

**The love of God  
is light in His people  
in the world**

# The love of God is light in His people in the world

*'In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'* 1 John 4:10

The word Propitiation is a reminder that God is opposed to everything that is evil because of His holiness, and that His opposition to sin may be described as His 'wrath' or 'anger.' Propitiation is concerned about appeasing His wrath in order to satisfy His righteousness, thus enabling Him to justify those that turn to Him in faith. This wrath is put away from us only by the atoning work of Christ in taking God's wrath on Himself as our punishment of death, so that in Him we can have life in repentance before God. *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."* John 17:3

Christ's Propitiation isn't for everyone without distinction, the removal of the wrath of God onto Jesus is only effectual for the truly repentant soul. And the repentant must not consider His salvation as something easy to gain.

Jesus tells us that in order to follow Him we need to be aware of the cost and be willing to surrender all our life to Him in order to follow Him. His example of this surrender is *"And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."* Luke 9:23-24

The cross we share with Christ is the instrument of our suffering in the world as we are separated unto God in holiness and truth for His glory.

*'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'* Rom 8:16-17

Jesus goes on to clarify what is needed to follow Him.

*“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”* Luke 14:26-33

This willingness to count the cost as necessary to be reconciled to God is a life of repentance, it is not just done once, but it is a life of learning to identify what is not of God and put it away so we can live for Him in a life of trust and obedience so He can live in us as Lord God Almighty.

We are not left to manage this life by ourselves, God provides all we need as He works His plan according to His will. Where does the commitment to live for Christ come from? It comes from the indwelling Spirit of Christ who is now our life as He compels true believers to obey because of the effectual work of God that produces the Fruit of Christ in all who abide in Him as the only giver of life.

*“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”* Ezek 35:25-27

The life God gives to the repentant soul is the indwelling Spirit who always works in order to demonstrate compliance to His will through

obedience. The Holy Spirit's life in the believer is effective and produces the fruit of righteousness. For us to live in growing holiness and truth, God gives us His own Spirit to enable us to live as His holy children.

*'For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'*

Rom 8:3-4

BUT, not everyone who claims Christ will receive eternal life. *"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

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."*

Matt 7:21

John MacArthur gives some understanding of this situation in his book -- 'The Gospel according to Jesus'

"Saving faith, repentance, commitment, and obedience are all divine works, wrought by the Holy Spirit in the heart of everyone who is saved. I have never taught that some presalvation works of righteousness are necessary to or part of salvation. But I do believe without apology that real salvation cannot, and will not, fail to produce works of righteousness in the life of a true believer. There are no human works in the saving act, but God's work of salvation includes a change of intent, will, desire, and attitude that inevitably produces the fruit of the Spirit. The very essence of God's saving work is the transformation of the will, resulting in a love for God. Salvation thus establishes the root that will surely produce the fruit."

Again:

"True salvation produces a heart that voluntarily responds to the ever-awakening reality of Christ's Lordship."

Again:

"This is the very essence of what it means to be a Christian: *"For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."*

Rom 14:7-9

Steven Lawson gives his understanding. 'It will cost you everything'

"Salvation is entirely free. But receiving it will cost you everything. It is not offered as cheap grace. Nor is it received by easy believism. It does not take a particularly special person to be a Christian. Just all there is of him."

We can conclude therefore, that everyone who has Jesus Christ as Lord obeys all His commands.

*'And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Matthew 28:18-20

Therefore, it is by the grace of God alone and not ourselves that we are in Christ. This is because Jesus us the way, the truth and the life for all who will deny themselves and take up their cross to follow Him.

*'So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.'*

1 John 4:16

Abiding in God is to have the love of God in us as God is in us. And we live in God by abiding in Christ.

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."* John 15:4-5

*"Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain 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 15:9-11

John Piper speaks of love for Christ. 'What is saving faith.'

'To become a Christian, to be justified and finally saved, is to "embrace Christ." Embrace! Not take between the fingers as one gets a boarding pass, shows it twice, and then, after the flight, throws it away. Faith does not "embrace" Christ briefly with mere fingers. To believe savingly is to embrace Christ with the soul as the "supreme good offered, and the inestimable treasure." Believing is receiving, receiving Christ not as a guardian of my most treasured possessions, but as the most precious possession Himself, for which I am "prepared to lose anything." This is what it means to be a Christian.'

Again:

“In other words, we agree that the only faith that justifies is the kind of faith that works by love, the love that Paul says is summed up in "*Love your neighbour as yourself*" (Gal. 5:14; see also 5:6)." This is what both MacArthur and Grudem stress: faith is not saving faith if it is not the sort that "works by love." That is, Christ is not a sin covering Saviour where He is not embraced as a love-creating Lord.”

It is reasonable to say that having Christ as the supreme treasure means we experience genuine devotional love and not just some theological truth.

### **Christ Jesus is the Love of God revealed in the world**

*'He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind.'*

John 1:2-4

*'For this is the way God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.'*  
John 3:16 NET

Those who believe in Him have His love. God's Love is Light in the world in His people.

Those who have received His love are His light in the world.

*Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."*  
John 8:12

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;... Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*  
Matt 5:14,16

*"By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."*  
John 13:35

*"I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and You loved them, just as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*  
John 17:23-26

*"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."*  
John 17:20-21

*'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.'*  
1 Pet 2:9

If love for God and therefore the love of God in fulfilling His passion for holiness is not revealed in the church as the light of God, then God seemingly isn't there. What is God's passion for His children? "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."  
1 Pet 1:6

Light comes from the glory of the God of Love as His Life in action. Those who have the love of God have Christ living inside, so they should never be afraid of the dark. *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*  
Matt 28:20

There is much to be fearful of in the world, for no one is perfect, but in Christ we are not to fear, because we are strengthened by the love of God who is always in control.

