WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL · PRINT EDITION

The Love That Saves

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 10 · November 15, 2026

JOHN 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

HOW THIS WORKS

- Five days, Monday through Friday — about ten minutes each. Every day has a prayer to open, a short reading, something to think about, one action step, and a prayer to close.
- This week's homework runs underneath all five days: Memorize John 3:16. Each time you say it, put your own name in place of "the world" and "whoever."
- Keep a pen with it. The lines are part of the devotional.
- Prefer your phone? The same devotional is online each week at thesummit.life → The Gospel of John → Reading Plan.

THIS WEEK

Sunday Pastor Tom picked up where Jesus left off with Nicodemus and asked the question underneath it all: why did God provide a Savior in His Son? Because He loves people. Because without a Savior, people face eternity apart from Him. Because people love the darkness and need the Light. This week you will take it one piece at a time: God loved, God gave, we believe and receive, we are not condemned, and we come into the light.

DAY 1 · MONDAY

For God So Loved

JOHN 3:16 · ROMANS 5:6–8

Opening prayer

Lord, You loved me before I ever loved You. Help me take that in today. Amen.

Read John 3:16, then Romans 5:6–8. Sunday Pastor Tom asked a question: Can a person know that they are forgiven and will spend eternity with God? This week you will walk through God's answer one piece at a time, and it starts where the verse starts: "For God so loved the world."

Most of us hear "so loved" as "loved so much." John means something more specific. "So" means "in this way," and it points back to what Jesus had just told Nicodemus: the Son of Man must be lifted up like the bronze serpent. This is how God loved: by giving His Son to be lifted up on a cross.

And look at who He loved. In John's gospel "the world" is not a warm word. It is humanity in rebellion against God. Paul says it plainly: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God did not wait for us to clean up. He did not love us because we were lovable. He loved us while we were His enemies.

Pastor Tom put it this way: God loved, even in our sin. That is the first reason God provided a Savior, and it is the one everything else rests on.

God did not love you because you were worth it. He loved you while you were still a sinner, and He proved it with His Son.

Reflect

When do you find it hardest to believe God loves you: when you've done well, or when you've blown it? Write down why.

Today's action step

Start this week's homework today. Memorize John 3:16. Each time you say it, put your own name in place of "the world" and "whoever." Say it once now, with your name in it.

Closing prayer

Jesus, You died for me while I was still a sinner. I don't deserve that kind of love. Thank You. Amen.

DAY 2 · TUESDAY

He Gave His Only Son

JOHN 3:16 · 1 PETER 2:21–25

Opening prayer

Lord, show me what Your love cost. Amen.

Read John 3:16 again, then 1 Peter 2:21–25. God's love did not stay a feeling. "He gave his only Son." Pastor Tom said God's love led Him to action, not just a feeling of love for us.

"Only" translates a word that means one of a kind. John used it in chapter 1: "the only Son from the Father." There is no one else like Him, and God gave Him. One commentator called it a shock: God put the well-being of the world above that of His one and only Son.

What did the giving involve? Peter tells us. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree." The sending was the beginning. The cross was the cost. Jesus was lifted up, like the serpent in the wilderness, and carried our sin there Himself.

Love that costs nothing proves nothing. God's love cost Him His Son. That is why John can say God loved the world, and mean it.

God's love is not a sentiment. It is a Son, given.

Reflect

Where are you tempted to settle for a feeling of love toward God without any action behind it? Write down one place.

Today's action step

Say John 3:16 out loud three times today: morning, noon, and night. Pause on the word "gave."

Closing prayer

Father, You gave Your only Son for me. Jesus, You bore my sins in Your body on the tree. I have no words but thank You. Amen.

DAY 3 · WEDNESDAY

Believe and Receive

JOHN 3:16 · EPHESIANS 2:4–9

Opening prayer

Lord, I keep trying to earn what You have already given. Teach me to receive. Amen.

Read John 3:16 once more, then Ephesians 2:4–9. God loved. God gave. Those are finished. The rest of the verse is about us: “that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Pastor Tom quoted a commentary: “Belief consists of accepting something, not doing something.” Think back to the bronze serpent. The bitten Israelites were not told to fight the poison, make an offering, or prove they were sorry. They were told to look. The power was in the One who provided the remedy.

