

*Jesus Loves Me*  
*This I know*  
Does It Get Any  
Better than This?

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*M*ost of us are familiar with the line from the children's hymn, "Jesus love me this I know for the Bible tells me so." This phrase conveys a truth that Paul, the apostle of God's grace, declares in his letter to the Romans:

*"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:8).*

### **WHAT IS LOVE?**

Before we can really appreciate the love of God we first must understand what love really is. Is it an emotion, a sensation, a passion, or a feeling? Although any or all of these things *could* be, and often are *associated with* love, I would suggest to you that love itself is actually *more* than these things. I would propose that love is a value system.

*"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement, that ye may approve things that are excellent" (Philippians 1:9-10a).*

### **WHO DOES GOD LOVE?**

The answer to the question is really quite simple. Another look at Romans chapter five will clearly reveal the answer:

*"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us" (:8).*

God values sinners. It is not that the sinner has inborn *self-worth* or *self-value*. No, it was God Himself that *chose* – out of His own purpose – to *place* value upon sinners. It was **HE** who *made* sinners valuable. Our value was not intrinsic, instead in was imputed to us.

The actual value of anything is determined by the price someone is willing to pay for it.

Let us illustrate. Consider the price of land. Why can *dirt* vary so greatly in price? An acre of soil could go for millions of dollars, or it could sell for a few hundred dollars or less. All things naturally considered equal, what really makes the difference? Is it not what someone is willing to pay?

Land value on a single parcel of land can rise or fall – all depending on what an individual is willing to exchange for it. One may say that a certain acre is worth, say, \$500,000. Yet it is only worth that price if someone is willing to exchange \$500,000 dollars for it; thus its *actual* value, at least for the time being. It is important for us to note this price is not necessarily its *intrinsic* value.

Let's say that a farmer has five hundred acres. This land has been in his family for generations. It has been assessed by local authorities for years at a very low value rate, resulting in a minimal tax burden. For "ages" the value of this land went relatively unchanged, but over the last few years the value had continued to escalate at a rate that he had not seen before.

One year he receives an assessment that is almost unbelievable. It is nearly twice the value of the previous year alone. He appeals to the local authorities for justification of such an "unrealistic" increase. He learns that there has been a trend developing over the last few years. Folks from urban areas have been slowly migrating to their rural area. He further learns that within the past year the property on all four sides of his farm has been sold in a like manner.

The prices paid for all four farms was, at least from local values, unprecedented. The assessment, authorities explained to the farmer, is that land is only as valuable as what people are willing to pay for it. "If a one hundred-acre farm is sold for a certain amount of money, then that is what it is currently worth." How much was the farmer's land worth? Whatever anyone was willing to pay for it! The farms around his – land exactly the same in characteristics – were valued at the price for which they had been purchased. How could his land, in the center of all the others, be worth any less? Thus enters the principle of exchange-value.

Just how valuable does this make *sinners*? They are valuable because of what He was willing to spend.

*"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us**" (Romans 5:8).*

*"... Christ also hath loved us, and **hath given Himself for us** an offering and a sacrifice ..."* (Ephesians 5:2).

*"... Christ also loved the church, and **gave Himself for it** ..."* (Ephesians 2:25).

*"... the Son of God, Who loved me, and **gave Himself for me**" (Galatians 2:20b).*

What, then, is the exchange-value of *sinners*? It is *CHRIST* Himself!

Think of it! God loves man. You will never see a man that God does not love, for He loves *sinners*. That means that when we share the “gospel of grace” we can never share it with the wrong person. Ours is an everyman gospel!

This means that **every** night, when you lay your head on the pillow, you go to sleep in the love of God, and **every** morning that you wake up, you wake up in the love of God. There is never a day that God does not love **you!**

This wonderful truth has not always been revealed to mankind.

### **A DISPENSATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

It is important for us now to compare what we have seen in Romans chapter five with the statement of our Lord Jesus Christ:

*“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.

Now, that is quite a different statement from the one that we read in Romans. Do these statements contradict each other? No, of course not!

First, it must be understood that *that* quotation of Jesus Christ in John is taken from His *earthly* teaching ministry (as a minister of the circumcision – Romans 15:8); whereas Paul (as a minister to the gentiles – Romans 11:13) is revealing truths from the *heavenly* teaching ministry of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:1-12), which had been kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25). In Romans, our Lord Jesus Christ is revealing things never before known. The extent of God’s love is one example of these unsearchable riches (Ephesians 3:8).