*"That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these."* Isa 45:6-7

*'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.'*  
1 John 4:18

Instead, faithful followers are to be a light to the world of the glory of God in Christ. The test of true faith in God is whether His sacrificial love is evident in us when we under are pressure to be like the world.

*'Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognise this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you— unless indeed you fail the test?'*  
2 Cor 13:5

The love of Christ on the cross is the place that controls the true believer because it is the power of God unto salvation.

*'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 those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf.'*  
2 Cor 5:14-15

*'By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever follows His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.'* 1 John 2:3-5

### **The Holy Spirit dwells in the repentant heart as a temple of God**

*"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."* Ezek 35:27

*'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

1 Cor 6:19

The Spirit discloses to all those who are born of God all we need to know in order to live with Christ.

*"He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."*

John 16:14

*'In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.'*

1 Pet 1:6-9

*'Since you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brothers and sisters, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.'*

1 Peter 1:22-23

*'For you have been called for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps'*

1 Pet 2:21

## **The love of God is not restricted to those who love us**

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”* Matt 5:43-47

*‘And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”* Mark 12:28-31

## **The love of Christ is especially displayed for His chosen children**

*‘Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour.’* Rom 12:10

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* John 13:34-35

*“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”* John 15:12

*“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”* John 15:13

*‘By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.’* 1 John 3:16

*‘Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.’* 1 Pet 4:8

*'Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.'*

Col 3:12-17

*'Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.'*

1 John 4:11

*'Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.'*

Rom 13:8

*"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

John 13:35

*'Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another'*

1 Thess 4:9

*'Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,'*

1 Pet 1:22

*'No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.'*

1 John 4:12

*'So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.'*

Phil 2:1-4

*'With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,'*

Eph 4:2

*'Let all that you do be done in love.'*

1 Cor 16:14

*'Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed.'*

1 Pet 4:8,12-13

*'Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we also have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we celebrate in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.'*

Rom 5:1-5

## **Love trusts God for all things**

We claim to have faith, however, when we complain about what is disagreeable, we have lost sight of the presence of Christ, and are unable to walk in the light of His love. We complain when we suffer because we fail to trust that God loves us and lives in us to enable us to live for Him. We often give up too quickly.

*'You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are punished by Him; For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.'*

Heb 12:4-7, 11

In God's economy, whatever bothers us is for our testing in holiness to see if we are going to trust God to hold us secure in His loving as He trains us in righteousness, regardless of the circumstances. Without training in faithfulness to God we won't grow. We need His training so that we will overcome our inertia according to the flesh of the unregenerate life and put on the life of Christ by accepting His cross of self denial as we follow His example of humble obedience and trust in God our Father.

Complaining about others reveals a lack of trust in God. Complaining, even when wronged, is the quickest way to lose our peace. Grumbling about our circumstances is not trusting God. God's children trust Him in all things. Our dissatisfaction that denies faith includes in-laws, spouses, employers and even our children.

We must live in the awareness that the God of all love lives in us by His Spirit. A refusal to love with Him is to refuse Him, in the same way we deny Christ who has bought us with the price of His blood.

*'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.'*  
Prov 3:5-6

Trusting in God means that when things are a problem for us, we are quick to bring our cares to Him, and then, we rest on His grace, accepting whatever He decides is best according to His will because we know He loves us and we love Him and trust Him.

*'Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, having cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you.'*  
1 Pet 5:6-7

We cast all our cares on Him and trust Him to do what is in our best interest as He works to transform us into the image of Christ.

*'For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.'*  
Rom 8:29

We can only love God and our neighbour while we rejoice in Christ by standing in the light while observing the darkness of the world.

Abiding in the love of Christ isn't possible when we are not trusting but complaining. We complain even while we are assured by God that He is always doing what is best for us.

*"Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"*

Gen 18:25

How do we know this problem of complaining is a failure of trust? By bitter experience, because it results in the feeling of abandonment. And we who are taught by the Spirit should know better.

Our failure to trust God feels like abandonment, but the abandoning is all ours. God has not failed to keep His promises, we have failed to stand firm in His word. And failing to trust God, we devise our own folly, which He hands us over to until we have suffered enough, and become desperate enough, to once again take up our cross so we can live with our Christ whom we love and follow as the light of the world. And it is God who stirs up our discontent with our own plans so that we will return to our cross and be acquainted with the love of Christ once again.

It doesn't take much to deny God, just a little complain about doing some housework. Or griping about the government. Let alone voicing our displeasure about someone's short comings. In our complaining we refuse to accept that God is the Sovereign Lord over all things in heaven and on earth. We live as if things happen by accident, when in reality God is behind everything that happens in the world.

A failure to take up our cross is to deny God's salvation and cut us off from the presence of His love. It means we have avoided the narrow gate and continue to please ourselves on the broad way to unending torment. Jesus said if we deny Him, He will deny us.

A commitment to love under adverse conditions, where there is no cooperation and even rejection, is evidence of the Spirit living in us as we submit to His authority. Even unbelievers are able to love when everything is going well. But to love while under adversity requires self

denial and a cross if we are to follow Christ. There will be times of failure, but there will be conviction and repentance if faith from God is real and not just a figment of our imagination.

True faith is from God as a commitment to keep us for Himself is the undeserved love of God we call grace.

*'Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.'*

Eph 1:4-6

### **God has an eternal purpose to raise us up to be like His Son**

*'Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.'*

1 John 3:2

*'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.'*

Rom 8:28-30

Pray:

*'That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.'*

Eph 3:16-19

# Living Water Resources

## Come to the River

*'I pray that according to the wealth of His glory He will grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner person, that Christ will dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, you will be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you will be filled up to all the fullness of God.'* Eph 3:16-19 NET

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