

Forever Redeemed

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 April 2022

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] If you have a Bible, go ahead and turn there to John 3.16.

If you don't have a Bible, please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our congregation to you in the hopes that you'll continue to be reading the Word of God. Many of you have this verse memorized.

Whether you want to just recite it from heart or read it from the Word, would you please stand with me and let's honor God's Word together. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? The Bible says that in the beginning, through the agency of His eternal Son, God created all things by the Word of His command.

And by the power of that same Word, He holds all things together. He owns all things. He is the owner of all things. He has the right to do what He pleases.

[1 : 12] And what pleases Him is to fill the earth that He has created with the knowledge of His glory. So it makes sense that people who were created in the image of God find their true purpose and pleasure in fulfilling God's purpose for which He gave them.

To know God. To know God. And to enjoy Him forever. To live with childlike dependence on His grace. But then in Genesis 3, the Bible says that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were enticed by an idea proposed by Satan.

Maybe they didn't need to rely upon God's gracious provision. Maybe eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge wouldn't bring death, as God had said. But would give them a new lease on life.

So captivated by Satan's lie, they rejected the truth of God's counsel. And the moment they sunk their teeth into that forbidden fruit, tasting it, believing that it would satisfy them in ways that God never could, was the moment when sin entered the world.

And ever since, as a result of the fall, everyone is born with an appetite for sin and a distaste for God.

[2 : 32] An appetite which seeks to promote self-glory instead of God's glory. We are all born into the world with a nature that is prone to rebel, that is prone to sin, that is bent towards self-reliance and self-exaltation, which is acted out in selfish and self-centered ways.

We are all born spiritually dead, spiritually disconnected from God. Creatures made to worship who are deceived as our first parents were into thinking that we know what is best for us.

Self-deification is at the root of our sin, which seeks to rob God of His glory.

This is a problem. It's a problem of infinite proportions. Because God who made all things, owns all things, and sustains all things, has said in His Word in Isaiah 48, 11, For how should my name be profaned?

My glory I will not give to another. There exists a separation between sinful humanity who seeks their own glory and a holy God who rightfully refuses to share it with another.

[3 : 52] However, after Adam's rebellion, God in His grace sought His rebellious children. And though there would be terrible consequences for what they had done, interspersed between His righteous judgments concerning their sin, God issued a promise which contained good news.

That promise, good news, came as God directed His attention to Satan, the deceiver. And He said, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel. And so in the midst of this cursed passage, a promise of hope is given. Theologians call this promise the Proto-Evangelium, which means the first gospel, the first mention of the good news.

God says here that one day He would send one who would reverse sin's curse. Satan would strike Him, yes, but in striking Him and dying, He would deliver ultimately the fatal death blow.

The Bible is the story of salvation. It progressively reveals the drama of a loving father seeking his estranged sons and daughters and restoring them to his loving family through this promised one.

[5 : 18] In the New Testament, the one promised arrives. And He is revealed to be Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became flesh. As John 1, 1 through 4 and John 1, 14 say, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

In John 1, 14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory. Glory as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. The Bible says that Jesus is Emmanuel, that He is God with us, that He is fully human and fully divine.

One person with two natures, that Jesus is God's champion. He is the God-man who lived righteously, who died sacrificially, and who rose victoriously, bridging the gulf that sin created by becoming cursed on the cross to redeem those who trust in Him for salvation.

That is the message of the gospel. That is the message of the Bible. And here in John 3, 16, Jesus provides an amazing summary of an enormous reality to a man named Nicodemus who came to Him seeking truth.

[6 : 40] In just one sentence, Jesus summarizes the gospel. He summarizes the Bible. This one sentence contains four revelations, which, if believed, result in redemption and transformation.

This verse, if believed, transfers one from darkness to light, from death to life, from confusion to clarity, from despair to hope, from anxiety to peace, from sorrow to joy.

This verse and the four revelations it contains are what I want to share with you this Easter morning. And so the main idea from this verse that I want to communicate to you this morning is that the gospel contains good news revealing what God has done to save sinners through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The gospel contains good news revealing what God has done to save sinners through His Son, Jesus Christ. You know, wherever the gospel of Jesus Christ has gone, this verse has become almost instantly known.

Millions of people have memorized it. It has been inscribed on books, on tombstones, on buildings, and homemade signs at sporting events. Even unbelievers unfamiliar with the Bible know this verse by heart.

[8 : 05] But perhaps this verse's familiarity to you has caused you to take the truths that it contains for granted.

You could be thinking this morning, this verse is really for the spiritually immature. It's for the baby Christians.

You know, I memorized and I mastered that verse a long time ago when I was in Sunday school or in Awana. And so maybe for you, this verse has become so familiar to you that you've stopped savoring the rich truths which it contains.

