

# **God's love in Jesus Christ**

*Erkki Kuisma*

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I strive to agree with Jesus Christ in all things, because He loved me and suffered the punishment of my sins. It is possible that I have been mistaken in some matters. However I trust that He will correct me, if I have misunderstood something. I love His reprimand and His comfort because without them I cannot remain in truth. Thus, if there is something wrong in these writings it is the fault of Erkki Kuisma. Jesus deserves the credit for everything that is right.

Issued 11.07.2010

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# Holy Love

**What is true love? If you could love your neighbour with God's love, you would be living true life. However you cannot do it until you first have received His love.**

## **Appearance of God's love**

God proved His love for us by becoming man in Jesus Christ so that we would be able to know Him. Jesus lived a human life in the way that perfectly carried out God's love. God has granted Jesus to suffer the punishment that our wickedness deserves so that we would be able to get forgiveness for our sins. This is love that suffered everything.

Does this kind of love make an impact on you! Is this message even worth telling to those who think they are good? Only those who confess their own evilness can experience this to be love. If only someone repented and thought: What have I done! Woe to me, how bad I am! Is there any hope that a godless one would repent and would convert? In the heart of God there is the love which hopes for the salvation of every person.

While monitoring thoughts of people God notices that most people do not regret their evilness and do not receive His love. What does He think about this? He loved billions of people in vain. They despise His sacrifice. He knew this beforehand but even so He loved all people by granting the atoning sacrifice of Jesus to happen for the atonement of the sins of everybody. Impartially He loved every human being with the same love.

He didn't love us to gain our requited love. He loved us because He is love. Love given in vain proclaims the quality of God's love. This is love which is not self-seeking.

However if someone receives His love this cannot be without causing requited love. Whoever claims to have received God's love and doesn't love God has not truly experienced His love.

This is love for God: to obey His commands. He, who loves Him, doesn't think that His commands would be burdensome. This love believes everything that God says. Although I would do everything

right, but of selfish motives, I would gain nothing. If God's love is not in me, I am nothing.

I wish that God's love would come into you when believing in Jesus, and I hope that it also remains in you till your resurrection, when you will be made perfect. Although you would not care about God's love, it doesn't remove the fact that He has loved you. It remains forever.

Faith, hope and love remain in Jesus Christ, but will they remain in you?

### **Holy love and created loves**

Say the word love and many think you are talking about love between man and woman. Nowadays for many people the meaning of this word is only sensual pleasure of a sexual intercourse. For most people this word means that persons who love each other are either relatives or friends or they are of the same mind. Don't mix up God's love with these loves.

God loved His enemies, that means, He loved the rebellious mankind. It is much more than to love one's relatives, friends or kindred souls. He suffered the punishment of the people who hate Him and experienced pains for those who don't love Him. It is much more than to rejoice at one's spouse or to be good to those who are good to you.

God's love is holy love, because it originates from a quite different source than all other things that are considered love.

God has created love between man and woman but God's love is not created love. When someone loves one's spouse or children, the person loves himself. A created love will pass away, but God's love is eternal.

A created love and the eternal love are not equal in value. If you think too much of a created love, this attitude of yours can prevent you from finding your true bliss and causes you to reject God's holy love. Those, who honour more created things than the Creator, don't recognize eternal values.

## **Love as an idol**

We often hear it said that all loves are different expressions of the same thing. They speak about agape, fileo and eros loves. All these three Greek words mean love. The Bible uses the word agape about the love of God because it makes a clear difference between God's love and the love of friends (fileo) and the love of spouses (eros). Choosing of this word tells us about the holiness of God's love. Love to a friend or to a spouse is not expressions of God's love.

Marital love is a created thing and it will run out. Jesus proclaims that in the new world there will be no marriages. Sexuality is only for this time. In a wedding they often read the Bible passage of 1Cor.13 "the praise of love", as if it somehow was linked with the situation. However that text speaks about God's love and not about love between a man and a woman.

That text is read, because it is believed that a feeling of falling in love would be able to cause the things mentioned in the praise of love. Practice proves that human love is not able to do it. So what is this all about? It is worshipping of the feeling of falling in love. Especially this is typical for the western civilization. An idol worshipping often uses nice words which are not true. Therefore it is not a wonder that exalted words of God's love are used to praise the Eros idol.

When erotic love has been in this way raised on the same level with the love of God it defames His love. Reading that Bible passage at the great moment of the romantic love is worshipping an idol. It is no wonder that this happens in the Greco-Roman civilization, because Eros is an old Greek idol.

Pink little angels don't represent God's love but human ecstasy of falling in love. Blood-red Jesus, the Son of God executed on the cross represents the holy eternal love. In that event God loved His enemies!

Who is able to look at God's love in the Crucified One! Many consider it such an ugly sight that they want to cover it with flowers or with other mawkish things. This sight is unfolded to be love only for those who have received God's testimony of their own evilness.

Many would like to get forgiveness for their bad deeds, but they would not like to face their own badness. They think their bad deeds are only mistakes of good persons. Therefore they make God's love into a rosy cross. They want to cover the bloodiness of the cross in every way, because atoning blood tells that God hates evil doers.

Also love between friends is a created thing and it will run out. Peter loved Jesus as his best friend. In the flame of his love he affirmed: "A friend will not be forsaken." However he had to experience it bitterly how his love disappeared like the early dew when he at dawn denied knowing Jesus.

If our love for God is only like loving of a friend, it is as the early morning dew which dissipates when the Sun rises. God has created friendship and the marital love which are beautiful, but woe to us, if exalting of friendship prevents us from sharing the love that gave His only begotten Son for the sake of His enemies.

