

Food for thought from the Gospel of John

3 – 6 God's Only Begotten Son

John 3:16-18

The most difficult places to teach or study God's Word are often the places that are most familiar. We may have already learned from that passage. So, our eyes glaze over the words because "*we already know that.*" Our mind and spirit don't expect more. So, we aren't waiting around. "Let's move on to something new!" May God's Spirit give us patience and hunger for His ministry to us – to learn from what we already know, or think we know. Sometimes it is making connections with other passages that we haven't connected before. Sometimes it is just focusing on a word, its definition and how it is used in other places. Basically, you just need to slow down and be ready for repetition (Isaiah 28:9-10). God's Word is deeper and more transcendent than we might imagine. It is not all academic. God's Spirit can take what you already know and simply make it more important to you than before.

God gave / sacrificed / spent His "only begotten Son" for us. The phrase "Only begotten" can tell us that Jesus is the only Son of God. There's no one like Him. He is God in the flesh. The second person of the Trinity, come in bodily form and made Himself vulnerable to physical pain, suffering, and death. At the same time, God exposed us to deity in a form that could bless us and not consume us (John 1:1-5,14,16-17; 14:9; I John 1:1-4).

That doesn't mean everyone loved, liked, or benefitted from Jesus (John 1:5,9-11). But, by His birth, life, death, and resurrection, He changed the meaning of life and gave many people eternal life (John 3:16; 8:12; 14:6; Matthew 16:24-26; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:21). Jesus had to take on a physical body and an earthly life so that He could perfectly use it to satisfy God's requirements and then offer it as a sacrificial substitute to redeem us – buy us back from sin (Matthew 26:26-28; Romans 8:1-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13)

There is a sense in which the words "Only Begotten" are used in the Greek to show how precious and beloved is Jesus Christ to the Heavenly Father (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18). The same Greek words are used to describe some of the children that Jesus healed (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38). These were very pitiful situations. Luke especially shows how the Son of Man felt the pain of others and demonstrated pity for people's sorrows and problems (Isaiah 53:4). If we can feel the pain of a widow who has lost her only son, perhaps we can feel the pain / the investment of the Heavenly Father, giving His Only Begotten Son for our sins!

Notice other times when the endearment of the Father towards His Son is expressed:

- Matthew 3:17; 12:17-21 (cp. Isaiah 42:1-4); 17:5
- Colossians 1:12-13
- II Peter 1:16-18
- I John 4:9

Behold, how grievous it is to dishonor the love that the Father has for His Son:

- I John 2:22-23
- John 5:22-23; 14:23-24

Next time...

Behold, this great love that the Father has for His Son is extended to the people which belong to Christ:

- I John 3:1