



**Sermon Series:** All Signs Point to Jesus

**To be used with Session 7:** The Sign of His Power Over Death

**Sermon Title:** Eternal Life in Jesus

**Scripture:** John 3:16

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study “The Sign of His Power Over Death,” this sermon builds upon today’s Bible study by expounding upon the most quoted verse in the Bible and showing that Jesus offers eternal life to those who truly believe in Him.

**Introduction:** When God created humankind, He created us in His image. Part of being created in His image means that we are eternal beings. A study conducted by Pew Research found that almost 75 percent of American adults believe in eternity. The Bible says that God has placed eternity within our hearts (Ecc. 3:11). This means we know that there is more beyond this life. Since we know that we are eternal, the question becomes, what does it mean to spend eternity in heaven? The Bible clearly answers this question and it starts with an understanding of God’s love.

### 1. Understanding God’s love.

To accurately understand and apply this message, we must start with context. We are observing a conversation that Jesus had with a Pharisee named Nicodemus. The Pharisees were the religious elite. They were the ones who set and enforced the laws. Based on this exchange, we can discern that merely knowing and following laws was not sufficient to provide eternal peace as Nicodemus had questions.

- a. **God’s love is sacrificial.** As we begin to study God’s love, we need to understand the word *love* from the original language. We today can say that we love pizza, and we love our family enough to die for them. We use the same word both times, but the meaning and application is vastly different. The Greek language offers different words for love so that confusion is not had. The word used to describe the love of God is not a love of desire, nor is it a brotherly love. Instead, it is a love of self-sacrifice for others. The love that God has is a love that sacrifices for those to whom the love is directed.
- b. **God’s love is for the world.** Who exactly is His love directed towards? The answer, according to the Bible, is the world. While this does not ensure that everyone will receive this love, we can rest assured that He loves the entire world, and everyone has the opportunity to respond to His sacrificial love.
- c. **God’s love is giving.** One last thing to learn about God’s love is that it is giving. When Christmas season arrives, most of us enjoy giving gifts more than receiving them. We

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take the time and effort to find special gifts for our loved ones. We do not always give because the gifts are deserved. We give because we love, and we want to give our very best. Our giving of gifts to loved ones is patterned after God's giving to His loved ones. He gave His very best in His only begotten Son.

## **2. Our response: belief.**

Most of us would say there is a difference between acknowledging something to be true and believing something to be true. For example, I can acknowledge that one of the pews in the worship center today has the ability to sustain me. I can easily do this from a distance. If I chose to believe the pew to sustain me, this means I have to place all of who I am into the pew. Belief requires me to act upon what I acknowledge.

In a similar manner, the gift of eternal life is not merely acknowledging Jesus to be a good teacher, a prophet, or a noble historic figure. James dealt with this issue as well when he said, "You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe – and they shudder" (Jas. 2:19). Demons have a belief in God, but this belief does not mean that they have the hope of salvation and an eternal relationship with Christ.

The word that John used is different from the acknowledgement of something being true. Instead, it points to a deep-seated belief in something or someone that yields consistent action based on that belief. This belief leads to action and not merely words. When someone has this type of belief in Christ, the result is eternal life.

## **3. The result: eternal life.**

If we are honest, we long for results. If a student works hard, that student wants to earn a good grade. If an hourly worker shows up early, that worker may desire a raise. The result of placing one's belief in Jesus as the only way to glory is eternal life. This is more than simply living forever. When we place our faith and belief in Christ alone, eternal life begins right then and there. For one, we experience the abundant life (John 10:10) that Christ promised. When our time on earth ends, we step into the presence of God because Paul said when we are absent from the body we are at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

We must, however, acknowledge an important factor regarding eternal life. We discussed a student working hard for a good grade or an hourly employee working hard for a raise. Eternal life is not something we can work hard for or earn. Eternal life is something we receive only by grace through faith; we cannot earn salvation and eternal life (Eph. 2:8-9).

**Conclusion:** The question we all need to ask ourselves is: Do we acknowledge Jesus as a good teacher and noble person or do we believe and trust Him for eternal life. Nicodemus understood that his religious knowledge was not good enough for his eternal questions. Let's make sure that we are trusting Jesus for our eternal life as this cannot be earned.

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