

## ADVENT CONSPIRACY 2023

Love All  
John 3:16

As we move into WEEK 3 of ADVENT CONSPIRACY, I want us to think about what should MOTIVATE us as Christians to SPEND LESS and GIVE MORE. The world uses MANIPULATION and GUILT to drive us to give. **[Basis for “Giving Tuesday”]** Our motivation as believers must come from a place of genuine CONVICTION rather than manipulation. **Convictional motivation creates more than a FEELING; it creates a FOUNDATION!** One of the most famous verses in all of the Bible is JOHN 3:16. We used to see that verse on placards behind the goal posts of nearly every football game that was on TV, we still see it on t-shirts, and we read it on signs along many of our highways and freeways. This morning, I want us to read it with FRESH EYES as we attempt to understand the HEART of GOD that is revealed to us by Jesus in these few words. **I want to use a TECHNIQUE for study that has helped me understand the Word better for years: Emphasize each word and phrase.** This will also help us to see what we should DO with these words in our lives. **John 3:16 NIV**

**16 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 . . .

Consider who God truly is, and we have the baseline for an astonishing truth. I have talked a lot about WHO GOD IS in messages over the years, but I could never EXHAUST the depth of who God is if I had a million lifetimes to talk endlessly about him. There is NO ONE ELSE like him. It is always overwhelming just to recount out loud different truths about God that help us to remember the One who ALONE is GOD.

Self-sufficient – He does not NEED anyone or anything. He is I AM.

-This reveals that he is the SOURCE of ALL. All things come FROM him.

Omnipotent – He is without limits in his power. He is ALMIGHTY.

-This reveals that he is SOVEREIGN. All creation is under his control.

Omnipresent – He is in all places at once. You cannot escape him!

Omniscient – He is perfect in KNOWLEDGE. There is nothing he does not know!

He is Holy, Pure, & Perfect

### For God SO LOVED THE WORLD

God LOVED. This does not refer to some idea that God was INFATUATED with us. Love is NOT a FEELING of affection or delight. Love can LEAD to those things, but it is not those things. God did not love us because of something that WE DID for him. We have done NOTHING for him. We are not the CATALYST for God’s love. God is love, and he is the SOURCE of all love. His love sparks all other love. And his love is not a REACTION or an EMOTION. Love is an ACTION. Love DOES. Love is a CHOICE that results in a CHANGE!

**And let me remind you again who it was that God loved: the WORLD.** How would you describe the world? Scripture gives us a good idea of what the world is, and it is not pretty.

The world is WICKED and UNHOLY.

The world is REBELLIOUS and ARROGANT.

The world is SELF-CENTERED and FOOLISH.

The world is EMPTY and HOPELESS and completely NEEDY.

**I have a question for you: Are you unholy, proud, selfish, and poor?** I know that I have often reminded us that we are some of the wealthiest people in the world today. But it is also true that EACH OF US is DESPERATELY WICKED and hopelessly POOR! We are SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT without Jesus Christ. Jesus came to rescue you and me from poverty and sickness and death. He came to give us LIVING WATER that we desperately needed. He did this out of OBEDIENCE to his loving Father.

**For God SO loved the world THAT HE GAVE**

God is amazing in every way. He is the SOURCE of ALL GOODNESS and GRACE, and he has NO NEEDS whatsoever. In light of this, we cannot say enough good about him. We cannot GLORIFY him in any way that is even CLOSE to what he deserves! **But what is most astonishing about God for us is that, although he NEEDS nothing and is COMPLETE in himself, still he CHOSE to LOVE those that he CREATED. It could have been far different.**

He could have REJECTED US after we SINNED against him.

He could have DESPISED US when he saw how broken we were.

He could have IGNORED our pleas for MERCY when we cried out to him.

He could have CRUSHED us and PUNISHED us for our rebellion and sin.