I'm from Kansas City. And Kansas City has the best barbecue in the world. For 35 years, I grew up eating it and taking it for granted.

Then I moved here. And no offense. It's just not the same. And so now whenever I go back home and whenever I visit Kansas City, I eat that barbecue.

[9 : 14] But this time, when I eat it, I savor every bite. The smell of it makes my mouth water. Every morsel delights my taste buds.

Likewise, once a Christian has tasted the gospel, they never lose their appetite for it. So I invite you who are saved to feast again on this verse that you may have taken for granted.

But I know that some of you this morning are probably going to taste the gospel for the very first time. And I'm glad you're here. Whatever the case may be, my prayer is that the Holy Spirit for all of us would sensitize our spiritual taste buds through this verse to taste and to see that the Lord is good.

That he is better. That he is the only one who can truly satisfy and nourish our famished souls with the gospel which reveals his love and his grace.

And so again, there are four revelations. Four revelations which, if believed, will result in eternal life an everlasting joy. Because the gospel is good news. But to behold its goodness, to behold its light,

it must first be presented against the backdrop of bad news.

[10 : 42] And the bad news is the subject of that first revelation that I want to share with you this morning from John 3.16. And here it is. All human beings are in danger of perishing.

All human beings are in danger of perishing. Now you might be thinking now, well, I thought you said the gospel was good news.

So how can it contain bad news? Well, you think of a jeweler who wants to show a client one of his diamonds. He wants the diamond's beauty and clarity to be fully seen.

So what does he do? He places it on a piece of black velvet so that the light fully reflects the diamond's beauty. And so Jesus here, the cosmic jeweler, displays his gospel against the revelation of bad news.

In his summary of the gospel, Jesus says, whoever believes in me should not perish. But stated negatively, that statement means that whoever does not believe in him will perish.

[11 : 52] But what does it mean to perish? Biologically speaking, we are all aware, especially those of you getting up in years, that our bodies are perishing. Every morning when you rise from bed and your muscles ache and your joints pop and you stare at your reflection in the mirror, you are aware that your strength and your beauty that you once possessed are fading.

Now that is an aspect of sin's curse, but that's not the kind of perishing that Jesus has in mind here. What he has in mind here is much worse. It's not a physical, but a spiritual perishing.

You know, a lot of attention is given to God's love expressed in John 3.16. But just a couple verses later, Jesus says in John 3.18, whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

So the danger that Jesus speaks of here isn't just dying, but dying in sin, dying in unbelief, dying in rejection of him and being eternally condemned before God who judges righteously.

In John 3.36, Jesus says, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

[13 : 24] And so these verses reveal that if you are to be rescued from perishing, it is because the love of God has provided a way for you to be rescued from the wrath of God.

In the Bible, to perish in sin means to endure the wrath of God forever because you've rejected the only way that he has given, the only way he has provided to be rescued from it.

To perish means that you will remain under the wrath of God because you will not trust in Christ. And that is a terrifying place.

The book of Revelation describes those who perish like this in Revelations 14.10. He also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

You see, perishing is not, as some would like to believe, a going out of existence. You know, to some that might sound like relief, thinking that I'll live my life my way, I'll live it up, and whether there is a God or not, I'll just cease to exist.

[14 : 41] Either way. But the Bible says that our souls, your soul, is eternal. The life you have is derived from God, the source of life, who always was and always will be.

Your soul is eternal, and the soul that rejects Christ suffers eternally in hell. Do you know that Jesus preached a lot more about hell than he ever preached about heaven?

His words are replete with warnings about it. Hell is the opposite of eternal life. It's eternal punishment. That's how Jesus describes it in Matthew 25, 46.

In Luke 16, 26, he says that there is a chasm fixed between heaven and hell that no one can cross. Perishing means wrath. Perishing, he says, means torment.

It means separation from God's peace and love and mercy and forgiveness and grace. It's a death with no end. Jesus describes it as a place of outer darkness, a place of unquenchable fire, a place where your ears will be eternally filled with the sounds of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[16 : 01] Now you might be thinking, well, certainly I've done nothing to warrant such punishment. I'm a good person and that doesn't sound like something God would do or ever do to me.

Listen, the Bible is God's word and in his word and as his word it serves as a mirror for us and it reflects both the truth of who he truly is and of who you truly are.

Romans 3, 23 and Romans 6, 23 describe who we truly are for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 6, 23 for the wages of sin is death.

And so now we might ask, well, why is sin so serious as to deserve this kind of perishing? And the answer is that God is holy. God is the worthiest person in all the universe.

He is of infinite value. He is infinitely perfect. Sin is the antithesis of who he is and he measures all things by himself.

[17 : 19] He is the standard and we fall way short. He is the one who stands outside of time. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. You depend on him for everything.