The mutual unity of the Jesus believers is based on God's love and not on friendship. However, in practice it is human friendship that keeps many believers together and not God's love.

Many altars have been built on friendship. Good brother clubs are closed fellowships where friends love each other. Often these people oppress those who are outside their friendship. Therefore the oppressed ones find their own friends with whom they have a good working unity.

God's love contains a new kind of "friendship", where we are one in God. The human friendship is only a weak shadow compared to the unity that God's people experience in the Spirit of God. The unity of the Spirit unites the believers to each other not a human friendship.

Who is able to look at a human being for whom God gave His only Son! If you were able to see yourself as such a person, see also others in the same way. The Gospel presents a true human being to us and many consider this sight so ugly that they want to cover up it with something. They hide their hostility to God. All people, who have become God lovers, are His former enemies.

Only those who have received God's testimony of their own evilness can take up a loving view of all people. He, who knows his own

evilness and has been released from it in Jesus, is able to see the badness of all people. Knowing the truth about man sets us free from demanding or waiting for too much from human love.

### **Love and freedom**

Think how kind and gentle God is. Angels and men dared to rebel against Him, because near Him there is freedom. In His nearness there is not an authoritative menace of judgment, which we so often experience in the company of some people. You have freedom to make wrong choices.

Although we have freedom to make choices, we have not got freedom from consequences of our deeds. You have freedom to desire and do evil but you are also liable for the results of your freedom. God will sentence for all deeds with justice. He has installed His judgments inside His creation so that we partly suffer the consequences of our deeds already now, though their final consequences we will not face until in eternity.

Freedom from consequences of bad deeds is the dream of every evil doer. You see, how much people love this thought: You can do freely whatever you want without any fear of judgment! In fact this kind of freedom doesn't exist, even though you would very much like to have it.

Does it exist, love that forgives endlessly? If it did, by it you would reach the same result as by denying the existence of judgment. You could do evil as much as wanted without any fear of judgment, because you could only ask forgiveness and the matter would be resolved in that way. In fact this doesn't exist either, because only those who repent are forgiven and they who have experienced God's mercy don't want to continue doing the deeds for which they just got forgiveness.

You can try to get the forgiveness of God and at the same time refuse to experience His love. In this way you get strength to wrong again, because you are free from fear of judgment but also free from His love. This kind of attitude hardens your heart. Finally you are not able to receive forgiveness, no matter how much you confess your sins.

It is not God's fault, if you are not able to get forgiveness for your sins. When you don't get forgiveness the reason is not in God, as if He was not ready to forgive you again. This is the reason: You are not any more able to receive His mercy. It is extremely dangerous to try to separate God's forgiveness from His love. If your heart is badly hardened, don't ask forgiveness for your sins, but only look at the sight of God's love when Jesus suffered on the cross just for the very deeds you feel remorse for.

If only your love of doing evil died while watching God who suffered for you! Confess your badness to Jesus over and over again and accept the judgment you deserve. Ask for nothing, just do by the truth. Finally you will hear the merciful words of Jesus: "Take heart, your sins are forgiven."

### **Receiving love**

We are not able to love and we are not able to receive love. Thus is it no wonder if we are without love. Love comes from God. He is the only one who is able to love. If He doesn't love first, nobody can love.

Nobody has got God's love as an inborn ability. Everybody must receive it by hearing the Gospel of God. You can love only if you have first experienced that God loves you.

Our inability to receive God's love is our basic problem. This difficulty is like a dam which prevents the stream of heavenly blessings from coming into our life. If you don't get your share of God's love during your life, you will be left without it forever. Look at everything what you see around you in this world. It is created only for that purpose that you could among it receive God's love and live by its power.

Every day the Spirit of God proves to all people of the world that they are evil. The Spirit of truth has been sent out into all the world convicting people of their guilt, testifying to God's innocence and proving the justice of His judgments.

Everyone who resists the testimony of God's Spirit makes himself incapable of receiving God's love. Only those who submit to truth are able to receive love.

Jesus appeared to a believer and asked: "Why don't you want to receive my love?" This man had believed the Gospel some years ago and had rejoiced that he had gotten forgiveness for his former, current and even future sins for the sake of what Jesus did on the cross. Therefore this question surprised him. What did Jesus mean?

This man was dissatisfied with the circumstances of his life and was complaining to God about his sufferings. His sins had caused his pains. God gave those pains to the man so that he could understand that the sufferings of Jesus are consequences of our evilness.

This discipline was love which aroused the will to be shuddered at evilness and gave strength to turn away from it. If you don't understand that the discipline is love offered to you, but complain to God about the judgment you experienced, it is as if you didn't want to receive His love.

If the one who has been sentenced for a crime complains about the judgment, he cannot at the same time ask for pardoning. So are you still disputing with the Spirit of God about your judgment? How such a complainer could receive God's love!

He, who is ready to identify himself with the crucified Son of God, is able to receive God's love. He took my part as the target of the wrath and judgment of God, so that my heart that is craving for evil would be broken. Don't be afraid of your breaking in the hands of God - from those pieces He will create a new heart for you in the power of the resurrection of Jesus.

## God's grace

**The grace of God is different from a mercy of man. Goodness, charity and mercy are often bidden together. They all mean to many people the same, something soft and beautiful. So they don't notice the real meaning of mercy. Much is included in the grace of God, but there is only one gate into sharing His grace.**

### **Grace must always be asked for**

Have you ever asked for grace? A man in panic kneels down to a judge and prays: "Give me mercy! I am a guilty and I earn my punishment, but don't execute me but be gracious to me and give me a right to live!"

