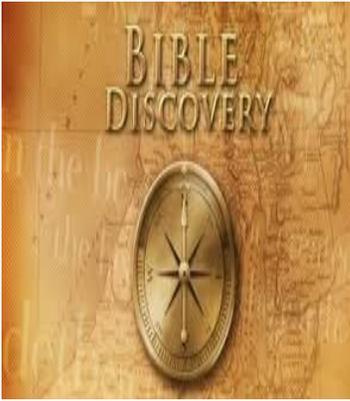


17 Apr 16

Revelation 1:4-8

## God's Love is Forever



“His love endures forever.” This powerful four-word phrase is used over forty times in Scripture and its meaning is mind-blowing! Despite our ever changing nature, God’s *enduring* love never changes in response to our behaviour. God’s *enduring* love remains unyielding, is constant, remaining even when confronted by misfortune. That’s the magnificent kind of love God has for us. “Endure” seems to reverberate with “power” doesn’t it? If we look it up in the dictionary, pondering it in as it relates to God’s love for us, a phrase leaps out at us: “without flinching.” It tells us God’s love endures our fickleness, persists through our unbelief, remains during our rebellion, continues without end, and God’s love endures it all without flinching. “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases”; it’s

surely something we rely on completely. As the Alpha and Omega, His love has always been; “His mercies never come to an end”.

Whenever I stop and truly consider such depth in God’s great love, when I remember *His love is forever*, something bubbles deep within my heart. Each time I consider “His love endures forever”, it digs a little deeper. It strengthens my belief it’s true, solidifies my resolve I can live in hope, in confidence brought by God’s love. Of God’s love, A. W. Tozer adds,

**“An infinite God can give all of Himself to each of His children. He does not distribute Himself that each may have a part, but to each one He gives all of Himself as full as if there were no others.”**

Because God’s not only all loving, but infinite, everlasting, He’s always sufficient to meet our needs, always there to reach out to us, always with us in our time of need, always our loving Father – always! Blogger Jennifer Dukes Lee, wife of an Iowa farmer, mom to two girls, and author, puts it this way,

**“Before the foundations of the world, He loved you. Before the fall of Eden, He loved you. Before He sent His Son splitting through the cosmos to this world, He loved you. Before He died upon the cross, He loved you. When He rose again, He loved you. And He’s coming back again because He loves you. When you took your first breath, He loved you. When you messed up bad, He loved you. When you made good grades, He loved you. When you won and when you lost, He loved you.”**

So, let’s lift hands in praise! Let’s shout hallelujah! Our Father loves us...messy, sticky, and over-booked – just as we are. Nothing ever changes that. All He wants is you to love and trust Him in return; to love those He puts all around you. Does He want you to grow? Does He want you to overcome obstacles, struggles, temptations and failures in your life? Absolutely! But two things you need to consider. First, God isn’t waiting for you to get your act together so He can love you. Even more, those changes He wants in your life – He’s doing the necessary work, all the heavy lifting, setting you straight, walking with you through it. What’s your part? You’ve just got to surrender to Him! Jerry Bridges, author, speaker and staff member with *Navigators*, who recently passed away, wrote,



**“Here is a spiritual principle: We cannot exercise love unless we are experiencing grace. You cannot truly love others unless you are convinced that God’s love for you is unconditional, based solely on the merit of Christ, not on your performance. Our love, either to God or to others, can only be a response to His love for us.”**

We know then God's love is foundational and unquestionable. He didn't just sprinkle His love, or scatter His love; *"God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us."* [Romans 5:5] It's this love poured out for us John seeks to identify to us as the power and presence of God through Christ to His church. Images which depict our Heavenly Father as the God of all comfort, and our knowledge of Jesus as both the beginning and the end serve to remind us that such understanding transcends common experience, overcomes natural occurrences, human understanding, familiar directions, and preconceived mindsets. Because God's love is timeless – forever rooted, grounded in Christ, we can seek, receive and send out the bold message with which God has generously equipped us through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

God's love is forever; He *"loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father"*. [vs. 5] This magnificent love compels us then to respond, to reach out to our world, demonstrating increasing joy by His love in our lives. This love's so different from any this world will offer. This love's contagious, replicating and everlasting. This eternal love finds opposition from worldly love but God's love endures! Listen to these words from 1 John 2:17, *"The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."* Let me go back a couple of verses and read you what John is saying...*"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world."* [1 John 2:15-16]

John's words in both his epistle and Revelation 1:4-8 direct us to understand the impact of God's eternal loving presence in our lives as we reject the world, surrender our hearts fully, and come to our heavenly Father through Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

## ***Where does that leave us?***

We've three certainties of God on which we can depend...

