

Speaker: Sid Sheriff Arbroath

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Reading: John Chapter 3 verse 16 - 21 and 36  
John Chapter 5 verse 24

"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" This verse is the Gospel message in a nutshell. It is well-known and in today's world there is a popular saying that "familiarity breeds contempt".

The world in this verse is not referring to the physical world around us but to the world of men who are lost in sin.

Men in the world doubt God and his love. They often question God's existence and say:

"Where is God"?

How can a God of love allow so many disasters?

We cannot explain the reason behind disasters and evil in the world but in John 3v16 we are taught that we should never doubt God's love for us. The verse contains the little word "so" which emphasises the extent of God's Love: "For God so loved the world".

Love desires to give and God gave His very best which was His only begotten Son, His One and only. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians recorded his thoughts on this gift, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor 9:15).

This is emphasised in other verses:

"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2: 8, 9).

"He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The word, damned, in this verse means the same as condemned in John 3 verse 18, "He that believeth on him (the Lord Jesus Christ) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already".

Men on death row know that they are guilty and are aware that they are condemned. Men in the world do not realise that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The greatest sin in the world is the sin of unbelief (Jon 16:9). God sent His Son into the world; He had a lowly birth, He lived a perfect life, He did many good works and then He went to Calvary. We live in a world of atheists who refuse to believe the Holy Bible which is the word of God. It took the children of Israel 40 years to reach the promised land which they could have done so much quicker if it had not been for their unbelief. Unbelief will keep people out of heaven (Revelation 21:8).

Believers can rejoice that they have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and have the knowledge that they have passed from death to life and from condemnation to no condemnation (John 5:24). "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3).

The dying thief admitted the justice of his punishment on the cross. He also acknowledged that the Lord Jesus Christ

had done nothing to deserve the punishment he received, "This man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:41). The Lord's response to that dying thief was immediate, "Today shall thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

The prodigal son is a picture of the world today. He spent his inheritance on riotous living. When he realised what he had done he returned to his father's house and admitted his sin before God and his father. He was received by his father as a picture of God's love for the sinner. It is a picture of the truth of John 3:16. It is the desire of those preaching the Gospel that men would realise their state before God and put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zacchaeus had an ambition to see the Lord Jesus and was so determined that he climbed a sycamore tree. Zacchaeus had two things that the world seek health and wealth but he was still dissatisfied. When the Lord passed that way his life and the way he lived it was changed forever. (Luke 19:1-10). This is evidence of the change that occurred in his life. He had been transformed. He was condemned and hated but he sought the Lord who responded to him and salvation was brought to his house.

The jailer was also another condemned man who inquired of salvation, "What must I do to be saved". The answer was very simple, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30-31).

The apostle Paul was transformed on the Damascus road and was assured of his salvation. He recorded these words in his letter to Timothy, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

There are no grey areas in salvation, there is only one way. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). He is the only way. The Bible says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).