

DAY 16 WORLD

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world..."

We have a tendency with verses and texts that we are familiar with to reduce them to their lowest common denominator. Our familiarity with a given text lends itself to unfamiliarity, reduction, a limiting of what the text is really saying.

This may be most clearly demonstrated with today's verse and word of the day. John 3:16 maybe the most familiar verses in all of the scriptures and certainly one

that we are tempted to reduce its meaning. "For God so loved the world." Our natural tendency when we hear these familiar words is to reduce them to the individual nature of such a verse. And that isn't wrong; this certainly has deep individual implications. BUT, God's redemptive scope is much bigger. "For God so loved the world."

We often make the gospel too small. We reduce it to individuals being reconciled to God or even to God forming a special community. But God's work goes far beyond those acts. God's plan includes the healing of the whole world.

I think of Paul's words in Romans chapter eight when he talks about all of creation groaning for healing. The vision of God is one of cosmic focus. God is redeeming and reconciling all of creation. Of which, we are an integral part, but we are not the whole story. God's redemption is all-encompassing.

As Trevor Hudson writes, "God's loving arms surround the globe. They embrace every human being, nation, and culture. They embrace the trees, mountains, rivers, and every living thing. God wants to rescue, restore, and reconcile the whole world."

This is the vision that God has for creation. All of it redeemed, healed, reconciled, made new. And maybe what is most stunning in God's vision and plan is for us to participate in this work. We are certainly a small role, but we play a role nonetheless. We cannot take on all of the world's ills, but we are called to live within the world in recognition and reflection on the reality that God has given us a level of authority to rule over creation in some way.

Daily Practice

Today when you read the newspaper, read it through the eyes of Jesus. When you watch the nightly news, ask Jesus what breaks his heart. What is God laying on your spirit about the world? How are you called to respond?

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.