

# BRINGING THE WORD OF LIFE

## E-MAIL NEWSLETTER

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'...that you may know that you have eternal life.' 1 John 5:13

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## God's Love

One of our greatest needs as human beings is to be loved. We all need love. We need to know that we are important to somebody, that somebody truly cares about us, wants us, and accepts us unconditionally. The good news from God's Word is that somebody does love us—God! Love is His nature. It is the essence of His being.

### *God's Love is Self-giving*

God wanted so much to manifest His love that He first created the angelic hosts and later the human race so that He might communicate Himself to them, give of Himself for them, and bestow His very best on them for their benefit and blessing. Our love is often selfish and demanding, but God's love is pure. Because He is love, He loves to give. Jesus said He gives good things to those who ask Him (**Matthew 7:11**). James went so far as to say that every good gift finds its source in Him (**James 1:17**). Since God is love, we can expect Him to give of Himself.

### *God's Love is Sacrificial*

Not only does God's love motivate Him to give, but it motivates Him to give when it costs Him dearly. God's love cost Him the very best that He had—His only Son. That is the message of the greatest love text in the Bible: "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's giving His Son involved more than merely allowing Him to leave Heaven's glory and enter earth's history.

It meant allowing Him to die in our place and pay the awful debt of our sins. God proved His love conclusively and irrefutably by sending His Son to the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (**Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 10**). That is sacrificial love.

It was no less of a sacrifice for God the Son; His willingness to offer Himself was the summit of sacrificial love. Paul called Him "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (**Galatians 2:20**). Jesus Christ made the supreme sacrifice for us when He died in our place.

He was falsely accused, beaten, spit on, crowned with thorns, nailed to a cross, and left to die the most excruciating death known to man. The infinite curse of sin's penalty, the Father's just punishment for the whole world's guilt, was laid on Him as He hung on that cross. He possessed the power to walk away from it unscathed, yet He voluntarily stayed there and bore that suffering for us. There simply is no greater love (**John 15:13**).

Whenever we are tempted to think that nobody loves us, we need to think of the cross. Jesus bore that shame and suffering because He loves us. He values us so highly that He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to secure for us eternal joy.

### *God's Love is Unconditional*

One of the most amazing things about God's love is that it is extended to us when we do not deserve it and continues steadfast and strong even when we do not respond to it.

When the Bible says,  
"For God so loved the world," it refers to  
each individual sinful person.

The Bible categorizes all unbelievers as God's enemies, people who have willfully set themselves against Him (**Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21**). God even loves His enemies—all of them.

There is not one good thing in any of us that merits God's love. He does not love us because we are so lovable or because we can somehow make ourselves worthy of His love. We are totally unworthy, yet He prizes us highly and showers His very best on us. It is His love for us that gives us our worth.

**God loved us  
when there was nothing good to be seen in  
us and nothing good to be said for us**

God finds great delight and receives great glory when we respond to His love, enter His fellowship, and do His will. In fact, He made us for that purpose. But whether or not we ever return His love, He keeps on extending it to us.

There is nothing we can do to make Him love us anymore, and nothing we ever do will cause Him to love us any less. He loves us perfectly and completely regardless of how we perform. His love is unconditional.

### *God's Love is Eternal*

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (**Jeremiah 31:3**). That everlasting love reaches into eternity past. He knew us and loved us before He made us, when we were but a thought in His mind. And He will love us for eternity to come, for, as Paul assured us, nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God" (**Romans 8:39**).

How can we ever exhaust the love of God! Paul called it a love that "passeth knowledge" (**Ephesians 3:19**), far greater than our finite minds can grasp.

**He also called it a "great love"  
(Ephesians 2:4).**

He referred to its breadth, its length, its depth, and its height (**Ephesians 3:18**), but it is obvious that he was speaking of dimensions that defy measurement: breadth and length which encompass the whole world, a depth which reaches to the lowest sinner, a height which exalts us to the loftiest Heaven.

God's love has no limit. It is described in F. M. Lehman's gospel song:

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above,  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Tho' stretched from sky to sky.*

We can no more exhaust God's love than we can empty the ocean with a bucket. And we are invited to keep drawing from His inexhaustible supply.

### *God's Love is Holy*

Since God is holy, then His love must be a holy love that encourages holiness in those loved. God will use every loving means at His disposal to encourage our obedience. He does that because He loves us. The writer to the Hebrews encouraged us not to regard God's discipline lightly. It is the evidence of His love for us (**Hebrews 12:5, 6**). He knows that obedience to His Word will be for our greatest happiness, so He takes steps to help us want to obey Him. If He did not love us, He would not care about our happiness.

