

“God’s Love For You”

Grace, mercy, and PEACE to you, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To the family of Carol Luedders – to all our brothers and sisters in Christ – may Christ’s peace be yours today, and in all the days to come. Amen.

John 3:16 is a familiar bible passage to many people – but what does it mean that “God so loved the world” – what does it mean that He “gave His only Son”? Jesus Himself defines this love of God and the giving of His Son – connecting it with Moses and the children of Israel during their wilderness wandering.

Jesus says – “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.”

In the Old Testament, the Lord sent His servant Moses to deliver God’s people from their bondage and slavery in Egypt. Even though they had been set free – they soon began to grumble against the Lord. Their rebellion, and lack of faith in the Lord, resulted in poisonous snakes being sent into their camp – and those bitten were dying.

Even though they had brought this upon themselves by their sinfulness – the Lord loved them – and gave to them a means of salvation from the serpents. Moses was to lift up a bronze snake upon a pole – and the Lord promised, that whoever looked to the snake lifted up, would not die, but live.

So it is for all of us – that our rebellious sinfulness has brought death to us. That is what we all deserve because of our sin. But God loves us – and for you, and for your salvation, He lifts His Son, Jesus, up upon the cross – so that all who trust in Him to take away their sins – shall not die, but live – and live eternally.

God’s love for us never changes. In the Old Testament and New Testament – His gracious love moves Him to send His Savior.

Jesus comes to a Samaritan woman drawing water at a well – and because of His love for her, He sits down to visit with her. He says to her: “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)

Jesus, the Son of God comes to Martha after her brother Lazarus has died – and loving her, He says: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Do you believe this, Martha? Do YOU believe this?

The time was coming when Jesus would no longer be seen by His disciples – these men who had been by His side, listening to Him. Their conversations were coming to an end – so in love, He prepares them.

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son” – He gave Him into death. He gave His Son to take the whole world’s sin as His own – and suffer and die in the place of sinners – shedding His blood to pay the ransom, to forgive the debt of sin.

God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ – to suffer and die for the WHOLE WORLD, and that most certainly includes YOU – “that WHOEVER believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Such is His love for Carol. In Holy Baptism, He called her to be His own dear child. He washed away all her sin. God the Holy Spirit guided her by His Word to live a life of faith in Christ. By the death of Jesus, He has prepared a place for her in His Father's house – a seat at the Table of the heavenly Wedding Feast.

Dearly beloved, God knows all our needs – our needs of both body and soul – and “well provides them.” He knows how we have sinned and fallen short of His glory – how we have rebelled against His will for our lives – how we have loved ourselves, instead of our neighbor. He knows our need for salvation – so He sends His Savior.

God had good use for Carol in her life. The Lord who promised to be with her always, even unto the end of the age – was at work through her – in service to those He gathered around her – as a daughter, and wife, and mother, and grandmother – in her service at Madonna, in her friendships with you – in many and various way.

Her love for you was a great reflection of God's love shown to you in His Son Jesus – a sacrificial love – one that sets aside oneself to tend to the needs of others. [P]

I know that on the one hand you miss Carol – and on the other you are glad that she has no more sorrow or suffering. Now she is with the Lord in glory – and God's love FOR YOU and for the whole world continues – as He sends His Savior Jesus to you.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son” – to be born for you – to live, suffer and die for you – to be resurrected for you – and to ascend into heaven for you.

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son” – for the forgiveness of all your sins, for the resurrection of your body, for your life everlasting. Such is God's love for Carol, for you, and for the world. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.