

# Believing

#0061

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 13, 1971

I hope that everyone here tonight can have the assurance that Jesus is looking after you, and managing everything in the universe for your benefit.

Now my text tonight is the most familiar text in all the Bible. What do you think that is? That's right: John 3:16. Read it with me, all together:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

We've been told, and it's true, that if there were no other verse in all the Bible, this verse would make plain the way of salvation. There's a word in it that I want you to notice. The word is “believeth.” This is the one word in this text that shows me how I can get the benefit of all the rest that's in the text.

The first line tells us that God loved the world. That is every person in the world. Nobody's left out. He loved everybody. This is the message of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It's a message of love.

But there's a little word before the word love. What is it? God so loved. That is, in this way, in this manner, to this degree.

God so loved the world that He what? He gave. Love delights to give. The more you love someone, the more you think of giving them something, *expressing* that love.

God so loved the world that He gave what? His only begotten Son. Oh, what a gift, my friends. God gave *Himself* to us in Christ. He gave *Himself* to us in Christ. Christ came to reveal the Father's love. And thank God, that love is revealed to everyone here if we'll look through Jesus.

Now, will you repeat that text with me again? I don't want any interruption to cause us to lose this thread. All together:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

God loved the world, and He so loved the world that He gave. Gave what? His Son. His only begotten Son, Christ. Let us see what the purpose of that gift is.

That gift was given to us in life and in death. Jesus giving this life for us wasn't just on the cross. *Every* moment He spent in this world was a gift from Heaven to men. In fact, it goes beyond that. His whole life *since* He's gone back to Heaven is just for us. He said to His disciples, "It is for you that I go away." And on beyond that, His life is still for us. For He says, "He's coming soon, having prepared a place for us, to receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also (John 14:2–3).

So you see, the whole thing is for us. He wasn't on *loan* to this world. He wasn't on loan to the world. He's a gift—an *eternal* gift.

What's it all for? That whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but instead have what? Everlasting life. The two things are put in contrast: perishing and everlasting life.

I'm so glad that God wants us to live as long as He lives, and that's always. Not only that, He wants us to share His life. Mere eternal existence wouldn't in itself be a pleasure or a joy, would it? There are a number of people in this world who say they wish sometimes they were dead. Yes, there are many people who would hate to think that they were going to live on and on and on and on, with the sorrows, the disappointments, the pains that they have in this world. So God's gift of eternal life is not only in *length*, but in breadth and height, in depth. It's in all dimensions. He wants us to share the *joy* of His life, the *fellowship* of His life. He wants us to have everything that is beautiful and good and will make us happy. And He wants us to have it for how long? Forever. Forever.

Notice that keyword—believeth. Believeth. That's the one word, I repeat, that shows you and me how we can *get* the benefit of *all* the rest of the text. God so loved the world that He "gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Why is that word 'believeth' in there? Why didn't God just make an arrangement that everybody would be saved regardless of their attitude, regardless of whether they believed or not? Why didn't He do *that*? That would be impossible and still preserve man's freedom of choice.

One of the greatest gifts God *ever* gave the human family was the power of decision, of choice. We can *decide* whether we'll go to the right hand or to the left. We can decide whether we'll go ahead or go backward. *Every* day we're making decisions. Life is a whole series of decisions. Little things. Big things. One decision after the other.

Each decision that we make comes from a motive. We do a certain thing for a certain reason. Why would two people make two entirely different decisions? It may be because the motive is entirely different. And since God has given to man the power of choice, God must *respect* that power of choice.

Suppose I'm teaching my child to make decisions, and so I offer my child an orange and an apple. He reaches out and takes the apple, and I say, "No, no. I want you to take the orange. You can't have the apple." That child didn't get much of a choice, did he? No.

So when God gives man the power of choice, He must *respect* that power of choice. But without that power of choice, the joy of fellowship would be gone.

God appreciates our love because we can choose to love Him or choose not to love Him. That's the joy we have with one another. Think how dull life would be if all the love we knew came from a phonograph record. Some voice saying or singing, "I love you." It wouldn't mean very much, would it? No, no.

But a mother that has the little one in her arms from day to day, and finally watches that child begin to toddle around. And then as the mother cares for it and loves it and works for it from day to day, finally she hears that little one say for the first time, "I love you." She never grows tired of hearing it. Am I right?

So with the Father. Why? Because every time that is said, it is the result of a choice. A choice. But remember, that choice must be respected, and God, the Creator of the universe respects this power of choice that He has given us.

I'm so glad He gave me the power of choice. Are you glad you have it, or do you wish you were a machine that always did the thing just right? Just because you were made that way and couldn't do any other way.

I was visiting my daughter and son-in-law a few days ago. My son-in-law is working in a place where a great big computer is; the first time I ever saw anything as big as that. I watched those blinking lights, and I watched those tapes as they were running around. I thought of the intricacy of it all. They're keeping the records of 40 large textile mills in that one computer center. They can get anything they want there in just seconds.

