

Introduction:

I am sure you all know the old song “Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so.” Today’s Scripture is the most well-known verse in the Bible, and it has brought millions of people to Christ. There is even a guy in the USA who sits in ballgames and waves this verse on a placard! Please can you guess which verse in the Bible and can you tell me how many words in that verse? The most popular verse in the Bible is **John 3:16** and has **25 words!** Let’s read John 3:16 together on PowerPoint, *"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."*

God’s love for us is the most important thing in the world, so what can we discover about this love?

1. This is a love that is higher and greater.

Love can be described a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that ranges from interpersonal affection, for example, I love my mother, to the casual linking of this or that. I loved that meal or I love your Christmas decorations. The Greek language has four different words for **Love**: Eros, Philia, Storge and Agape.

- Eros means romantic love.
- Philia often translates brotherly love.
- Storge is a love between parents and children.
- Agape means the love of God for man and of man for God.
It is the unconditional love of God for his children.

Eros, Philia and Storge are human’s love and very limited but Agape is God’s love which is unconditional. In human history, there are many great love stories but in the end these human love will disappear. However, here the Psalmist says that *"For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations"* (Psalm 100:5). Only God’s love endures forever. What a great love story of Ruth in the Bible! When Ruth’s husband and father-in-law died and her world came apart, she didn’t give up on life because she knew that there was the God who still loved her. The Bible also tells us that *"God is Love"* (1 John 4:8).

2. This is a love that comes at great cost.

In our Scripture this morning, the Gospel of John says *"For God so loved the world."* John uses the verb “to love” (Agape) which refers to the unconditional love of God for his children. God’s love is very different from human love and it's not based on feelings or emotions but it’ s based on the character of the one who loves us, God the Father through Jesus loves us. He simply loves us! There’s nothing we can do to earn it or there’s nothing we can do to deserve it. He doesn't love us because we're lovable or because we make Him feel

good. He just simply loves us! When we get up in the morning, He just loves us. When we go to bed in the dark night, He just loves us. When we do good things, He just loves us. When we do bad things and hide somewhere, He still loves us. When we have family, He loves us. When we are absolutely nothing at all, God still loves us because He is love. God always love us and His love is constantly eternal. When nobody cares about you or nobody wants to be a friend with you. He still loves you!

Brothers and sisters, I don't know how you feel about this love? This love is unconditional and it only comes from God. If you want to know this limitless love or true love, you need to get to know God. The more you get to know Him better, the more you can understand how much He loves you. He is always ready to pour out His love on you, and He wants to teach you how to love others as He loves you forever.

Do you know that even when your loved ones are gone, there is God who is always with you and loves you? That's why I come to Church. That's why I serve Him, because He always loves me, this I know! I left my home country and came to live here in New Zealand and I have struggled with many challenges including language, different cultures and a new way of life, but what I learnt there remains with me and sustains me in my resolve to be a Minister of the church and to be able to share God's love with others. I believe God's love can overcome all the challenges that we face together as a society today because His love endures forever.

3. This is a love that cannot be bought or sold.

Look at what the Gospel John says here: *“that he gave his one and only Son.”* God loves us so much, and so He gave His only Son who is our Saviour. The impression that God “gave” or “gave up” his only Son is unmistakable because He just loves us and gave us his only Son as a gift. He gave his own Son and all of himself. “You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving.” God gives everything He has in Jesus Christ. He died as a ransom for our sins. He became our substitute and He went to the cross for us. Because of Jesus, we have become the children of God. God shows us His unconditional love by giving an unexpected gift “his only Son, a baby Jesus.”

Also in **1 John 4:9**, *“God sent the One and Only Son”* into the world and gave him up to death on a cross because of his unconditional love. He expresses his love by his action – giving and sending his only Son.

4. This unexpected gift of love for you.

Look at what the Gospel of John tells us;

*“that whoever believes in him
should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

The phrase *“whoever believes in him”* includes everyone. All those who believe in Jesus Christ, will have this unexpected gift – we will live with Him forever and ever as the children of God. Because God has a unique and specific love for “the one and only Son.” If we *“whoever”* believe and accept Jesus as our Saviour, we become the children of God. But we need to understand that not all people are children of God, and that becoming a child of God

only happens when you are adopted by God through faith in Christ Jesus (*Galatians 3:26*). The Gospel of John also says that if we are born again, we have been adopted into the family of God (*John 1:12, 3:1-8*). If we believe in Jesus Christ, we become His sons and daughters. God's love is international and global (God's love for the world). God loves everyone. Today in our society, there are many different kinds of people and we each face our own challenges. Even though we may be of different races, wealth, gender, part of small churches or big churches, we all share in the same Spirit and we are all a part of God's family, so we need to help and encourage one another. Paul says in *1 Thessalonians 5:11*, *"therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."*

Even though, we are different culture, colour and language, God loves everyone. God just love us, that word never makes sense to you unless you say to yourself or unless you put your name on – Jesus loves Roi Nu! Jesus loves you! Jesus loves us! Who we are? Where we come from? What we do? None of them is no matter to God because He just love us. His love is for us.

Conclusion:

Brothers and sisters, we now know and understand, God's love is unconditional and limitless. He loves us and so gave His one and only Son, "Jesus Christ" who is our Saviour.

This is the biggest and the greatest gift of love, unexpected gift of love,
a baby Jesus for us from God.

- 1. This is a love that is higher and greater.**
- 2. This is a love that comes at great cost.**
- 3. This is a love that cannot be bought or sold.**
- 4. This unexpected gift of love for you! Receive it now....**

This Christmas 2016 how can you respond your best to God? What gifts can you bring to Christ this year? God loves us and the best response we can do is to offer our love back to Him! And we can offer gifts small ways to tell others how much we love them and to remind them, how much God loves them too!

A story to finish: Have you heard about the story of **"The Little Drummer Boy"** which is one of the most popular legends of Christmas. When Baby Jesus was born, many people brought precious gifts to Him. The wise men brought many valuable and expensive gifts to Him but there was a little Drummer boy who was very sad and disappointed with himself because he was very poor and didn't have any gifts to bring to a Baby Jesus. He didn't know what to do next, but he began playing his drum as well as he could and with all of his heart. And so he did that – the song goes **"Pa rum pah pum pum. Pa ram pah pum pum. Rum pah pum pum."** Then, Baby Jesus responded to the sound, turned his head towards the drummer boy and smiled. The drummer boy was no longer sad, as he believed that he presented Baby Jesus with the greatest gift of all; the gift of love. It's showing that at Christmas the gift of love is the best gift of all. To conclude, let's watch the video clip of the story of "The Little Drummer Boy." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ_MGWio-vc .