Only a sentenced understands to ask for a mercy. An accused either denies one's guilty or confesses it. He who accepts his guilty either denies earning his punishment or agrees with it. If a sentenced doesn't accept his punishment but yet asks for mercy, he has not repented in his heart. His pride makes him incapable of receiving any mercy.

### **Grace is given to the humble**

*"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* James 4:6 To confess one's sin is only a half of humbleness. To accept the shame of the punishment is the more difficult part. The other criminal said on the cross: "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve..." This confession of the humble heart got the gracious answer from God and opened to him the gate of the Paradise.

God is a fair and impartial judge. *"All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."* Eph.2:3

### **From under wrath to under grace**

God hates all sinners and therefore all people are "objects of wrath". However He is so wonderful that He loves His enemies! He has proved His love for us in the deed, when He sent Jesus to suffer our punishment. Most people don't appreciate this great deed of love,

because they don't understand that they are in danger to fall down into Hell at any moment. If they would comprehend that they are judged by God, they would ask for mercy from Him. Then God would show His grace to them in Jesus and they would experience the love of God.

When God has justified a sinner, this is not anymore a sinner but a just. God loves righteousness and hates sin and therefore He also loves just ones and hates sinners. It would be misleading to say that God loves sinners, because it is only partly true. God's love for sinners is only in the deed, when Jesus died on the cross for sinners. If you have not received God's grace in Jesus Christ, the wrath of God is upon you. Any babbles of love or liturgy of priests cannot change it.

### **Grace comes through faith**

The abandoned Christianity has pretended to people that God loves them though they live without Jesus. In this way it is prevented to experience the real mercy. God's grace gives you as a gift, what you don't earn. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no-one can boast."* Eph.2:8-9

I have not any own earning that can save me. If I would try to pay my bad deeds by doing good deeds, I would compete with the atonement work of Jesus and so trying to get the salvation from myself. If I would try to get the salvation by punishing myself for my bad deeds, I would prove my disbelief against the power of Jesus' sacrifice. If I would try to enter into the grace of God by taking a baptism or partaking of the Communion, I would try to get the salvation through works and not through faith.

### **Good self-esteem by the grace of God**

Remaining in the grace of God means remaining as the unearned and only turning to the power of the atonement work of Jesus. However the grace of God doesn't leave us without works. *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effects. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."* 1Cor.15:10 Remaining in the grace

of God opens my life to the effects of God's Spirit. I can experience that *"I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."* Gal.2:20

I cannot do any works for my salvation, but after the moment, when I got it through the faith of Jesus, all what I will do, I do with Him.

*"As God's fellow-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain."* 2Cor.6:1

The Bible version used in references is NIV

## **You can experience God's love**

**God loves the righteous more than the sinners. His love that you can experience as a sinner is only a shadow of the love you will experience after becoming His friend.**

### **God is good to everybody**

*"He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."* Matth.5:45 However people don't feel that God loves them. Instead they accuse God of their unfair destiny. Many hearts are full of fierce bitterness towards the Almighty.

All may not admit that they are rebelling against Him, but actually hate against God is the basic attitude of the whole mankind. This hatred is put into practice in many ways.

Some express their hate by living just as if He would not exist. Some others express it by saying "He does not exist". Unconcern and denying His existence are evidences of passive hate. They who give a creature their worship, although it belongs to God only, are active in their hostility towards God. The most extreme form of hating God is allying together with evil spirits fighting against God.

The loving relationship between God and man has been broken, because man has wronged against God and tries to blame his sin on God. How is God reacting to accusations of man? He doesn't quarrel with us. He is quiet and lets our own heart speak against us. He is sad because of a sinner. The consequences that wrongdoers must meet, hurt God's heart. The wages of sin is death, eternal separation from the good God.

### **God's love for a sinner**

God has demonstrated His love for a sinner in this: Christ died for him/her. He laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. Our punishment was upon Jesus so that we would get life. God's wrath stroke His Only Son on Golgotha so that we could be saved from His wrath.

People living in sin are enemies of God, but He loved His enemies by preparing the way to eternal happiness for them. Where is the

heart who sees this precious love? What are the preconditions for experiencing God's love?

The first precondition is that man admits that God is just and innocent and that he himself or she herself is unjust and guilty. It is important to humble oneself in just those things of which a sinner has accused God for a hard destiny and has said: Why has God allowed this to happen to me? Jesus and God's Spirit help us to humble ourselves by testifying to the truth. Who listens to the truth gets power to humble oneself!

Jesus says: *"For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens me."* John 18:37 If a sinner humbles oneself to confess that God is innocent in everything, he also understands that Jesus is the innocent Son of God.

If man doesn't accept the truth of his/her sinful heart he can never experience God's love. Also he/she is unable to see God in Jesus. The sinlessness of the Son of God is the light of the world. It is the true light that gives light to every man.

The second precondition is that man admits that also the punishment of his/her sins was once upon Jesus on Golgotha. Looking in faith at the crucified Son of God brings reconciliation between God and man. We can experience God's love when we clearly understand the meaning of the work Jesus did on the cross! Through this deed it is easy to own the forgiveness of one's sins. The Saviour feels very near and dear.

It is very lovely to experience that God has forgiven me as a sinner. Unfortunately many stop here. They put up shelters under the cross of Jesus and say that it is good for us to be here. God wants to give more. He wants to justify a godless one. He makes a sinner into a righteous one, who experiences the same love that Jesus experienced from His Father.

