

God So Loved. He Gave. He Preserved
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Bible Text: John 3:16
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Let's join our hearts in prayer this morning.

Dear Heavenly Father, how gracious and holy thou art. We thank thee, O Lord, for thy great faithfulness and thy love and thy mercy, Lord, for things we are not intelligent enough to speak about, that all that we see and all that we know can never come to what you know and what you reveal. Lord, may you now in this hour reveal the depth, the height, the width, the everything that is thy love this morning to thy people. May you be pleased to bring us to thy feet to hear thy word as only thou can bless us with. Bless this time for the glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

This morning we'll do things a little differently. We're going to go and start reading and we're going to read down to our text this morning. So we're going to begin in John 2:23. We'll read to the text and then we'll settle in in what the Lord has provided this day. John 2:23,

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered

and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Then our text this morning,

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.

I'm amazed as I read this account that it was preached to one man and is preached many times today and from pulpits that it's an invitation to man to come to Christ which certainly it is not. If the Lord is pleased and the Lord has been pleased to reveal the truth to you this morning, what you saw in that text that we just read was a particular salvation. That's why we backed up in chapter 2. We started Jesus knows what's in all men. Jesus did not join himself to all men but he did call one to him, he called one of his lost sheep, he called Nicodemus to him. At that moment then, the Lord began to plow and began to reveal to Nicodemus where true life really is and how a child of God, one chosen of the Father and one whom the Son would die for, would ever be able to believe.

This morning, I want to look at this proclamation of assurance. We just sang that song, "Blessed Assurance." This verse today and our text, John 3:16, is blessed assurance. It is blessed assurance to the child of God. It shows him as the Lord is revealed to him that he has died for him and first and foremost that he believes in him, and how that takes place. We're going to look at that this morning. We're going to look at three things I hope we see in our text today that God so loved, he didn't just love, he so loved. We're going to speak about that. Lord willing, we'll speak about God gave. He gave his only begotten Son. And finally we will speak about God's preservation, how that he has preserved those to never perish who believe in him.

So this morning, I want to start in our text, John 3:16. By introduction, we've already read up to this point but we're going to back up a little bit again because our text starts with the three letter word, "for," because it's connected. It's connected not only to what we just read but more specifically it's connected to 14 and 15 and Jesus says this after he said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." So if you will, turn with me back to Numbers 21 real quick and we'll see what Jesus is talking about, this fulfillment of this passage of salvation, and I pray this morning as we read this account in Numbers 21, when we see what the Lord had preserved in history but foreshadowed the Son to come, and I hope you will be referring to it many times because, well, we'll just get in.

Chapter 21, verse 4, says this, "And they journeyed," this is the Israelites as they were in the wilderness, "they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." Let's stop there a minute because I can identify with a passage like that. I know that in the way that the Lord has ordained for me to walk in this life, I've been much discouraged at many times. I've been much discouraged at myself and the things I see in myself. I'm much discouraged in others that I see. I'm much discouraged in the world that I live in. So I can understand that. I can understand the fallen nature that's in man to be discouraged no matter how much the Lord has done for him.

That's where we picked up here in Numbers 21 because the Lord had already delivered them, the Lord had already delivered them through the Red Sea, the Lord had already delivered them many times and yet that stubborn hardness of heart always raises its head to say, "Lord, you haven't done enough," and there's a discouragement now because of the way that they're wandering in the wilderness and the people spoke against God. You say, "Wow, that's horrible how people speak against God," but the very truth of the matter is every time that we complain, every time that we murmur against God's providence, we speak against the Lord. We speak and we wonder and we say, "Why, God?" That little three letter word which we always love to use, why. Why are things the way that they are?

"And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." They were provided manna. The Lord rained down manna from heaven. He gave it to them as a sign of the bread of life that would come down, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would be the sustenance of life for all of his people, and just as man does today in religion, just as man did many years ago, they get sick of it.

