



EXCERPT



### **Mission 3:16**

#### *God's One-Verse Invitation to Love the World*

June 9, 2020 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4519-4

*"Paul Borthwick skillfully weaves together his missiological expertise—as a global scholar and a cross-cultural minister—with a gentle but unignorable call for each of us to live as whole-life, whole-world disciple-making disciples. This invitation comes through sound biblical exegesis and inspiring stories that honor the faithful witness of women and men from around the world."*

—*Ruth Hubbard*, vice president, Urbana, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA

## God's Mission Statement

John 3:16 does not appear in isolation. In that respect, it really isn't an elevator speech but rather an amazing summary of the good news of God's love that flows through John's Gospel and the Bible.

We Jesus followers are called uniquely and specifically to fulfill our part in God's global mission. But to understand our roles, we first need to understand the mission of God into which we are summoned as disciples of Jesus.

I'm suggesting that John 3:16 clearly and succinctly describes that mission. In it, we are introduced to the missionary heart of God: the God who seeks after lost people, sacrifices to pay the penalty that we deserve, and sends us out to carry out his mission in the world.

To summarize the chapters ahead:

**"For God":** God is the great initiator of mission. He is the starting point, the pursuer of Adam and Eve in the garden. In the person of Jesus, he comes "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

**"So Loved":** Love is the motivation for mission. God's first message is not condemnation or accusation but love. Unlike most deities of other world religions who provoke fear or demand submission, the pursuing God of Christian faith reaches out to us in love.

**"The World":** Our entire human population—and even creation—is God's concern. The whole world, all peoples and nations and tribes and languages, is loved by the God who wants everyone to know and respond to that love. The word used for world, *kosmos*, is replaced as "nations" (*ethnē*) in Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:47, but Mark 16:15 refers to "all creatures" or "all creation" (*ktisei*), going past the idea of the human world to all of the living creatures and creation. Tradition indicates that Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation," was the trigger for Francis of Assisi's love of creatures and creation.

**"That He Gave":** Sacrifice is the foundation of God's mission. For salvation to come, God had to give his son as the sacrifice for our sins. And if the good news of salvation and the kingdom of God is going to be spread all over the world, then we, the people of God, will need to make sacrifices—personally, socially, financially, and physically.

**"His One and Only Son":** Jesus is the pivot around which God's mission revolves. Salvation is found in no one else. Jesus is the mediator, the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to God but through him (John 14:6 and 1 Timothy 2:5). In our pluralistic world, we want Jesus to be one among many options. But the Bible affirms that Jesus alone is the savior sent by God.



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Paul Borthwick (DMin, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) is senior consultant for Development Associates International. His books include *Western Christians in Global Mission*; *Six Dangerous Questions to Transform Your View of the World*; *Great Commission, Great Compassion*; and *The Fellowship of the Suffering*.

**"That Whoever Believes in Him"**: The mission of God offers an invitation and calls for a response. We understand God's love, receive his forgiveness, and choose to follow.

**"Shall Not Perish"**: God's love blends with his judgment, and as a result, condemnation is the consequence of disbelief or rejection of Jesus (John 3:17, 36). God's mission is not just a happy invitation to a relationship with God followed by eternal bliss. It also includes a warning to flee the wrath that is to come—judgment, condemnation, and hell.

**"But Have Eternal Life"**: God's mission is eternally significant for us all. His love, initiative, and sacrifice call us into a relationship with him that will last forever.

In exploring each of these eight components of God's mission we discover where we fit in it.

—Adapted from chapter one, "Entering into John 3"



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