

Does Jesus Really Love Me?

If you are like me and have been in church literally all your life, you've heard the song "Jesus Loves Me." Can I tell you a secret? As a kid, I kind of got tired of that song. Still, the repetitive nature of it instilled in me the words, but it took me a while to really understand the depth of this truth.

Romans 8:38-39 (NKJV) is the grown-up truth behind this song: "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The last phrase of these verses is what we need to focus on. It's telling us that the depths of God's love is seen in what Jesus did.

I Love You

It should be a big deal for someone to say, "I love you." As awesome as that is, it's quite another thing entirely for that person to tell us that nothing will stop him or her from loving us. Nothing.

We are humans and we aren't perfect. We learned that back in Romans 3:23 (NKJV): "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." All means all: everyone, me and you too. So we could likely do something to make someone stop loving us. It happens all the time in marriages.

However, with Jesus it is different. Here is where Romans 6:23 (ESV) comes in: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." This verse solidifies our fate as sinners, but it also gives us the way out. Jesus is God's pure gift of love to us. It is only because of what Jesus did that God can love us.

God With Skin On

Without Jesus willfully agreeing to leave His heavenly throne and come to earth as a human, die on the cross, be buried, be raised from the grave and ascend to heaven, God couldn't love us. We are sinners by nature; it took God with skin on to rescue us so that we can accept His gift of salvation.

We have to understand, though, that Jesus wasn't just masquerading as a human, He was fully human while He was here. Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV): "You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges. He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross."

An Act of Pure Love

This tells us that Jesus was fully human while He was here on earth. The Amplified Bible explains that He was one with God, possessing the fullness of all the divine attributes. Then, He willfully emptied Himself, temporarily giving up His divine equality by coming to earth in the form of a man. He became completely human, yet without sin. Then Jesus went a step further and became obedient to the Father's plan of dying on the cross.

He willingly went to the cross; it was an act of obedience born out of pure love for God His Father but also for all of mankind. It's exactly what Romans 8:39 (TPT) says, "No power could ever be found in the universe that can distance us from God's passionate love, which is lavished upon us through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One!"

The most important ingredient here is pure love, a love which led Him to willingly, with much agony of mind and flesh, lay

down His life for us. In John 10:17-18 (NIV), Jesus explains what is going to happen to Him and tells that it is His choice to die for us.

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

God-Sized Plan

Jesus' love for us may make a bit more sense if we realize it was the fulfillment of a God-sized plan orchestrated to give us access to God the Father. As sinners, we could never come into His presence without Jesus as our intercessor.

Jesus' love transcends everything. It doesn't matter if we are inclined to trust more in the desires and comforts this world offers or if we are afraid of what death brings us; neither of these can separate us from God's love because Jesus has already paid the ultimate price for us.

Even if we fail to follow God and instead fall into the world's addictions, those still can't separate us from what Jesus did for us and the fact that we are in Christ. Jesus will still be there to gently call us back to Him.

Death can't separate us from His love either. It is not the end but the beginning for those of us who are in Christ. Even if angels or demons, powers of hell or any power in the sky above or the earth below wanted to separate us from God's love, they can't.

Nothing Can Stop Us

In the same way, nothing can stop us from loving God, not even political powers or laws or not having the freedom to worship God. That cannot cut us off from loving Him. That cannot cut

us off from the fact that God calls us His beloved because we are in Christ. Christ's righteousness covers us.

Nothing can stop us from loving God. It might stop us from gathering in public, but our relationship with Jesus is personal. Nothing can stop us from loving and trusting Him.

When God looks at us, He sees us through the righteousness of Christ. In and through Jesus is how God loves us. It is the only way that we can dare to even speak to Father God. Jesus is our mediator, expressing our love to God. That's why it's important to acknowledge that the only way we can come into the throne room and submit our prayers to God is in the name and by the blood of Jesus.

Yes, Jesus Loves Me

Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT) has long been a favorite of mine. It really helps me understand God's love for us in a new way. "For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty Savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

I love that line, "He will calm all your fears." There are a lot of things to be afraid of in this world. Courage is not the absence of fear; it's doing what God shows you to do even in the midst of fear.

Jesus is our mighty Savior and His love calms our fears. He loves us so much He sings over us, He dances over us, with joy! Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

For more on this topic, check out Sweet Grace for Your Journey podcast episode 96: Jesus Loves Me.{eoa}

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