Washing away our sins is not the whole salvation. *"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."* Titus 3:5 Both washing and renewal of the heart are included in a rebirth. When a heart is washed a sinner experiences God's love for the

sinner. When a washed person gets a new heart from the Holy Spirit he starts to experience God's love for the righteous ones.

### **God's love for the righteous**

God has expressed His love for a righteous one by making a home in his heart. *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."* John 14:21,23

Is it not better if God makes us temples for Himself than if we make Him a temple for us under the cross? Do you think that all who believe in Jesus, have experienced how He has "shown Himself" to them? Many have received Jesus as the atoning sacrifice of their sins, but not as their Lord and God. They have experienced cleansing but not got a new heart.

Really, it is possible to be cleansed of all sins, but remain without a new creation. Paul stresses the importance of getting a new heart by saying: *"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation."* Gal.6.15

Cleanness without a new creation leads to losing the faith. *"If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning."*

<sup>2</sup>Peter 2:20 Jesus says the same when He speaks about an evil spirit who comes out of a man and later wants to return to the house he left. *"When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."* Matthew 12:45

It is dangerous to be saved partly. Jesus and His Father should move in the cleansed heart. If not then backsliding is on the way. Peter says about this that *"it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them."* <sup>2</sup>Peter 2:21

Jesus said: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them." Peter said: "They turn their backs on the sacred command." Did Jesus give a command when He cleansed us? Yes. Others obey it, others don't. Notice, the command can be obeyed only by the power of the gospel. Therefore it doesn't give us any credit. Love experienced through the gospel, gives the power to carry out this command. Obeying this command lets us experience God's love towards the righteous. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.

So how can we experience the love that those living in their sins never can experience? By taking our stand on the gospel. The first precondition is that the one who got forgiveness also forgives others. *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* John 13:34 If you don't forgive, you have not taken your stand on the gospel.

The second precondition is that the cleansed one publicly confesses that Jesus is his/her Lord and God. *"And this is His command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us."* 1John 3:23 If you are ashamed of Jesus, you have not taken your stand on the gospel.

From where comes the power to obey this "sacred command"? How could anybody believe in the name of Jesus, if he doesn't see the greatness of that name! If you after your experience of cleansing give yourself totally to Jesus, you will notice that your heart will be changed so that you fulfil the preconditions. Instead if you decide to live for yourself, your salvation remains half-finished and finally even what you have will be taken from you.

### **Your response to God**

If you believed in the gospel, you were cleansed. Is receiving His grace your only response to God?

We cannot endlessly stand on the gospel, if we don't give God the whole response that belongs to the gospel. You thank God for His grace in Jesus, but is Jesus the Lord of your life? God is waiting for your reaction to His deed, God the Father exalting Jesus to the highest place, on His Throne, and giving Him all authority.

Think about this, God the Father trusted Jesus so much! Why would not you do the same and give Jesus all authority in your life?

The power to stay on the gospel comes from Jesus who has all authority in our life. If we let Jesus make home with us, He will affect all good in us.

When reading this writing did you experience that I am pressing Jesus to you? If that was your experience, you misunderstood me. I cannot give Jesus to you. Accepting my speech doesn't guarantee that you get God's grace. God Himself decides to whom He gives mercy and with whom He moves in. So pray God. He will answer you.

The Bible version used in references is NIV

## **Love from the Judge**

**Many know the Christian gospel as a sweet message about God's love. However it is the message about the cross of Christ that also includes bitterness of God's judgement. I hope you could endure a little bit of word of judgement so that you could experience love forever.**

### **Your heart is a judge**

Everybody feels the need to judge injustice. Especially we keenly condemn wrongdoings of the others. God has put a sense of justice into our heart. And that is not sufficient for us, for our heart also demands a punishment on wrongdoers. Especially lawlessness of the others is on the top of our punishment list.

Some people give the expression that they are so tolerant that they judge nobody. However we can find out that an outwardly gentle exterior hides the same nature as the others have. After all we cannot escape the judgement of our hearts. Therefore it is better for us to seek the right judgement on ourselves and on the others than try to repress condemning matters from our minds.

How often does it happen that our heart litigates against someone! If we want to be very loving, we try to interrupt the trial and we convince ourselves that we have forgiven. However we can notice that our heart starts the trial again. The evidence is taken out again and a suitable punishment is sought for the guilty one.

The feelings of our heart are very partial! When someone wrongs us, we become angry against the wrongdoer and demand that the injustice is compensated for us. If we ourselves wrong, we don't become angry against ourselves and we don't demand compensation for our victim. However I should become angry in the same way with my own sin than with others'!

### **Self-condemnation**

Many try to silence the voice of their conscience by judging other people guilty of the same thing that they have a bad conscience. In this way they will judge themselves when they judge the others. For some time they are able to silence their conscience by judging the

others, but one day there comes a moment when it doesn't help any more.

One day they are cut to their heart when they realize that they themselves have done just the same injustice for what they have cursed the others. Then they can make a choice. On that day their heart demands them to punish themselves with the same punishment they have sentenced the others. In this distress they seek release from the judgement of their own mouth.

If only these people then would stop being their own judge and would give themselves to be judged by God. The punishment they sentenced themselves, was one day on Jesus when He died on Golgotha so that they could be released from it.

Unfortunately only few people turn to God when they are in distress. Then most people decide to have mercy on themselves and forgive themselves and at the same time them whom they have been judging. This may sound good but it is not. Many even consider this experience the discovery of love, although they stepped to the broad road that leads to destruction.

### **Self-forgiving**

Many have learned not to judge themselves and the others for the wickedness they feel to be too difficult to overcome. They have learned to forgive themselves and they are able to do the same for others who have wronged them.

