

3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

A twenty-six-word parade of hope: beginning with God, ending with life, and urging us to do the same. Brief enough to write on a napkin or memorize in a moment, yet solid enough to weather two thousand years of storms and questions. If you know nothing of the Bible, start here. If you know everything in the Bible, return here. We all need the reminder. The heart of the human problem is the heart of the human. And God’s treatment is prescribed in John 3:16.

He loves.

He gave.

We believe.

We live.

He loves.

God loves you because he chooses to do so. *“God wasn’t attracted to you and didn’t choose you because you were big and important... He did it out of sheer love...”* (Deut. 7:7-8, MSG). God’s love for you depends on his goodness, not yours. And since he is totally good, you are absolutely loved. You don’t need to win his love, you already have it. And since you can’t win it, you can’t lose it. He will love you forever. You may step outside of his will, but never his love. Mark it down. He loves you. So much, in fact, that...

He gave.

He gave his one and only Son. Jesus is God’s *“one and only.”* He is

unlike any other person in history. Every quality we attribute to God, we can give to Jesus. Jesus has an eternal life span, unending wisdom, and tireless energy. Most of all, Jesus is sinless. When he lived on the earth, he never sinned. *"He never did one thing wrong. Not once said anything amiss"* (1 Peter 2:22, MSG).

We, on the other hand, do wrong things daily. We stretch the truth. We hurt people. We take advantage of the weak and disrespect our family. What should God do? He has made his position clear. *"Anyone whose life is not holy will never see the Lord"* (Hebrews 12:14, NCV). Where does that leave us?

It leaves us depending on the 3:16 promise. *"God... gave his one and only son..."* Though sinless, Jesus took our sin. God placed our sin on his Son and punished it. When Jesus died on the cross, he died for us in our place. Our response to this great gift is simple...

We believe.

We trust Jesus to do what we can't. We don't trust our own efforts to save us. We can't save ourselves. We don't place our trust in other people to save us. We believe in him.

We take similar steps of trust daily, even hourly. Believing the chair will support us, we set our weight on it. Believing water will hydrate, we drink it. Trusting the work of the light switch, we flip it. We have faith in the doorknob, so we turn it. We trust power we cannot see to do work we can't accomplish. Jesus invites us to do the same with him. And when we do, when we believe...

We live.

God gives us brand-new life. He gives us joy in this life and the promise of eternal life with him. We have joy because we have his Spirit living within us. Little by little his Spirit changes us to be more like Jesus. No guilt in life, no fear of death, he gives life, now.

And life for eternity. In Heaven you will be you at your best. No anger or sadness, tears or trouble. Never weary, selfish, or defeated.

Clear mind, tireless muscles, unhindered joy. And, most of all, God! *“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and the knowledge of God”* (Romans 11:33, ESV). Heaven is a perfect place of perfected people with our perfect Lord.

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Would you like to accept the 3:16 promise? You can. Tell God you accept him.

“Father, I believe you love me. You gave your one and only Son so I can live forever with you. Apart from you, I die. With you, I live. I choose life. I choose you.”

Jesus awaits your prayer. Believe in him and you will...

Not...

Perish...

You will have life, eternal life, forever.



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