

# The Love of God

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Many people who do not study the Bible think that God is full of anger, just waiting for us to fail. They imagine that He's up there on a cloud somewhere sharpening lightning bolts, impatiently waiting to strike us in His unmerciful wrath! Thankfully, that is not true. Yes, we have already sinned, but far from wanting to harm us, the God of the Bible wants us to find Him and receive His forgiveness and love. It is a saving kind of love and one that requires action on our part.

We read in James 4:8 that we are to “draw nigh [near] to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” He is not distant and uncaring. God has already taken steps toward us. John 3:16 reads, “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.” This verse tells us of His unparalleled love for His creation. This passage of promise tells us that His love is a wonderful gift, a sacrificial gift (He gave his only begotten son), and it is available to “whosoever.” He has offered salvation to all of humanity. It is universal in its scope and available until the end of time. However, it is also conditional, hence the “should not.” This covenant requires us to take steps towards Him. His love is there for all, but we must act on His instructions given in Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. His love is tender in nature, as described in Zephaniah 3:17, which says, “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” Isn't that such a comforting promise from God's Word to us? It is not alone, for in Matthew 11:28, our Redeemer said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He wants to be involved in our lives. He is not distant. He is concerned about our fears, and He wants to be there for us and to take care of us. We read in 1 Peter 5:7, “Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you.” God is interested in all of our cares, not a portion of them but all of them.

The God of the Bible is longsuffering, not wanting anyone to go to hell. The apostle Peter penned, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). So, how are we to live in response to that love? Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4 for us to “please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” Did you notice that? We are to love Him and each other; we are to be soldiers of love – God-pleasers and not men-pleasers. As His army of light, struggling against the darkness, we must be bringers of hope – and Jesus is the first, best and only hope of humanity.

The first words in Luke 2:10 were spoken by an angel: “fear not.” Do we not live in a world full of fear? People turn to insufficient things; they put their trust in poets, priests and politicians when only God can deliver salvation. The apostle wrote, “we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). That truth is found in only one place – in Jesus Christ. He said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man commeth unto the father but by me.” He is the way, and

there is no other. This exclusive claim by Jesus Christ excludes any other way; He is the divine truth, bringing the light of understanding into hearts and minds.

Jesus is the life. In John 10:10, He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” This is an overflowing life, starting in this life and continuing into eternity. The love of God is a supreme love, the sacrificial kind, a fighting kind and a deeply tender kind. In Matthew 28:20, we also discover that He is with Christians always. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13, Paul rejoiced that we are not “as others which have no hope.” In Isaiah 41:10, our merciful Father said, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

God’s message to His children is clear: cast your cares upon Him and fear not, for He is with you – always. You are loved so much by God that He paid a king’s ransom for you! Those of us who have been redeemed according to the Scriptures have hope, and we should pray for those who reject Christ, for they are without hope. We have a faithful, covenant-keeping God Who has prepared a place for us with Him in eternity. That is the love of God, and if we hold on to Him, He will never let go.