

AMAZING LOVE!

By Pastor Greg Hooker

"...God is love" (1 John 4:8).

My friends, consider these three simple, yet profound words spoken by the Apostle John – *"...God is love."* John didn't say God was loving, but that God 'IS' love! In other words, He is the very essence of love – love is God, God is love and consequently, God is the only true source of love. As His children, we are simply mirrored reflections of God's radiating love, letting the Light of His grace shine in a dark and inhospitable world.

Over the years of my Christian life, I have come to realize that many of God's children (present company included) have the wrong perception of God. So often we see Him as a fearsome Dictator seated on His throne of Divine judgment, lightning-bolt-arrows poised in His hand, ready to strike us down when we err, or sin against Him. We view Him as someone to fear and dread; a monster hiding under our spiritual beds waiting for the precise moment to pounce. As a result of this distorted view of God, we search for the nearest corner, cower down and hope He cannot find us.

My fellow believers, is that what our Heavenly Father is really like? Does He wait for the opportune time to squelch us like a common insect if we get on His nerves, break one of His commandments, or annoy Him? I submit to you, God is 'nothing' like that – far from it! He is our Father, and we are His beloved children bought with a tremendous price and there is nothing that we can do, or not do, that would cause Him to love us more or love us less!

Think about this: For those of you who have children, we know they often do things they shouldn't do. They get into trouble, cause shame and invoke your anger and displeasure. Does that lessen our love for them? Of course not! They are still our flesh and blood and no matter what they get into, we still love them with a parental love. Yes, we sometimes use the "rod of correction", but our love never wanes; it remains in full force, ready to envelope them with our arms of compassion. That is how our Heavenly Father relates to His children!

You may say, 'You don't know what I've done! How can God still love me after I've messed up my life so bad?' My friends that is when the love of God shines the brightest! Listen to what God says about His love for sinners, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

"While we were yet sinners..."! Before you and I were saved there was absolutely nothing worth redeeming about us – NOTHING! We deserved to be cast head-long into the dung-heap of fire, brimstone and eternal destruction from the very presence of God. The Bible describes our very best as *"filthy rags"*. The passage in Isaiah 64:6 reads like this: *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our*

righteousness's are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Now I don't mean to get vulgar about what I am about to reveal, but what the Prophet Isaiah was alluding to is this: Our "righteousness" in the sight of a Holy God is as "filthy rags", a reference to the menstrual-flow-rags of a woman's period and according to Levitical Law deemed to be of utmost uncleanness.

Nevertheless, even after we add up our best which equals nothing; God still sheds the light of His love upon us! Just take a glance at the cross for confirmation – see the Lamb of God beaten, bleeding and buying our eternal salvation with His own precious blood! Doesn't the holy, pure and undefiled blood that Jesus shed stand in stark contrast to the polluted, vile and utterly despicable "filthy rags"?! My fellow brothers and sisters, "...God 'IS' love", so much so that He provided the ultimate demonstration of love by allowing His precious Son to take our place, endure our shame, and redeem us back to a glorious and eternal relationship with the Father! Glory!

Now, hold on to your seat; I am going to reveal a passage of Scripture that ought to make the stones of the earth shout for joy! Are you ready? Here it is: *"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 creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38, 39).

May I recommend you go back and read that immutable, interminable, promise over and over until it is engrained in the innermost recesses of your soul?! When I read this passage, I picture the Apostle Paul penning these words as he is shouting glory hallelujah running down the streets of Corinth! Go Paul! Whoohooo! Let the world know we have a God, which in spite of our vile disposition, loves us to the utmost extremes!

Paul possessed a strong, unwavering confidence that there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING that can separate us from God's love! There is no hostile force present in the universe – no demons crawling in Hell below, no creature roaming the heavens above, no living thing slithering in the oceans depths, no conquering enemy, no friend or foe, no watery or dusty grave, no grizzly death or glorious life, no sin of commission or sin of omission, no habit or addiction, no harsh word or lie, no failure or fame, no heartache or trial, no sadness or sorrow; NOTHING shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

To God be the Glory! "God 'IS' love"!

'The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star

And reaches to the lowest hell.
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.'

- Written By Frederick M. Lehman