



Saved to love  
God's love  
is forever

The forever flower

# *Saved to love*

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

John 3:16

*‘God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’*

Rom 5:8

We can know the love of God only because God takes the initiative to call us, even though some people wrongly think they can ask God to come to them. How is it possible for us, as enemies of God, who are spiritually dead in our sinful independence, ever be able to consider we can invite Jesus into our hearts, to receive forgiveness and become children of God, as if our salvation is our initiative?

We can't invite ourselves into the family of God. Jesus told a story about a man who invited himself. *“But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here*

*without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

Matt 22:11-14

God is the one who loves us enough to prepare the way to eternal life. God is the one who issues the only possible invitation through Jesus, who says, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."*

Matt 16:24

We are saved from our sinful independence for the sake of God's love. The world insists that everyone can find their own way to heaven. But God says Jesus is the only way; He is the only way to be saved from eternal judgment.

This salvation from God requires a new life of dependence on God. We cannot be reconditioned, we need a new beginning. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

John 3:3

The new life is given by God through the work of His Spirit. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless*

*one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

John 3:5-6

The way into this new life with God, is God's initiative, and is only by believing in and obeying His Son. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* (John 3:16) *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

John 3:36

There is only one way available to us to know the reality of God's love, and that means doing what Jesus says is necessary to abide in His love. *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."*

John 15:10-11

Because of His great love, God is concerned for the world, this includes all who live a life of

independence from His absolute rule, and therefore walk in the darkness without intimate knowledge of God. *'This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.'*

John 3:19-20

As a result of God's love, Jesus came to save sinners from themselves in order to restore us to a healthy loving relationship with God our Father. In Adam we fell out of love with God by placing ourselves before Him. Through Jesus Christ we have the opportunity to fall into the love of God. *'God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'*

Rom 5:8

We are saved, not because we loved God, but that He loved us enough to give His only Son to die the death we deserve. Adam's declaration of independence is now to be surrendered in repentance, so the "I" of self determination no longer has a place in our lives. Jesus came to restore us to an intimate relationship with the

God of love. *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

John 17:3

There are many people who consider they are good people, who live upright lives in their own eyes, but they do not subject their whole life to the measure of the life God requires of all people, a life made evident to us in the life of Jesus Christ.

Good people want to have God's love on their own terms, but God has only one door into eternal life; that is His Son, whoever believes in Him will follow His example of how to live before the Father.

Independence of mind and heart means eternal separation from the presence of and the love of God. Because of God's love, the results of living in the darkness of self determination and ignorance of God is now over for those who respond to the upward call of God in Jesus Christ, because they surrender all to His rule and authority.

God can only be known fully in self forgetfulness. Our life is not to be about God

and I, but God alone. There is no room for dual occupancy in the heart which is to be hidden with Christ in God. The sour taste of religion in our world today is only possible when people want to retain two wills, two opinions, two desires that invariably compete as two masters.

Matt 6:24

The measure of a heart worthy of God's love is in the cost we are willing to bare for His undeserved love. (Luke 9:23) The only reasons for real love is God, because God is love. *'Love is from God; ...for God is love.'* 1 John 4:7-8

### **God's love means maintaining godliness**

Israel was the object of God's love, she was seen by God as His bride who had gone to other lovers. *"Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion."* Jer 3:14

Even though His chosen bride played the harlot, the Lord God desired the unfaithful return to Him. *"They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again?'"* Would not that

*land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me," says the Lord."*

Jer. 3:1

Because of the character of God, unfaithfulness is punished in the pursuit of faithful love. *"Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy."*

Ezek 16:38

God punished His wayward bride to move her to repentance. The Lord warned Israel of His impending judgment in order to lead her to repentance, but if she refuses, He must punish her.

## **God's love demands justice**

Some people want to deny God can be angry about our sin, insisting love is absolute and tolerant of our failings. But if Justice is denied when love is violated, it means love has no lasting value, and cannot be counted on. Because God's love is consistent, He has to maintain the integrity of His love by applying righteous judgment. *'For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in*

*Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Rom 6:23) God loves us so much He sent His only Son to pay the penalty for our sin. Justice was done in our place by Christ on our behalf. John 3:16

Unfaithfulness to God's love has unavoidable consequences, and discipline must be endured because the more the love, the more correction will be required because the love of God never fails to love. *"My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His reproof, For whom the Lord loves He reproveth, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights."* Prov 3:11-12

## **God is love**

The essence of God's love is endless goodwill, abundant benevolence, and delight in the object of His love, and always just. Because *God is love*, (1 John 4:8) He is the foundation of love. Everything God does flows from His love. God loves because that love is consistent with His nature and the nature of His being. He loves the unlovely, so it is not because we deserve to be loved, but because it is His nature to love and He must be true to His nature. The love God

has for us, should to describe the quality of our love for God.