Their strength to forgive others comes from their self-forgiving. From where have they got their strength to forgive themselves? They have invented good means of defences for their deeds. They have accepted their bad tendencies as their natural qualities. They are humanists and they understand the weaknesses of people, their own and the others'. They are so well freed from all judgement that they are smiling at their own wickedness. These smiling devils are proclaiming their message of "love" and tolerance all over the world.

Many say that God has forgiven them, although actually they themselves have forgiven themselves. Because they have made their self into a god for themselves, they consider self-forgiving their

divine quality. They are so quick to forgive themselves that God doesn't even get any possibility to forgive them.

A self-forgiver has fallen into a slippery road. Little by little wickedness changes harmless in his mind. He forgives himself more and more, until he finally is able to do what so ever. Only forgiveness coming from God is able to cleanse a heart of sins and to lead to a good road. The cleanness given by the blood of Jesus causes love for goodness. In a pure mind wickedness changes little by little more and more evil.

Do not be satisfied with your own forgiveness or with the mercy from other people, but seek the forgiveness of God. A heart with a bad conscience cannot adjudge impartially. A requirement of justice that has been repressed from consciousness is an insidious factor and gnaws at heart, because the trial has always been cancelled. It would be better to finish the trial before a qualified judge. In that way the case would be removed from your life.

### **The only competent judge**

Your heart is not a capable judge nor is mine. There is only one competent Judge. Do you agree to a trial against yourself? When God is the judge it is safe. It is far more dangerous for you to be your own judge.

God says as follows: *"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."* Isaiah 1:18 God is the judge of all His creations.

Many think that listeners experience the grace of God and His forgiveness, when a skilful singer presents a sweet love song about God. They try to open by singing the hearts of people to receive the message of God's love. However God advises us to arrange a trial and "let us reason together".

Have you ever heard that love was found in a court room? The door of the court opened and a happy man run out. *"Then he comes to men and says, 'I have sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light'."* Job 33:27-28

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:16

When God judges you guilty, you will perish in the fire of His anger. God loved you so much that He prepared for you the way out from His own wrath.

Maybe hearing this gospel doesn't touch your heart, because you have already forgiven yourself. Therefore you don't know to fear the judgement of God.

Maybe this gospel touched you only partly. You heard only the word: God loves you. All words that told about the judgement of God that you deserve, you let go past. You repressed them out of your mind as fluently as you used to do with all the earlier judging thoughts.

Do not deceive yourself with a half-truth! You have to meet God as the Judge so that you could experience Him as your loving Father.

### **Mercy experienced**

Your heart is partial and therefore it is an incapable judge. Instead, God is unbribable, *"who judges each man's work impartially."* <sup>1</sup>

Peter 1:17 To be able to experience cleansing from your sins you have to confess your sins to God. Of course it is easier to confess one's deeds to oneself, but it is harder to do it before the Judge.

The consciousness of guilt, influenced by God, is not only an indefinite feeling of inferiority, but it is a feeling of deep shame concerning what we have thought, said and done. Due to the clear evidence we feel we deserve the judgement of God. The atmosphere is like from a trial when the accused has been exposed completely.

In this trial there is the Witness in the place of a prosecutor. The Spirit of God proves a person's guilt. He proves God's righteousness to us. He convicts us of our iniquity and of the punishment we deserve. The purity of Jesus makes us ashamed of our sins, but His sacrifice purifies us as pure as He Himself is.

One who sweats in fear of the judgement is allowed to hear that there is One who once suffered the judgement instead of him/her.

Jesus comes and says to the one who regrets sins: "Take heart, your sins are forgiven."

So the gospel gives the faith that purifies the heart which God presents with His Holy Spirit to witness that He accepts the person. *"God, who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. ... for He purified their hearts by faith."* Acts 15:8-9 *"And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us."* 1John 3:24

When the Bible speaks that we are saved "by grace through faith", it speaks about the experienced grace and not about a doctrine of grace. *"God made us alive with Christ - it is by grace you have been saved."* Eph.2:5,8 So to be saved by grace means to become alive, and not only to trust the doctrine telling I need to do nothing to be saved.

If you have not experienced grace, there is something wrong with your hearing. *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."* Rom.10:17 Was it so that you didn't hear the message of Christ, but of men? Paul had a clear vision of how to proclaim the gospel so that hearing it could give the faith which also leads to experiencing grace. *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."* 1Cor.2:4-5

### **Nullified cross of Christ**

Paul, the apostle says: *"Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel - not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."* 1Cor.1:17 Later he says the reason why he didn't want people to believe through wisdom. *"So that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."* The faith that rests on God's power is got from the cross of Jesus. *"For the message of the cross is the power of God to us who are being saved."* 1Cor.1:18

The cross of Christ was emptied of its power in your life, if you didn't hear the message of God's judgement. If you were persuaded with beautiful words into becoming a believer, your faith rests on men's wisdom, and not on God's power. The cross is the place of

judgement. When Jesus died on the cross, it was the day of God's wrath. The judgement with great anger struck against Jesus because of our sins. *"The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him."*

Isaiah 53:5

Thus we understand that it is necessary to speak about God's judgement (=cross) to people, so that hearing could give the faith through which God's grace can be experienced. Because it is displeasing for us to speak about the judgement of God, we try to replace it with human wisdom.

Because the cross is the place of judgement, the message about God's judgement is God's power to us who believe. Of course this is "foolishness to those who are perishing". They cannot understand how it is possible to make people love God by speaking about God's wrath! These conceited people surge their scorn for this kind of message. Religious people absolutely disapprove of that kind of rude words.