### ***1. God's love is UNCONDITIONAL -***

Who did Jesus die for? Did He not die for the ungodly? You and me! Even though we were absolutely hopeless and helpless when our Lord died for us, He did it anyway. There's no exam, no income bracket, no popularity contest, no fashion sense necessary for us to have God's amazing love. Through His merciful, amazing grace, we have His unconditional perfect love poured out on us with a simple decision to say YES. Paul summed it well, saying, *"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* [Romans 10:9] There's no asterisk, no caveat, no plus sign to that agreement.

### ***2. God's love is INCOMPARABLE -***

Think of hostages kidnapped. We've certainly felt the sting of such atrocities as we watch the news in recent years and can feel the agony of families waiting – hoping – for their loved ones return. What if their captors had only one demand, *"We'll kill the hostages unless someone steps up as a replacement."* Maybe someone will? But think then, what if the hostage taken turns out to be one of the worst criminals, the very worst person ever; who do you think might step up and die for them? Forget it... the hostage is a goner! But that's exactly what Jesus, our Lord, the perfect Son of God, the co-creator of the universe, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Christ – the Messiah, freely chose to come and do – to die for the very worst of the worst of people! He *came* to die for me – and for you. Maybe you're feeling like that worst of criminals right now... distant from our heavenly Father, a failure in living a holy, consistent, loving life in line with what you know is truly righteous. Don't be afraid to admit your helplessness, your hopelessness, afraid of more sorrow and failure - come to Jesus just as you are without one plea; just believe on His name! Jesus accepts you – He loves you. After all He died for you.

### *3. God's love is INCOMPREHENSIBLE -*

We'll never understand it humanly speaking. He doesn't do what we would do, He doesn't think as we would think. While we were actively, purposely, willingly breaking God's law, He sent His Son Jesus to be the Christ who died for us. It's absolutely humbling and shocking – mind blowing when you think about it.

The story's told of Prussian King Frederick the Great. Touring a Berlin prison, as he walked by, the prisoners fell on their knees before him each proclaiming their innocence. "I didn't do it", "I'm not guilty", "there's been a great miscarriage of justice!" "Your Majesty, save me from this great injustice" each cried out. That is, all except for one man, standing with head hung down and shoulders stooped saying nothing at all. Frederick called to him, "Why are you here?" "Armed robbery, Your Majesty," was the reply. "And are you guilty?" "Yes indeed, Your Majesty, I deserve my punishment." Frederick then summoned the jailer and ordered him, "Release this guilty wretch at once. I'll not have him kept in this prison where he'll corrupt all the fine innocent people who occupy it." Think of it; finally someone who was honest, not trying to cover up things! Willing to admit, "I was wrong!" – No excuses, no shifting the blame, no plea for leniency. "I deserve to be here!" For you and me, it's at that point when God rushes in to help! 1 John 2:1-2 (NKJV) tells us,

***"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."***



**Jesus, in His great love,  
takes care of the sin  
problem in your life!**

Jesus, in His great love, takes care of the sin problem in your life! Are you worrying over your deep need? Let Jesus have it! Have you been running away from God in sin? Come to Christ, lay it all at the cross - get your life cleansed by His love, by His work in your life! That's exactly what happens when you surrender to God's Son - JESUS!

God's love is forever...unconditional, incomparable, and incomprehensible! In a nut shell, God's love is simply magnificently wonderful! It's a drawing love, a protective love, a love filled with hope! So what's our destiny? What do we choose? If we're in Jesus Christ we've chosen LOVE! If we're not in Jesus today, then only wrath for unresolved sin awaits! That's scares me way down to my boots; how about you? In God's love He calls out to us to come out of this world and to be separate in His love forever. What a wonderful invitation but it only works if we accept it. If you have never said yes to God's unconditional, incomparable, incomprehensible love then I invite you to do so today. I know that it's a decision you'll never regret. Give us a call or drop an email if you would like to know more.

***Blessings,***

***Pastor Dave***