

a full, complete and fair decision about every one of us.

But who will survive that judgement? Each one of us deserves to perish for today's sins alone, let alone those over a lifetime. And nothing we can do can ever wipe them away.

But in his great love and mercy, God does not want that.

**... but
have
eternal
life.**

God wants to give us what we don't deserve. He wants to give us life not death. He wants to give us heaven, not hell. And he has made this possible through the gift of his Son to our world.

What is God like? He is absolutely fair, and will one day settle all injustices. He will pay back everyone for what they have done. The punishment will fit the crime, and we will all be in full agreement with the wisdom and fairness of his ruling.

But God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life!

This is the meaning of Christmas. A time when we celebrate God's life-giving gift to the world. This is the meaning of Easter, when we remember how God dealt with the problem of

sin by drawing it into himself as Jesus died on the cross and rose again from the grave.

And this is the meaning of our lives today - to understand what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, and by believing in him, receive the gift of life that God offers to us.

A Christmas Prayer

Dear God,

There is so much that I do not understand about who you are. There is so much I do not understand about myself.

Please help me to understand more about these things as I look at the life, death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ.

And at this Christmas time, help me to discover the gift of life that you offer to me in Jesus coming into the world.

Amen

If you need further help, please contact the person who gave you this leaflet, or read one of the Gospels in the Bible - we recommend Luke - or visit: www.twowaystolive.com.
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You may have seen it at football matches, held up as a banner in the crowd. You may have seen it as a poster outside a church or at a railway station. John 3 verse 16 is the most famous Bible verse in the world. Why? Because in a few short, memorable words, it sums up the meaning of Christmas, Easter, the Christian faith and of life itself. Read on to see why...

**For God
so loved
the
world...**

For most people the big question is not whether God exists, but what God is like. The vast majority of the world is confident that there is some creative, guiding unseen hand that is involved in our world and our lives. The real discussion is what is he (or she) like?

Does God look at our insect lives with indifference, distaste or with a gently bemused smile? Is God more like an impersonal force, or a cosmic computer than a bearded twinkly-eyed gentleman?

At the heart of the Christian understanding is that God is none of these. God is not distant, but close. God is not a detached, cold mind, but a passionate lover of all that he has made. He does not sleep as the world suffers, but weeps over the pain and strife in our world.

But God's love does not stop at feeling sorry for us. It is a love that does something about it. God has done something wonderful in our world to rescue and restore us.

**... that
he gave
his only
Son...**

What God did was to send his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. Jesus was born as a gift to us. It was no ordinary baby that lay in the manger. He was God's gift to the world he loves.

He gave us Jesus to show us what God is really like: full of compassion, and yet so completely and utterly pure, that lies, injustice and cruelty are repulsive to him.

He gave us Jesus to show us what we are really like. He was the only perfect human that ever lived. And this life of self-giving, tireless love shows us what we truly are - compromised and selfish to the core of our beings.

No wonder people then and now are both attracted to Jesus and repelled by him. In his life we see the truth about both God and ourselves. We are more messed up and broken than we know, but more deeply loved than we can ever imagine.

Jesus was given to bring us back to God. He did this by dying on a cross. His death makes it possible for defiled people to

walk clean into the presence of our holy, loving creator.

**...that
whoever
believes
in Him...**

What God wants from us is to believe in the One he sent to us. He wants us to trust in what Jesus did when he died and rose again to bring us to God. He wants us to lay aside the confidence we have in ourselves - our goodness, our good deeds even our religion - and place our trust in Jesus Christ.

And this offer of rescue is for everyone: 'whoever'. No matter what you have done. No matter who you are, or where you come from. God's offer of forgiveness is for millionaires and murderers. It is for mothers and maniacs. It is for church-goers and chavs. It is for Bishops and atheists alike. Like any relationship, it starts with an offer, and grows with trust.

And this is not just a matter of lifestyle choice. It is quite literally a life and death decision.

**...should
not
perish...**

God's love for the world means that he is also our judge. He is angered by the evil, corruption and greed in our world.

One day we will see how much God loves those who have been hurt, excluded and impoverished by others. He knows enough about each of our hearts to make