### **God's judgement in Jesus gives love**

So what did happen on the cross? God's judgement against sin is this: "The wages of sin is death." The judgement for a sinner is this: "You will surely die." This judgement of God met Jesus on the cross due to our sins. Then He experienced the real essence of death, when the Father forsook Him for a while. He cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Surely dying means that God forsakes and drives away from His presence.

Could there be any more terrible experience than to hear God say: *"You cursed one, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."* Matth.26:41 If a bad and evil man drives me away from his presence, I don't feel unhappy. On the contrary I feel relieved when I get rid of him. But that is terrible when God, who is full of goodness and love and purity, forsakes me.

Woe how much that experience on the cross hurt Jesus! Sufferings in the body were light pains compared to that forsaking. He experienced it because of us. Do you accept that you deserve to be forsaken by God? If you don't, you resist the gospel of God.

God has not yet forsaken you, although you have forsaken Him. Faithfully He is waiting for you to repent and you will take the responsibility for your sins. Answer to Jesus when He cries out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Say to Him on behalf of God: "Jesus, God forsook you because of my sins!"

The Bible version used in references is NIV

## **Eternal punishment**

**If an evil man would assure me of that I am in danger to be thrown to hell, I hardly would believe him. When perfectly good Jesus Christ warns me against eternal punishment, I want to take it seriously. If you feel that a warning scares you, it is the same as you would think that the warner lies. This warning of your eternal destiny is so important a thing that consider it carefully before you turn your back to Jesus.**

### **Eternal punishment or life**

You stand in a high place and see the lake of fire. You look at the flames and see there the devil and his angels. They cry out with pain and wriggle with distress. In your horror you turn your head away from flames and you see by your side an angel of God. He grasps you and throws you into the eternal fire.

Or.

You stand before the throne of God and you see Him face to face. You look at His glory and are delighted at His wonderful being. You are happy and look around you and see angels of God and the great multitude of God's people. Together with them you start to praise God. You feel that it's not until now that you live - and forever.

### **On the way to hell or heaven**

Jesus says: *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* Matth.7:13-14 Jesus speaks about the two gates. It is difficult to enter through the one and through the other you go easily, almost unnoticed together with other people.

When you become Jesus' own, you enter through that small gate. When you reject the call of Jesus, you enter through that wide gate. When you are a follower of Jesus you are on the road to heaven. If you are not with Jesus, you are against Him. The road of God's opponents is broad and it leads to the place of punishment that is prepared for enemies of God.

*"Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Math.25:41* Jesus has died for all people and has so prepared for everybody access to heaven. When He died on the cross He also destroyed the kingdom of devil. The head of the serpent was crushed and the devil and his angels were condemned.

Jesus says very clearly in Math.25:31-46, how all people will be judged on the grounds whether they have loved Jesus or not. They who will be saved have put their love to Jesus into practice. Whatever they have done, they have done it as for God, not for men. They who will be judged to eternal punishment are accused only of what good they have not done in their practical life - for Jesus. They who have not heard anything about Jesus will be also judged, because they have not worshipped God. They know God through His deeds in nature, but *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him,..." Rom.1:21*

### **Hell is the place of God's wrath?**

The Bible pronounces unambiguously that the salvation is prepared for everybody. However someone believes that he is predestinated to the destruction. He feels so because he experiences in his soul anger of God against his sins. In these experiences he can suppose that he has already been condemned to hell, because he doesn't want to humble himself to confess that God's judgement is right. Here on the earth it is possible for you to be moved from God's wrath under His grace. An anguished person needs to understand, why Jesus cried out on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He tasted on the cross that feeling man feels in hell.

Jesus suffered God's wrath for you so that you could experience God's love and acceptance. Therefore only Jesus can condemn to hell. He is worthy to do it. *"The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power..."*

2Thess.1:7-9

## **What kind of place is hell?**

The destruction is the hell of the abandoned ones. When you now feel God's anger it doesn't mean that He would wish you to hell or that He already would have decided to send you to it. On the contrary, it is His love when He rebukes you. When you are able to sin without the feelings of God's anger, you have become hardened and are near the experience that you will be deserted forever.

Everybody who sins experiences in his soul some degree of God's anger and so he gets to feel a little bit about what it is like in hell. The everlasting destruction is the place of agony. Jesus describes its atmosphere using the image of our earthly feelings: *"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth."* Luk.13:28 The feelings of oppression in hell are similar to the feelings of a person who wants to commit suicide. Among earthly oppressions an unhappy one decides to commit suicide to get a relief to his pain. Judas Iscariot also thought in this way after he has betrayed Jesus and surely he did not comprehend that he fell from temporal distress to eternal torment.

Jesus says about Judas that he is *"the son of perdition."* NKJV/ John.17:12 He himself chose his way when he hardened his heart. In the last supper Jesus said, so that everybody heard, that Judas was going to betray Him. How good an opportunity to humble himself before the judgement of God! But even then he did not confess that God's judgement is right, but he held on to his pride. When God's judgement hit to his conscience after the betrayal he killed himself. His repentance was only the agony of failure that the proud heart feels, not the appeal to God to get His mercy. The son of destruction went to his own place. Hell is their place, who rather condemn themselves than surrender to God.

