DAY FOUR

TUESDAY – NOVEMBER 4, 2025

Fatherhood Changed the Verse I Thought I Knew

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, KJV).

It's the verse we all know. The one we heard first in Sunday School, the one held up on posters at football games, the one that slips easily off the tongue. John 3:16 is the most quoted verse in the Bible—and yet, it wasn't until I became a father that its weight truly settled into my soul.

For years, I read John 3:16 and focused on Jesus' sacrifice. I thought of the physical pain, the betrayal, the suffering. I pictured the cross, the lashes, the crown of thorns. I understood the cost of salvation from the perspective of the Son.

But then my son, Alex, was born.

In the moments after holding him for the first time, something shifted. I had never known a love so complete, so overwhelming, and so deeply protective. Suddenly, everything else in the world faded. I would do anything for him. I would give everything up for him. And the thought of ever sending him into harm's way? Into darkness? Into the arms of people who might reject him, hurt him, or kill him? That thought crushed me.

Then came Emma, and my heart stretched even further. I realized my love wasn't divided, it had multiplied. I couldn't imagine giving up either of them. Not for anything. Not even for people I loved. Especially not for people who might never love them back.

"He gave his only son..."

God didn't just send Jesus to earth to live a humble life or preach powerful sermons. He sent His Son knowing what was ahead: the betrayal, the beatings, the mocking, the cross. He sent His beloved child into a broken, angry world – a world that would reject and brutalize Him. God gave Jesus fully, holding nothing back. He gave His only Son...for us.

That's a love I struggle to comprehend. That's a love I could never replicate. I would lay down my life for my children without hesitation. But to give them up? To knowingly hand them over to pain for the sake of others? I don't know if I could make that sacrifice.

But God did.

John 3:16 is more than a memory verse. It's the story of a Father's ultimate sacrifice. A Father who watched His child suffer for mankind, not because we deserved it, but because He loved us that much. When I look at Alex and Emma, I'm reminded that God's love for me—*for us*—was greater than the love I thought couldn't be surpassed.

He gave what I could never give.

He loved in a way I can only begin to understand. And all He asks in return is that we believe in His Son – so that we may live forever with Him, embraced by that same, unfathomable love.

Dear Lord, thank You for loving us so deeply that You gave Your only Son. As a parent, I can only begin to grasp the weight of that sacrifice. Help me never to take Your love for granted. Teach me to love others with even a fraction of the grace and courage You've shown. May I live in awe of the gift of salvation and lead my children—and others—toward the light of Your truth.

John Ferrell