Yet, he did NOT. In fact, he did just the OPPOSITE. More than that, EVERYTHING that WE (the world) HAVE DONE to CHRIST. he DID NOT DO to us! **Isaiah 53:3-7 NIV**

**3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. 4 Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.**

Next, we must give our full attention to that which God gave to meet our desperate need. **For God SO loved the world that he gave HIS ONE AND ONLY SON**

This is such a significant point. First, it is unthinkable that God gave the ULTIMATE Gift to rescue each of us. God only has ONE SON. There were not SEVERAL OPTIONS before God that he could give to save us. Jesus was and is our only Hope! Simon Peter reminds us that we were “not redeemed with perishable things like SILVER and GOLD, but with the PRECIOUS BLOOD of the LAMB . . .” The blood of Christ was the ONLY thing that actually COULD redeem us, and God was willing to give that gift for us (Isaiah 53 says that “it pleased the Father to crush him . . .”), just as God the Son was willing to be given “for the JOY that was set before him.” That JOY was US: Unholy, rebellious, wicked sinners! What a magnificent, loving God!

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, THAT WHOSOEVER**

I cannot simply rush through this verse at this point. This ultimate Gift of love from God was not just for a select few because of their worthiness; it was for WHOSOEVER. Are you whosoever? I bet you are. It was not for the PURE, or the POWERFUL, or the WEALTHY, or the WISE. It was for the foolish and the wicked and the wanderer and the helpless. The Gift of God stands available from the FIRST up to this very moment for ANYONE who meets the ONE REQUIREMENT for receiving this Gift:

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whosoever BELIEVES IN HIM**

The requirement for receiving the Ultimate Gift is astounding. You do not have to PAY for it. You could not if you tried! You do not have to EARN it in any way. You could not if you tried! You do not have to CHANGE in order to receive it. Instead, it will change you! You do not have to WORK for it, or SWEAT for it, and GROVEL for it, or MAKE PROMISES in order to get it. You simply have to BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus. To believe is to TRUST in; to place one’s complete self with and to the Son of God; to truly REST in the TRUTH of his life, death, and resurrection. It is more than just thinking the right things about God and his Son, but about COMPLETELY RELYING on the person and work of Jesus Christ for your deliverance and salvation. When you BELIEVE in him in this way, you will experience a transfer of worth and a transformation of character that is only possible in the name of Jesus Christ. **And there is more.**

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.**

Receiving God’s gift of love will ensure that you will NEVER DIE; that you will never experience SEPARATION from God or PUNISHMENT for your own sins. You will not have to fear death or hell. You are completely covered by his love! You are given full and free access to the presence of God and the fulness of joy that can only be found in him. You are promised EVERLASTING LIFE. Life that is not only eternal, but exceptional in its quality. You will one day be free of pain and suffering and sorrow and fear and loss. You receive God and all that comes with him. This is the Gift of God to a lost and empty world.

All this, because God LOVED ALL, so he GAVE ALL. Words fail me now. This One who is ALL gave all for those who were NOTHING. Let me give you a gift to help you better understand this glorious Gift: [Play message by S.M. Lockridge - THAT'S MY KING!](#)

What does this mean for us? What do you think? **Out of the fulness of God, we not only live; we can also GIVE.** We are receiving from the Endless Supply of God to give to a needy world. **No ONE of us can meet all of those needs, but the ONE that we serve can meet the needs of ALL through EACH ONE of us.** I am not just talking about our money. I am talking about our selves. Giving so that others can KNOW God's love like we do.

Pastor Rufus Smith, from Hope Church in Memphis, spoke to our Discipleship Academy last Monday night. He was talking about how rare it is for even God's people to truly love people that are different from them. We love some, but not all. But we have been called to love all. He described how that can happen. [\[DOMINO ILLUSTRATION\]](#)

God, please help us choose to be the FIRST DOMINO that you touch that can then touch all those connected to us in some way.

Let's pray.

**ADVENT CONSPIRACY 2023**  
**Week 3 – Facilitation Guide**  
**Love All**

**START TALKING:**

Which organization do you think is the most effective in raising money, and why do you think they are so effective?

**START THINKING:**

What should motivate Christians to be generous?

**START SHARING:**

**Read John 3:16.** Contrast what you know about who GOD is compared with who the WORLD is. What COULD God have done with the world, compared with what he actually DID do?

**Read Isaiah 53:3-7.** What did Christ endure from those that he came to save?

**Read John 3:16 – again!** In what ways are we ALL “whosoever?” What did God give to all of us who are undeserving, unworthy, proud, sinful, and poor? What does this tell you about God?

How did spending time focusing on each word/phrase in John 3:16 in the message impact you? Which word or phrase hit you the most?

**START PRAYING:**

Spend time worshipping and praising God specifically for who he is. Praise his name and his work!

**START DOING:**

Give something away this week that YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE.