

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

**“GOD’S GREATEST HITS:
POWER OF LOVE”**

The theme of love is everywhere. Movies are made about it. Songs are sung about it. Poems are written on it. Love is important to humans. We were made for love. This week we will study the One who created us with this need for only He can fully meet it. God is love.



Today's Scripture:
Psalm 31:7-18, 21-22

The Word

One of the more popular preschool songs is “Jesus loves me”. You know it “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so...” It is almost cliché to discuss the love of God. The song is simple. Yes, the Bible often addresses the love of God for the people He created. But sometimes when I am in the middle of terrible circumstances, I cry out, “God, I thought you said You loved me. Look at what I am going through. How can you love me and yet allow me to suffer this?” Have you ever felt that way? Read about someone else who describes their suffering.

Psalm 31:9-13

⁹ *Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and my body with grief.*

¹⁰ *My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction,
and my bones grow weak.*

¹¹ *Because of all my enemies,
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors;
I am a dread to my friends—
those who see me on the street flee from me.*

¹² *I am forgotten by them as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.*

¹³ *For I hear the slander of many;
there is terror on every side;
they conspire against me
and plot to take my life.*

Verse 9-13: This person is in anguish. He is being affected both physically and emotionally from the stress in his life. He feels completely alone, having been abandoned even by his friends. Not only that, his enemies and his neighbors hate him.

The slander against him abounds. He is despised, alone, forgotten. He is shattered, like broken pottery that can never be fixed. Hopelessness and fear are taking over. He is at the end of his rope.

What would you do if you felt that way? Would you shut the blinds, cry in the dark, punch a wall, whine, complain, get angry, or eat lots of chocolate ice cream? I am amazed at what this man did.

Psalm 31:14-18

- 14 But I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my God."
15 My times are in your hands;
deliver me from my enemies
and from those who pursue me.
16 Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your unfailing love.
17 Let me not be put to shame, O LORD,
for I have cried out to you;
but let the wicked be put to shame
and lie silent in the grave.
18 Let their lying lips be silenced,
for with pride and contempt
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.*

Verse 14-18: Instead of staying focused on his horrible circumstances, he turned his eyes to God. He chose to trust God over all the thoughts screaming in his head, over all the emotions churning in his heart, over all the advice of the world. He recognized God is God. He knew that no matter what would happen, his life was in the Lord's hands. God alone could save him. In his dark times, he requested that the light of God shine in on his situation. He knew that God's love was unfailing and was powerful enough for saving. He asked that the God of love turn his circumstances around.

What did love do? Love saw the pain.

Psalm 31:7-8

- 7 I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.
8 You have not handed me over to the enemy
but have set my feet in a spacious place.*

Verse 7-8: Even during difficulties, God's love is there. Even when we feel abandoned, the God who loves us sees our circumstances. Even when we see no way out, the God of love delivers us.

Psalm 31:21-22

²¹ Praise be to the LORD,
for he showed his wonderful love to me
when I was in a besieged city.

²² In my alarm I said,
"I am cut off from your sight!"
Yet you heard my cry for mercy
when I called to you for help.

Verse 21-22: Love is shown even when we feel like we are in the middle of a war. When we are attacked on all sides physically, emotionally, or spiritually, we are not alone. The God who loves us hears our cries. He is not far removed from our problems. He is not calloused to our hurts. He loves us. He is involved. How wonderful His love feels when we are in a place of hurting and pain. The sweetness of His love, which is always present, takes on a deeper meaning as we face our circumstances with Him. Even when we feel far away from Him, He is never far from us.

Jesus loves you. The Bible tells you so. But do you believe it? Will you trust His love even when you walk into difficult places? Will you allow the reality of His love to cut through to even your deepest pain? Will you cry out to Him like a child who has fallen, knowing with confidence that the Father will pick you up? Your pain is real. But so is His love. Let Him show you the reality of His love.

Application

The truth of the love of God can meet us at our deepest need. Ask God to apply His love to the hurting parts of your heart.

Have you ever questioned the love of God? If so, when?

How can you trust the love of God even when you walk through difficult circumstances?

How can you live out the reality of God's love when you are suffering?



Today's Scripture:
Hosea 1:2, 3:1-3, 13:14

The Word

I am a prostitute. I have given myself over to what was not right. I have done the unspeakable. I have sold my body and soul for money. Now that I have your attention, I must add to the shock: you, also, are a prostitute.

"I am not!" you proclaim. But it is true. You have forsaken all that is good and pure to pursue your worldly ways. You preferred the arms of the world over the embrace of God. You left the One who loved you in order to run after those who used you. The ways of the world, the lusts of the flesh, the desires of our hearts, left us all empty. Yet, for some reason we continue to follow after all that leads us to sin. Sometimes, when we are in the middle of all that is heinous, we hear Someone calling out for us. It is a voice of love, of mercy, of grace. Will we come back to our God or continue down our path of destruction? This is the same question a woman named Gomer had to face. Gomer was a prostitute in the physical sense. She was married to a prophet of God. Seems like an unlikely match, yet God chose the marriage.

Hosea 1:2

² When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."

Hosea was commanded by the Lord to marry Gomer. Their marriage was to be a picture of what the nation of Israel was doing to God. The Lord had been faithful to Israel and had loved her unconditionally. Yet, Israel continued to worship other gods, especially one named Baal which involved cultic practices, including prostitution and child sacrifice

The symbolic picture of Hosea and Gomer vividly portrayed the waywardness of Israel. Despite all that God had done for the nation, she continued to run away from Him. In the same way, Gomer left her husband and went back to her life of prostitution. Through this process, she somehow ended up becoming enslaved.

Hosea 3:1-3

¹ The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek barley. ³ Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you."

Verse 1-3: Gomer had run away from Hosea. She left the one who truly loved her and went to another man. This man did not protect her from enslavement. Now she was in bondage with no means of escape on her own. Is this not the picture of us? We run away from God and pursue our own wants and desires. Yet, the sin that seemed so alluring now has us trapped. We cannot escape on our own. We are powerless, like a slave in chains.

You are sitting in a dungeon. Your clothes are tattered. You are forced into unspeakable acts for you are no longer treated as human. You lean your head against the stone wall questioning how you got here. You remember thinking it would be fun. You wanted freedom. You wanted life your way. Now, look at you. Chained, battered, scarred. You are alone. Who would want used trash like you? You hear voices. Someone is offering to pay for your release. You strain to listen. The price quoted by the jailor is high, but the voice is not deterred. He is willing to pay any price. You recognize the Voice. It is the One you left. You ignored His pleas for you not to go. You smirked at Him, thinking you did not need Him. You made fun of His restrictive ways. You mocked His love. Now, He is here. You look at yourself. Shame flushes your face. You tell yourself, "I don't want Him to see me here." You push against the wall as if to hide. Then, you hear the footsteps. You close your eyes. But the Voice calls your name. You are looking down. In front of your face is a hand reaching out to you. The hand is scarred. You look up and scars on His head overwhelm you. You look away only to see His feet with healed puncture wounds. You look up. The eyes are filled with love. And He says, "You were worth the price".

We were in the dungeon of eternal death. We deserved to be there. But a loving Savior paid the ultimate price in order to redeem us. It cost Him His life to save us from the penalty of our iniquity.

Hosea 13:14

*¹⁴ "I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death.
Where, O death, are your plagues?
Where, O grave, is your destruction?
"I will have no compassion,*

Verse 14: We were ransomed. The payment was blood. We can walk into a new life under the banner of our Husband's love. Our past is now the past. What we have done cannot be changed. However, what Christ has done gives us an eternal future. That is the power of love.

Application

Spend time in adoration of the Lover of your eternal soul.
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How would you respond to the call to marry a prostitute?

Why would God give us this picture of a husband and wife relationship?

How can you see the attributes of Gomer in you?

How can we grow in understanding and awe of the cost of Christ's redemption of our lives?



Today's Scripture:
Romans 5:6-8

The Word

Let's study one of the most popular sentences said around the world. "I love you." The personal pronoun "I" is followed by a verb. This verb is the word "love". This verb cannot be enacted upon itself, it must have an object and in this sentence it is "you". Before you begin yawning on our remedial English lesson, realize the power of this statement. Love is a verb. That means love is an action. Love is not just a sweet feeling that we have. It is beyond being "star struck" by someone. Love is a choice. Love is intentional. It is narrowing in on an object and devoting thoughts, emotions, and actions to that object. If I said, "I love ice cream" then I would think about it, be very happy considering the flavors of it, and would make the decision to buy it. When we say we love a person, this is reflected in our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Why am I going on about this point? Because it is the key to everything! God loves you. This is not mere words. The Lord of the heavens and earth has thoughts about you, has feelings for you, and even acts in love towards you.

Romans 5:6-8

*⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.
⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might*

possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Verse 6-8: We are the focus, the object, the treasure that God loves. You are the apple of His eye. You make Him smile.

To think that God, the Lord, the King loves us, we might consider ourselves amazing. Yet, when we look at this text, we are faced with the reality of ourselves. We are powerless. So, we are not loved for our strength. We are ungodly. Since this is true, we are not loved for our character. We are not righteous. That means we are not loved for our choices in life. We are not good. The stark reality is that we are not loved for our personalities. We are sinners. So, we are not loved for our “religion”.

We did nothing to earn God’s love. It was not possible. Look at what we are. Do you see anything within us to move God to love us, even on a good day? Yet, God chose to love us. He had to for He is love. It is not that He just loves to love. He is the embodiment of love. That is all the more amazing to think about when you realize the objects of His eternal affection are us.

It becomes even more mind-boggling to consider when we were shown the love of God. Was it when we had just named all the books of the Bible? How about when we helped an old lady cross the street? Maybe it was during a church service? Or when we gave money to the poor? It was none of these. God demonstrated His love for us when we were still sinners. We had our fists shaking in God’s face, and He still loved us. We were mocking His ways, and He still loved us. We were living life our way and He still loved us.

His love was beyond just a warm fuzzy feeling. His love was put into action in a drastic way. The King of the universe set aside His crown of gold for a crown of thorns. He set down a royal scepter to pick up a filthy cross. The God who created life allowed Himself to die for you. As He hung there, nails in His hands and feet, people shook their fist at him. They mocked Him. They wanted life their way. That same crowd is the same people He was willing to die for. That same crowd includes you and me. While we were still sinners, He died. This act proves the love of God for you.

Do you question this truth? Do you wonder if God truly loves you? Do you sometimes feel that He loves the “spiritual giants” more than you? Jesus died one death. This one act on the cross demonstrates God’s love to each one of us. That means His love is equal for all of us. The crucifixion is the proof for this truth. We are loved by God. This love is not determined by how we were in the past, how we are today, or how we will be in the future. His love was already shown to us thousands of years before we were born. This act of love can never be revoked. It is eternally given to us. The cross is all the evidence we need.

Application

You are loved by God. Praise Him for choosing you to be the object of His divine affection.

Why do we question the love of God?

How does recognizing ourselves as sinners help us to better understand God's love for us?

How can we help someone who does not believe God could ever love someone like him or her?



The Word

Today's Scripture:

Luke 22:33-34, 54-62, John 21:15-19

Have you ever dared to dream of doing great things for Christ, only to miserably fail? I know I have. I have vowed to stay away from sin then fell back into it once again. I have dreamed of handling every circumstance with faith and boldness, only to cower in fear. I have treated God's children cruelly even though I knew He had called me to love them. I have disappointed myself as well as hurt others. Can the love of God meet me at my deepest failure? May we be inspired and humbled by someone who lived through failure to see the victory that only the love of God could accomplish.

Luke 22:33-34

³³*But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."*

³⁴*Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."*

Verse 33-34: Peter was extremely confident of himself. When others were scared, Peter ran forward. The disciples stayed in the boat. Peter walked on water. The disciples weren't sure who Jesus truly was. Peter announced Him as the Christ, the Messiah. He was bold. But he was also foolish. He had placed his trust in himself, his abilities, his fearlessness. They all tumbled like a deck of cards.

Luke 22:54-55

⁵⁴Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

Verse 54-55: Jesus has just been arrested. A crowd of men were sent to bring Jesus back to His accusers. They had been armed and ready for a fight. The disciples fled the scene. Jesus was led away.

In the darkness, Peter cautiously made his way to the place where the mock trial of Jesus was being held. Look where he sat down, right with the people who were enemies of Jesus. Maybe some of them were from the very crowd that had arrested Him in the garden. Obviously, these were not the followers of Jesus hanging out. Yet, Peter sat right down with them, trying to blend in. He was pretending to be one of them. His bluff was getting ready to be called.

Luke 22:56-60

⁵⁶A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

⁵⁷But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

⁵⁸A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."

"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

⁵⁹About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

⁶⁰Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

Verse 56-58: Peter is trying to act like one of the crowd. Suddenly, he feels someone staring at him. This servant girl was watching him intently. She announces the truth. Peter was with Jesus. She recognized him, possibly from the arrest in the garden. Peter denied it. Another person accused him of his alliance with Jesus. Once again, Peter said, "no". After an hour's time, after a long time of being able to think through his lies, he fell into the trap again. Strike three. The rooster announces his failures. The moment of defeat was not experienced alone.

Luke 22:61-62

⁶¹The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." ⁶²And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Verse 61-62: Your Best Friend is facing false charges. His torturous death is imminent. He is alone in a cruel mob. You promised to be there for Him. Instead, you just denied even knowing Him, not once but three times. The rooster crows. Suddenly, life is turned upside down. The One he had denied did not deny him. The One he had forsaken had never forsaken him. In the middle of His darkest hour, Jesus remembered Peter as he faced the darkness of his own sin, guilt, and shame.

