

## The QBC Daily Nugget September 1, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**JOHN 3:16** – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **SO LOVED**. It is just two letters but it's powerful. Read today's reference taking the word "so" out. Now go back and read it again with the "so" put back into it. Did we feel the difference? One two letter word makes **JOHN 3:16** jump out with such force. When the heart feels a little cold and needs melting, go to **JOHN 3:16**. It has "blast furnace" heat to melt the hardest of hearts! There is another time to run to the inviting warmth of our God who so loved the world (put your name in place of world when coming to Him). It is when the deceitfulness of sin (**HEBREWS 3:12-13**) has done its work. We are out of fellowship with God, needing confession, repentance and restoration. At those times, we might find ourselves feeling a little like my dog Jake felt recently. He doesn't like to be alone. And he sometimes "voices" his displeasure by getting himself into things he shouldn't. When he is confronted with his misbehavior, one sees a very sad dog. Head bowed, tail lowered between his legs, and barely able to raise his eyes. He knows he was wrong and is getting what he deserved – a good scolding, but it is always followed up with a loving affirmation of acceptance. Not of the behavior but of him. I know when I have blown it for the umpteenth time with the Lord, I feel like Jake and my sinful flesh wants me to believe God isn't willing to "take me back" and restore me.

The Puritan John Showers in his book "God's Thoughts & Ways Are Above Ours: Especially in the Forgiveness of Sins" understood the difficulty for the humbled saint returning to God to receive forgiveness and restoration. The deceitful heart and accusing devil will attempt to paint a picture of a God who is not quick to restore. The believer might even struggle believing that God truly does "so love" him or her. Showers writes on this temptation to be "Jake-like", afraid to lift up his or her eyes to God out of fear of rejection – "There is a need of urging this, because sins after repentance, and after vows, resolutions, and sacraments, not only defile, but disturb the conscience; and you can't presently approach God with comfort. What then should you do? Give up all for lost? Run into excess of riot and say, "There is no hope; therefore let us walk after the imagination of our own hearts"? No, by no means. But by renewed acts of repentance towards God and by faith in the blood of Jesus, return to God and seek forgiveness. I grant that in such cases it is hard to do this with any encouragement and hope. Our hearts misgive us, and well they may. We shall have a thousand jealousies and fears, and it can't be otherwise. However, God's thoughts are not ours. He will abundantly pardon returning sinners though you have abused His grace, though you have dishonored His name, revolted after forgiveness, slighted the Redeemer Christ, grieved His Holy Spirit, given advantage to the devil, and deserved to be cast out of His sight; though you have broken your solemn vows and broken your peace thereby – yet let such remember that God will show mercy to returning sinners, and He will abundantly pardon them. He will heal their backslidings, and make them loathe themselves and be confounded for all their abominations, even after He is pacified towards them" (**EZEKIEL 16:63**).

We need not fear God rejecting us when we come to Him for cleansing. He will heal. He will forgive. He will restore because He not only loves us and desires to do us good, but He **SO LOVES** us with the intense desire to do us good.

PRAYER: "Lord, I praise You for a love so undeserved and yet so freely given."

QUOTE: "One may never sink so low as to be beyond the reach of God's steadfast love."