Secondly, what Jesus Christ is discussing in John is “greater love hath no **man.**” This is a record of the love of natural man. This is the extent of his value system. However, Christ reveals through Paul that there is a GREATER love, not a greater love known among **man**, but the love of GOD!

*“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **But** God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (John 15:13; Romans 5:8).

Man’s love can extend to friends, but God’s love extends to sinners! It is Paul’s gospel that reveals this wonderful truth (Romans 16:25).

## SINNERS? OR SAINTS?

The world is made up of **saints** and **ain'ts**: those who are in Christ and those who are still in Adam. One is either saved, or lost, righteous, or unrighteous; a son of God, or a son of man.

Now, we have determined that God loves *sinner*s – Calvary is the proof of it, proof positive in fact. Nevertheless, does this mean that there is *no* difference in the value that God has for the saint and the value that God has for the sinner? Well, let's see.

First, we must consider what the dividing line is between *SAINTS* and *SINNERS*. That dividing line is trust in the finished cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Once a sinner trusts what Christ accomplished for him on Calvary's cross, he is *changed*. Part of what that change entails is found in the following passage.

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new** creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).*

This is a result of **The Great Exchange**.

*"For He [God the Father] hath made **HIM** [God the Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (I Corinthians 5:21).*

## WHO IS THIS CHRIST THAT WE ARE IN?

Who is this Christ? That is, who is He to the Father? Now, we're considering the subject of love. What is God the Father's love for His Son? How much does He value *Him*?

At the beginning of our Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry we hear a voice from heaven answering that question!

*"... This is My **beloved** Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17b).*

Then, toward the close of His earthly ministry, again we hear the answer,

*"... This is My **beloved** Son, in whom I am well pleased ..." (Matthew 17:5b).*

Now, did you notice something? He did not say, "This is my **loved** Son." NO! He said, "This is my **BELOVED** Son." Are "loved" and "beloved" the same? Or does the "be" somehow change something? What does this "be" mean?

**BE** is obviously a prefix. It is defined as meaning "completely, thoroughly, excessively." Oxford states that the prefix **be** "naturally intensifies the sense of the verb."

Sinners are loved by God the Father; but the Son is **beloved** of the Father! He is "**completely,**

**thoroughly, excessively**” loved of the Father. The Father’s love is **INTENSIFIED** toward His Son!

Whom does God the Father love more, with greater intensity? The sinner? or His Son? The answer is quite clear, is it not? The greatest value that the Father has is toward His Son.

### **WHAT DOES ALL THIS HAVE TO DO WITH US?**

Now, we might ask ourselves this question. What does all this have to do with us? Well, maybe another look at the Scriptures will bring these truths to bear upon our souls.

“... *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*” (Ephesians 1:6b).

Being “*in the beloved,*” we are thus **beloved**! How could it otherwise be? That is why **we** are now (after having been placed *into Christ*) called **beloved**.

“*To all that be in Rome, beloved of God ...*” (Romans 1:7a).

“... *Brethren beloved of the Lord*” (II Thessalonians 2:13a).

God now views us (those of us already *in Christ*) in a totally new way! He sees us as ...

“... *Saints in Christ Jesus ...*” (Philippians 1:1).

### **OUR PAST**

“*But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*” (5:8).

Sinners are what we used to be. That is our past. We are now saints!

Still, how is it that we have actually become **so** valuable, so excessively, so completely, so thoroughly loved? It pleased the Father to do so!

“*According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy [saints!] and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children [adult sons of God!] by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved*” (Ephesians 1:4-6).

This means that **every** night – as a saint – when you lay your head on the pillow, you go to sleep as the **beloved** of God. Likewise, **every** morning that you wake up, you wake up as the **beloved** of God. There is never a day that you are not God’s **beloved**! Well, I’ll **BE**!

## ARE YOU LOVED, OR BELOVED OF GOD?

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new** creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

Are you loved of God, or the beloved of God?

Everyone we meet is either loved of the Lord, or beloved in His Son. What an effect this truth can have on our attitudes toward others!

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