If you have sometimes been so desperate that you have brooded on suicide in your mind, you know a little about the feelings in hell. That agony only continues forever, for Jesus, who died for you, does not lie, when He says: *"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."* Matth.25:46

### **Is your place in heaven empty?**

Although Jesus is the atoning sacrifice of the whole world, the whole world has not the reconciliation with Him. Your place in heaven will be empty, if you don't allow to reconcile yourself to God. *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."* 2Cor.5:20

I understand that it is difficult for you to accept the judgement of God against you, but it is possible for you, if you look at Jesus. All we deserve the fire of hell. If you object to this, it is the reason why you are not interested in Jesus and you are not able to enter through the small gate.

Really, Jesus Christ did not die on the cross for you because of any less reason than to be able to save you from eternal punishment. You are mindless if you do not humble yourself to confess before God that also you need that sacrifice of Jesus. *"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."* Rev.20:15 Is your name in the book of life?

The Bible version used in references is NIV

## **In flames of love**

**An ardent desire means love but love - to what? God's love to man is a wonderful thing. Why do you escape the flames of His love? Surely it is because you are burning with love to something which God ardently hates.**

### **A brier in fire**

God appeared to Moses in flames of fire from within a brier bush. However the brier didn't burn up. In this situation God revealed His name to Moses: *"I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* Ex.3:14

A thorn bush describes our sinful nature. *"The best of them is like a brier, the most upright worse than a thorn hedge."* Mic.7:4 Why didn't the fire of God's holiness burn up a sinner? God became man in Jesus and thus He shared our thorny nature. He has been tempted in every way, just as we are, but He never sinned. Thanks to Him also we can share the fire of God without it burning us up.

Jesus came to baptize us with fire. *"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"* Lu.12:49 The holy fire was once kindled on Golgotha. The ardour of God's love is hot as blazing fire. It is as strong as the fire of hell.

Jesus experienced the ardour of God's wrath on the cross because of our sins, but in His resurrection He experienced the ardour of God's love. This fire of love, that He got, He gives His own, when He baptizes them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. *"They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them."* Ac.2:3

In this way a prophecy that God had earlier given was fulfilled in Jesus: *"The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers."* Isa.10:17 The fire of God's holiness burnt our sinful nature in a single day in the body of Jesus when He was on the cross. On that day a crown of thorns was put on the head of Jesus to show us that now this prophecy came true.

The sinful nature rules a godless one like a king. The godless don't confess their king to be thorny, but the fire was kindled under their honour on Golgotha and they cannot put it out. As surely as Jesus has been raised from the dead a new human being has risen from the ash of this fire.

### **Fire of love**

When Jesus speaks about the fire He brought, He speaks about the spreading of love. God's love for us appeared on Golgotha. Also our love to God was kindled there. Who can spread the fire of God's love? Jesus' own got from heaven a baptism in fire on the day of Pentecost so that they could preach the Gospel of God. *"He makes His angels winds, His servants flames of fire."* <sup>Heb.1:7</sup> The fire of Golgotha has kindled the hearts of Jesus' own and made us flames of God's fire.

This Bible passage is often referred to: *"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."* <sup>1Jo.4:8</sup> We should also read the following verses in order to know what kind of love God is. *"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* <sup>1Jo.4:9-10</sup> A bare phrase "God is love" tells very little. It is a defective sentence, like a lamp without light or a hearth without fire.

A bare word "love" only tells that something is important to somebody. What is dear gives love its actual content.

Also the love of money is love, although it is the root of all evil. Even the love to violence is love and also the love of one's country is love. The love to power can be considered love. The love to knowledge and to wisdom is love that many honour. The love of work is very valued love. The love to one's own body is love. The most famous is the love of sexual pleasure. However these kinds of loves have nothing to do with the love which is said about "God is love".

The love to a friend is a good thing and the love for a spouse and children is lovely, but God's love for man is much more. Therefore

also our love to God is more than our love for our friends and relatives.

Lusting after evil things is love to evilness. Be frightened of this love! God's love is love to goodness and He wants our best so eagerly that He sacrificed His only Son so that we could get a part with Him. Remember that this phrase, "God is love", means "that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

Do you feel in your spirit the fire of God's love that has come into you from the message of Golgotha? God's love burns our heart, *"because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again."* 2Co.5:14-15

### **Love has cooled down**

Jesus predicted that the fire of love of many believers will grow cold at the time of the end: *"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold."* Mt.24:12 If the fire of lawlessness takes power in us, it puts out God's fire from us. Carriers of the fire of lawlessness have run from one church to another and set many on fire with love that is not from God.

Love to freedom blazes not only in the torch of the Statue of Liberty in New York. Lawlessness pretends to be love to freedom, although it actually is love to evilness. Many have caught fire from such a message of liberty which says that they need not obey the moral commandments of God. This fire is blazing among Christianity announcing that Jesus removed the law and gave us the liberty to do what we want. Their flames flicker cheerily, when they assure that God's grace set them free from the slavery of the law.

Due to them the love to Jesus has died down in many hearts. Jesus says to those who belong to Him: *"If you love me, you will obey what I command."* Joh.14:15 If you resorted to violence, it proves that you don't love Jesus. You know, He commanded you to love your enemies and not to resist an evil person. If you, who are divorced one, remarried or if you married a divorced one, it proves that you don't love Jesus. You know, He says that everybody who marries a divorced one commits adultery. If you take pains to gain money as

much as possible, it proves that you don't love Jesus. You know, He says no-one can serve two masters.

Notice! Though you didn't love Him, He however loved you and died for you. This word is an invitation to you to humble yourself before Him in order to get a share of His godly nature. Do not take God's grace only as an assurance of forgiveness anymore.