I thought about that this morning as we came to our text this morning in John 3:16 and I thought about you and I thought about me as we sit and we think about that text. We've heard it a million times in our life probably, and maybe some of us in here are starting to say, "Well, that's not nothing new. I've heard that text 100 times in my life. I might have heard 100 sermons on that text. Why do I have to hear it again today?" The same same mindset as in the people here in Israel. The same mindset, "We're sick of it. We're sick of what God has given us." And I know that's very easy for us to put that to the people that are outside of Christ because they don't want Christ. They call out for his crucifixion, they call out for, "Get him away from me!" But there's something in us that lurks every day of our life that does the same and that's what magnifies the warfare, and if it wasn't for the graciousness of this gift that we speak of today, for God sending his Son to die for his people, to save his people from their sins, we would die in that same mindset that floods this world today, but because of this gift, we are saved, we are washed, we are renewed, we are forgiven, forgiven for these thoughts, we are forgiven for our hardness of heart, we are forgiven for our complaining spirit.

So the people "loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents," this is verse 6, chapter 21 of Numbers, "And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." Do you see that? This gift that you will see that God gave, he gave to a particular people. Many died that day. Many died because they were bitten by fiery serpents that the Lord sent for judgment. That fiery serpent is sin. That fiery serpent is the things that we do in the hardness of our heart, and the fallen nature that we do, and the thoughts of sin, and the easiness or the willingness to believe in the wicked one, and without forgiveness, without the blood of Christ to cover that, without that pole being lifted up, without our eyes lifted up upon him, we will surely die, we will surely perish. Don't miss that. Many people died. Many people.

"Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So they came to Moses as an intercessor and they said, "Pray to the Lord. We have been convinced of our sin. We've been convinced of our hardness. We see that the end of our hardness and the end of our complaining is death." And they came and they asked and they beseech Moses to pray for the people. Isn't that what the Lord tells us as he convinces us of sin? We are brought to the throne of God, we are brought to the mercy seat to beg and plead our cause with our Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Intercessor who goes and intercedes on our behalf, who stands before an Almighty Father and as he looks at his Son, he sees us in him, clothed in his righteousness. All of this wickedness put away. All of our complaining put away. This is the blessedness of the gift that keeps on giving. As the Lord has revealed himself to you today as you sit in that seat and he has given you the gift of faith to believe in him, he will not just give it today, he will give it tomorrow as it pleases him. He will give it in the next five hours as it pleases him. He will give it in a week as it pleases him because without it we cannot please him, without it we cannot believe, we cannot understand.

I've said this many times from up here and it really makes an impact on me when I read the old writers and they say and they talk about the hardness of their heart and how even at the time that the Lord brings them through a trial, even at the pinnacle of that time they cannot believe, they cannot see God as a Deliverer, they cannot see the blood of Christ, they cannot see Christ fighting for them and they say that same saying and I believe it today, it be more possible for them at that moment to make a world as God made than it would for them ever to bring belief out of their soul and to believe in and of themselves because of our fallen nature. The faith of the Son of God is a gift of God, it is a gift to his people.

"And the LORD said unto Moses," verse 8, "Make thee a fiery serpent." You say, "Why? It was the fiery serpent..." Well, he had to be made sin. He had to be made the very thing that killed the people. He was the remedy.

"Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." We've all been bitten by our fall in our daddy Adam. We all have. We've all been bitten by sin and the only remedy that was foreshadowed here that is spoken and culminated in John's epistle in John 3:16 tells us

that the Son of man was lifted up, the Son of God was lifted up and whosoever, and we just saw that there were many who died, but this world that Jesus died for, not one of them will ever perish. Not one of them. None of them. So I think it's easy to see that in this passage we see there were people outside of that world, don't we, that died and perished because they were not given the faith to look up.

Now I want you to think about that a minute. I want you to think about, picture yourself in a wilderness with fiery snakes all around. Picture yourself running from one place to another looking for someone to save you. I've got kids, the kids are going to look to their mom and dad, they're going to look and say, "Daddy, can you help us? Mom and dad, can you help me? How are we going to stay away from these snakes? Tell us what to do. Tell us what to do." That's what we do, we look around, how are we going to be saved? How did these people look up and see that snake from the top of that pole? It's the faith of the Son of God. It wasn't happenstance. Whoever the Lord saved, whoever the Lord ordained to be saved were saved. Not one more. Not one less.

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Now let's go back to our text in John 3:16 and we begin this morning, we've talked about the word "for," because now "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world." For God so loved the world. The world of his elect that complain every day. The world of his elect that are not worthy for such a great gift. I'm mesmerized and I think about how great this love is. I can't even get to the depth of it. Paul said he longed to know what the breadth and depth of the Lord's love is because as much as we know, there's so much we don't know. That's why that little word "so" is in there, God so loved.

