1. Why Should He Love Me So? - (congregational)

The writer of that song Robert Harkness asked a great question when he wrote that song in 1925… Why does God love us so…?

Especially since “all of have sinned/disobeyed and fallen short of resembling the glory/character of God” our Creator. (Romans 3:23)

* We struggle with the answer to that question when we think about it from our human/carnal perspective.
* Which has been corrupted/skewed by the knowledge of good & evil which God did not create us to possess.
* But we have it because mankind disobeyed God & ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of “good & evil” in the beginning…

and it gets passed down to every person who is born.

* Knowing both good and evil has turn mankind into judges, when there is only One Judge…
* Judging causes us to hate others and even ourselves because of the sin they commit…

But GOD is not like us… And aren’t we glad?!

Yes, God does hate… But He hates the sin (disobedience to His Word) which is the source of much of the pain & problem in our lives/world…

He hates sin because it separates His children from Him, as darkness is separated from light. But HE never hates the people who commit sin.

His mission was, is and always will be, to renew & transform our minds (the minds of sinful people) so that we can begin thinking & acting like Him… through discipleship.

* So it was His AMAZING LOVE for us that drove Him to intervene. (Romans 5:8)
* His love made it possible for mankind to have a “sin-ectomy” and avoid being separated from Him eternally in a place the Bible calls Hell. (Romans 6:23)

God has done everything possible to prevent anyone from going there…

He saw mankind…

* Starving Spiritually, with no way to feed ourselves – John 6:35
* Thirsting Spiritually – John 4:14
* Estranged from Him – John 3:3 & John 1:12
* Sick & Naked – 1 Peter 2:24
* In prison – John 8:36

For God to do all of that by sending His only Son to die a brutal, painful death for sinners SCREAMS God’s LOVE for YOU!!!

You matter! You are worth it to God!

He paid the price for our sin that we were not able to pay…

So that we could sin-less here, represent Him well as a child of God, and one day spend eternity with Him in heaven…

2. Were You There? Worship Team Trio Special

John 19:17-24

Not many of Jesus’ followers were there…

If we had been there when they crucified our Lord, sitting at the foot of His cross, we would have heard Him utter seven statements…

Statement one

Luke 23:34 - “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

Again, in our humanness… we may think that if there ever was an unforgivable sin, it would be the one committed by the soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross… mocking Him and gambling for His clothes.

But Jesus’ words indicated otherwise... Remember that it was God’s LOVE that put Jesus on the cross, not the soldiers.

It was His love for you that held Him there… not there nails…

James (the half brother of Jesus) would later write that there is no sin greater than another (James 2:10). Even though that isn’t how we view things.

If we judged God’s way, we would see ourselves as no better than anyone else… Humbling isn’t it? It’s a good place to be in the eyes of the Lord…

So what did Jesus want the people that day (and us), to learn about His Father?

* He hates sin, but loves people…
* His love forgives… no matter what a person has done or not done.

They need only repent (turn away from their sin and turn to God) and receive His priceless offer of forgiveness thru Christ the Son and the new life by His Holy Spirit that He freely offers to all.

A new life that sees from God’s perspective…

That focuses on eliminating sin from our lives so that we can progressively (by the Holy Spirit & the Word of God) become more like Jesus who came not to judge others, but to give His life for others…

* To be Holy as He is Holy.
* To begin loving the unloveable, as He does.
* Becoming slow to speak and quick to forgive, as He does…

Becoming God pleasers rather than people pleasers… Galatians 1:10

Father forgive them… they have no idea that they are being used to save so many others…

Statement Two

Luke 23:43 “Today you will with Me in Paradise.”

Even a convicted criminal, in their dying moments can confess their sin, be saved and spend eternity in heaven!

That may not sit well with some people who themselves desire to commit the sin of pride, judgement and murder themselves…, but when you hang with Jesus we begin seeing life & people differently…

We don’t prepare ourselves to hate & kill, but to love and be used by God to save those who desperately need Him…

The view is much better when we hang with Jesus…

2 Corinthians 5:8

Statement Three

John 19:25-27 “Woman, behold your son.”

Jesus teaches that even in His dying moments His concern for others is unwavering. That’s what true faith does.

Jesus was on mission… His relationship with God the Father was on track…

When we are following closely in Jesus’ footsteps, knowing therefore that our eternal destination is secure, we focus much less on ourselves…

Which makes perfect sense… that the needs of others would become more important, and that we would want to take as many people to heaven with us as we can.

Is your walk with Christ such that Jesus would entrust His earthly mother to your care?

 Statement Four

Matthew 27:46 “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

In that moment, when the Father placed the sin of the world upon His Son, the Father had to look away, Jesus was “cut-off” and forsaken so we don’t have to be.

Statement Five

John 19:28 “I thirst!”

Jesus reminded everyone that He is not only 100% God, but also 100% man. He knows pain, suffering & thirst just like we do…

He can identify with all of our needs.

Statement Six

John 19:30 “It is finished!”

The complicated/messy Tabernacle system of sacrificing animals to atone for sin was finally over!

The final Lamb had been slain… the Son of God was the perfect/final sacrifice for all mankind…

Statement Seven

Luke 23:46 “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

If Jesus can entrust His spirit (numa/life) into God’s hands, do you think we can!

Jesus knew His Father’s power & plan for what He was suffering thru that day…

He knew that His Father would not leave Him in a stone cold tomb…

Video

4. Christ Arose - Lillian leading Congregation

Video

5. He Lives - Lillian leading Congregation

6. Because He Lives - John and Lillian Special

John 11:25-26 I am the Resurrection and the life…” Romans 10:9-10

Does that describe you today?

Please bow your heads & clothes your eyes…

There is no better way to celebrate Easter than to receive Jesus into your heart & life today…

Or maybe you have, but life or circumstances has pulled you away and you know that you need to return to the “Good Shepherd” of our souls…

Dear Father in Heaven,

* I know I am a sinner
* I cannot save myself
* I believe Jesus died for my sin
* And that you raised Him from the dead
* I trust Him as my Savior
* And choose to make Him my Lord
* Give me your Spirit
* That I may begin to live like you
* In Jesus name, AMEN!