

# Whom God loves MOST

John 17:23



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*April 2019*

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**Summary:** Passover season is the time that shows us more than any time how much God loves us. But could you conceive of a love God the Father has for you, a love so deep that it would *equal* the love he has for his perfect son Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah)? Is that even possible or thinkable?

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Many of you are in the Passover season this year. I realize some of you kept the Passover and Days of unleavened bread a month ago, but others are keeping it now – a month later. My focus is not on the calendar date, but the timeless message of “WHOM does God love the MOST?”

And let me ask some questions:

- **Who does God the Father love the most?** Think now. Would you say that’s gotta be his Son, Yeshua?
- **Is it at all possible that God Almighty, our Father, could love YOU, or ME, AS MUCH as he loves His perfect son, the Word of God? Is *that* possible?**
- **If you believe God does love you, then I ask you this: Does God the Father love us LESS than he loves perfect, holy Yeshua?**

**What’s your answer? Does God love us the same as Yeshua, more than Yeshua, or less than Yeshua?**

What do you think? And do you have scriptures to back up whatever answer you came up with?

**WHY should you and I spend time on this topic?** The reason we need this topic is so we can be ASSURED of the correct answer of God’s love for you and me, so in our low times of life we can come to our Abba in heaven knowing that in spite of any of our weak points, even in our sins, or in our

physical and mental pain, persecution, and feelings of abandonment at times - that God's love for us is deeper than we can even imagine.

You might also wish to listen to my upcoming new sermon – “IN times of weakness, we're made Strong” to help in time of severe trials.

So back to this topic. Could **you ever imagine hearing your heavenly Father saying, “Here is (put in your name), my BELOVED daughter/son, in whom I am well pleased”?**

OK, let me make it easier; *let's take out the last bit about him being well pleased with you and me.* Many of you struggle with the concept of knowing you can be well pleasing to our God and Father. Can you, with that taken out, still imagine God the Father saying he LOVES you? And saying that to YOU, in your hearing?

We know God often spoke to people through other people. So let me in this message, hopefully show you from God himself through his word, a few verses about the depth of God's love. I've spoken on these verses before, but unless we hear them again and again, we can tend to forget.

**So welcome everyone to Light on the Rock, where we focus on our relationships** with one another and with our heavenly father and Messiah, whom we hope to marry someday. The 2 great commands – to love God and to love one another, in the same way as Yeshua loves us.

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Remember also we have blogs that are loaded with helpful short topics. Be sure to check out the blogs. And thank you for coming to the site – and so let's move on.

**Who are the ones that scripture says God really loves?**

**Back to our topic today: We know at Jesus' baptism and on the mount of transfiguration,** there were words spoken from heaven indicating God's great love for his son, Yeshua (Jesus) of Nazareth.

**“This is my BELOVED Son, in whom I am well pleased”. Matthew 3:16-17; 17:5**

So we know God loved Jesus. No one has any issue with that. Would God the Father say that about you and me?

But we also hear the Beloved Son himself telling us that his father -- God -- “**So loved the WORLD**, that he gave his one and only Son” for all of us, so that all who believe in him would never perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16. Also read 1 John 4:9-11 how God so loved us by sending his Son for us.

So now from the words of God himself, we're assured he loves Yeshua and loves the people of the world as well, making them a way to be forgiven and reconciled.

But how about you and me? Could God the Father love us deeply also, even in our times of failing, of stumbling into sin, of feeling abandoned and depressed?

I'm sure you know that anyone with God's holy spirit is considered “holy” -- “hagios” in Greek, and translated as “saints”. In the first or 2<sup>nd</sup> verses of most of the epistles, Paul addresses his letters “to the saints in” Ephesus, Corinth, and so on. And by the way, in Romans 1:7, where he says to the Romans -- “those called *to be* saints” -- the words “to be” are not in the original. We are “hagios” -- holy ones -- right now. WHY? Because a holy part of GOD is in us -- His Spirit, a piece of himself, if you will, is inside you and me. And where God is, is holiness.

(IN audio I discuss how in Europe especially only the best and miracle-working Christians were ever allowed to be called “saints” -- and how unbiblical that is.)

**Now we holy ones, the saints of God, are often called “Beloved” as well.**

Romans 1:7 “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints...”

