

GOD'S LOVE AND MAN'S SIN

One of my favorite passages is found in Romans, chapter 5 and verses 6-8. Listen as we read from the word of God: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God loved us-not as worthy of His love; but as sinful men. Men seldom are willing to give their lives for even the best of men; but God manifested His love in Christ's death for us as unworthy sinners. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15: 13- 14

We are impressed with two outstanding facts-the fact of man's unworthiness, and the fact of God's wondrous love. Jesus declared that His mission in the world was to seek and save the lost; to give life and that abundantly. But when He came to His own, His own received Him not. The very people among whom He worked and taught the things of God asked that He be put to death. The people He loved desired a murderer to live in His stead. But the crimes of that generation do not hide man's sinfulness both before and since. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

In his sinful state man is not only lost, but is helpless to save himself. He is alienated from God and has no hope without Him. We cannot really appreciate Divine grace until we have become convinced of our own helplessness.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16) Jesus was not obligated to go to Calvary. There was no anticipation that man could ever repay Him. In reality, few men would ever really appreciate what He did. It was grace and grace alone that moved Him.

The gospel plan of salvation begins with Heaven's love; it is effectual when we turn our love to God. All that Jesus did will not save us unless we return His love by loving Him. The greatest commandment of all is that we love God. (Mark 12:30) The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15) The Bible says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (I John 5:3) Again, "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." (I John 2:5)

My friends, it is useless to talk about loving God unless we are willing to serve Him. Empty words will not take the place of loving obedience. True gratitude for the gift of God's love calls for willing surrender of heart and life.

We conclude with this passage: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the BREADTH, and LENGTH, and DEPTH, and HEIGHT; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19.