Without him you don't exist. And so you and I owe him perfect trust and allegiance and love and worship and honor and respect and obedience because he made you, he gave you life, he owns that life and he is the one who sustains it.

So to reject him and to distrust him and to disobey him and to enjoy other things making gods of them all are infinite insults to your infinite creator.

God says in Psalm 711 God is a righteous judge and a God who feels indignation every day. Every day God is rejected.

Every day people turn to other things rather than to him for joy and peace and satisfaction and love. This is bad news but the more you come to grips with it the more precious these other revelations from John 316 will be to you that despite your sin despite your sin against God despite the perishing you and I deserve in his love God has made a way through his son for you to be rescued from the danger of perishing.

[18 : 53] And so the second revelation that Jesus gives here is that God has designed a way for you to be rescued from perishing. God has designed a way for you to be rescued from perishing.

John 316 begins with the truth that God exists and that Jesus is his son. While we are made in God's image Jesus is the image of God.

He is the full representation and manifestation of who God is. Colossians 1 15 through 20 says of him he is the image of the invisible God the firstborn of all creation for by him all things were created in heaven and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things were created through him and for him and 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 the firstborn from the dead that in everything he might be preeminent for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross.

You know though we live in a scientific age though the theory of evolution is taught in our schools as if it was fact a Gallup poll from 2019 revealed that 87% of Americans 285 million people believe in God but belief in God isn't what saves you it's what you believe about him and Jesus says in John 3 16 that it is necessary to believe that he is the only begotten son of God well what does begotten mean?

that is a strange word that is not a part of our modern vocabulary in the Bible angels are called sons of God and they are by virtue of being created by God in the Bible Christians are called sons of God and they are by virtue of being redeemed and adopted into his family through salvation but the only son of God is the begotten son of God not a son by creation not a son by adoption but by begetting but still what is begetting?

[21 : 07] C.S. Lewis said rabbits beget rabbits horses beget horses humans beget humans not statues or portraits and God begets God not humans and not angels see there never was a time when the son of God was not and he is the perfect image and representation of God co-equal co-eternal the second person of the Trinity Jesus is the only begotten son of God he reveals God and in this verse he reveals that God's design to rescue sinners is motivated by his love in fact the Bible says in 1 John 4 8 anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love and the greatest expression of God's love has been expressed in what he has given you his only begotten son you know people often express love through gift giving young men will save up money to purchase a diamond ring to give to the woman he loves in the hopes that she will accept that gift in his proposal and commit herself to him in the covenant of marriage now say say that say that a guy wanted to propose to his to his girlfriend wanted to marry her and he gets down on one knee and he pulls out of his pocket and lifts up to her one of those toy 25 cent rings that you get out of the vending machine what do you think how do you think that that his girlfriend would respond this is a joke this has to be a joke you wouldn't seriously think that I would accept this kind of a gift and if he wasn't joking then she would probably be thinking

I don't know that this is the kind of person that I want to spend the rest of my life with because I don't know that he truly values me listen God hates sin but in love he's given his son there's nothing more precious and there's nothing more valuable that he could have given if you were to be rescued from the danger of perishing God had to give his son and he knew that in giving his son he was giving him up to rejection to crucifixion and death sin against an infinite creator has infinite consequences that only an infinite being can overcome and can atone for as Romans 5 7 through 8 says for one will scarcely die for a righteous person though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die but God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners

Christ died for us Jesus set up the truth he revealed in John 3 16 with an illustration from the Old Testament which he compared himself to in John 3 14 through 15 the verses that come right before 16 he says as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life now that that story comes from numbers 21 and it's the story of Moses and the bronze serpent when the people of Israel rebelled against God they were punished with the plague of serpents which bit the people filling their veins with poison and would result in their death and in verse 8 God after hearing Moses' prayer says this make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole and everyone who is bitten when he sees it shall live you see God's design motivated by love to rescue his rebellious people from perishing was to lift up an image of their affliction those who wanted to be rescued had to fix their eyes on it and trust in

God's words that if they did they would be saved so putting it together what Jesus is saying here is that God so loved the world he gave me it means that he gave his one and only begotten son to the world of rebellious serpent bitten people who are perishing in sin God has lifted up his son on the cross before a world cursed by sin and he was cursed there he was forsaken there by God he absorbed God's wrath there he atoned for your sin there that by looking in him and to him the son of God the one whom he gave the one who will substitute and willingly substituted his life his righteous life for your sins if you look to him in faith you will be saved you will be rescued God has given his best to save you from the worst he has designed a way to rescue you from perishing which leads to the third revelation from this verse it's your duty to believe in