Well, what kind of love is it? You and I don't understand that love because 1 John 4:8 tells us that God is love, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." He is the, I won't say example, he's the exemplary, he is the love that everything else is measured by. He is the perfectness of love, God is. God is love and God so loved this world and we're going to talk about that more in a minute but this love is an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." It was of the Lord's mercy to draw those ones to look up to that pole to save them and it's of the Lord's mercy to draw his people to him after he said, "The Father will draw all of them to me."

That is such a surety. I began this message by saying we sang that song, "Blessed Assurance," it is a great assurance to know what God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost has done on behalf of this world, for this world. He so loved it, he so loved the people that he elected before the foundation of the world and he placed them in his Son. He placed them in his Son, in the perfect ark. That's the only place you could ever be that you could live everlastingly, and everlasting means from everywhere we look

from today as far out as we can see and even farther. But that's not all, it's also looking from today and as far back as we can ever see. It's everlasting. He uses the term, John uses them interchangeably, eternally and everlasting, because they're the same to the child of God. Everything begins in Christ and everything begins in the eternity of Christ. The Sonship of Christ, the gift of the Father, the sealing of the Holy Ghost, all of this happened according to his will for his good pleasure before the foundation of the world.

When left to ourselves, as we saw, if you didn't pick up on that, when you look at Nicodemus' answers beginning in verse 4, I want you to see the man-centeredness.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus, and I don't fault Nicodemus because he is only walking in the light that he had and all he could understand was the physicalness of what Jesus was saying, "You must be born again," and he took the knowledge that he had about birth and he said, "Okay, I understand this," but notice how he says this, he puts salvation still in man's hands when he says, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he," can that man, "enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" He's still creature-centered. That's the way he's always sat in the synagogue. He's always listened to the Pharisees. He was a Pharisee and he had that formalized religion that always puts man at the center of it and Jesus came and told him of this particular salvation and said, "It has nothing to do with man. You must be born from above. You have nothing to do with this. This birth is a gift. This birth is of the Spirit." And he removes man right out of it, but if you see, if you go down to 9 now, Nicodemus after everything Jesus told him and how he was "born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," he puts a perfect delineation, "What you say is born of the flesh, what I say is born of the Spirit," and he puts a perfect division.

Then he talks about how the Spirit moves and how man can never detect the work of God. He can't see it. His eyes see the physical. We need Christ, we need the Holy Spirit to see into the spiritual realm. We're not spiritual people. We don't walk around saying, "Oh, I'm spiritual today therefore I can discern all things." No, we're dependent upon the Lord to reveal himself to us. He lives and dwells with us. The Holy Spirit is there to illuminate Christ in our life.

"Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?" Nicodemus is having a huge problem understanding this because he's not been enlightened, he's not been shown yet the depth of the gift of God in Jesus Christ. He has not been shown. Now we do know over time that will happen. We do know. We know that Nicodemus who came to Christ by night, which was little faith but it was faith, to be given to come by night later would beg the body of Christ because he wasn't scared of man anymore. His love for the Lord was because the Lord loved him. We see that later, we see the Lord's fruit is always borne out in his people. We see it. He's faithful. He's faithful to do it. He removes the fear. He removes the fear of man. He removes all of it in his time.

Right now he's having trouble believing, he's having trouble understanding and if we're left to ourselves, it's hard for us to understand it too. It really is because Paul wrote in

Romans 5:8, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Do you know what Jesus is telling Nicodemus and what Paul said in that passage? There's no merit in man. There is nothing that man ever did that God said, "Because man did this, I'm going to save them." Never. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. His salvation as a lamb slain before the foundation of the world and came in time, when he came in time. That's what we talk about today, when God sent his Son he loved this elect world so much that he sent his only Son to die for them.

Now we all in here have sons and children in the room and as men we know how hard that would be, in fact that's impossible, absolutely impossible to do such a thing, to send our son or one that we love to die for enemies, to die for those who hate us, to die for those who are estranged from us or hate us, like I said. We wouldn't do it. We wouldn't do it. It magnifies the love of God that he sent not only his Son but he sent himself because he and the Father are one. He sent himself to die in the place of this elect world to save them from certain death. Absolute death.

