



Saint John United Methodist Church
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Message for December 11, 2022
"The Themes of Christmas: Love"
Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb
Scripture: John 3:16

It has been termed "*the gospel in miniature.*" It expresses the great good news that Jesus has come into the world. This great verse is on the minds and hearts of millions. I dare say, it is the most memorized verse in the Bible, certainly in the New Testament.

John puts it this way. "*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)

God So Loved

We read in this great passage that "*God so loved.*"

His love is so deep, so profound, so powerful that it is seemingly beyond comprehension. We understand that love when experienced, particularly when we invite Christ into our lives.

God Gave

We have all come to know this as a season of giving. We are all scurrying about to offer gifts to those we love. We also find ourselves giving to others in need, all of this in direct response to the great gift that is Christ.

God gave his only son as a redemption for our lives. Life, not death reigns supreme.

Because of God's great gift in Jesus Christ, we can do no other but turn and give as well. God's abundant love, his great gift, has a way of spilling over into everyday life.

Whosoever Believes

Experiencing God's love in Jesus Christ essentially comes down to a faith response.

- Faith that stands assured.
- Faith that stakes one's entire life on the good news of Christ's coming.
- Faith that would much rather follow what is unseen than what's seen.

Jesus, upon letting Thomas touch where the nails used on the cross had been, says this, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.*"

“Believe” is more than a marketing slogan for Macy’s.

It is the very thing that connects us with the great truth that Christ has come into the life of the world, and longs to be front and center in our lives.

For God So Loved _____

Some of you are aware that Ashlee and I will sometimes offer in our sermon notes a sentence or two with a couple of blanks. We leave it to you to fill them in. How about this one?

“For God so loved _____ that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

The blank is there so you can write in your name.

That makes it personal. That brings things into focus when it comes to God’s intent in sending his son.

I have heard it said, *“If you were the only one in need of salvation God would have still sent Jesus. Jesus still would have suffered. He still would have risen from the dead.”* God loves you that much.

How are you responding to this *“gift of a lifetime, the perfect gift, heaven’s gift?”*

John writes in John 1:12, *“For to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”*

This was God’s intent all along.

Glory to God.