

Speaking to the soul



Real love

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. 1 John 4:10

Most of the love that we experience in our lives is reciprocal. We love other people, and they love us. Sometimes we have taken the initiative and, on other occasions, they have done so. It is very different with God. There is nothing that we could ever do to win his love. However hard we might try, we could never get to a point where God was forced to love us. The fact that he has chosen to love us is entirely down to his own initiative. This is an incredibly important truth because the whole of our Christian life needs to flow from it.

In his letters, Paul often used the word grace to describe God's relationship with us. Forgiveness and salvation are a matter of sheer gift. There is nothing we could ever do to contribute towards them. When we take the step of faith and accept Jesus into our lives, we are simply responding to his incredible generosity to us. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Because of God's incredible and totally unmerited love, our lives need to be full of praise and thanksgiving. If we had made any contribution at all towards our salvation, it would be different. We could go around with a smug expression knowing that our wonderful lives had been duly rewarded with the gift of God's love. However, as it is, all we can do is boast about God and keep telling others just how incredibly generous he is.

QUESTION

How do you respond to the fact that God loved you long before you ever thought about him?

PRAYER

Lord God, I thank you for your amazing love. Help me to allow it to shape every part of my life. Amen

Photo - Church flowers