Matt 22:37

God's love is always seen in what He does as the Lord of Lord's. God's love is most clearly seen in the cross of Jesus Christ. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

John 3:16

God's love is undeserved by all who live in the world, for all are separated from God at birth by the hostility in their hearts towards God; so God's love is graciously available for those who walk in the darkness of rebellion. His love is for all because God wishes none should perish, (2 Pet 3:9) and He constantly seeks the benefit of the ones He loves. God's love led to the sacrifice of His only Son for those He loves. *'How great a love the Father has bestowed on us.'*

1 John 3:1

## **God has feelings**

We become so insulated from honest affection if we deny God can have deep affections for us. Even the way we interpret love in the Bible shows we tend to say that love is all about what

is done, not how we feel. But God has emotions.

- God gets angry. Rom 1:18
- God laughs. Psalm 2:4
- God has compassion. Judges 2:18
- God is grieved. Genesis 6:6
- God knows the meaning of love. 1 John 4:8
- God hates sin. Prov 6:16-19
- God is jealous. Zeph 3:17
- God knows sorrow. John 11:35
- God's love is a tender love. Matt 23:37

Because mankind's nature is distorted by sin, God's emotions are not the same as human emotions. At a much higher level God is a personal God with a mind, emotions, and a will of His own. To deny God has emotions is to deny that He possesses personality.

Because God has emotions, He understands ours, and He will never have a bad day. God's love is not inconsistent in the way we are often inconsistent. All of God's emotions flow from his perfection. Unlike us, the Lord's anger is based in his divine justice. His justice is always pure, right, and holy. Therefore his anger is

perfectly righteous and predictable; it is never changeable or malicious. So, in his anger, God never sins.

Jas 1:13

God's Love is everlasting. *"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."* (Jer 31:3)  
God's love is everlasting because God is eternal and unchanging.

Malachi 3:6

## **Evidence of our love for God**

Therefore our love for God has to be the first thing in our life. *"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."*

Matt 22:37

*'We love, because He first loved us.'* (1 John 4:19)  
To further our blessing, God's love finds a natural pathway back to himself. *'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.'*

2 Cor 5:14-15

Because we have received the love of our Father, we reflect the love of our Father.

*'Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.'*  
Eph 5:1

Since all the attributes of God's love are given to us by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, we have all we need to love like God loves. (2 Pet 1:3-4) If we are not living for His life to find expression through us in love, we must ask the question: do we have God at all, are we really in Christ, do we actually have the Spirit of God, if we do, what is causing us to deny His life manifesting through us?

Our loving God wants us to be united with Him by faith so that we retain the ability to worship Him as individuals who are in fellowship with Him. God has called us into His love, and nothing can separate us from His love, except our unbelief. If God's children are to love as God loves, we must receive this love from its source, God. We are told that this is the love that *"has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us"* when we became His children. (Rom 5:5; cf. Gal 5:22) As a result of God's love toward us, we are able to love one another. *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down*

*his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”* 1 John 3:16

## **In Christ we are bound together in love**

*'There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.'*  
Eph 4:4-6

The love we have received from God is expressed through the lives of those who are in Christ; it upholds all things in the lives of the people of God. Love gives meaning to service, and love gives divine value to the family of His beloved children. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*  
John 13:34

Since love is to be sacrificial in following the example of Jesus Christ, it is opposed to a life of self seeking. Because love is the blessing given to the humble spirit, there is no room for pride and self seeking. Therefore the inclination to save our life for ourselves needs to be denied if we are to live with God and

each other in love. Love binds God's people to God and one another. *'That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'* Col 2:2-3

It is only possible to become a lover of God by giving ourselves as a living, and complete sacrifice to God in absolute surrender to the love of God in His Son Jesus Christ. *'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'* Rom 12:1-2

## **Evidence of our love for others**

Our responsibility to act as God's children means we do as He would do. *'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.'* Matt 22:38-39

Jesus prayed for our complete union with God's love. *"that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us."*

John 17:21

In love the Son laid down His life so we can live with Him in love. Therefore the basis for the Christian life as the community of God, is love, love from God. *'How great is God's love that we should be called children of God.'*

1 John 3:1

*'For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.'*

2 Cor 5:14-15

God's love is to have an effect on our daily living in fellowship with the children of God and even with those who resist His love to go their own way. In order for us to love as God loves we need to rely on the Spirit of God who shares His godly life with those who obey Him. *'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.'* Gal 5:22-23

Love is from God the most glorious, through us the most humble, to others the most in need. His love is practical and effective. *'Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.'*

1 Cor 13:4-8

*'So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.'*

Col 3:12-14

*'The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.'* (1 John 4:8) *'We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides*

*in love abides in God, and God abides in him.'*

1 John 4:16

As a way of protecting us from being unloving, we are commanded to put away all anger. *'Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.'*

Eph 4:31-32

### **His love is our love for the world**

*"I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."*

Matt 5:44

First of all, we love the saints, (Eph 1:15; Col 1:4) then we are to love the pretend saints, then the accusers and the abusers, the intolerant and the unjust, the rebellious and the independent unrepentant, including those who are both near to us and far from us, including in the entire world. *'For Christ's love compels us.'* 2 Cor 5:14

God didn't just love those who are respectable; He loved those who were behaving as His enemies; us. Therefore we shall love our enemies as we imitate His life. *"I say to you,*

*love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."* (Matt 5:44) This is a command for us to make sure our love is God's kind of love. As the children of God's sacrificial love, we are to reflect the character of our Father, which is based on His love. We are saved for love and loving the unlovable, in the same way we were loved while sinners who knew nothing about love. God's love is about devotion and tenderness that doesn't expect love from the unloving, but always prays for and seeks out a loving response, so that all men would be able to reflect His devoted love in all things. The God of all love and light is devoted to drawing people out of the darkness of the unloving world and into the light of His great Love. Once infected with the love of God we are then motivated by that love to act in the same way as God because we are impelled with the same motivation, His love.

