

The Love of God and The Love of Christ

Tyrone Keels (Excerpted from “To Know God is To Love Him” by same)

All glory to Jesus Christ - The Manifold Wisdom of God - CHRIST the King, The Infinite One, Day Star; 1 Peter 1:19, King of kings; Revelation 19:6, Brightness of the Father's Glory; Hebrews 1:3, Bright and Morning Star; Revelation 22:6, King of Glory; Psalms 24:7-10, Redeemer; Isaiah 59:20, Savior; Matthew 1:21, God With Us; Matthew 1:23, Lamb Slain From the Foundation of the World; Revelation 13:8

Proposition – God desires from all His creatures the service of love; service that springs from an appreciation of His character.¹ What is character but the thoughts and feelings combined. God's thoughts and feelings toward every created being is love. His character is love when examined from any and every viewpoint. This is not easily comprehended by the natural human mind and yet it is nevertheless still true.

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world.² While the sinner is yet far from the Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of his Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love.³ No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. God follows men with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain.⁴

No earthly parent ever pleaded so earnestly with an erring child as He who made you pleads with the transgressor. No human, loving interest ever followed the impenitent with such tender invitations. God dwells in every abode; He hears every word that is spoken, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every soul, regards the treatment given to father, mother, sister, friend, and neighbor. He cares for our necessities, and His love and mercy and grace are continually flowing to satisfy our need.⁵ No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that he does not mark.⁶ Every lofty tree, every shrub, every blooming flower, the lily of the field, and the earth clothed with its garment of living green, are kept in order and occupy their time and season to bear testimony that God loves man.⁷

As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Ezekiel 34:12.⁸

While men are hard-hearted, condemnatory, and willing to abandon the one who needs help that his soul may be saved from death, the Father, with heart filled with love for the sinner, opens his arms, and says, "Child, come back to me."⁹ Although the compassion of man may fail, still God loves and pities, and reaches out His helping hand. God's everlasting arms encircle the soul that turns to Him for aid.¹⁰ God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes, and grieve his Spirit; but when we repent, and come to him with contrite hearts, he will not turn us away.¹¹

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house.¹² He waits with unwearied love to hear the confessions of the wayward and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us. He invites us to take our trials to His sympathy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weakness to His strength, our emptiness to His fullness.¹³ God loves to have us trust Him, loves to have us have confidence in His promises.¹⁴ Despondency may shake the most heroic faith and weaken the most steadfast will. But God understands, and He still pities and loves.¹⁵

The love of God is without a parallel. It is marvelous.¹⁶ The utmost eloquence cannot describe the love of God.¹⁷ The finite mind can not comprehend this love in all its depth and magnitude.¹⁸

The Love of God

There is no way whereby the love of God can be measured save by the gift of his Son to the world. "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."¹⁹ ***In the infinite price paid by the Son of God to ransom man, the love of God is revealed.***²⁰ Christ was not only an expression of the Father's love, but a channel to convey the love of God to men.²¹ While God's hatred of sin is as strong as death, His love for the sinner is stronger than death. Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed. Favor is heaped upon favor, gift upon gift. The whole treasury of heaven is open to those He seeks to save. Having collected the riches of the universe, and laid open the resources of infinite power, He gives them all into the hands of Christ, and says, All these are for man. Use these gifts to convince him that there is no love greater than Mine in earth or heaven. His greatest happiness will be found in loving Me.²² Christ was not only an expression of the Father's love, but a channel to convey the love of God to men.²³ Every ray of sunshine, every morsel of food, or drop of water, is a gift of redeeming love, and pleads with the sinner to be reconciled to God.²⁴

He who washed the feet of Judas longs to wash every heart from the stain of sin.²⁵ Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity.²⁶

Every soul that is especially imperiled by falling into temptation causes pain to the heart of Christ, and calls forth his tenderest sympathy and most earnest labor.²⁷ The divine Teacher bears with the erring through all their perversity. ***His love does not grow cold;*** His efforts to win them do not cease. With outstretched arms He waits to welcome again and again the erring, the rebellious, and even the apostate. His heart is touched with the helplessness of the little child subject to rough usage. The cry of human suffering never reaches His ear in vain. Though all are precious in His sight, the rough, sullen, stubborn dispositions draw most heavily upon His sympathy and love; for He traces from cause to effect. The one who is most easily tempted, and is most inclined to err, is the special object of His solicitude.²⁸

The love of Jesus is stronger than death, for He died to win your love, to have you lean upon Him fully and entirely, and to make you one with Him, mystically and eternally one. The love of Jesus is something expressed, more tender than even the love of a mother for her child. The most tender love we know is that of a mother for her child, but the love of Jesus exceeds this. She may change in her affection. Mothers may become unkind, but ***Jesus never, never will become unmindful or unkind, or cruel to His children.***²⁹

As a faithful physician, the world's Redeemer has his finger upon the pulse of the soul. He marks every beat; he takes note of every throb. Not an emotion thrills it; not a sorrow shades it; not a sin stains it; not a thought or purpose passes through it, with which he is not acquainted. Man was purchased at an infinite cost, and is loved with a devotion exceeding that which a father feels for his child.³⁰ Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear.³¹

The Saviour says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20. ***He is not repulsed by scorn or turned aside by threatening, but continually seeks the lost ones,*** saying, "How shall I give thee up?" Hosea 11:8. Although His love is driven back by the stubborn heart, He returns to plead with greater force, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."³²

So great is the unwillingness of the Lord to leave you, and such is His love toward you, that notwithstanding your life has not been in accordance with His will, and your works and ways have been offensive to Him, the Majesty of heaven condescends to beg the privilege of making you a visit and leaving you His blessing.³³

The love of God is so deep, so full, that ***it could only be expressed in giving*** for our sakes His own beloved Son to poverty, to shame, to humiliation, to mockery, and to death.³⁴ As we linger beneath the cross, we gain a faint conception of the love of God, and we say, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." But in our contemplation of Christ, we are only lingering round the edge of a love that is measureless. His love is like a vast ocean, without bottom or shore.³⁵ The Lord God through Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and fallen. ***He will receive all. He welcomes all.***³⁶

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