But there is something *infinitely* more wonderful than *all* those great computers right here inside your skull and mine. Those ten billion brain cells, with the electrical circuits that connect them, are far more wonderful than anything man has made.

We marvel at these moon trips. But, my dear friends, the thing that made the moon trips possible was that man has a head on him. Who made the head? God made the head. He made that brain to think.

But there's something in that brain far more wonderful than the ability to plan and execute a moon trip. It is in the forebrain where the centers dealing with reason and judgment and conscience are. *There* is where man decides whether to love God or not to love Him; whether to believe God or not to believe Him. And God is not arbitrary. When He offers us something and says, "If you take this, you'll have life." Oh, no, friends, He's not arbitrary at all. Having given us the power of choice, He must either withdraw that choice and force us to accept His way, or else He must wait for our choice. It's that simple.

God has given us *every* reason for believing in Him. He's given us this wonderful Bible, which proves out in the prophecies. He has shown us in those wonderful prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that He can foretell the future. That builds confidence. In the realm of nature around us, He's given us evidence that He is God and that He loves us. He's made things beautiful for our eyes to enjoy. He's

made delicious foods for our mouths to enjoy. He's given us human friends and loved ones all to teach us that He loves us. And most of all, and best of all, He has revealed Himself to us through the gift of Christ, His Son, who came as the gift of God to live for us, who died for us. All to reveal His love, to take away our sin, and to give us this hope.

It all rests back with our choice. Whosoever does what? *Believeth* in Him shall not perish, but have what? Everlasting life. Do you believe?

Somebody says, "Yes, I believe."

Let me ask you something. What do you mean when you say, "I believe"? Do you mean simply that you believe that there was somebody who lived 2,000 years ago by the name of Jesus Christ? The Bible says the Devil believes that. How could he help it? He knows it to be a *fact*. Historians who are infidels believe that there was someone who lived here 2,000 years ago, and who did the work that eventually produced the Christian church. Merely to believe that historically has in it no saving power.

Do you know why? Because there's no *choice* with it. No choice. I can believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again and went back to Heaven. But if that's as far as my belief goes, it isn't what this text is talking about at all. That's simply accepting a historical fact.

Let's turn to John 1:12, and we will see what's involved in this matter of believing in Jesus:

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" John 1:12.

In other words, this text is telling us that to believe Jesus is to receive Him. That's it. So if you and I *give* ourselves to Jesus, and in turn, let Him give Himself to us, we have the power to do what? To become the sons of God. That's receiving Him and believing Him. That's the result of it.

I hope every one of you has that joy. You can have it. If you came into this chapel with that joy in your heart, I hope it's even greater when you leave this evening. If you came into this chapel without that joy, it can be yours as you leave these doors. This is for you. Jesus made you by His almighty power. He came here and lived to show you and me how to live. He died for you and me. He rose for us. He went back to Heaven for us. And He's sending us the good news tonight that if we will accept what He has done for us, and open our hearts and receive Him, we'll have the power to be His children.

Let's take another text that makes this plain. Revelation 3:20. This was written by this same apostle, John, that wrote the Gospel of John. He pressed close to Jesus, you remember. And got the message of His love, and he's sharing it with us.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” Revelation 3:20.

Do you notice—don’t miss it—His respect for the power of choice? Where does He stand? At the door. [Elder Frazee is knocking.] What’s He doing? Knocking. What does He want? He wants to come in. Why doesn’t He do it then? Why doesn’t He come in? He’s the King of the universe. Couldn’t He crash the door and come in? Does He have to wait until I open it?

Oh friends, He has made Himself dependent on my choice. Isn’t that a wonderful thing? The King of the universe who made me and loved me enough to die for me waits on the porch knocking while I make up my mind. Isn’t that wonderful?

Well, listen. What can I do about it? Thank God, I can *open* the door. What does that mean? Let me make it very simple. Yonder is a door. Suppose Jesus were actually on the other side of that door, and we hear Him knocking. Tell me, what’s between Jesus and us? The door is between us. *This* door where Jesus knocks is *whatever* in your life stands between you and the Lord. That’s it. If there is nothing between, the door is open. But if there is *something* between you and the Lord, *then* He is knocking at the door.

Some people don’t like to hear that knock. They wish He’d go away. It’s because He loves us that He doesn’t go away. Aren’t you glad that Someone loves you enough to stand at the door and knock? Aren’t you?

Someone says, “Ah, but I wish He wouldn’t talk to me about this thing and that thing that I am doing. I know I shouldn’t, but I wish He wouldn’t bother me about it.”

Ah friend, why does He bother you about that thing? Because He knows that sin, that habit, that transgression is bringing, eventually, sickness to your body and ruin to your soul. If He loves you enough to make these ten billion brain cells, don’t you think it makes Him sorry if you’re doing something in your life, habits, that injure those delicate tissues? He that made the heart and keeps it beating there, millions of times throughout a lifetime, don’t you think He is sorry when you and I do the thing that injures those wonderful muscular tissues of the heart? And whatever it is in our lives, whether it’s something in what we call the moral realm or something in what we call the physical realm, if it’s bringing injury to the mind or body, Jesus is sorry. It stands between us and a close fellowship with Him. And He’s standing at that door and knocking.