2Thess 2:13 “....brethren beloved by the Lord....”

Romans 8:39 -- nothing, in fact, can separate us from the love of God

### **HOW we show our Love for God**

We prove our love for God by keeping his word (1 John 2:5), his commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3) and demonstrating our love for people in need (1 John 3:17), among other points that could be made.

### **Does God still love us when we sin?**

There is a passage in **John 15:10-11** that says we stay or abide in God's love when we keep his commandments. V 12 Yeshua says his command is to love one another as he has loved us. I just bring this up because some teach that every single time we sin, or break one of God's commands, we lose – or step out of -- his love. That's ridiculous.

Even as a mere human, I did not quit loving any of my children when I found them disobeying me. There may be correction and chastening required, but my love remained unshakable.

God may chasten us, but he does so as a loving Father. Read **Hebrews 12:5-11 some time**. God chastens us, it says, out of his love to bring forth the fruit of righteousness and holiness at the end. So even in the severe chastening God can deal out, it's done for our good and out of his love. But each time we're not perfect – no, God does not quit loving us.

In Luke 15, the prodigal son's father did not stop loving his son even while he was living a life of terrible sin. The Prodigal's father was a picture of God the father. If we persist in a life of disobedience, then of course we will end up in the 2<sup>nd</sup> death – but that again, is out of his love to keep us from continuing to hurt ourselves, others and the family of God.

[Extra: make no mistake; those who are more obedient to God, more of the time, will have more rewards. There's no doubt in my mind about that. But the love for each one remains steady. ]

Look at Romans 8. It speaks of God loving us even while we were still sinners, and how God through Christ died for the ungodly, for the unrighteous. SO if that's the case, certainly when we stumble, we have the assurance God still loves us, and certainly as and when we repent.

**Romans 5:5-11**

**“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For when we were still without strength, in due time *Christ died for the ungodly.* 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* 9 Much more then, having now been justified [declared righteous] *by His blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For *if when we were ENEMIES we were reconciled* to God through the death of His Son, *much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* 11**

And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

So it's clear, we're not as righteous as Christ was. Not even close. But we have learned in other recent sermons that God imputes, credits, or gives us God's very own perfect righteousness through Christ, if we believe in faith, as Romans 3-4-5 clearly teach us, and as I've spoken on recently. Remember **Philippians 3:9-11** – Paul did not want his own righteousness but the righteousness of God, through faith in Christ. And Paul calls it the GIFT of righteousness in Romans 5:17.

So God the Father now sees Christ when he sees you. For you died spiritually, and your “life is now hidden in Christ, in God” – Colossians 3:3. You crucified the old self, the old you no longer lives, and the life you now live is Christ, by faith in him as Paul says in Galatians 2:20.

OK, so I think most of you can accept that too, that the saints of God are also loved by God, yes even when and as we still stumble and fall short of the mark.

**So Christ is beloved, you're beloved, and even the world is beloved of God, who sees the end from the beginning.**

**But back to my question in the beginning: But are you loved as much and as deeply as he loves Yeshua his Son?** Who does God love most? I've often spoken on a verse we're about to read. It's an incredibly moving passage, spoken from the mouth of the Son of God himself.

**Are you ready? This is from John 17**, be turning there please, where Yeshua gives his priestly prayer for himself, for those present, and for all who would ever believe in him. Remember, though he was not a descendant of Aaron, Yeshua was in fact part of a higher priesthood than Aaron's – the Melchizedek priesthood, so this is part of his prayer:

**John 17:20-23**

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: [now here comes the point of this sermon]

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, **and have loved**

The “as” in this phrase means “In the same way as, as much as...”  
That’s almost unbelievable, isn’t it? We – as imperfect as we sometimes act and live at times, can be loved in the same way as Jesus Christ is loved?  
Really? Yes, really.

THE OTHER translations are consistent with this message. And when I read “loved them”, think – put your name in there – “and that you have loved Philip (your name) as you have loved Me, Yeshua.”

The CJB says, “and that you have loved them just as you have loved me.”  
NIV: “and have loved them even as you have loved me.”  
*New Living and New Century Bible: “and have loved them as much as you have loved me.”*  
**The Message: “... and loved them in the same way as you loved me.”**

This is such a heart-warming passage that I want each of you to memorize John 17:23, or at least remember the gist of it:  
“God loves ME every bit as much as He loves his Son Yeshua.”

