

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
March 11, 2018

God's Love and Eternal Life
John 3:16

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

March 16 is the day of "John 3:16." Let's share John 3:16 with someone that day. By email, text, phone, and face to face conversation. The best way to share the words of the Bible is this. Give the Bible to the person, and ask the person to read aloud the verse. It is the best way to take the Word of God into heart by reading directly from the Bible, not just by hearing from others. It may be a big job to send a copy of the Bible, but it's easy job to send this small copy of the "Gospel of John." Please bring home from usher's desk as you need, and spread the Word!

1. Love of God

March 16, 2014 was Sunday. So, I gave you a message from John 3:16, titled, "God's Love Saves Us." I talked that the love of God is, firstly, "paradoxical love," secondly, "sacrificial love," and, thirdly, "priceless love"

Why is it "paradoxical love?" Because God loved the world. The word, "world," means "the society excluding God," "the power against God," and "lusts not pleased by God" in the Bible. However, God loved and tried to save and accept those who denied God, fought

against God, lived in sins, and could not have fellowship with holy God.

Why is God's love "sacrificial?" Because God gave his only Son. God loved the world and us, sinners. This does not mean God accepts the corruptions of the world and never judges our sins. Sins bring the results. All of us have to pay for our sins. But, God had his Son pay for the penalty of our sins. The penalty of sin is death. The Son died on the cross to pay for our penalty of sins. God sacrificed his only Son to save us from our sins.

God's love is priceless. We cannot buy it with any amount of our properties, abilities, and efforts. We are able to receive it only by faith. Anyone who seek for the salvation and believe in Jesus Christ will be saved.

Everyone love the word, "LOVE." The most beloved word may be "LOVE." We desire love, adore love, sometimes, have an illusion about love, and sometimes, we break the loving relationship and part with someone's love. Even love becomes hatred. Why? Because our love is not supported by the love of God. Because it's just human love. We are not truly able to love God and others without knowing the love of God. God shows us his love through John 3:16.

2. Invitation to the Salvation

In the second half of John 3:16, it tells us the necessity of Jesus Christ's salvation, saying, "that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." According to this, we are destined to perish and are approaching eternal death. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes

judgment,..." When we leave the world, stand before the Holy God and receive judgment, who can say "I am fine!"?

This is terrifying; therefore, many of us try not to think of this subject. Blaise Pascal said this.

As men are not able to fight against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think of them at all. (Pensees, §168)

In Japan, we have a trend of funerals, which does not fit into the traditional style of funeral ceremony. It can be a very personal ceremony so that they prepare for it themselves while they are still living. Also, some people carry out the funeral ceremony while they are still living, and this is called "*Seizensou*" (funeral ceremony before death). In these days, we are encouraged to prepare for our death, and this trend is called "*Shukatsu*" (Preparation for our ending). However, this trend is all about the remaining years, funeral ceremony, and inheritance. It does not include the preparation when we stand before God without what we have accomplished in this world such as status, fame, human relationships, and property. The most important thing for us is not prepare for a "ceremony" but prepare for "death". Amos 4:12 says. "Prepare to meet your God!" We need to prepare to meet God. In Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." This is truly necessary for our prayer.

But how do we "prepare to meet God?" Firstly, we accept what God has already prepared for us. God knows that we can not stand by ourselves before him; therefore, he "gave" us his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ took over our sins, and we are able to stand before God. Jesus Christ took over our sins and gave us his "righteousness." Jesus

Christ, sinless One, replaced his “righteous” position with “sinful” people so that the sinful people became the righteous people.

Other than Jesus Christ’s “righteousness,” we can not stand before God. In the hymn “Rock of Ages”, it sings like this:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure; save from wrath and make me pure.

“My hope is built on nothing less” sings:

When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be
found,
dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the
throne.

God has prepared the salvation for us through Jesus Christ in order that “whoever believes in him should not perish.” God “perished” his most beloved son and prepared our salvation. How sad does he feel if we reject this love? Have you ever thought of it? The God of love invites us to his salvation through John 3:16. Let us answer his invitation.

3. The Eternal Life

Secondly, we prepare to meet God by living in Christ and obeying him. God saves those who believe in Jesus Christ, and give them the eternal life. In John 3:16, it teaches that the believers have the eternal life.

The natural life ends someday. Psalm 90:10 says, “The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty.” Our life spans are limited. So, how do we go through after death without having

eternal life? Yet people have the eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ will not fear of the time of death, because they already have the eternal life to live forever. The believers can live with God forever with the eternal life.

At the same time, however, the eternal life make us live life according God's will. It is impossible to become God's children, and follow after God unless we have the eternal life. The believers need not only the position of righteousness and the status of God's children, but also the nature of God's children and righteous deeds. God give birth the believers as the children of God, gave the nature of God's children, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and the power of doing righteous works. The natural (worldly) life makes us live only in this world, but the eternal life makes us live in the Kingdom of God. We can live only for ourselves with this worldly life, but with the eternal life we can live for God with the eternal life. God who gives us the eternal life commands us live with the eternal life while we still are on the earth.

The word "to perish" used in John 3:16 is translated into "to be lost" in Luke chapter 15. In Luke 15, there are three lost things, a sheep, a silver coin, and a son. Each one is valuable, but it loses the value and purpose. Likewise, many people don't know that they are valuable beings made according to God's image. They lose the purpose that they should live for God, and compete and hurt each other. Their life shows that they have been already lost and perished, even before they stand before God after death.

God wants us not only to have the passport to heaven, but also to start the travel to heaven immediately after we believe. We had been

perished losing the purpose of life. God gave us the eternal life in order that we might take a step to the new life living for God. John 3:16 teaches us to believe in Jesus Christ, and receive the new life and live by the life. We cannot separate following Jesus Christ from believing him. Gospel is the one message to teach “to trust” and “to obey” Jesus Christ.

Somebody wrote John 3:16 in this design. You can read the word, “GOSPEL” in John 3:16. John 3:16 is really the summarized gospel.

For God so loved the world
that He gave his Only
begotten Son, that whoever believes
in Him should not Perish
but have Everlasting
Life

John 3:16 is not only for non-Christians. It’s also the verse for Christians. It teaches Christians that they have the eternal life and should live by the life. People will understand what John 3:16 is teaching when Christians live gospel by the eternal life. Live the gospel, witness it. Do it earnestly.

(Prayer)

Dear Father, we thank your deepest love that you have given to us, sinners, the one and only Son Jesus Christ. You not only saved us from the judgment of sins, but also gave the eternal life that free from the power of sin. By the eternal life, we can live with purpose in the world. We are the pilgrim people traveling to heaven where exists no sin. May remind us that Your love are with us always, when we are walking toward heaven. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.