

Intense Love!

John 11:35-36,

“Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, See how He loved him!”

Tears of love!

Some of us have felt deep tear jerking love for a child, a grandchild, a spouse or parents. God’s love is so much more intense, and his feelings towards us are much more “tear jerking” than ours. If life has not allowed you to experience this type of love for others, just hang on. His love for you, when realized, will develop and intensify your love for others. Remember, Jesus wept over Lazarus just before He raised him from death.

One time, just a few months after Jesus came into my life, I just started weeping uncontrollably. I hurried to the nearest bathroom and locked myself in and said, “Lord, what was that.” He said, “It’s just Me.”

Recently I was reading the Word with a friend of mine in our Sunday Bible class. Suddenly he began to cry. He said to me “This is the first time I have cried in this way with the Lord.”

“One of the saddest things is the fact that God’s people do not comprehend His love even though Jesus, God in the flesh. Jesus was offered Himself to be tortured and He died the horrible Cross for all. That is real love!

It is sad when we see that even some believers are lukewarm. Others have left their first love, and others have idols that replaced God’s love for them. If this is you, hang on.

Remember, most often you will experience God’s real love through being in contact with His Word, the Holy Spirit within you, worship and worship music, and with other believers.

God’s love is intense! God portrays Himself as an enraptured bridegroom.

Often, His bride (which is us) is portrayed in many biblical passages as a prostitute or at least someone who is not worthy to be loved. God sees Himself as the bridegroom over these “horrible people” fervently waiting for the marriage!

This is real, but we often don’t realize how deeply and passionately God loves us. We think, “How can He love me? He is too huge to even care about me personally, much less love me with a love that is difficult to describe.

Isaiah 62:1-5,

“1 For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns.

2 The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name.

3 You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem In the hand of your God.

4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah¹, and your land Beulah²; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.”

The vine and the branch

John chapter 15 records a time in history just shortly before Jesus was crucified and was buried, later to be resurrected. In this group of chapters, John 14-17, Jesus is giving His disciples, and you and me, some last minute and very important instructions on how to live our lives after He leaves.

John 15:1-16:4,

“1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

Normal is to have the sap flow from the vine to the branch.

Jesus is saying that we will be eternally connected much as a branch is to a vine. The life of the vine flows through the branch and causes the branch to bear fruit. There is a oneness inferred here between you and God. His life is flowing into you, and that includes His love. As that happens you have the opportunity to allow His implanted Word bear fruit.

2 “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Pruning should be expected. But do not view the pruning process as a lack of God’s love.

Fruit in a vineyard is only produced in abundance on tender, newer growth. As a branch become older, it becomes harder. Even though a branch is living and is connected to the vine, it can become barren. Therefore the gardener cuts back the old hard wood, which forces it to produce new growth that will produce fruit in abundance. God therefore takes us through times where everything in our lives seem cut off except for our relationship with Him. In that process our connection with Him, the Vine, is enlarged and fruit is produced.

Don’t become discouraged when pruning takes place! The work is already finished. Just believe!

John 15:3-4,

3 “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

*4 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it **abides** in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

¹ The queen of King Hezekiah and mother of Manasseh

² To be married to a husband

To abide is a very key issue for love.

The word abide means some very intimate and important things. It means to live together in intimacy, dwelling together as a husband and wife with a deep love. It means to live within. It means that the two are spiritually living inside one another with a special love. It means that the two are no longer who they used to be before the abiding took place.

Quoted from “Hearing God,” a devotional by Dallas Willard.

*“In his book, ‘Take Another Look at Guidance,’ Bob Mumford writes: God wants to bring us beyond the point where we need signs to discern His guiding hand. Satan cannot counterfeit the peace of God or the love of God dwelling in us. When Christ's **abiding** presence becomes our guide, then guidance becomes an almost unconscious response to the gentle moving of His Holy Spirit within us.*

Read John 15:4 and notice the rhythm of the words. It's as if you and Christ are moving together, as if you were skating or dancing arm in arm. You are so in sync with Christ that his next movements are plain to you - and you immediately follow. Ask God to help you live that way.”

Abide from the Strong's Bible Dictionary:

To abide, to remain as one, not to become another or different, remain dwell, continue tarry, endure to remain, in reference to place to sojourn, tarry not to depart to continue to be present to be held, kept, continually.

Abiding brings fruit.

God created us to “abide” with and in Him-He in us and us in Him. It is a oneness between the Creator and His created human. Did you hear that? God made Adam out of dust and then breathed Himself into Adam. Now he wants us to return to normal.

John 15:5,

*“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who **abides** in Me, and I in him, bears much **fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.*

6 “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

John 15:20

“20 “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

There will be warfare, but look what Jesus said here. Do not allow the warfare to mistake God's love for you. He is there during your trials.

John 16:1-4

“1 “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.

2 “They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

3 *“And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.*

4 *“But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”*

The word glorified means to reveal.

It is like an artist that just finished a sculpture. He covers it with a cloth, and then as the crowd gathers, he rips off the cloth to glorify, or to reveal his work.

1 Corinthians 10:31,

“31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

God loves people so much, even ungodly people, that it is His desire to reveal Himself to them. When He is revealed, then we must make a decision. Will we reject Him? Will we reject truth? It is up to us; we have a free will. When He revealed Himself to me, there was so much love that poured through me that I instantly invited Him to take control of my life.

What kind of love? Can you really comprehend these Scriptures?

John 15:9-10,

“9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

10 “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

1 John 3:1,

“1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

Obedience to God is essential.

John 14:21,

“21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.””

John chapter 14 shows that when we obey that God becomes real to us. Then when we see God is real to us, we have a greater love for Him and have a greater desire to obey Him more. It can be an endless cycle that leads to a very close and intimate relationship with the Creator!

Always ask Him what He wants you to do. Always be alert for where He wants you to give and when you need to forgive. Always be ready to be convicted, not condemned, by

the Holy Spirit in you for any sin. When you confess your sin to Him, He cleanses you as if you had never sinned – 1 John 1:9.

John 15:16,

*16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and **appointed** you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

The word *appointed* used in verse 16 is interesting. It means to lay horizontal in a helpless position. Often we must come to the end of our own limited power and resources to really appreciate submitting totally to God. He loves you so much. Don’t be surprised if he “appoints” you!

John 15:17,

“These things I command you, that you love one another.

How can we love other people? Only by the power of God working in and through us. That is, if you allow Him to do so.

Romans 5:5,

“5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Remember, we are the bride of Christ.

Revelation 21:2,

“2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Will you spend time in Jesus’ presence? Will you meditate upon the Scriptures that state how deep the Father’s love is for us? Will you press into worship, and listen to worship music? Will you keep your mind on the Holy Spirit and be aware that He abides in you? Will you continually pour out your heart to Him, both the good and the bad?