



“Living on the ROCK Radio”

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1 Corinthians 10:4

A Word from Pastor Israel

Dear Listener

“An Expression of God’s Love” (Ephesians 2:1-10)

God’s love is probably the most misunderstood and abused subject when discussing the nature and character of God. In fact, there are many including Christians who subscribe to the idea that, as one Hollywood celebrity emphatically, proclaimed, “God is Love Period!” However, if we take such a notion that God is nothing but Love to its logical conclusion, then nothing we would ever believe, do, or say would matter. If God is love period then we can behave any way we want, believe whatever we want, make any laws we want or break them for that matter, practice injustice as we see fit, and forgo any form of ethical propriety. If God is truly Love period, then we can breathe a sigh of relief because we need not worry about any kind of judgments against sin and wickedness because God by virtue of that Love will sort everything out in the end. We need not worry about a Holy God-just a loving God.

At the heart of the Gospel is NOT the question of whether or not God is love. This fact is well established in the Bible. Romans 5:8 declares

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us”

So, it is not a question of whether or not God loves us. The issue is How did God express that love and how we can continually experience that expression.

God expressed His love for us in Christ in Two ways;

“GRACE/MERCY and TRUTH”

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of Grace and Truth”
John 1:14

Jesus is the Expression of God’s love for us. And we experience that love when Grace and Truth is present and evident in our lives and in our dealings with each other.

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians chapter 2:1-10 gives us an overview of how God expressed His love towards us in Christ and how we know that this Love is in us.

There are 3 Realities that we must apprehend in order to Experience the Love of God in Christ;

First, we must

1. RECOGNIZE that We were once ALIENATED from God (Eph.2:1-3)

Paul writes, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath

None of us can experience the love of God expressed in Jesus unless we first acknowledge that we are in a separated state from God because of our sin. That means, we served the World, the Devil, and the Flesh. No one is born a child of God. That happens at the new birth when we are given a new nature and are reconciled back to a relationship with God. This is all done by God's grace through faith in Christ. We received this new birth the moment we place our faith in the word of Christ.

The next thing that happens when we recognize God's grace and Truth is that we are

2. REGENERATED and made ALIVE in Christ (Eph. 2:4-6)

.⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus

We were once dead because of our Transgression but have been made ALIVE through Jesus Christ. The new regenerated us are now able to recognize we are saved. There are two critical truths we need to see in order to be sure we are saved.

One, we must accept the fact that we are not saved by God's love. That might shock some of you but nevertheless, access to salvation is only granted by Grace through Faith in the Word of God who is Jesus. Some may find such a statement hard to accept. But not because God loves me doesn't mean I am saved. In fact, there will be many people who will spend eternity separated from God not because God doesn't love them, but rather, they rejected God's only Son who came offering Grace and Truth.

Secondly, once we are saved, our ability to express God's love to others is also rooted in Truth and Grace. Jesus said that the world will know that we are His followers by our love for each other. That love is manifested in our ability to relate to each other with Grace and Truth. This was vividly illustrated by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20 when He admonished His followers to point out the fault of a brother or sister in person first. When they listen, you have won them over. If they don't, do not simply give up. Show them grace by calling other witnesses. If they still do not listen, show more grace by calling the church. If they still refuse to listen, then have nothing to do with them. This is how we express our love for one another. We tell each

other the Truth seasoned with Grace. If someone refuse to acknowledge their sin, even if grace and truth were applied, then when we disfellowship ourselves with that person, it is not because we did not love them, it is because they refuse the grace and truth we offered. God does the same for people. Many will be separated from God not because God does not love them but because they refuse to accept truth and grace

Finally, once we recognize our alienation from God and have been regenerated, we will then be

3. RECONCILED to God to ACCOMPLISH His Purpose in our Lives (Eph. 2:7-10).

⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We have been saved by Grace through Faith not by works that we should boast. Salvation is a gift from God. God's purpose for saving us is that through us the world will see his Truth and Grace. This has been His plan all along. He prepared those who will come to Him by faith to bear the light of Truth and Grace in a lost and dying World. That is our purpose and calling. I hope that we will all be partakers of God's Love that He Expressed in Jesus Christ who has come full of grace and truth.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU. AS CHALLENGING AS THE LAST YEAR AHD BEEN, WE CAN ALL BREATHE A SIGH OF RELEIF THAT GOD HAS ALLOWED US TO ENTER A BRAND-NEW YEAR. LET US PRAY THAT THIS YEAR WILL BE TIME OF BELSSING, HEALING, COMFORT, PEACT, AND THANKSGIVING



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