That is what believing is. It is not a work you perform well enough to be saved. It is the open hand that receives what God has already given. Paul says it in Ephesians: “By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

If you contributed even a little, you would get a little of the credit. God made salvation a gift so that all the credit stays with the Giver. Nicodemus had a religious résumé a mile long, and none of it could save him. Neither can yours.

You cannot earn what God is giving. You can only believe and receive.

Reflect

What have you been quietly counting on to make you right with God besides Jesus: your effort, your record, your church life? Write it down honestly.

Today’s action step

Say John 3:16 from memory, with your name in it. Then open your hands, literally, and tell God: “I receive what You have given.”

Closing prayer

Jesus, I stop trying to earn it. I believe in You, and I receive what You have done for me. Amen.

DAY 4 · THURSDAY

Not Condemned

JOHN 3:17–18, 36 · ROMANS 8:1

Opening prayer

Lord, I want to know where I stand with You. Speak plainly to me today. Amen.

Read John 3:17–18, then John 3:36. Here is the answer to Sunday's question. "Whoever believes in him is not condemned." Not might not be. Not hopefully won't be. Is not. Present tense. Pastor Tom said this is how you can know today.

Notice why Jesus came: "not to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." The first coming was a rescue mission. But notice too that the unbeliever is "condemned already." No one starts neutral. The snake-bitten Israelites were dying before the pole went up. Jesus did not bring the condemnation. He came into it.

Verse 36 removes any middle ground. Belief in the Son means eternal life. Refusing Him means the wrath of God remains. Pastor Tom said it plainly: there is no middle ground here.

Now read Romans 8:1. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Your certainty does not rest on how your week went, how you feel, or how you compare to others. It rests on God's promise to whoever believes.

If you have believed in Jesus, you are not condemned. God said so, and He does not change His mind.

Reflect

What do you tend to base your confidence with God on: your performance, your feelings, or His promise? Write down what shifts when it is His promise.

Today's action step

Write John 3:18a on a card: "Whoever believes in him is not condemned." Put it where you will see it tomorrow morning. Then say John 3:16 from memory.

Closing prayer

Jesus, You did not come to condemn me. You came to save me. I believe You, and I rest in that. Amen.

DAY 5 · FRIDAY

Into the Light

JOHN 3:19–21 · JOHN 19:38–42

Opening prayer

Lord, I don't want to hide from You anymore. Bring me into the light. Amen.

Read John 3:19–21. If the cure is this simple, why doesn't everyone take it? Jesus answers: "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." The problem is not that God has failed to make Himself known. He sent the Light. The problem is that people love their sin and do not want it exposed.

That is uncomfortable, because it is true of all of us. There are things we would rather keep in the dark than bring to Jesus. Pastor Tom said, "Don't let love for your sin keep you from the God who loves you." He already knows. He came to save you, not condemn you.

Then verse 21: "Whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." Coming to the light is not cleaning yourself up first. It is stepping out of hiding so that what God has done in you can be seen.

Now read John 19:38–42. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. He is last seen in daylight, openly honoring Jesus at His burial. The man who hid in the dark went public. John points it out on purpose: this is the same man "who earlier had come to Jesus by night."

That is what baptism is. It does not save you; believing in Jesus does. But baptism is how faith goes public, so that everyone can see what God has done in you. Baptism is coming up at Summit in a few weeks. If you have believed and never been baptized, that is your next step.

God loved. God gave. You believe and receive. Then you come into the light.

Reflect

What have you been keeping in the dark? And if you have believed in Jesus, have you ever gone public with it? Write your honest answer.

Today's action step

Say John 3:16 from memory, with your name in it, one more time. Then take one step into the light: confess what you've been hiding to God, tell one person you have believed, or talk to a pastor about baptism.

Closing prayer

Jesus, You are the Light. I'm done hiding. I believe in You, and I want everyone to see what You have done in me. Amen.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next Sunday: Week 11 · He Must Increase · John 3:22–36 · November 22, 2026. Memory verse this week: John 3:16.