

The title for today's message is: **One Died So That Many Could Live**

Jesus said: ***“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.***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

This morning, we look at the shortest possible description of the whole Gospel. John 3:16, a marvelous passage loved by many.

Luther referred to it as the Gospel, within the Gospel, or, the Gospel within a nutshell. And such it is.

This short verse of less than thirty words is often one of the most memorable.

From confirmation class, and one that many will remember, even when many other passages have faded from our thoughts.

This one, simple passage summarizes the reason for the Easter celebration only a few short weeks away.

But, have you ever really considered what it means? Today, I want to take a closer look at what is really important in our church.

The love of a God that truly cares for us. I want to look at the message that we were blessed with a savior who sacrificed Himself on behalf of us.

The message behind John 3:16 is really what we need to understand each and every day.

This short passage is a message of love, a message of sacrifice, and a message of comfort for millions of Christians across the world.

Today, we're going to take a closer look at what God's love really means.

But, before we dive into this passage, I want to use a more contemporary story to help us understand just what really is behind this message of grace and mercy.

We often talk about the love of God for us as His children. But, can we really grasp what that means.

How do we relate with the ever-present, unfathomable love of a forgiving God.

For disobedient, sinful, and sometimes, just plain mean spirited people?

How do we relate our depraved nature with the undeserved grace that was bestowed on us? And what does that gift really mean?

Now, rather than tackling this theological passage by dissecting the words and their individual meaning.

I want to tackle this passage from another angle to grasp just how much God's love really overflowed.

We have sinned and have only eternal damnation in the fires of hell to look forward to, right?

I mean, no matter what we do, we cannot improve this fate. We cannot avoid the ever coming judgment that will lead us to our demise.

And share in a most uncomfortable eternity with other sinners. We cannot mitigate our punishment by doing good deeds for our neighbors, friends, or loved ones.

We cannot balance the ledger with service to the church or our communities.

Our only option is for someone to take on the punishment of sin and death that we truly deserve.

Our only remedy is for a savior to take punishment in our place, so that we enjoy future life in eternal bliss.

Our only hope is that a messiah would volunteer to bear our burden of pain and guilt, so that we can spend time in paradise.

Now we often pay close attention to the love that God showed for us by producing his one and only Son to be sacrificed on our behalf.

We often pay attention to the burden that the Father was willing to part with. Which was His most prized possession, His Son, Jesus Christ.

We often look at the willingness of God the Father to put His one and only Son to the test. But, that's not the only gift.

His Son had to be willing as well. Not only was the Father willing to give the Son, the Son was willing to be given.

Both Father and Son were partners in this transaction. They took the step together to make this sacrifice on our behalf.

So the message is not only that God so loved the world that he gave, but also, For Jesus loved the world that he came.

The Son Willingly took on this task, willingly embraced this task. Two gifts in one! Two persons, one purpose, one love.

Sometimes, we may find it hard to relate to the great love that God showered on us with the sacrifice of His son over 2,000 years ago.

And through this voluntary sacrifice, our debt of sin was paid in full, so we are now allowed to live, through this sacrifice.

And the truth is there is no way we can say thank-you enough. Nor is there a way we can repay the debt.

There is no way that we can make amends for the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf.

But, there is nothing that had to be done. Because the sacrifice was voluntary. The sacrifice is over.

The sacrifice cleared our name in the ledger that counts our sins in heaven, and we are now free from our sinful past.

This is the message of John 3:16. Our debt is wiped away. Through this love and sacrifice, our future is determined. We too, will live.

“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.

What comforting words these continue to be. As the Christ sacrificed for us, we are a family of Christians, sharing in the grace and mercy, that only God can provide us.

We can be ever grateful, and always remember, that we have God the Father who love us so much that He sent His Son to die for us.

God’s Son who took on the task of our salvation, and God the Holy Spirit who continually strengthens us in our faith.

Amen.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.