

Blog



Loved

Do you know you are loved?

According to John Lennon, “All you need is love.” If only we knew that we are loved, that we have always been loved, and that we will always be loved. In a world that sometimes feels starved of genuine love and acceptance, we may be amazed to discover that love is closer than we think.

In his story of the prodigal son, Jesus portrays a scenario where a wayward and rebellious son leaves home. Rejecting his family and living the high life, the son squanders his new found wealth and eventually finds himself destitute. In desperation he returns home, anticipating a cold reception. But while he was still a long way off, his father sees him, loves him, runs to him, embraces him, kisses

him, welcomes him home, clothes him, feeds him, throws a banquet for him, publicly and proudly presents him to the neighbours, and restores him to his position as a son (Luke 15). There is no rational explanation for a parent's love.

John, an apostle and one of Jesus' disciples, describes God the Father's attitude to us like this:

"See, what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! Dear friends, now we are children of God." (1 John 3:1)

God is love, and he loves us. Yes, he loves the whole world. But he also loves each one of us individually. During the 1960s David Wilkerson pursued Nicky Cruise around the worst areas of New York with the message, "God loves you, Nicky!" The same is true for each of us. We are loved. I am loved. You are loved. "Christ not only died for all, he died for each." (Billy Graham)

Here are some thoughts about how much we are loved.

Loved as sinners

We are loved as sinners. Before we had ever shown any interest in God, he already loved us. Way back before we were born, God had already seen us, chosen us and loved us (Ephesians 1). When Jesus was nailed to the cross he showed how much he loved us. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us." (1 John 3:16) God's love for us has not been earned. It is not a reward for good effort. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). God knows the worst about us and still loves us. We are loved as sinners. We are loved.

Loved as saints

We are loved as saints. Having come to Christ and put our faith in him we begin to have our eyes opened to just how much we are loved. It is possible to think that now as a Christian believer, God loves us because we follow him, live for him and serve him. In the story of the prodigal son, the elder brother fell into the trap of believing that his father's love was earned because of a lifetime of hard work. He couldn't understand how his inconsistent brother could be so loved. But as followers of Christ we enjoy the the amazing love of God regardless of anything we may or may not have done. We are loved as saints. We are loved.

Loved as sons

We are loved as sons. Having been adopted as sons and daughters into God's family, our heavenly Father now spends all his time delighting in us and exploring ways to pour out his love into our lives. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights." (James 1:17) Comparing earthly fathers to our heavenly Father, Jesus said, "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him." (Matthew 7:11). We are loved as sons. We are loved.

When asked if he could summarise his theology in a single sentence, Karl Barth replied, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." Paul's prayer for us was that we would, "grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge." (Ephesians 3). The old song writer wrote, "So dear, so very dear to God, more dear I cannot be; the love wherewith he loves the Son, such is his love to me." (Carlos R Martinez) God loves us. We are loved as sinners, we are loved as saints, we are loved as sons. We are loved.