

For God so loved the world,

He gave Green Bay Aaron...

He gave the Badgers a # 1 seed

He gave the Milwaukee Brewers...

No, no ,no

For God so loved the world, he gave His only Son

For you

For me

For each of His children for all time

This doesn't mean he loves some more than others

It means we need to learn how to read his love

It is easy to see his love in victories

It is easy to see his love in material blessings

In health and wealth

But we need to learn to see His love in all things

We see His love in creation

We see His love in nature

In trees

Even in a tree that would become the cross His Son would die upon

Do we see His love in hardship?

Do we see His love when our health or marriages are threatened?

Do we see His love when we struggle financially?

God's love abounds

It always has and always will

Because he doesn't just love

HE IS LOVE

We see this in our first reading

When the princes, the priests and all the people of Israel

Added infidelity upon infidelity

Practicing abominations, polluting the Lord's Temple

How does God respond?

Early and often He sent messengers to them

He had compassion on them

But they mocked his prophets

Despised His warnings

And His anger was so inflamed there was no remedy

He allows them to be taken into captivity

The Temple destroyed by the pagan Babylonians

But all is not lost

God's punishment has a purpose

The exile eventually ends

God uses another pagan king and the Persian people to restore Israel

God's punishments and His blessings come from the same font

They come from His love

They call us to trust in Him

And not in ourselves

In our Gospel Jesus recalls the Exodus from Egypt

He tells Nicodemus

Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert

So must the Son of Man be lifted up

When the people turned against God in the desert

He sent the fiery serpents among them

If they were bitten, they died

When they cried out in repentance

God told Moses to make a bronze serpent

Mount it on a pole

When someone has been bitten

They were to look upon the bronze serpent

And they would be healed

God did not remove the serpents from his people

He did not protect them from being bitten again

The serpents remained as a reminder of their rebellion

But in His mercy

God sent a remedy

It is the same for our sin, for our rebellion

He doesn't remove it from our lives

He gave us free will so we could choose to love Him that is love

And when we fail

He sent a remedy

For God so loved the world

He sent His only Son

And when we are bitten, not by a snake but by Satan

When we sin and turn our backs to God

We look upon the remedy

We look upon Jesus Christ

The innocent Son of God, hanging on a cross

And in the words of Blessed Fulton Sheen

If this is the remedy

How deadly is the sickness?

And when we fall

He comes down to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves

As St Paul tells us

When we are dead in our sin, we are helpless

When the Israelites were dead in the wilderness

Being bitten by poisonous snakes

They were helpless

When the Jews were dead in exile

God restored them

We see this played out again and again in salvation history

We cannot understand this mystery fully

But we cannot deny it at the same time

Our restoration is a gift

Nothing we do earns it

But we can accept it

Jesus took our humanity upon his divinity

To lavish his grace upon our lives

This gift of faith allow us to do the good works God has prepared

That we should live in them

For God so loved the world

He sent His only Son

He wants to give us so much

More than we could ever imagine

But so often we fail to see

We shut ourselves off from His grace

We fall into the trap that we will get what we deserve

But there is a remedy

In faith, we look upon the Son

Raised up on the cross

And in humility

We ask for what He deserves

Then our good works are not something we do to earn a reward

The choices we make

The words we use

These are done in thanksgiving for what we have received

Living in his grace

We see everything as a reflection of his love

The good and the not so good

What he directly wills for us

What he allows for us

Then we see the cross isn't just a piece of jewelry

It isn't meant to be just a shrine in our home or in our church

It is a way of life

God brought redemption and salvation through Jesus' cross

When we embrace our cross

When it is our life

Our lives are joined to His

We get a little glimpse of the mystery

A little better understanding

For God so loved the world

He sent his only son

So that the world might be saved through him