

# **You are Loved**

By Fabian Oliver

“Most of us were taught that God would love us if and when we change. In fact, God loves you so that you can change. It is the inherent experience of love that becomes the engine of change.”

-Fr. Richard Rohr

I often come across many people who feel distant from God. They feel that because they are not on track spiritually, and perhaps have stopped praying as frequently as before, or going to church as many times as others, that they are no longer close to or even loved by God. But that is not quite the case as the above quote suggests.

God’s love for us is unchanging despite our state of being. God simply loves us where we are. We do not need to sign up for it or write an exam to apply for it. We just need to realize it. We just have to become aware of it and then it embraces us like a tight hug from a loved one. Paul asserts that God loved us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8) and more importantly, nothing (not our sins or fears, not even our wounds, sadness and brokenness) can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39).

## **Bits and pieces of God’s love**

There are moments when my heart warms up as if the radiant heat of God’s love directly touches my heart: seeing my family together smiling and laughing; the birth of a new-born baby; the saying of vows by an engaged couple; the offering of peace during holy mass. I am reminded of God’s love whenever I reflect on the lives of the saints or partake in the Eucharist. There are similar glimpses of that love when I reflect on the hardships and love of a mother. There are even moments during worship, where I feel like my tears and brokenness come into contact with God’s tears of compassion and sympathy.

“When you know how much God is in love with you, then you can only live your life radiating that love.” -Mother Teresa

When we see Jesus on the cross; when we see his bruised beaten body covered in blood; when we see his innocence poured out and nailed to the cross, what does it mean for us? It may reflect the many injustices of life that hurt and exploit the innocent. It may reflect the repercussions of our own sins and ignorance towards what is right. Finally, it may reveal the love of God in which Jesus suffers with and for us, so that we may live for him. Indeed, we must live for him!

“Amazing grace

How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me,

Oh I once was lost

But now I’m found

Was blind but now I see

Oh, I can see it now

Oh, I can see the love in Your eyes

Laying yourself down

Raising up the broken to life”

-Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace) by Hillsong

### **Love for the ‘unloved’**

God’s love is for all (this is what we call grace). Once we realize God’s love for us, we respond with love: Love for God and for all creation. This is our mission. To love and be loved. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as we love ourselves (Matthew 22: 37-38). Very often, Christians are seen bringing each other down as opposed to lifting each other up. We are at times quick to judge, but slow to love.

How **do** will we end war, poverty, abuse, racism, broken families and all forms of discrimination? The many ills in life have left so many depressed and feeling unworthy and unloved. There are many solutions to such problems but without love we can do nothing (Corinthians 13). Love is the fuel that drives our Christian lives. Who will go and spread this love to all nations, especially to the 'unloved'?

"God loves us. May we discover the beauty of loving and being loved."

-Pope Francis

May this chorus be the prayer of our hearts:

Help me to love with open arms, like You do

A love that erases all the lines, and sees the truth

Oh, that when they look in my eyes, they would see You

Even in just a smile, they would feel God's love

-Brian & Jenn Johnson: For the One

**Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39).**