But what about this world that he loved? What about this world that he loved? Well, two things I can tell you, it is not the world that Jesus said he would not pray for, it cannot be because we have an Intercessor that prays for us all the time. We have an Intercessor that intercedes for us so we know that the Scriptures tell us that Jesus said, "I pray not for the world," so it can't be that world because he prays for us, and it can't be the world that John wrote about when he told us not to love the world. It can't be them because the children of God love one another. It is a great commandment of the Lord to love one another. It is the work of Christ in the soul to love one another for we have many worlds defined for us and Jesus defined for Nicodemus a set particular world. That's why I said we backed up to John 2. It's important to know that Jesus knew what was in all men and it's also important to know that he withdrew himself to all men and then went to reveal himself to the ones that were his and that's where we have this account.

So, yes, it is a particular world but in that particular world Jesus has a number that is as the sand of the seashore, as the stars of the sky, that every one of them he reveals himself to as their salvation and that there is no other name given under heaven whereby they must be saved. He is life. He is the salvation of his people. For God so loved the world. As I said earlier, he did it, why did he do it? We think about these things sometimes, we're challenged with these questions and I always go back to Ephesians 1:5 for that, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." It pleased the Triune God to have this plan of salvation and no other plan. No matter how it's hatched out, no matter how man approaches God today, no matter what he brings in his hand, no matter what Cain sacrificed, he comes up, no matter what works, no matter what merit, the Lord is not a respecter of persons but what he is is a respecter of his will and his work that he has done on behalf of his children.

"For God so loved the world," then we get into God gave. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." He gave. He gave what Paul called an unspeakable gift. The more I speak up here to you today, the more he becomes unspeakable to me. The

more I think about the depth of love, the more I understand I don't know it. I can't sit and explain it to you because it's too deep for me to understand. The more I speak about what Christ has done, the more I'm incapable to explain it to you because it's not found in me to do any of those things. It is an unspeakable gift. It is a gift that was given out of great grace.

God gave himself and it was a perfect gift. You know, I know it's wrong for us to do this at Christmas time or whatever but we can judge and we judge God's love based on the measure of his gift, how great that gift was. And we do it. I mean, we do it. When we get things, we think about how much thought went into it or does that person love me that gave me that? We do that. We always question things but there's no questioning God's gift. The measure of his love was he gave his only begotten Son. The most precious thing to him he gave. He gave it willingly. He gave it out of great love. He gave it perfectly.

James 1:17 tells us, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Every perfect gift comes down from the Father through the Son and that perfect gift that he gave, I often think about this time of year and we've been lecturing the children in school in John and when we got to this passage, the Lord spoke to me in it and told me that would be my next text whenever I was up here, so that's why I'm here preaching from this text. It's funny, 18 years since the time the Lord ordained me to preach the Gospel and this is the first time I've ever preached from this passage. There's shame in that but I also feel in awe. I feel in awe to even be brought to this passage because it's so deep but it's been something that's been so impressed upon my mind and my heart this last week or two weeks, it's been a different season for me because the Lord has just peeled back another layer, another film off my eyes to see more depth into what this great gift really is. It really is perfect. It is a gift that I could never repay. It's a gift that the Lord knows exactly what his people need and that they need his Son and that they need him every day.

Romans 5:15 says, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Death came upon all men by one man, Adam's fall, and God sent forth his Son to show that death is no longer a possibility, is no more a reality, and has been defeated by the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Once again, the depth of this gift, loving so much that that fear of death that we have all our life, that the Lord gave us a gift to conquer that that takes the fear and the sting of death away; that the gift that he gave us was resurrected to show us that there is a life beyond here, to show us that life is only in Christ; that he has conquered death; that he has put it away, and as many times as we will be scared of it in this life and as many times as we are, may the Lord bring us to this gift to show us that this gift is the antidote, this gift is the reason for life and not for death.

Romans 6:23 tells us, "The wages of sin is death." We saw that. We saw that in Numbers 21. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. God gave. "For God so

loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." His only Son. That gift and this is what is in this gift, conquering of death, life, everything, all mercy, all love, all grace to live, all power to live, not the spirit of fear, no condemnation, which we'll get to.

