sent there, he winds up there because he will not turn to the Lord for help.

3.) 2 Thessalonians 2:10 tells us that men perish, “because they received not the love of the truth.”

*Note – It is the “Perishing” of man, that touched the Loving Heart of God, that caused Him to take action.

III. The Plan that is Available to All

God so loved, “that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

- I want you to note the “whosoever” of this verse. – This word is even better than your own name.

- He could have written, that if “Jeff Haney” believeth he should not perish. – If I read that I could still say, “which Jeff Haney?” – “Whosoever” is best possible word that Jesus could have given us.

A. Is a Plan of Giving and Receiving

1.) God so loved that he “Gave”

a.) God’s interaction was to just “Give Man” Salvation.

b.) God gave:

(1.) Sacrificially – “His only natural born son.”

*note – God the Father, was the biological father of Jesus of Nazareth. – He was the only man ever born for the sole purpose of dying.

(2.) Substitutionally – gave His Son to be tried, convicted, and sentenced, and punished, in the place of the guilty, so the guilty wouldn’t have to perish.

*Note – God satisfied both His Justice, and His Love when He gave His son to die!

- That is a Love beyond the pale of human logic and reason!

2.) The Bible says in Romans 5:7-8 – “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸ But God commendeth his

love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

3.) What on earth was God doing? –

*Note – Here is the most wonderful picture – “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . .” 2 Corinthians 5:19

*note – To borrow an analogy from another preacher, the scriptures paint for us a precious picture of what God was doing . . .

- The rest of 2 Corinthians 5:19 – tells us that he was “not imputing our trespasses against us.”

- Romans 4:21-22 speaking of Abraham – “being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

- Ephesians 1:11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,

Here is what Saved people can know:

- In the ledgers of glory, where God has tallied all of the debts that I owe Him, and kept accurate record, you would find at the very bottom, the summary debt of Jeffrey Haney – “Transferred to the account of Jesus Christ.” – That is Forgiveness!

But that’s not all.

- In those same ledgers of glory, where God has kept account of the eternal riches of Jesus Christ, and all the wealth of heaven, you would find at the very bottom, the summary totaled – “Transferred to the account of Jeffrey Haney” – That’s Love!

- In forgiveness He has transferred my sins to Christ’s account.

- In love He has transferred Christ’s righteousness and riches to my account!

4.) It must be “Received” – It is a giving/receiving plan – “that whosoever believeth”

- believeth in him, on him, toward him,
 - it is the same idea as the Old Testament requirement for those snake bitten people to turn and look to the brass serpent for healing.
 - it is believing enough to trust and obey!

*Note – It is as simple as believing, but it is not “cheap believing.” – It is believing enough to trust and obey! – It is the kind of faith that trusts!

*Note – Sometimes we ask have you ‘received’ Christ? – A gift that is not received is of no avail! – We receive it by believing!

B. Is a Plan of Living and Rejoicing

1.) What is it that God is giving, in the place of perishing? – Eternal Life!

a.) This is in direct reference to the New Birth – when Jesus said, “ye must be born again.”

- what crime can you charge a newborn child with?
- when a person is born again, it is as though their past life no longer exists!

- A Person with a New Life, has No Past! – “I’ve already been forgiven of my lost life, and I’ve already been endowed with my new life!

- When someone is born again, they no longer have a past, only a future.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

- Literally, at the point of Salvation, there is no lost life to give an account for! – Christ endured the

penalty for it, and there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

- It is not just that my old sin no longer exists, my Everlasting life has begun!

*Note – Note what he says, “He gives that we might Have”

Conclusion: - I have news for you. – The Hokie Pokie is not what it’s all about!

- It is all about The Power that is Above it All
- It is about the Problem that Afflicts us All
- It is about the Promise that is Available to All.

2009 College Football National Championship – Tim Tebow eyeball – John 3:16, was searched out on the internet in one 24 hour period, 90 million times.

- There is no greater testimony to the tragedy of human ignorance, and evangelistic failings, than 90 million people trying to find a verse that is second nature to most Bible believing Christians.

- May we do better with getting John 3:16 to the world.