Jesus your duty is to believe in Jesus you see believing is the vital link to receiving God's love as the gospel advances through the world it creates a division between those who believe and those who don't it's not a division based on race or intelligence or wealth or based upon any of the other ways that the world divides itself it is a division created by whether you believe in the son of God or not it's not based on wishful thinking but conviction that has left you convinced you know I love the March Madness tournament and in being a KU fan there have been very few times when I fill out my bracket that I don't have KU winning at all in some way I managed to convince myself I could see them win yeah I could see them you know what I think they're going to win the national championship this year but you know what this year I didn't have them

[27 : 23] I maybe this morning you feel that this gospel is too good to be true you realize the deficit of your sin and you know how great it is and maybe you're tempted to doubt that it could be as simple as just turning to Jesus in faith and be saved you know this is why the gospel is so amazing Jesus did it all

Jesus paid it all if you look to him and if you trust in him you're saved you can't earn it you don't deserve it but if you will look to him in faith you'll be saved of all of your sin past present and future you will be transformed you will have hope you will have joy and peace and purpose you will know the love of God you know what you'll still sin you'll still stumble but God will continually forgive you and sustain you when God saves you he keeps He clothes you with the righteousness of his son when you are saved the Bible says you are in Christ he's taken your sin he's bore your shame he's endured the wrath of God on the cross that you deserved and this is why the gospel is good news but you know what there's still more there's still more one last revelation the destiny of those who believe in

Jesus is eternal life for God so loved the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life in job 5 24 Jesus says truly truly I say to you whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life notice what Jesus says in that verse he does not say will have eternal life he says has eternal life right now in other words eternal life is not something that you wait for after you die it is something that you have in believing in him now eternal life is a personal intimate relationship with God it is a conscience!

experience of knowing God always of being able! to communicate with God it produces a renewed mind and a renewed heart with new desires and new affections it's a life that isn't waiting to experience joy one day but has it today because you have Christ and his spirit indwells you and that lasts forever forever forever you know it's hard for me with a finite mind to envision what eternity must be like how long is forever I love this illustration by John Piper he said if a little bird should fly from the coast of the sea to a great plain and deposit a grain of sand once every thousand years when that mound of sand reaches the height of Mount Everest eternity will have just begun and so on Easter we celebrate

Christ on Easter we celebrate the resurrection because we know that the one who was raised is the one in whom there is eternal life and he is the resurrection and the life as he said in John 6 40 for this is the will of my father that everyone who looks on the son and believes in him should have eternal life I will raise him up on the last day eternal life lasts forever and it encompasses both your body and your soul and don't you know that that's the way it should be when you look at yourself in the mirror and you see yourself falling apart in the morning don't you think this is not the way it should be it's not the way it should be Jesus has stepped down from heaven he has assumed the role of a servant he lived sinlessly he died sacrificially to atone for your sins he endured the cross willingly stepping into the danger that you otherwise would have known eternally and he gave his life he shed his blood he sufficiently atoned for sins but it is only efficient for you if you trust in him if you believe in his divine design to rescue you from your sins that you can't save yourself and you understand that only

[32 : 51] God can give life to the dead you still have this responsibility to turn in faith to him and trust and recognition that Christ died the death you deserved that by his grace through faith just as he arose on the third day so you too one day in Christ will experience a similar resurrection and that resurrection life begins now for those in Christ and it stretches into forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever so the main point of application is this if you reject Christ you will perish perish but if you believe in him you will live you will live and you will live the abundant life one question that I have for you to take with you this morning one question of application according to

Jesus words in John 3 16 are you in danger of perishing or are you destined for eternal life maybe the greatest question that you could ever think over Jesus said in John 11 25 I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live and so my hope is that today you can put your name in place of that whoever I hope that today you can place your name in place of that whoever in John 3 16 knowing with certainty that Christ has redeemed you through his sinless life sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection and so I want to end by sharing some testimonies with you of some of those whoever's from our church their names are Julie and Brandy and Danny and Nikki and Jack and I hope that you can count yourself as one of those whoever's who believes in Jesus and has eternal life that you will know the joy of those whom Jesus forever redeems

I am a woman who did not think much about God at all I am a woman who lived my life my way but God rich in mercy reached down with his irresistible grace and his uncompromising holiness and profoundly changed me and now I can't imagine my life without him I was raised in a church that thought they were worshiping God but then I learned about the one true God and now I am truly redeemed I always believed in God I believed that Jesus died on the cross but it wasn't until someone told me that Jesus personally died for my sins that I have a relationship with him I battled depression for years believing the lies of the enemy that I had done something terribly wrong and brought it all on myself but God being rich in mercy and grace pulled me out of that pit of despair he alone is my hope and peace I've seen a lot of people being saved and I wanted to join God's family forever you set me free so I'll shake off these heavy chains and wipe away every stain now I'm not who

I used to be oh God I'm not who I used to be Jesus I'm not who I used to be cause I am redeemed redeemed redeemed redeemed redeemed redeemed thank God redeemed