Some of you struggle believing that. Some of you prefer to live in guilt and feeling like losers. That’s so sad. God loves you as much as he loved Jesus. Believe it. It’s right there, clear as day. I’ve been preaching this verse for many years, even in a sermon I gave in 2005 about the Passover.

### **HOW AND WHY God the Father would Love us as much as Christ**

HOW is it possible, as human as we are, for God to love us as much as he loved Christ?

- **God, as Father, must not play favorites, or have favoritism among his children (Romans 2:11 – there’s no partiality with God.) YOU are being brought into the family as a son or daughter of God and Christ is not ashamed of you, and neither is Father.** . All of you parents know that we must love all our children the same. Sometimes – some kids are more troublesome than others, they get themselves into trouble more often, but I’ve found that the ones who cause me or themselves the most trouble are the very ones I’m praying for the hardest, thinking about the most. Why? Because I love them all.

Wasn’t that the point of the story of the Prodigal Son and how much the Father was overjoyed to see this son, who was as good as a dead, come

back home – and what a CELEBRATION he threw for his sinful son who had come back. That's MY story. That's YOUR story. That's really ALL of our stories, except for a few who rather turn brethren against one another and spew evil reports on brothers and sisters who have repented and are now back in the arms of their loving father.

- **As I've covered in other recent sermons on receiving the Righteousness of God himself by faith through Christ, (I hope you've heard those new sermons) – you and I are covered by Christ's life now;** cleansed by his blood, covered by HIS righteousness for us. That gives no excuse to think we don't have to overcome, oh no. In fact that should propel us to want to overcome even more and to let the risen Yeshua of Nazareth's resurrection shine in us.

Our lives should be witnesses of the miraculous resurrection of the Son of God, because he lives, as proven by the dramatic life changes in our own lives.

Anyway, my point here is that the times you have fallen short of living the glory of God.... God is still there for you, loving you, covering you in Christ's life, especially when you come back to your senses like the Prodigal son did.

*And God loves you as much as, in the same way as, he loved and loves Yeshua.*

***God is not ashamed to be known as your God or brother***

You know how if one of your friends is suddenly in the news for attempted bank robbery or for defrauding seniors of their money – if asked, you may not wish to divulge or volunteer that he is a friend of yours, right? You're ashamed to be identified with someone so bad.

**But God doesn't do that.** He's not ashamed to be called your God. And Yeshua is not ashamed for you to be called his brother or sister, as long as we turn back to God, turn from our ways, seek his help and fight sin like we're truly in a war against sin.

**Hebrews 11:16**

“But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God**, for He has prepared a city for them”

Now the same about Jesus and how HE feels about us: ‘

**Hebrews 2:11**

“For both He who sanctifies (that’s God] and those who are being sanctified [that’s us] are all of one [that’s GOD again, as Jesus said in John 17:22-23], for **which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,**”

That’s why you should never listen to ministers and brethren *doing Satan’s work of spreading* dirt on brethren’s forgiven and cleansed past! Since we all know how much we each have been forgiven, we should never be part of being an “Accuser”, which is what “devil” means!

Now don’t misunderstand. I will give a sermon this year hopefully on walking WORTHY of our high calling. But the fact is, we still stumble and fail.

So Yeshua is not ashamed of you, and not ashamed to admit – yea even proclaim -- you are his sister or brother! Praise you, Yeshua. Praise you, Yehovah! But neither is God the Father ashamed of us.

So God loves you as much as – did you hear that – as much as – he loves Yeshua. So as you go through your ups and downs of the coming year, remember the wonderful love of God displayed by the Passover. He loves you as much as he loves Yeshua.

In Passover season especially, we wash one another’s feet. We don’t spread dirt on a brother or sister, no – we see them as washed by the Savior. If we don’t reconcile with our brother and sister, or if we don’t forgive them of anything they’ve done wrong, neither will we be forgiven. And don’t wait necessarily for him/her to repent, at least to your satisfaction. When Yeshua was on the cross saying, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” – were any of them repenting? NO, no one was probably. But he still offered his forgiveness.

Go forth, beloved Children of God, go forward now knowing Father loves you as much as he loves Yeshua.

Closing prayer.