### **Love opens the way to service**

*"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."* (Matt 10:39) *"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."* John 13:15

Jesus insisted that sacrificial love of service is to be the distinguishing feature of the followers of Christ. "*Will you lay down your life for Me?*" (John 13:38) Christ' life of self denial is to be the outstanding characteristic of His disciples. Therefore Jesus repeats the command to love one another. "*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*" John 15:12-13

The command from Jesus is for us to live up to the love we share from Him. If we have tasted His love we are required to share what we have received. '*Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.'*  
Phil 2:4-7

This love of Christ we share is not sentimental but is seen in self-sacrifice for others. When the Lord wants us to understand how we should

live on a daily basis, we are told to walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us. *'Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.'* Eph 5:2

The love of God we have received is a tender love, just as a Father has tenderness for His children. *'Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.'* 1 Pet 1:22

We are to love others with the same quality of love God has given us, whether they are fellow believers in Christ, (John 13:34) or bitter enemies. (Matthew 5:44) God calls on us to have the will to love in the same way He loves us, always with the determination to put the welfare of others above our own.

### **The bride is now the pure Church**

The bride of God no longer consists of one nation, called Jews, but people from all nations and languages, living by faith in the Son of God, loving God and the people on earth as would the bridegroom called Christ, the Lamb

of God who gave Himself as an offering for a godless world.

Now the bride prepares herself for the bridegroom in all purity and godliness as she learns to love as God loves. The bride is set apart for loving all people, because all are made by God. She is freed from the ordinary ways of the unloving world, but she doesn't overlook or ignore bad behaviour which is in fact ungodliness, ungodliness is always unloving and must be addressed to maintain love as the foundation for life in the church as the household of God, prepared as a bride for His Son in love.

### **Purity must be preserved**

Therefore those who make up the bride of Christ are to speak the truth in love, and exhort, rebuke, and admonish anything that harms her loving purity, even to the point of expulsion from the Church in serious cases. However this loving discipline, administered correctly covers a multitude of sins, because it is always in the hope of reconciliation through repentance, back into the loving household of God.

This is godly and loving discipline and training in godliness, it is never to be a compromise of the truth of God's holiness.

*'If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.'* (1 Cor 13:2) *'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.'* 2 Cor 5:10

Wisdom is necessary, because the world is without the perfect love of God, it would be foolish, and an invitation to suffer great disappointment, to expect love from worldly people that they are not capable of giving. Those who are in Christ must know the love they have received from God is to be freely given but not expected before repentance and spiritual rebirth into love from God.

### **Love grows through obedience**

*"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."* John 14:21

Christ' personal revelation of Himself is increased as a result of our daily disciplined obedience. Our experience of the presence of the Lord is in our hands when we exercise our faith according to His plan for our growth in the image of Christ. God has determined that our faith must grow through testing, with the result that we have an increase in the revelation of His love and presence and power with every difficult situation we overcome. The more we listen for His instructions, and obey His every word affirming His love for us, or giving us directions as to how we live, the more our spiritual sight increases and the more we grow to be like Him in all we think and do.

Reluctance to apply discipline to faith in our trials will mean the fullness of the revelation of His glory will be undeveloped, and the capacity to serve Him will be drastically diminished.

### **Our security is in His love**

*'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? But*

*in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.'* Rom 8:35, 37

*'For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Rom 8:38-39

In the beginning God made man in His image and likeness, so that we might remain in His love by trusting in Him and obeying all He commanded. Jesus Christ came into the world to restore that relationship, so that we might abide in Him, by believing in Him as we trust in Him and obey all He has commanded; so that His life of love might live through us who remain in His word, as we are set free from self will to live His life in fellowship with the Father of love.

God's love simply means we are born again by the Spirit so we are saved to love. We are saved to love God with our whole heart, mind, and strength. We are saved to live by faith in the security of His love, and we are saved to reveal

the love of God in us to the world. This new life made possible by the Spirit of Jesus Christ enables us to glorify the God of all love; to appreciate His dynamic love in us, and share His saving love with the entire world.

Love doesn't have double standards; love is always consistent, just like God. Self denial is the price we are willing to pay for the love of Christ to work in us. Luke 9:23

*'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect....Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honour; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.... Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.....Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.....Never*

*take your own revenge, beloved, leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'*

Rom 12:1-2, 9-11 14, 16-17, 19-21

*'But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.'* 1 Cor 13:13

Abide in Him



# Living Water Resources Come to the River

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