### *God's Love is Comforting*

When we grasp the reality of God's love we will rest in the Lord, free from all fear, secure in the assurance that He is going to provide all that we need and protect us from everything that will not be for our good.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (**1 John 4:18**). God never punishes His children. He laid all the punishment for our sins on His Son. He disciplines us in love for our benefit, but even that is nothing to be afraid of. Understanding God's love eliminates all fear—fear of God's discipline, fear of what tomorrow holds, fear of losing a loved one, fear of losing a job, fear of natural catastrophes, fear of global war, fear of suffering, fear of death, fear of being alone, fear of rejection. God loves us! There is nothing to fear.

## *God's Love is Life-changing*

It is to our advantage to know and believe the love that He has for us. We may never be able to grasp it fully with our human understanding alone, but God is ready to make it real to us if our hearts are open and receptive to His Word. Most of us long to be loving people, but we find it so difficult. God's love can change that. We can find all the acceptance and affection we crave in Him. Then, secure in His love, we shall be able to reach out in love to others, unselfishly, sacrificially, unconditionally, and inexhaustibly. It will profoundly influence our relationships with those around us.

A world-renowned theologian was asked by a student what he considered to be the most significant theological truth he ever learned. His answer was, "Jesus loves me. This I know; for the Bible tells me so." Believe it. God loves you!

*Condensed from The Joy of Knowing God by Richard Strauss.*



"God is light" (1 John 1:5) and therefore He must uphold His holy law. "God is love" (1 John 4:8) and therefore He wants to forgive and save sinners. How can God forgive sinners and still be consistent with His holy nature? The answer is the cross. There Jesus Christ bore the punishment for sin and met the demands of the holy law. There also was the greatest expression of God's love, making it possible for men to be saved by faith in Christ as Saviour. Therefore, His love is a holy love, and His holiness is expressed in love. *W.W. Wiersbe*

**Who delivered up Jesus to die?  
Not Judas for money; not Pilate for fear; not  
the Jews for envy: but the Father for love!**

## The Justice of God



Much is being said these days about "bringing them to justice," meaning to capture, try and punish those who have committed acts of terrorism or unlawful deeds. Such criminals will be tried according to the laws of man.

There is an even greater justice by which everyone in the world must be judged. God declares that standard of justice to be nothing less than His own perfection—His own sinlessness. Since God also declares that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," it means that every man, woman and child is guilty before Him and subject to the pronounced penalty of eternal separation from God in hell. We need to know, "How then can man be justified with God?" (Job 25:4), for until a soul knows what it is to be justified, he can have no real peace.

In man's courts of law, only those proven innocent can be justified or proclaimed "not guilty." The good news for mankind in God's tribunal is that God has found a way to justify the guilty, "ungodly" sinner.

A God of love wants to forgive sinners, but a God of holiness must punish sin and uphold His righteous law. How can God be both "just" and the "Justifier"? (Romans 3:26) The answer is in Jesus Christ. When Jesus suffered the wrath of God upon the cross for the sins of the world, He fully met the demands of God's holiness, and also fully expressed the love of God's heart.

Since the shed blood of Christ has met all of God's claims, every sinner—the moment he/she believes—stands invested with all its infinite value and is *justified by God*. This means that God declares the believing sinner "not guilty!"

More than this, He reckons that one to be *righteous* on the basis of the finished, substitutionary death of Christ on the cross.

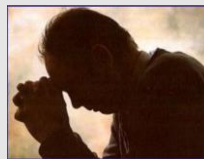
Justification is God's answer to the faith of him that believes in Jesus. When one is justified, his relationship with God is changed from being a condemned sinner to a redeemed saint. Justification is an act of God, once-for-all-forever. There are no degrees of justification. Justification does not mean that God *makes* one righteous or sinless, but that He *reckons* the believer to be righteous on the basis of the work of the Saviour. It is not a change wrought by God *in* the believer or the bestowal of a quality *upon* him. Justification is God's *accounting* one who believes His Word as to sin and Christ to be righteous or justified.

It is not Christ's life, but His death as the sinless Substitute that enables God to declare one just.

Therefore, in either justifying the repentant sinner or condemning the unbeliever, the justice of God is upheld to His glory. *Moments with the Book*



## POINT TO PONDER



*'Repentance and faith  
are opposite sides of the  
same coin.'* Anon.

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