

Is God's Love Actually Reckless?

I wanted to discuss the idea of God's love being reckless, as sung in the Bethel Music worship song, "Reckless Love."

There has been a lot of conversation around this song as to whether we should use the term "reckless" to describe God's love for us. To some, the use of this word is dishonoring to an all-loving, all-wise and all-powerful God, reducing Him to an obsessive deity, unable to control His own responses. To others, the use of this word speaks volumes to their soul as they consider how God left nothing on the table to rescue and redeem the lost sinner, even setting aside His own dignity in pursuit of His personal passion.

My intention with this response to "Reckless Love" is not to establish or discredit either view, but rather to turn us to the unifying truths of Scripture as we seek to understand Him who exceeds the ability of our mortal understanding.

When we hear the word "reckless," we tend to think of things that have to do with being foolish, undisciplined or unwise, right? The word relates to something done without applying wisdom, without thinking it all the way through, lacking prudence and good judgment.

So from that point of reference, you might be thinking "God is not any of those things! God is wise! God's judgment is always good!" And I would agree.

But here's the thing. God doesn't use the world's standards to judge and define His actions. He uses His own heavenly standards, which seem foolish to the world. And often God chooses to explain His wisdom and truth to us by referring to it in the most opposing words available in contrast to worldly wisdom.

For example, when speaking of those Jesus bled and died for, the pure white bride of Christ, Paul says in 1 Corinthians that we are "scum of the earth." When speaking about living a life based on faith in the power of the resurrection of Christ, again Paul concedes that to the world we should look like the most pitiful people on the planet (see 1 Cor. 15:19).

So the concept of using undignified terminology to highlight the great chasm that separates the world's understanding of God to His own understanding is well established in Scripture.

Take a look at what it says in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25:

"For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (v. 18).

Would you call the cross foolish? Of course not! You understand what the cross is, what it means? But to the world, it is foolish indeed.

"It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks" (vv. 21b-23).

They (the unbelievers) don't get it. It doesn't fit into their model of thinking ... their standards. It's foolish! It's reckless!

"But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, we preach Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (v. 24-25).

Consider this: God tells us we must become like children to come to him. A child, when he or she sees what they want, will go after it with reckless abandon. It judges for itself what is most important, and will leave all it has for that chance

at getting that one thing it deems in that moment to want the most.

Remember the parable Jesus spoke about the “pearl of great price.” The man sold everything he had to gain access to this one pearl of great value. Foolish! Reckless spending of all he owned! But to the person of faith it’s not foolish, it’s not reckless. It’s the wisdom of God calling.

Jesus will leave the 99 sheep to go after the one that is lost. Jesus will leave His throne in heaven to take on the frailty of human, mortal flesh, to save even just one lost sinner. To the world, to a grownup, this is childish, reckless thinking. But not to the one who knows what’s most important.

The father or mother who has lost his child will give up all sense of proper etiquette when searching for that child. I don’t like bringing attention to myself in any normal situation, but when I can’t find my small son or daughter in a crowd I get reckless to my own standards. I become a spectacle to all those around me in my effort to find my lost child.

Jesus became a spectacle on the cross, for all to see. Not prim and proper, no dignity, just a spectacle for all to see. Reckless love for those He came to save. Reckless by worldly standards—but not by the heavenly standard.

The Bible consistently encourages us to represent Him in this life by living the life of a fool. Fools that love others with the same reckless abandon as Jesus loves us. Fools that love as if this world and what it offers means nothing, and God’s kingdom and our eternity mean everything. To the world, that’s foolish, dare we say, even reckless. To the one being saved, it is the power and faithfulness of God the Father to do whatever it takes to save those He loves.

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