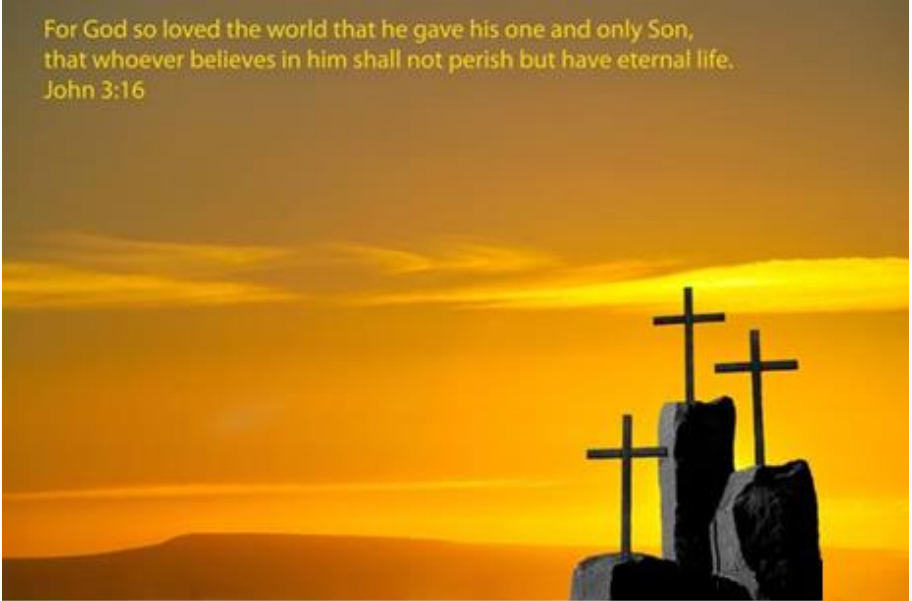


For God So Loved the World

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that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16



By

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As we draw closer to the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it is only natural that we reflect on the drama surrounding His death. Surely we cannot forget the pain and humiliation that he suffered. He went from judgement hall to judgement hall. He was forsaken by his own disciples, lied on, whipped and beaten, a crown of thorns was pressed on his head. He was forced to drag an old rugged cross up Golgotha and there they crucified Him. They pounded nails into His hands and feet. They stuck a sword in His side, they gave Him vinegar to drink. They taunted and ridiculed Him and gambled away his clothes. Finally, He died. Given all that Jesus went through you would think that He must have been a very bad man. He must have committed some unspeakable crime against humanity. Only a guilty man should be treated the way Jesus was treated. Was He guilty?

What constitutes guilt? Webster's New World Dictionary defines guilt as "The fact of having done a wrong or committed a crime." Well what are the facts that give evidence to Jesus's guilt? He caused lame men to walk. He gave sight to the blind. He healed all manner of illnesses, He even raised the dead. He fed thousands of hungry people and he was a role model for how mankind should treat one another. None of this fits Webster's definition of guilt. Therefore He was not guilty of any crime against humanity. He was not guilty of harming any man in any way, but nevertheless, He was guilty. How so? If He did no wrong, committed no crime, caused no harm or foul to any man, how is He guilty? He was guilty of being the instrument of God's love towards us. He was guilty of being the manifestation of God's love in the flesh. He was guilty of loving us **So!**

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"For God so loved the world...." The operative word here is "so". How much is "so"? What is the value of "so"?

Again we ask Webster for a working definition of “So”

Adverb “

1. To such a degree, (you are so late)
2. As a result, Therefore (He could not swim, and so was drowned.)
3. Very, (They are so happy)
4. Also, in the same way (I am hungry and so is he)
5. More or less, just about (I spent a dollar or so)
6. After all, Then (So you really don't care)
7. As shown, (hold your pencil just so)
8. Very much (in everyday use “she loved her garden so”)

Conjunction

1. For the reason that...(talk louder so that I may hear)
2. With the result that...(He didn't study so he failed the test)

These are but a few of the many examples of how the term “so” can be used. In our text for today it is used as an adverb showing the degree and intensity of God's love for man. Jesus is here in chapter 3 having a serious discussion with a Pharisee, Nicodemus, on the necessity of being born again. It was clear that Nicodemus respected Jesus, which in and of itself was a rarity. Having observed Jesus from a far, he came to Jesus to get up close and personal. He wanted to gain some insight concerning the wisdom of Jesus and His Divine power

that he had also seen. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that before he could glean any insight he must first undergo a spiritual transformation, a spiritual rebirth. You cannot understand spiritual matters with a carnal perspective. You must be born of the spirit to understand the spirit. When Jesus speaks of the love of God, it cannot be considered in the same light as man's love of the flesh. Flesh is fleeting, flesh is fainting, flesh eventual fades away. But the Love of God, the love that God has towards man is everlasting. For Nicodemus to grasp the importance of what Jesus is telling him about how much God loves man, Nicodemus must have a spiritual mindset in order to receive it. **“For God “SO” loved the world....”**The love of God is boundless, it is unfathomable. It defies all laws of Common sense, no realm of logic can comprehend it. Perfection falls short of it Quality, Infinity pales in the light of its quantity, its depth, breath, and width is beyond man's limited sight. And yet God makes it available to whosoever is willing to believe. Can you imagine loving so that even rejection is not a deterrent. Loving so that even pain and suffering is welcomed, loving so that denial and

betrayal will not diminish your capacity, Loving so that come hell or high water ,as the old folks used to say, you still remain steadfast, and unmovable, **For God “SO” Loved the world!** Can you believe that **God “SO” loved the world** that He was willing to sacrifice His only Son for our sakes. Look at us! Look at all of the atrocities that we have rained down on ourselves, look at all of the wars and rumors of wars that we have engaged in against one another. Would you give up one of your children for the sake of humanity as we know? Yet **God commanded His Love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** Romans 5:8. Can you believe that? Even the Psalmist expressed perplexity over God’s love for man: “Psalm 8:4 (KJV 1900): **What is man, that thou art mindful of him?**

And the son of man, that thou visitest him? What is so special about us that God’s loves us so? Just as the Psalmist describes his plight we too are as he “Psalm 51:5 (KJV 1900): **5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me.**” In other words **“there are none righteous no not one.”** And yet **God “SO” loved the world.**

What is it about us that has captured the heart of God? Could it be that we were created in His image and His likeness? He took his essence, shaped it, formed it and molded it into us in such a way that from the beginning and forever after we are His and His alone! That is why He “So” loves us.

1 John 3:1–2 (KJV 1900): 3 ***Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*** He So loves us because we are His!

Hallelujah For God So Loved The World!