

**"Christmas and the Love of God"**

**John 3:16**

**Introduction:** In our message this morning we are going to focus upon one of the greatest events in the history of the world and that is the birth of Jesus Christ. As we consider the TRUE meaning of Christmas today it is my intent to focus upon God's love for mankind.

There are many different ideas as to what God is like. Some people see God as unloving, stern, angry and unforgiving. They see Him sitting on His throne looking down on man ready at any moment to unleash His wrath and to wipe out the entire human race.

Some see every natural disaster as God's judgment on a certain group of people. I hear Pastors on the radio that attribute the earthquakes and the fires in California as God's hand of judgment upon those who live there. I hear Pastors who attribute every flood, tornado, and hurricane to God's judgment.

There are churches who because of their legalism they give the impression that if your hair is not the right length, or you are not dressed a certain way, or you do not worship as they do that God is angry with you and He wants nothing to do with you. That by the way was the exact way in which the Pharisees lived, and I can tell you that Jesus despised their practices.

The idea that I am making is that many people have the wrong perspective of God and much of the blame falls upon the church for not teaching the Bible. Much of the blame falls upon believers because of how judgmental they are. Let me show you what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:1-5**

*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

*<sup>2</sup> For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

*<sup>3</sup> And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

*<sup>4</sup> Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

*<sup>5</sup> Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

These verses were spoken against the Pharisees for they were very judgmental and legalistic. They had their group and anyone who was not like them was looked down upon. They claimed to be spiritual and so many of Jesus day based their understanding of God upon how they conducted their lives. They would point out little things in the lives of others while they had major problems of legalism in their own lives. They could see the splinter in someone's else's eye, but they could not see the 2x4 in their own eye.

When someone develops a judgmental spirit, they are guilty of usurping the position of God. In other words, those who possess a judgment spirit are guilty of believing they are like God. If it sounds like Satan's desire that's because to be judgmental is Satanic. When the church develops this spirit this then gives the impression that God is the same way.

## **2 Corinthians 5:20a**

*<sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,*

We are His representatives to a lost and dying world so to many of the world when they look at the church they see God. Therefore, much of the misunderstandings about God are because of how the church lives.

### **I. The Love of God Declared**

#### **Notice John 3:16a**

*For God SO loved the world...*

It is my desire to help you to understand the depth of this statement. The little word "SO" here is very important. If the verse read, "For God loved the world" it would not have the same impact. The word "SO" tells of the depths of God's love for ALL the world.

Let me show you Paul's prayer for the believers at Ephesus.

#### **Ephesians 3:14-19**

*<sup>14</sup> For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*<sup>15</sup> Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

*<sup>16</sup> That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

*<sup>17</sup> That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

<sup>18</sup> *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

<sup>19</sup> *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Paul desired for them to know the breadth, length, depth and the height of God's love.

1. **God's love is wide enough to include every person.**
2. **God's love is long enough to last through all eternity.**
3. **God's love is deep enough to reach the worst sinner.**
4. **God's love is high enough to take us to heaven.**

Let me see if I cannot magnify this just a little more. God loves all of us even though we are sinners. Let me show you how Paul described every one of us.

### **Romans 3:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

<sup>11</sup> *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

<sup>12</sup> *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

<sup>13</sup> *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

<sup>14</sup> *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*

<sup>15</sup> *Their feet are swift to shed blood:*

<sup>16</sup> *Destruction and misery are in their ways:*

<sup>17</sup> *And the way of peace have they not known:*

<sup>18</sup> *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

### **Romans 5:10a**

<sup>10</sup>*For if, when we were enemies,*

God loves us even though we are sinners and even when we were enemies. There is not one person on this earth that God has not loved. Even the people who die without Jesus Christ

Let me speak to each of you personally. There is nothing which you have done in your life that has caused God not to love you. You may not be loveable in man's eyes, but God has chosen to love you with the greatest love in the world.

## II. The Love of God Demonstrated

Notice John 3:16 again.

*For God SO loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...*

This is Christmas. When Jesus Christ was born and laid in the manger that was the greatest demonstration of love ever shown. Let me explain.

The sin that we are born had many consequences attached to it.

### 1. It enslaved each and every one of us.

**Romans 3:9**

<sup>9</sup> *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*

**Listen to the words of one Bible teacher:**

*The word "Under" was a common Greek term that frequently meant not simply to be beneath but to be totally under the power, authority, or control of something or someone. So here Paul says all men are completely subservient and in bondage to, the dominion of Sin, picturing Sin almost as if it were a cruel dictator or harsh taskmaster. Paul uses the word to describe a literal slave...*

If you are not saved, then you are a slave to sin. You could not stop sinning if you wanted to. So, the point is sin has enslaved us.

### 2. It separated us from God.

**Isaiah 59:2**

<sup>2</sup> *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

<sup>3</sup> *For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.*

### 3. It brought us under the wrath of God.

**John 3:36**

<sup>36</sup> *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

**4. It put us on a direct path to face the judgment of God for our sin.**

**Revelation 20:12-15**

<sup>12</sup> *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

<sup>13</sup> *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

<sup>14</sup> *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

<sup>15</sup> *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

These are just a few of the consequences of sin BUT Jesus came to reverse each one of these. Let me show you.

**A. Jesus came to set us free from the slavery of sin.**

**Isaiah 61:1-2**

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

<sup>2</sup> *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;*

**John 8:36**

<sup>36</sup> *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

**Romans 6:6, 11-14**

<sup>6</sup> *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

<sup>11</sup> *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

<sup>12</sup> *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

<sup>13</sup> Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

**B. Jesus came to bring us into the presence of God.**

**1 Peter 3:18**

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

**Hebrews 4:16**

<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

**C. Jesus came to rescue us from the wrath of God.**

**Romans 5:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

When Jesus died on the cross He became sin for us.

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

<sup>21</sup> For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

When Jesus died on the cross He took God's wrath for us.

**D. Jesus came to die for our sins.**

**1 Corinthians 15:3**

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

<sup>4</sup> And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

**John 3:36**

*<sup>36</sup> He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

On the very first Christmas God gave the BEST GIFT of all and that was His Only Begotten Son.

**Notice John 3:16 again.**

**Conclusion:**

Just like any other gift that is given it is not ours until we receive it. So, the same is true of God's Gift. We must receive Jesus Christ as our Savior.

**John 1:12**

*<sup>12</sup> But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Christmas is all about the LOVE OF GOD. He gave His Son so that we could be forgiven.

**John 3:17-19**

*<sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

*<sup>18</sup> He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

*<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*