

The Gift of the Father: The Son

Intro. Part of this passage is well-known even to Catholics. For many years John 3:16 was commonly seen on signs at sporting events and in black letters on some athletes' faces, particularly a certain quarterback from Jacksonville. It was not done by shouting or disrupting the games. One person, often in bright red or orange wig, just stood in the crowd with the sign. I remember having to look it up in my bible. At first reading it didn't seem earth-shattering. No bright light went on for me. But the more I saw John 3:16 the more I began to understand that someone thought it necessary to remind us of God's incredible love for us. Whoever came up with the idea to use the "technology" of television to evangelize was ahead of his or her time.

I. In the conversation between the Lord and the Samaritan woman at the well, she first failed to understand the difference between water and "living water." The Lord finally got her thinking of *heavenly* things (salvation) rather than *earthly* things (well water). In *this* gospel, the Lord had a similar conversation with a Jewish leader, Nicodemus, who was intrigued by the Lord's teachings, but could not understand what he was saying. Ultimately, unlike the Samaritan woman, he could not accept it. What an opportunity that would have been; to have a Pharisee working *with* the Lord instead of *against* him. At bible study, someone mentioned Joseph of Arimethea who also showed up seemingly out of nowhere to ask for Jesus' body to bury. He had to have some status in the Jerusalem community to go to Pilate, but kept a low profile until that moment.

Nicodemus was never mentioned again and Joseph was never mentioned before. The former did *not* accept the gift and latter *did*. What was the difference? Maybe Joseph was finally willing in love to take a chance with his life; Nicodemus was not.

Concl. People who care for each other look for ways to show it. It can be in *material* gifts such as flowers or clothing. It can also be a gift of *self* such as time spent with someone or the gift of life for another. The Father's love for us was so great that he sent his Son as a visible sign. That gift brought redemption; the light to the darkness. As with a gift, we can choose to reject it or accept it. Judgment is **not on God; it is on us.**