



# Great Lent Giveaway 2017 Life!

## Youth Group Session 3 –

### God's Unconditional Love

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(Originally created for GLG 2013 modified by the Office of Youth Ministry)

### Opening prayer -

#### *Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture*

O Master Who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and acting in all things according to Your holy will. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself (Mark 12:31)

Forgive them Father for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)

Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth (1John 3:18)

Let the children come to Me (Matthew 19:14)

Love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34)

My help comes from the Lord (Psalm 120:2)

What do these action words tell the reader?

Who is the speaker in the quotes?

Who is being called to action?

Take a moment and consider one of your most important or special “things”, a really precious item. Write that thing or item here:

Why did you choose that item?

Now, imagine giving your item, your most prized possession, away to some complete strangers that for sure can't appreciate it on the same level as you. Would this be hard? How would you feel knowing that they would not appreciate it the way you do?

For God so **L**oved the world,  
that he gave his **O**nly begotten Son,  
that whosoever belie**V**eth in him should not perish,  
but have ev**E**riasting life.

— John 3:16 KJV  
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“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

How would you react if they had actually given away your most prized possession to a group of people who not only underappreciated it but also destroyed it

Now – what is the first action verb in the quote?

What is the adverb?

*What does that mean? “so Loved”?*

The use of “so” is important because it shows an emphasis on how much love God has for us – an overabundance of love!

Why is this verb, “love” used in the first part of the sentence?

*“What does this say about God’s Love? - Think back to last week’s (or the previous) session.*

“... that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Up until the point of Christ’s birth there was no possibility for eternal life – salvation. There was only the Jewish hope of the messiah. Humanity was separated from its Creator. Because of God’s great love for His creation, He gives us His greatest gift so that we may have the ultimate “must have” – eternal life! Salvation! Isn’t that incredible? God love us, even when we mess up – even messing up to the extent of crucifying His Son! He gives us the opportunity for redemption, for forgiveness and ultimately for salvation – to be reunited with Him. Wow – what do you think about that?

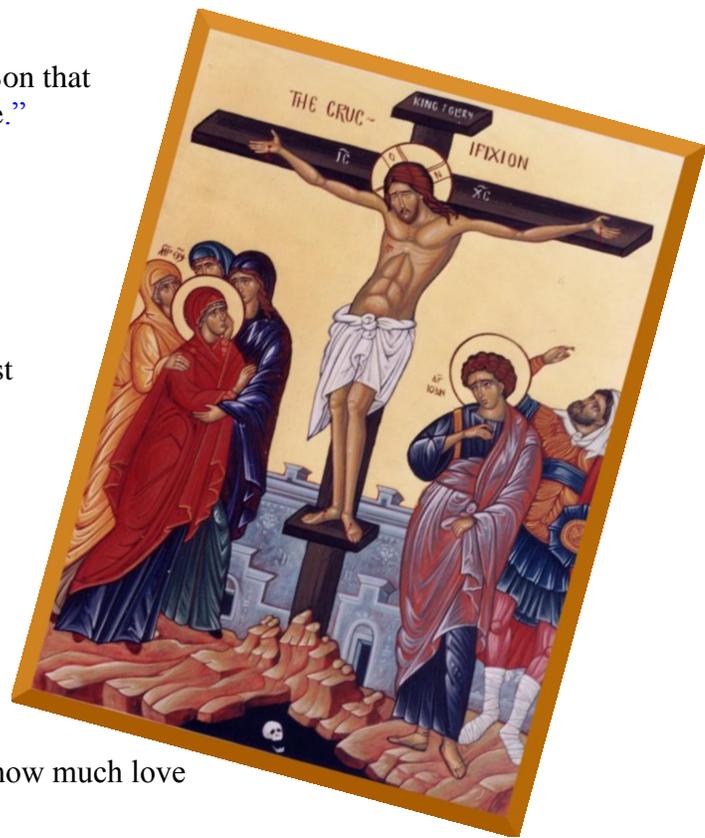
Have you ever questioned God’s love for you? After our discussion – How do you feel about God’s love in your life?

Now – there is one more aspect about this we need to discuss. We understand, that God gives and God loves but this is not all one sided...there is another action verb in the last quote.... What is it?

We must respond to God’s actions of giving and loving with BELIEVING! What must we believe in?

If we believe in these things what are we told we will receive? . That sounds like the ultimate “must have”.

So how do we show God that we believe? Let’s read the following to see if we can answer that question!





Matthew 8:20-22 “And Jesus said to him, ‘foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head’. Then another of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own.’”

Mathew 19:21-22 “Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and com, follow Me’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Luke 14:16-20 “Then He said to him, ‘A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore cannot come.’”

What do all these scenarios have in common? – Remember, we have been discussing actions!

What is the response to the call to action?

Each of these stories has accounts of people giving excuses as to why they cannot follow Christ, live as He has asked us to live, or attend His Liturgical banquet. Even though God has given us His greatest possession, shown His unconditional love and told us what we will receive for our belief ... we still struggle with giving up our earthly possessions and desires for Him.

With the closing days of Great Lent upon us, let us remember the words of St. John Chrysostom, “For the Master is gracious and receives the last even as the first; He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, just as to him who has labored from the first. He has mercy upon the last and cares for the first; to the one He gives, and to the other He is gracious.” In these final days of Great Lent, let us think of something we can give up for God because He has given up so much for us.

Could this be the sweater that our sister has her eye on and we don’t really wear but we don’t want to give it to her just because? Or is it time in the fasting season to give up meat for the rest of Lent, or for the rest of the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent? Perhaps it’s time to only use the computer for school purposes and stay off Facebook and Twitter for the remainder of Lent. Which excuse will you give to God when He asks you to follow Him? What have you/can you give up for His sake?

How can we live as Christ – as Unconditional Love in the days leading up to Pascha? During Holy Week – accept God’s call to action – *give* love, *believe* in His resurrection, *follow* Him through the journey of Holy Week and most especially His Glorious Resurrection and *live* each day experiencing the Love of God and revealing that Love to all!

