

How Sweet the Sound – God Loves Me The Trinity - God Has All the Bases Covered

It is probably the best known verse in the Bible, more than the 23rd Psalm, or the Lord's Prayer. Waved at sporting events, a famous wrestler taking it as his moniker, the popular author Max Lucado writing a book with that title, and our children memorizing it very young.

And well they should. Because the verse captures the heart of our faith, what sets us as Christians apart from every other religion. And it says why the Christian message is heard and believed in every country and culture in the world. and – it is what this meal, this sacrament we will share shortly, proclaims and demonstrates... and what this Trinity Sunday seeks to remind us about. So – will you please join me in repeating the verse...

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Amen.

If you believe that, you're a Christian. But it is no easy thing to believe. These days again, it can get you to heaven, but also it can get you into trouble here on earth.

Still, I think its worth any trouble it causes – and I guess you do, too. Because you're here. Please pray with me.

Lord – its how we know you. Father, Son and Holy Spirit – that sets us apart. May the words of my mouth, and the thoughts of these your faithful and loving people, make the fullness of your presence with us be more clearly known. Amen.

President Obama would like to see more understanding between America and the Muslim world. But - Arab leaders in Dearborn said it can't happen until America changes its policy toward Israel. And Friday - God's timing ? - I attended the funeral of a Jewish neighbor.

And John 3:16 speaks truth to both Obama's wish, and my worship, or at least presence, at the funeral.... And ... to the heart of what you I must believe if we are to find any true peace and strength for living in these very trying and troubled times.

Here's the truth – we have no argument with Jews or Muslims, or persons of any faith, or no faith at all. We do not need to prove other faiths wrong, or our own faith as right. We simply need to believe John 3:16, and live as if we really do believe it. If we do, yes, we will be seen as different from people around us.

We will be seen as people who know it is not our goodness or our good works that matter most - because we are sometimes not very good at all. We will be seen as people who hate no one else, Muslim, Hindu or Jew, or of any other faith or none, nor terrorist or criminal.

2

We will be known, as people who love others not because they are good or lovely, but just because they are - God's children, too, like us. We will be seen as people who are willing to share whatever we have with others, our faith and our worldly goods, because the one we call Jesus, our Lord and Savior, shared all he had with the world, and called us to live as he lived.

John 3:16 - Just a simple verse, but with a powerful life changing world changing message. It changed the life of a Jewish leader, Nicodemus, who after he met with Jesus understood that God's love was not just for Jewish people, not just for people who kept the law best, but for everyone and anyone who believed in Jesus Christ and in God's love for all people.

John 3:16 may help us accept and live with God's people who are Muslims, but it may never make it easy for Muslims to accept us. Because we do not believe the practice of our faith, doing all the right things - praying the right way, or making a holy trip, or giving money, or defeating those who don't believe as we do, is what saves us. No.

We believe God became one with us in Jesus Christ, and that the Spirit of God at work in us leads us to believe in him so that we might become one with the God who made us, and calls us to be God's forever children.

The heart of our faith is in this verse, and in the words we speak here every time we come to this table. They are words about a God who is our creator, who has made God known to us in human form, in the life of Jesus Christ, and whose spirit is at work in our world calling all people to believe. We are - saved by God's amazing grace through our own faith.

So we say, come. Come here. Not because you're good enough to be loved by God, not because you've done something to earn the right to be here, not because this Church says you're good enough to come. NO - we say here - that God so loved the world that God gave God's son, Jesus Christ, so that anyone who believes in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

Anyone, anyone can have a new life. Anyone, every new day, can begin a new life, can be, yes, reborn, reshaped, reformed, into a new person, who lives, no longer for himself or herself first, but lives first for Christ - for his way, and his truth, and his love.

And - we can find in this love strength to walk through the dark valleys of this life, even the dark valleys of disease, or depression - in this economy, or of the mind and heart, even the dark valley of death.

So come – come to the table, renewed in the knowledge of God’s incredible, wonder full, now and forever love for you. Come, just because you believe in God’s promise to you, the sweet sound - that God loves you. Amen.

David W. Robertson, Pastor