

John031617-121111  
Bridge of Hope  
December 11, 2011

## “Radical Love: The Gift Given of God’s Love”

In this Advent series we have talked about how God is the source of love who initiates and lavishes His love upon us. We have also talked about as the object of God’s love He forgives, cares, blesses, disciplines, and watches over us. If you missed either of the talks you can find some notes from the message on our website – [bridgeofhopechurch.net](http://bridgeofhopechurch.net). Today we are going to continue with some dialogue as we take a look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of what makes John 3:16 such an awesome text of scripture. We are going to discuss “The Gift Given of God’s Love.” To make things a little easier I ask you to raise your hand if you want to answer a question so we can keep from interrupting one another. I will do my best to give different people an opportunity to be a part of our dialogue.

**WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE GIFTS TO ONE ANOTHER? LIKE AT CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAYS, AND OTHER SPECIAL OCCASIONS.**

Let’s take a look at our scripture in **John 3:16-17** (NIV) *“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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

If God is the source of love and people are the object of His love, then it would seem to follow that the next obvious question we want to talk about would be . . .

**HOW DOES GOD COMMUNICATE HIS LOVE TO PEOPLE? (DISCUSSION)**

**WHAT KIND OF GIFT DID GOD CHOOSE TO GIVE TO THE WORLD? (DISCUSSION)**

Let’s take the next several moments and talk about what the gift of God’s Son is about.

**GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON . . .**

- **WHEN DID GOD DECIDE TO GIVE THE GIFT OF HIS SON? (DISCUSSION)**

THIS IS REALLY AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR US TO UNDERSTAND BECAUSE IT REALLY SUPPORTS THE THOUGHT WE TALKED ABOUT EARLIER THAT GOD LOVED US FIRST.

1. Sometimes it seems as if people think that God sent Jesus as a reaction to the choice of man to sin, but that isn’t the way things happened.
2. The Bible clearly shows us that it was the plan of God for Jesus to come from the very start.
  - When we read the Old Testament we look ahead to the when the Messiah would come.
  - When we read the New Testament we look back to the day when the Messiah came.
  - Jesus didn’t come as a reaction to sin; His coming was set before man ever made the choice to sin.
  - Jesus was involved at creation and knew the cross was before Him.
  - And He went ahead with creation anyway. Now that is an amazing thought.
3. The Bible says in . . . .
  - **Colossians 1:15-20** (NIV) *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **For by him all things were created:** things in heaven and on earth, visible and*

*invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and **through him to reconcile to himself all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

- **2 Timothy 1:9-11** (NLT) *For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because **that was his plan from before the beginning of time**—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News.*
- **Revelation 13:8** (NKJV) *All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb **slain from the foundation of the world.***
- 4. **For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son which was not a reaction to sin, it was the planned action to provide for the sin of man whom He was about to create.**
  - Now that is incredible love, to go ahead with the plan of creation knowing that which you created would require such a price for their salvation.
- 5. **This then leads us to our next thought . . .**

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR GOD TO GIVE HIS SON? (DISCUSSION)**

WHEN WE PAUSE LONG ENOUGH TO TRY AND THINK THROUGH THIS QUESTION THE IMPACT CAN BE STAGGERING AS IT DEMONSTRATES THE REALITY THAT GOD REALLY DID LOVE US FIRST.

1. **Just trying to understand this is difficult because it goes against everything inside of us.**
2. **Here is what I am aiming for in this thought, the Bible says in . . .**
  - **John 17:1-5** (NIV) *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, **glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.***
  - **Philippians 2:5-11** (NIV) *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but **made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death** — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
3. **This is hard for us to be able to grasp but let me share some thoughts to try and help us. God who was not created submitted Himself to live as a created being.**
  - God, who enjoyed the splendor of heaven, set aside that splendor to come on this earth.
  - God, who was all-powerful lived in a human body that had to exercise faith and overcome all the fears and doubts that we struggle with.
  - God, who is life submitted Himself to death, and not just any death, the excruciating death of the cross.
  - Do we need to say more to try and paint this picture?

4. When God created us, He knew the price He was going to pay for our salvation and He created us anyway.
  - Who loves like that?
  - Who would make something knowing that it would demand so much from them?
5. All that I am saying is when the scriptures declare the love of God for people this is an important thing for us to understand so we can grasp the depth of that thought.
6. Knowing that God decided on this plan before creation and that He understood it meant setting aside everything to become what He had created, leads us to our next thought . . .

- **WHY DID GOD HAVE TO GIVE SUCH A COSTLY GIFT AS HIS SON? (DISCUSSION)**

THIS TOO FURTHER STRENGTHENS THE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS LAVISHED HIS LOVE UPON US . . .

1. The price of love was great . . . God would give His one and only Son, submitting to death on the cross, as He became our sacrificial lamb.
  - What we couldn't achieve through the Law God gave to Moses, we enjoy through Christ.
2. Here is how the Bible talks about this costly gift that God gave to us, we read in . . .
  - **Hebrews 9:15-22** (NIV) *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

*In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because **a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.** This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.***

- **Romans 3:22-26** (NIV) *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through **the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.***
3. The reason for this costly gift was because it was the only way for the promises of God to be realized in our lives.
    - The promise of eternal life required a once and for all sacrifice and Jesus came as the Lamb of God to provide that sacrifice.
  4. We needed for God to provide so we could share in His promise.
    - And He created us knowing this costly gift would have to be given, it was in the plan.
    - Now that is why John starts off this important passage of scripture with the words, "For God so loved."
  5. Understanding this leads us to the next important question . . .

- **DID GOD'S SON HAVE ANY CHOICE IN HIS BEING THE GIFT OF GOD?**

AS I THOUGHT ABOUT THIS DURING MY STUDY IT STRUCK ME THAT THIS REALLY ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE EVER DID WHAT HE HAS DONE . . .

1. The Bible gives us clear understanding of this in one really short text of scripture; hours before Jesus was to walk the path to the cross we see Him in the garden on His knees praying. Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; **yet not my will, but yours be done.**" (**Luke 22:42-43** NIV)
2. Then we see this in **Hebrews 10:8-10** (NLT) *First, Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" (though they are required by the law of Moses). Then he said, "Look, **I have come to do your will.**" He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.*
3. And finally we read what Jesus says in **John 10:18** (NIV) *No one takes it from me, but **I lay it down of my own accord.** I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*
4. Yes, Jesus knew what was before Him and had a choice.
  - He chose to love as He came to give His life for the redemption of His people.
  - Advent, the coming of the Christ, is the perfect season for us to reflect on his love shared through the gift of His life.

Conclusion: By now we should understand the answer to this last question, we can probably all answer it together: **WHAT MOTIVATED GOD TO BE WILLING TO GIVE SUCH A GIFT AS HIS SON?** (PAUSE)

It is because of His love. Paul answers this well in **Ephesians 2:4-10** (NIV) *But **because of his great love for us**, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

John answered the question this way in **1 John 4:9-10** (NIV) *This is how **God showed his love among us**: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

And most importantly, Jesus answered this question in **John 3:16** (NIV) *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.*

Jesus Christ, the gift of God's love to all people.