

A Valentine From God

We have just celebrated Valentine's Day. For Kathy and me it was an exchange of chocolate and a dinner at a restaurant. That is nothing compared to the expression of love from God. I saw on Facebook a "Valentine from God." It uses the John 3:16 verse as the text and highlights in red the word Valentine vertically, linking God to us.

John 3:16 summarizes a core message of the Christian faith. Looking at this verse, several things stand out:

For God so loved the world – God loves all people, not just believers. We live in a lost world that includes us as well as others. Jesus was sent on a rescue mission to save a lost world, and to save us. The "world" refers to all the people on earth. The word "so" means "a lot" – a deep, passionate love.

Jesus as **the only begotten son** – Jesus is God's supreme sacrifice, the only Son of God. The brutal sacrifice of Jesus is an act of love for each of us.

That whoever believes in Him – the word "believe" in Greek means a "personal commitment," not just an acknowledgement of existence. Likewise, just *knowing* Jesus died on the cross for your sins is not enough. We must *believe* Jesus is our own personal Lord and Savior for our belief to truly say we believe.

Shall not perish but have eternal life – God views life as a precious gift. After all, He created it. Jesus endured great suffering, paying our debt in full, so that we could be granted eternal life. It is not something we earn, but a gift from God. Eternal life is the exact opposite of eternal death. Both are very real. For non-believers death is forever. For true believers, we seek eternal life with God.

Question: While February 14th – the manmade Valentine's Day has passed, His love for believers with a personal commitment to Him, goes on eternally. Jesus is God's gift to us. The question is: Are you willing to receive it?

Closing Prayer: In most devotions I write a prayer that summarizes the topic. On this subject, the closing prayer is up to you to create and say the words. No one can write it for you. If you are willing to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you need to tell Him in your own words. It is your own personal commitment.

Note: The Gospel of John focuses on "why" Jesus came to earth to be among us. It differs from the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) that explain who Jesus is and what He did on earth. Understanding its meaning is key for us to understand the "why" of Jesus' ministry.

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