The forgiveness of sins is only one part of the Gospel. The other part concerns the share of the godly nature. God's grace is not against the commandments of God, but it makes us new creations, who love the commands of God. The new man doesn't think that life according to the will of God would be burdensome. *"This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome."* 1Jo.5:3 A Jesus-man rejoices in the law of God, *"for in my inner being I delight in God's law."* Ro.7:22

### **Love to the Bible**

Hearts have also caught fire from another deceiving love than the fire of liberty. Many have love to the holy book, because they have been kindled from the fire of the law.

The law of God has always excited the minds of people either for it or against it. Either in public or in secret everybody is interested in what God has spoken. This interest comes from man's desire to get a share of the power of God.

Repeating the words which God has uttered is seen as a possibility to rule one's own life and the life of others. The Bible is the most famous spell book of the world. Its words are recited in the hope that they could magically produce miracles, happiness and success. It is true that these kinds of forces exist, but they are miserable principles compared to the power of the Holy Spirit which for the sake of Jesus can settle down in our heart.

In order to a devotee of the white magic to believe that the words of the Bible would have any effect he must believe in the godlike nature of his holy book. Therefore they worship the texts of the Bible as the Word of God that is always perfectly right. However the Bible, which they worship, says only about Jesus that He is the Word with the capital initial letter. Their superstition is revealed

when they believe that a literally referred Bible passage has more effect than expressed with one's own words.

Worshipping a letter petrifies a heart. When they have replaced Jesus with the Bible, they have stepped to the road of pretending. They have a form of godliness, because they are so biblical, but they deny its power, because their hearts don't live for Jesus.

Because they think to possess eternal life by their biblical faith, they do not bear that their life would be in conflict with the Holy Book. For this reason they eagerly interpret the Scriptures suitable for themselves. They don't delight in God's law, but they delight in interpreting its meaning as they like it. In this way their love to the law is revealed to be pretending. Violence to the law is lawlessness.

These zealots of the Holy Book are fighting against those who have caught the fire of liberty. Will the fire of the law beat the fire of liberty or will the fire of liberty swallow the fire of the law? Many will be surprised when these two fires will be united into one antichristian fire. However neither the fire of the law nor the fire of the lawlessness can swallow those who are burning with the sacrificial fire of Golgotha. Therefore the fire of God is your safeguard against all deceptions.

### **Love for people**

We can be merciful to many people by telling them about God's love in Jesus, but to some people we can show mercy only by avoiding them. *"Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear - hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."* Jude 22-23 It is dangerous to try to save a person who is in fire. It might happen that also the rescuer catches from the same fire. If only people's love to their idols died down, then they would be more receptive to the fire of God.

The fire of God's love is calling you out from the fire of lawlessness. Obey this call, although you would be like a brand snatched from the fire. One day the fire of God's wrath will appear and it will destroy the fire of lawlessness. Therefore the salvation from the fire of lawlessness means salvation from the wrath of God.

It is not easy to love a man. It is easy to love a baby, but it is easier to hate than to love an adult trained in evil. We will all be changed, but in what direction. Someone can today be lovable but tomorrow hateful or today hateful but tomorrow lovable. Because of our evil thoughts and deeds we are hateful, but God saw that we can be changed lovable.

Because I don't love my own wickedness, I don't approve of the wickedness of others. They consider me loveless, because I don't love what they love. Jesus said that the fire He brought causes people to divide against each other. If we hold different things dearest to us, we cannot have fellowship with one another. A Jesus' own can love a person who deserves to be hated, because he is burning with the fire of the Gospel. God loved His enemies and therefore we do the same.

Do the enemies of God understand the love of God towards themselves? Often they misunderstand it. They take God's mercy as a permission to sin without a judgment. This misunderstanding is impossible, if the Gospel comes in the fire of God's holiness. To love people in truth is possible only in the fire of God.

### **Tending the fire**

It is a valuable thing, if somebody even a little loves God because of Jesus. Even a little fire is good, if it is genuine fire of God. If someone's love for God has grown great, one is burning with a greater flame. Such a flame doesn't die down as easily as his flame who loves a little. In everybody's life there is the first and the last love and many objects of love between them. Take care that your love to Jesus is always the first one and your other objects of love are pure from idols.

The sacrificial fire of idols can put out God's fire from us. Many are accustomed to sacrificing to idols or they are driven into it with a current. That already weakens their love to God, but an active expression of love to an idol certainly smothers the fire of God. Therefore stay away from all idols, so that the holy fire of God would always burn in the lamp of your heart.

If the fire of God has died in you, the sacrificial altar of Golgotha is able to put it on fire again. Look at the Lamb of God, who was slain

to atone Your sins. He has also been burnt completely up in the fire of God's wrath and raised from the dead in the heat of God's love.

The Bible version used in references is NIV







**What is true love? If you could love your neighbour with God's love, you would be living true life. However you cannot do it until you first have received His love.**

**The grace of God is different from a mercy of man. Goodness, charity and mercy are often bidden together. They all mean to many people the same, something soft and beautiful. So they don't notice the real meaning of mercy. Much is included in the grace of God, but there is only one gate into sharing His grace.**

**God loves the righteous more than the sinners. His love that you can experience as a sinner is only a shadow of the love you will experience after becoming His friend.**

**Many know the Christian gospel as a sweet message about God's love. However it is the message about the cross of Christ that also includes bitterness of God's judgement. I hope you could endure a little bit of word of judgement so that you could experience love forever.**

**If an evil man would assure me of that I am in danger to be thrown to hell, I hardly would believe him. When perfectly good Jesus Christ warns me against eternal punishment, I want to take it seriously. If you feel that a warning scares you, it is the same as you would think that the warner lies. This warning of your eternal destiny is so important a thing that consider it carefully before you turn your back to Jesus.**

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