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God Loves Us as Sinners

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God Loves Us as Sinners

Day 13

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

In this verse, we see the essence of God's heart toward us. He is not filled with wrath and anger. His thoughts toward us are not about judgment or punishment. His heart is, and always has been, filled with love for us.

In the Old Testament, we often read of the wrath and judgment of God. People were punished for their sins. But even before He sent His Son, we see that the Father's kindness and mercy trump His anger. Scripture tells us, "With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you" (Isaiah 54:8).

Actually, God's wrath is as much a part of His love as are mercy and forgiveness. God's love for us is demonstrated in His fierce wrath toward anything that would harm us. God hates sin because it damages you and me and He can't stand that. The full force of His anger is directed against sin because it hurts us—the "very good" of His creation—the masterpieces of His design. Regardless of the cost—regardless of the sacrifice—He will fight to rid us of sin and death.

But what is sin? When Jesus died for our sins, what did He die for?

The Greek word for sin is *hamartia*. *Hamartia* means missing the true goal of life. All of us sin, not just in a moral or legal sense, but by missing the mark of living as God designed. When we consider our sin, we usually think of things we know we have done wrong or are doing wrong. But sin goes deeper than that. *Hamartia* encompasses ways of thinking, feeling and acting that we don't even know about that block us from living in the relationship with God for which we were created.

Jesus is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus died to free us of the sin keeping us from the Father and preventing us from being the people He created us to be. As the sinless Son of Man, the Son of God took our sin upon Himself and paid the full penalty for it. Jesus took the wrath of God our sins deserved; He took the separation they required.

Hanging on the cross, Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me” (Matthew 27:46). And then He descended into hell—the hell we deserved for our sin but, in Christ, will never hold us captive.

In His death, Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Old Covenant law so that we sinners could know the love of God. In Christ, the Father doesn’t remember your sins. He said, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12). In Christ, God sees you washed clean in the blood of His Son.

But no matter where we are in life, Satan, the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10), will pester us with thoughts to keep us from life in the fullness of God’s love. He will try to convince us that we are not “good” enough for God. We may be tempted to think God is mad at us in some way. We may fear that our trials are punishment for our sin.

Many of us try so hard to pull ourselves up to the level of holiness we think God desires. We work tirelessly to leave our sinful humanity behind. Like modern-day Pharisees, we use religion (including Christianity) to try to improve ourselves.

You may never be the person you want to be, but that is OK. The Father, Son, and Spirit welcome real people like you and me—with sins we can’t seem to overcome. God loves *you* as are *you* are. He sent His Son to restore you to the relationship with God for which you were designed.

Ponder for a Moment

Have you sinned in some way that you feel excludes you from God’s love? If so, Explain.

What conditions might you have placed on God’s unconditional love?

What does this passage tell you about how God actually sees you?