

Real Love – Jesus and You 1 John 4:9-10

Let's begin today by looking at the lyrics of a familiar song. Please get a hymnal and turn to page 185. I'll read the verse if you guys will follow with the chorus. **Read Jesus Loves Me.**

I love the simplicity of this beautiful song. It helps confirm part of last week's message in that God loves us despite who we really are. He sees us as He does the innocent little child. He accepts us despite our sin nature and opens His arms of redemption to us despite our desires for disobedience. Let there be no doubt that God is with us and never leaves us. Let there be no doubt that God made a way for His love to greatly impact our lives. As I said last week, thank you God, for the gift of Jesus!

For more than a century and a half, people have sung this song as an instrument of hope and comfort during some very dark circumstances. From missionaries around the world facing martyrdom to West Point Cadets on the battlefields of the Civil War, this little song has reminded many people of the simple message surrounding the love of Jesus for all humans. It even points us to the proper source for those moments of doubt. How do I know that Jesus loves me? Well, the Bible tells me so.

The motivating force behind the story of redemption is centered around the love of Jesus Christ. Let's go back to where we started last week and look at a few more verses from 1 John 4. **Read 1 John 4:7-10.** If you'll allow me a little latitude here, I want to read verses 9 and 10 again, but provide a bit more emphasis and clarity on a few of the words seen here. *“In this, the (perfect) love of God was (demonstrated) for us in that God sent his only Son, (Jesus), into the world, so that we might live (redeemed and eternal) through him. In this, we find His love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent Jesus to (avert God's wrath and judgement) of our sins (through the gift of His sacrifice on the cross).”*

God did not simply tell us that He loves us. Instead, he used an action, not an emotion, or a feeling, or a fleeting sentiment, but a sacrificial act on the cross. Jesus informed the disciples of this just before God put the final steps of His plan into action. John shared with us the words of Christ in **John 15:13**. Our faith in the truth of the Gospel message is rooted in our unwavering belief of Jesus' willingness to die for another through an act of total self-sacrifice on the cross. So, if someone asks or needs reassurance about the love of Jesus. If someone asks, how can I know that Jesus really did what HE did simply because HE loves me? Remind them once again of **Romans 5:8**.

How else does the Bible tell us about the love of Jesus?

The Bible speaks of the love of Christ in many ways and we could go down various paths this morning, but I want to draw you to just a few places.

First, Jesus shows His love for us in that He chose to leave His heavenly home where He was comfortable and experiencing true acts of worship, to come here and be ridiculed, mocked, spit

on, beaten, and eventually killed for our sin. **Read John 1:1-4 and 14.** Jesus viewed the need for our salvation as being more important than His own comfort in heaven.

Knowing that Jesus chose us over Himself should provide us peace and comfort and all the evidence we need concerning His love. It should also help us see the importance of allowing the love of Christ to impact who we are. Part of our transformation from being a sin-filled rebel to being a blood covered, redeemed saint of God includes some necessary changes in us. We must trust the changes which take place in our hearts and lives when we commit to Jesus. Let's look at Paul's teaching on Jesus' ministry of reconciliation because I think it will help us better understand the love of Christ as shown to us through reconciliation. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.** Your access to God's love and to His Kingdom rests on your decision to accept Jesus and the power of His reconciliation.

It is the love of Jesus that allows us to accept who we are in Him. His love in us allows us to express love to others. When I think of this, it draws me back the words of Jesus recorded for us in all three of the synoptic Gospels, but I want to share with you the words as given in **Mark12:30-31.** The love of Christ in us strengthens us and encourages us everyday and everywhere we go. The love of Christ helps us to experience God's unbelievable fulness. I want to close today by voicing a prayer originally spoken from Paul over the people of Ephesus. I hope this prayer encourages you, strengthens you, and reminds you about the love of Jesus.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

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