To receive Jesus, we must do what with the door? *Open* the door. Tell me, friend, will you open that door?

Somebody says, “I opened that door 40 years ago.”

Tell me, is it open tonight? Or has something come between you and the Master? Is there anything in your life that is unsundered?

It isn't just bad things that can stand between the Savior and us. When the rich young man came to Jesus and asked what he lacked, Jesus said he lacked just one thing. He put His finger on the plagued spot of the rich man's character. He said, "If you would be perfect, go and sell all you have, and give to the poor. You will have treasure in Heaven. Then come and take up the cross and follow Me."

Until you give yourself and all you have, Jesus can't use you. Why? Because He respects your power of choice. He's not going to come in and take over unless you let Him have it. And if you're content to give up bad things and selfishly hold on to whatever you have that you say is good, you're missing the point. You're failing to make the full surrender to Jesus.

I'll tell you about an experience I had with my little girl years ago. Many of you who have heard the story, you won't mind hearing it again. One day, my little girl was sick. She was up here in the sanitarium. I went in to see her. During the course of our little visit together, I chanced to tell her that maybe, if all worked well, that daddy might have another car. Her eyes got big, and she said, "But daddy, won't that cost a lot of money?"

"Yes," I said, "It will."

She thought a minute, and she said, "Daddy, if you do that, I'm going to give you all my money."

I thanked her, of course, but I don't know if I even remembered it. But a few later, when she was back at home, she came in with a piece of brown paper all folded up. She waited while I opened it. It had a dollar bill wrapped up in there. I said, "Thank you, Rebecca, thank you so much."

She reminded me what it was for. Then she said, "But that's not all, daddy."

She took the brown paper and the dollar bill and went back to her little room. Pretty soon, she came back and waited while I unwrapped the brown paper again, and there were *two* dollar bills in it.

She waited while I thanked her for that, and then she said, "But that's not all, daddy."

And then she went back to her little room, with the paper and the money, and this time when she came back there were those two dollar bills, a quarter, dimes, nickels and pennies. The change added up to 54 cents. As I unwrapped it and looked at it, she said, "Daddy, that's all." That's all.

Well, that helped me to buy the car, you see. And she had a part in it.

Ah, my dear friends, what we have to give to Jesus is so little, but it means so much to Him when it's all. Do you see what I mean? Why hang on to some penny or nickel? Why hang on to ten billion dollars? Why hang on to anything good or bad that stands between me and the knocking Savior who waits at the door, longing to come in.

I know both sides of this thing. I know what it means to keep Jesus waiting at the door. I'm sorry I ever kept Him waiting a minute. Aren't you? But I know what it means to *open* the door and let Him in.

To open the door means to just give Him the right-of-way to take over your life. It means to turn over to Him that thing that He's knocking at. And then simply believe, because he says so, that He comes in and accepts you and forgives your sins.

Is there anyone here tonight who has never made that full surrender to Jesus? Is there someone here tonight who has never opened that door? Tonight you know *this* is the call of God to your soul. [Elder Frazee is knocking.] And tonight, you are going to open the door. May I see your hand; is there someone like that here tonight? Bless your heart. Jesus loves you. Is there someone here that knows that Christ is calling you? God bless your life; Jesus is so happy.

Is there someone who has given yourself to God in the past in your experience, but tonight as the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart, you recognize that there is something standing between you and a *full* fellowship with Jesus? You don't need to tell *me* what it is, but God is telling *you* what it is. I'm sure of that. I've been working with Him, friends, in this wonderful ministry for 45 years, and I *know* that the Holy Spirit is here talking to hearts, knocking at the door.

And so God is talking to someone about something. Someone who has surrendered in the past, but tonight there's something that is standing between you and the Master. Wouldn't you like to have that out of the way tonight? Wouldn't you like to do what my little girl did? Wouldn't you like to wrap it all up in the brown paper, and as the paper is open, say, "Daddy, that's all. That's all. Nothing held back; nothing kept, Lord, *all*. You gave all for me; I give all for you."

Oh, how valuable each of you is to our Dear Lord! God would have given His life just for one of you. How many of us would like to send our Dear Lord the word that from now on, *He* will be the Lord of our lives? Thank God—every one of you. You mean so much to Him.

[A woman sings, "In Times Like These."]

If there's someone here tonight that hasn't quite gotten the blessing that you'd love to get, tarry with me and let me talk and pray with you. You could go out of this chapel tonight walking with God. I know you can.

Our Heavenly Father, seal to our hearts the message from Thy book tonight. Seal the acceptance of Thy love and the terms of the Gospel that we have entered into tonight. Give every heart the joy of Thy presence. We ask it in Christ's name, amen.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons  
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757  
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755  
[www.WDFsermons.org](http://www.WDFsermons.org)  
[support@WDFsermons.org](mailto:support@WDFsermons.org)