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The Most Amazing Verses in the Bible

John 17:23-24

The Bible is full of amazing verses and statements. It reveals to us the marvelous qualities of God, His glorious works, and what He has done for us. As we complete our series on “The Real Lord’s Prayer” in John 17, I believe we find what must be some of the most amazing verses found anywhere in scripture. We find these in verses 23-24:

23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

What makes these verses so amazing is Jesus’ statement, speaking of His Heavenly Father, **“You...loved them, even as You have loved Me... You loved Me before the foundation of the World”**. What is perhaps the most amazing statement found anywhere in the Bible?

God Loves Us Just as He Loves His Son, Jesus Christ.

What a statement! God loves those who have turned to Him in repentance and faith just as He loves His own Son. Let’s try to grasp just what this means to us.

God the Father’s Love for God the Son

The Bible reveals to us that **“God is Love”** (1 John 4:8, 16). While love is not the only or even the primary quality¹, it is one of the defining characteristics of God. Love is part of God’s perfect nature. God defines and demonstrates what true love is – beyond any understanding we might have of human love. This love has been eternally part of God’s character.

For love to be expressed, obviously there has to be someone towards whom to express it. This perfect love has been expressed between and among the members of the Trinity from all eternity. The three distinct, yet inseparable persons of God – The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit – love one another completely. In the Bible, we encounter a Father, Son and Holy Spirit each *loving* the other, *giving to* the other, *honoring* the other, *glorifying* the other — this without confusing the order of the Godhead, or the roles that each divine person has fulfilled from eternity past.

The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is a relationship of love – complete, total, perfect love. This was the love that existed **“before the foundation of the world”**. This love of the Father for the Son was demonstrated many times. At Jesus’ baptism God spoke from heaven saying **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”** (Matt. 3:16-17). At the transfiguration, the Father again spoke **“This is my beloved Son: hear Him”** (Mark 9:2-7). In John 3 Jesus said **“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand”** (Jn. 3:34). Again in John 5 Jesus says **“...The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing...”** (John 15:20). And in John 15 Jesus says something quite similar to our passage, **“Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you...”** (Jn. 15:9).

This perfect, eternal love between the Father and the Son is beyond our understanding. Yet this is the same love that Jesus said God has for those who follow Him!

God's Love for Us

The Bible tells us we have all sinned and fallen far short of God's perfect holiness (Rom. 3:23). Because of this, we are under God's anger and judgment (Eph. 2:3). So how can we as sinners experience this love of which Jesus speaks? It is because of Christ's perfect life, His suffering and death on the cross, and His resurrection. When a sinner repents and trusts Christ, their sins are credited to Christ and they are forgiven, the punishment meted out upon Christ on the cross. At the same time, Christ's own righteousness – His perfect obedience and holiness – is credited to the believer's account. Now the believer – “in Christ” – is loved and accepted by the Father just as Christ is.

Look at just two of the passages that describe this amazing love:

*⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. **Romans 5:6-11***

*³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He lavished on us. **Ephesians 1:3-8***

Now God loves us just as He loves His Son. The Father loves us and has accepted us in exactly the same measure, quantity, and fullness that He has loved Jesus. We cannot be more loved, accepted, and approved than we already are. We do not earn

“more” of God's love or favor by our pursuit of holiness or acts of service. We do these things out of our response to God's love.

Our Response to God's Love

What is our response to this great love God has for us?

Respond to the gospel message. If you have not repented and trusted Christ, consider the great love He showed in sending His Son to suffer and die for sinners.

Praise and worship God. The unfathomable truth of the Trinity and the wonderful love God has shown us should drive us heartfelt praise and worship of our God!

Find assurance, peace, and security. The truth that God loves us just as He loves His own Son is our greatest source of peace and assurance.

Seek to obey Christ and His Word. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (1 Jn. 5:3).

Love others. “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 Jn. 4:10-11).

Strive to know and understand His love better. Paul prayed that believers “...**Might be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge...**” (Eph. 3:18). That is why we gather for our studies in the capitol – to try to understand better God's great love for us.

God loves us just as He loves His Son, Jesus Christ! I pray we comprehend just a little bit better what his amazing truth means to us!

¹We also see God is holy (Is. 6), God is light (1 Jn. 1:5), God is a righteous judge (Ps. 7:11). Holiness is perhaps the greatest quality as it really describes all of God's nature and character.

BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

MCMANUS (House) CONFERENCE ROOM

(252-M Located by minority offices near House chamber)