

God Loves You!

Of course you have heard the familiar phrase, "God loves you!" Someone, years ago, placed the statement on a large billboard in northern New Mexico for travelers to think about as they drove along.

It is interesting to view the different reactions to this message of, "God loves you!" Some ignore it, as if there no God. Some sneer at it, in cynical disbelief. Many assume they know the love of God based on their subjective feelings. Others give serious thought to this Divine revealed truth.

In fact, the central message of the Bible is that, in concern for man's well-being, God has shown His deep concern and love for us. God truly does love us! Many people often fail to appreciate the fullness of God's love because they either do not appreciate, or have knowledge of, the Law of God.

What is God's law? Well, "in a nutshell," God's law is, "*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 6:23). "*We have all sinned...*" (Romans 3:23). Therefore, each of us is worthy of "death," i.e., "spiritual separation from God." You see, when we sinned, we made ourselves an enemy of God (James 4:4), worthy of His wrath and subject to destruction (Colossians 3:6).

However, instead of a "declaration of war," God extended a "peace treaty" to us. Paul wrote, "*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:6-8). Perhaps, more familiar, is the statement of Jesus; "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever trusts and obeys Him should not perish, but have eternal life*" (John. 3:16). God's Love, shown through the Savior, Jesus, is the message of "the gospel," the "good news" of salvation provided by God on our behalf. God's desire is for us to return to Him through obeying His Son.

2 Peter 3:9 reveals, "*The Lord is...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*"

This "peace treaty" is offered in hope that we will be motivated to turn from our sin and alienation from God to a life of righteousness and service in Jesus Christ. The message of God's Love for us is positive and uplifting. It gives light, it gives life, and it gives hope. It inspires true, trusting, and obeying faith in the One who gave His life for us. God's Love motivates the true believer to "*repent and be baptized*" for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:36-41). Having obeyed Him, the atoning blood that Jesus shed in His death for us is applied to the debt of our sin. Furthermore, "*...if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*" (1 John 1:7).

Yes, God loves YOU! He does not love your sin, and He will not save you if you choose to practice sin. But, in his love for you, He has provided a Savior in His Son Jesus Christ. If you choose to turn from your sin to continue in the word of Christ, you will experience God's Love in its fullest measure (cf. John 8:31-32; 10:10).

Colossians 1:21-23 reads, "*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*"

What is YOUR reaction to the message of God's Love? Jesus said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments*" (John 14:15). Indeed, "*...this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments...*" (1 John 5:3). Won't you accept God's Love and obey His will?

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