Peter left the crowd that he was trying to hide in, for he had been found. Not by an angry mob but by One Man who was willing to turn and see him in his shame and love him still. That love was made evident specifically Peter after the death and resurrection of Christ.

John 21:15-19

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

¹⁸Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Verse 15-19: Three times Jesus asked Peter about his love for Him. Each time Peter would have to probe his heart to answer. The failure of denial, the sound of the rooster crowing would have still been fresh on his mind. Jesus knew that. That is why He reinstated Peter, giving this man a ministry for the kingdom of God. Feed the lambs, take care of the sheep, feed the sheep. Be about heavenly business. Do my work. Peter, I know you failed. But you are going to be faithful to the end. Peter would die a martyr for the sake of Christ.

Jesus was encouraging him to let go of this past failure and walk confidently in a new way. The bold and arrogant Peter was now being called to minister, to help, to give his life to others. Jesus knew his sin, he had seen him in the middle of it, yet he also could see what Peter would be for the kingdom. The faithless becomes faithful, the coward becomes bold, the one hiding in a crowd becomes a teacher, the one who denied Christ would now publicly proclaim Him.

Then, Jesus took Him back with the words "Follow Me". These were the same words that Peter had heard when Jesus called him to leave the fishing business three years

before. It was if He was saying, “Peter, My call on your life was never revoked. I still have a plan and purpose for you. Your sin cannot deny my faithfulness. You will be what I have called you to be.”

The same is true for us. We are loved by a God who saw us in the middle of our failures. This was after we knew Him and yet we still crumbled into wicked ways. His thoughts and feelings for you have not changed. He will not revoke His call in your life. You are still one of His own. He cherishes you. Do not hide in the crowd anymore. Go out and weep in repentance. But then, allow Jesus to restore you to the heavenly ministry that He has called you to. His plan for you is amazing. Look at Him. He is looking at you. His eyes are filled with love.

Application

If you are overcome by the failures of your past, confess it now. And then walk towards the freedom that the cross gives you. Let God reinstate you to His purposes in your life. He will. He loves you.

Do you believe the love of God even when you have failed miserably? If so, what is the evidence of this belief?

How do we allow God to reinstate us into His kingdom purposes?

How can the truth of this lesson help us to minister to other believers who have been sidelined by their past sins committed after they received salvation?



Today's Scripture:
Ephesians 1:4-6, 3:17b-19

The Word

Have you ever felt left out? Maybe you were in a new place and did not know anyone. Or you were at a party and no one talked to you. The worst of all could be that you experienced the torture of recess, waiting for one of the captains to pick you to be on his team. Let me tell you an amazing truth: God's love for you led Him to pick you as one of His own. You are on His eternal team.

Ephesians 1:4-6

⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Verse 4-6: Imagine space, the final frontier. Picture it before the earth was formed, before the galaxy was in place, before the stars were hung, before it was what it is. God already loved you. It would be thousands of years before you would be born. Yet, He loved you. And He picked you out like a special treasure to be His child.

God chose you to be His child. He adopted you. He loves you as much as He loves His own Son, Jesus. You do not receive leftover love, but you are given the same parental affection that Christ Jesus receives! What an awesome thought!

God loved you before you could love Him. God loved you before you could do any "good works" for Him. God loved you before you could speak His Name. God loved before your great-grandparents were even born!

How great is this love! Does it boggle your mind? It should. For it is beyond our understanding. Yet, it needs to be explored for His love is everything in our lives.

Ephesians 3:17-19

¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Verse 17-19: We are to find our roots, our stability, our strength in the love of the Lord. To know that we are loved in such an amazing way can keep us standing firm no matter what winds of circumstances may blow.

To know that you are loved is wonderful. That is the beginning. However, there is so much more. God wants you to explore His love, to experience it. He wants you to grow in the awareness of His love for you. Is this not true in any relationship? Over time, do you not come to appreciate the person more and more? It is the same with the Lord. He wants us to grow in our capacity to know His love, this only happens by spending time with Him.

As you grasp more of the love of God for you, the more you will realize that there is even more love than what you can understand. It is a divine mystery. He is the ultimate intrigue of the universe. He never grows dull. Instead, our excitement in God increases over time.

God's love is beyond any width, length, height, or depth. It can never be measured but it can be explored. Are you up for the challenge? It will be the biggest thrill of your life.

Application

Meditate on the love of God. Thank the Lord for His amazing love for you.

What are your thoughts and feelings about being chosen as a child of God?

How do we explore the love of God?

What have you learned this week that has impacted you?