

This Is How We Know: The Other John 3:16
February 18, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

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. (John 3:16 NIV)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. (1 John 3:16 NIV)

During the season of Lent that leads us toward Easter, we are going to examine the New Testament Letter of First John. As a guide, we will be referencing a book titled "This is How We Know" written by author and pastor, J.D. Walt who contends that John 3:16 and the other John 3:16 (found in 1 John) work together to form the two halves of the gospel. This week we will spend some time discussing what these two verses tell us about the Christian faith.

Digging Deeper

Because God loves the world, Jesus gave up His LIFE for us.

- Jesus Christ paid for you with His life. That's how valuable you are. We don't often determine the value of something by examining the giver, but in this case it is certainly appropriate to assess our worth in this way. How can realizing the importance God places on you help to change the way you think about yourself?

Because we believe in Jesus, we come to know God's LOVE.

- Jesus loves me this I know. For the Bible tells me so. It may be a simple lyric to a children's song, but the message is deeply profound. The simple truth of God's love can always be trusted and has been abundantly evidenced by the actions of our Savior. What do you think it means to *know* God's love for you? Not just to be aware of it, but to KNOW it is true? When is it most difficult for you to recognize it at work in your life? Why do you struggle during those times?

Because we know God's love, we give up our LIVES for others.

- Have you ever compared the message of John 3:16 with that of 1 John 3:16? What does it mean to lay down your life for someone else? It's a popular expression to say "I would die for you" as a means of conveying a deep love for someone. Have you ever known someone who actually did this? First responders and military personnel may have greater exposure to such actions, but most of us will not be presented with a circumstance that literally requires us to die for someone else. Even if that day never comes, perhaps the condition of our hearts is what is most important. Are you in such a place that you can honestly say, because you KNOW God's love, you are prepared to lay down your life for your brother or sister in need? What do you think needs to happen to get you to that place?
- We might also think of this in terms of how we can be a living sacrifice for God. Everyone needs to know and believe their eternal lives have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Some people might need to see His love working through us to begin to open the door of their hearts to a relationship with Christ that will lead them to accepting the truth of His life, death and

resurrection. Sharing your faith with non-believers, and loving people in such a way that God's leadership of your life is evident, is another way to demonstrate love. What are some specific ways you show others that they are valuable to you?

Conclusion

"It's easy to love helping people. It's another thing to love people. Helping people tends to make us feel worthwhile. Loving people makes them feel worthwhile. Helping people, which is a good thing, requires showing up. Loving people, which is a supernatural thing, necessitates growing up." (J.D. Walt) Truth be told, most of us have some "growing up" to do in this regard, don't we? Over the next few weeks of Lent let's ask the Lord to develop a spiritual maturity in us that will move us from mere believing to real knowing by filling our lives with Christ's power and presence so we can have true love for the world.