Ephesians 2:8 tells us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." That bleeds into the last part of our text.

God so loved. God gave. God preserved and he preserved by giving a gift in his Son that out of his Son comes this other gift, faith. You see, everything comes from the Son so we can say it's the Son, faith is the Son. Yes, it is. Love is the Son. Yes, it is. Peace is the Son. Yes, it is. Everything is him and one of those gifts is to believe on him. To believe on him.

You know, it amazes me. I've read a lot in my life, I really have, a lot of religious books, I'll call them that. Some of them sound, some of them not very sound. A lot of them put a lot of prerequisites on man, "If you do this, then God loves you. If you've done this, if you belong to this people, God loves you." But when we look at the word of God, he tells us something that whosoever believeth in him, this gift is given. I've already said today that that gift is truly, it's not easy-believism like is shoved down our throats especially this time of year? It is truly a gift to have a thought in your mind, to have a powerful presence in your mind that you have overcome your fear in Christ; that Christ has overcome your doubt; that he says to you today that he died for you and you believe it. You believe in the Son of God. You believe on the Son of God. You believe in everything that the Son of God has done. That's it. That's what the Bible tells us that this world will be saved because of the gift of faith, because of what Christ has done; that whosoever, which is a qualifying word, it is a particular word, whosoever believeth in him should not perish, that's salvation, that is assurance, that is preservation, but have everlasting life.

Turn with me just over a couple of pages. We're going to go back to John 6 where we were a couple of weeks ago when the pastor preached there for us. I just want to read a couple verses starting in 37.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Shall come to me. That is a shall. That means it will happen. That's what we saw, that's where Nicodemus came. Jesus saw what was in all men and he did not draw himself to those men but he went and drew one to him.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Notice that. Nicodemus was not cast out because he could not believe. Nicodemus showed what was in all of us, unbelief, and that we need the power and the gift of faith from another to believe. These things are too hard for us. It's too hard for us. We try to rationalize, we try to study our way in, we try to think that there's another way, we make it all up in our mind, "If I do this and I do that," but we must die. We must be dead that we may live in him.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven," that's what we read today in John 3, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son," and we heard today how the only way to see the Son is by the faith of the Son of God. The physical presence of Christ cannot save you but to see the Son by faith and the finished work of Christ is where salvation is.

He "which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." That's that preservation of the saints, that everything that Christ did for us he did on our behalf and went first, that our resurrection is assured in him because of his resurrection. Our life is assured because of his life. Our triumph over sin and death and the grave is assured because of his triumph over sin and death and the grave. Everything is because of him.

Now turn with me over to 1 John 5, beginning in verse 9, "If we receive the witness of men," and we do, we listen to reports, we listen to weather reports, we listen to what's going on in the news and a lot of times we're swayed by those things, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." That's what I ask you today, has the Holy Spirit revealed to you today that you have the witness of Christ in you? That you have the witness of Christ in you? And if you do, you will have no need of anything else in this life or the life to come because he is life, he is the sufficiency of his children.

"The witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Nothing else. No merit. Nothing you can do. No receiving Christ. None of that. This is the record that he's given us, that eternal life, this life is in his Son.

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." These things that I preach unto you today that I hope that the Holy Spirit preaches to you today into your soul, is that you believe on the name of the Son of God and that you may know you have eternal life and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God and that you may walk in the newness of life that is in him.

Paul said it this way and if you know me, you know I've got to get this in, Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ," we must die with him, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the gift that he sent his Son to die and to live inside of his people, "and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," believing on him, believing in him, "who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Back to our text in closing [unintelligible] Jesus' words, "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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world." Understand that. The people of God are not condemned, Romans 8:1, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world "but that the world through him might be saved." That's a particular world. That particular world that is saved because look what we've got in 18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already," that's that world that the Lord said he would not pray for and the world that John tells us not to love, "because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." How true that is. We see that every day in what we read and what we hear, the wickedness and the evil of man. May the Lord's light guide us and may he keep us close to him. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest," and if that's all it said, it would give reason for those work-mongers to come and tell us that it's all of our deeds but that's not what it says, "that they are wrought in God." It's truly all of him and do you know why? "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."

Dear heavenly Father, may you add thy power and thy clarity and thy love. For this I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.