

## The Love of God by Hendrik Joubert

The love of God is amazing. Should one ask for the passage which best describes the love of God for mankind different people will list a variety of passages. One of my personal favorites reads: ***For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*** (Romans 5:6-8)

Through the apostle we learn of the way in which God **demonstrates** His love to mankind – ***while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us***. This demonstration is impressive. Men will sacrifice themselves for a worthy cause, but we want to know up front that it will not be in vain. One does not give up your life for nothing...

Consider what Jesus gave up to make the ultimate sacrifice: ***...who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*** (Philippians 2:5-8)

God taking on human form to become a bond-servant, to become obedient to the point of dying on a cross – considered a curse. (**Galatians 3:13**) Think about how He was treated by those He came to save. They rejected the Messiah because He would not conform to their image of Him. Many still demand that Jesus return to reign over an earthly kingdom in spite of the Lord explaining: ***"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."*** (John 18:36) (Interesting is the fact that His return is associated with the greatest battle ever. ***If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting...***

The most impressive statement in this demonstration seems to go unnoticed: ***He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross***. Herein lays another dimension of the phrase ***the love of God***. It not only refers to the love that He has for mankind, but also the love that man should have for God – at least those who profess to be His followers. God **demonstrated** His love towards man by sending His Son to die on the cross - ***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*** (John 3:16) The Son demonstrates His ***love of God*** by complete obedience.

God passed the "test" with this amazing demonstration. If there was a test for man, would you be interested in taking that test – so you may know if we love God? What do

you imagine such a test would look like? How may we “demonstrate” to God that we love Him? We are supplied with just such a test in the Scriptures: ***For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.*** (1John 5:3)

Notice, first of all, that it is man’s ***love of God*** discussed in this passage. The “demonstration” is specified – ***that we keep His commandments...*** This sounds so legalistic, does it not? Are you not immediately thinking about appealing to God’s amazing love, and the resulting grace? Is it not alarming that in spite of His great love and that wonderful grace that the Son personally warns that the majority will eventually be lost!?! (Matthew 7:12-13)

Some find comfort in reasoning that the division is between those who consider themselves Christians and the rest of mankind. Notice the Lord’s explanation in the same conversation (Matthew 7:21-23) The most upsetting phrase is probably: ***"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "***<sup>23</sup> ***"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'*** The division is therefore made among those who consider themselves followers of Jesus.

The compulsion is to condemn the *condemned* by explaining why *THEY* will be lost – to exclude ourselves. Jesus simply says that when men make the rules, worship becomes vain. Notice how he quotes from the prophets to show how God warned men about this timeless principle: ***'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'*** (Matthew 15:9) How many church councils and synods assemble annually to decide what members are to believe and practice because of the pressures from society? The test was here announced by the Lord: ***"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.*** (Matthew 7:21)

Consider how two young people who care for one another will do the utmost to let the desires of the other dictate. “What would you like to do? No, what do you want to do?” The idea is to find out what the other person likes so that you may demonstrate that you consider the desires of that person more important than your own. God says: ***"This is the love of God, that we find out what He desires (likes), and do that."*** Or, as Jesus said ***"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*** (John 14:15) When one considers His amazing demonstration, returning His love is not a burden at all...