

God's Steadfast Love¹

Humanly speaking there have been countless acts of love in the history of the world, e.g....

Taylor Morris and Danielle Kelly have been together since high school. In 2007, Morris enlisted as an explosive technician in the Navy. After years of training and the couple talking about their future plans, Morris was deployed to Afghanistan where he stepped on an improvised explosive device, losing both legs above the knee, his left arm, and right hand. But this tragic incident has done nothing to stifle the couple's relationship. The story of Morris and Kelly's love captured in photos (like...?) has crossed the globe and had more than 2.6 million views.²

Donald Featherstone is the artist most famous for inventing the plastic pink flamingo lawn ornament. However, people who know him and his wife Nancy well, think of them as an incredibly close couple. For the past 35 plus years, they've worn matching outfits everywhere they go. They have four wardrobes of twin outfits, organised by season and occasion. They don't like being apart. Donald proposed on the first date and they've been together almost all the time since. "If you want to do things by yourself, why get married? Why have separate hobbies? We never argue" Donald says. He learned long ago to say, "Yes, dear", but in fact it's because we have a strong foundation. "Being with him is never an effort" Nancy says³

What about 16-year-old Lui Shi Ching who carried his friend to school on a daily basis for eight years. His friend, Lu Shao, has a congenital disorder making it difficult for him to walk. This all started because Lu shao was stuck at school when his mum didn't come to pick him up. Lui Shi Ching, who was smaller than Lu Shao, decided to help and carried him home, which he did to and from school for 8 years. Lui Shi Ching didn't brag about it, his parents didn't even find out until four years after he first helped his friend⁴

The world is full of stories like these 3 and you'll know of many, and even have one yourself.

As great as such stories are, as much as they give us the warm fuzzies there is only one demonstration of love - that defines the absolute end of what love means and we find that in the Bible in 1 John 3:16 *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us"*.

¹ References this message was adapted from:
<https://www.bible.com/en/reading-plans/16785>
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/16785/day/4?segment=0>
<https://thelife.com/his-steadfast-love-endures-forever>

² https://www.oddee.com/item_98698.aspx

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/may/25/husband-and-wife-dressed-same-35-years>

⁴ https://www.oddee.com/item_98698.aspx

The other reference in the bible to love - and more well-known is of course John 3:16 (note the same numbers!) *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.*

The word "love" is found many times in the Bible. We can find it everywhere, described in so many different ways. But this evening I want to bring you just a few aspects of God's love: God's love is incomparable, it is steadfast, his love is irrevocable, it is a forgiving love, and lastly God's love means we worship him.

I know these are all true of God, I personally have experienced this. When I met Jesus in my early 20's it wasn't first without been absolutely desperate to find something more. My prayer for you is that you may know God, perhaps even for the 1st time, when you see he is real and his love for you is real. That through knowing him you may experience a love like you have never known before. And your life and the lives of those around you will be changed forever. And the reason that can happen is because when we truly experience the love of God we cannot remain the same.

The Love of God is Incomparable

God is love. Everything God does and everything God did is because of love. He is the purest form of love and the true measurement of love. Love was made by him, for him and through him, therefore love only exists because of God. So we only truly understand what love is, when we know God.

Ps 86:8-9 Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God.

God shows us his love for us in so many ways. He gave his son in sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. He makes everything to work together for our good. He created everything for us to enjoy. He provides our needs. God loves because his love is based on his character. There is no love or no one or no thing, certainly no other god, that gives us love like God, his love is incomparable!

The Love of God Is Steadfast

We live in a world where everything changes, where one day one thing is cool and the next day it is old-fashioned and ridiculous; baggy pants were cool, now its tight pants, and worn half-way off your butt! Years ago eating egg yolks were bad for your health now they're encouraged.

Think about what wasn't allowable on TV and now its plastered all over the place. Everything keeps changing, in some cases with blinding speed.

Let me tell you what hasn't, doesn't and won't change: God, and his love. His love is steadfast. It is firm. It is unwavering. It is forever. It is always faithful. It will not change no matter what happens with clothes, fashion, food and morality because God stays the same forever.

Deut. 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

It might be hard for us to fathom the reality of the Love of God being steadfast, forever, because nothing around us lasts forever anymore. But it does not weaken. It isn't temporary. It does not change with the state of the world. It does not go in or out of fashion. God does not get bored.

Rom. 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

His love is *steadfast, incomparable and...*

The Love Of God Is Irrevocable

The world is in the state it is because we, rather many, have rejected the love of God. We have told God that we do not want His love, nor are we interested in it⁵. We want to do things our own way, for our own pleasure, for our own gratitude. That is the reason for all the chaos in the world. Because of this, there is not a single thing we can do as human beings to make the world a peaceful or better place.

That will only happen through the love of God, in the people of God, shining the light of the love of God. Being salt and light in the world. This is love that is irrevocable. Irrevocable is a legal term. It is something that you cannot take back. It is beyond recall, changeless, final, permanent, and, unavoidable.

Lam. 3:22-23 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Rom. 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

Human to human love is full of all sorts of conditions; it is revocable. We take back things we give, say, and do. God is not like that.

⁵ Lennon *Imagine*...utopian view of the world

He is not like a human parent who says he loves us then doesn't. Now we always want to put things right with God, but he never withdraws his love or changes the way he is toward us, like a fellow human might. The love of God does not work that way. He is a perfect loving father whose *love for us is irrevocable*. And we must choose whether to enjoy the benefits and blessings of this for the rest of our lives, or not.

The Love Of God Offer Forgiveness

I love this *painting* by Rembrandt. It's called "The Return of the Prodigal Son" and believed to be one of Rembrandt's final pieces. The painting depicts graphically the forgiveness of a father towards his son, based of course on the parable in Luke 15. If you look at the painting closely, you can almost feel the love of the father by the way his hands are placed on his son's back and the expression on his face.

The parable talks about a son who asks the father for his inheritance, and then leaves and spends it recklessly. It also tells of the forgiveness of the father when the son returns and the father running toward the son then throwing a massive party for him. It is a powerful story of love that offers unexpected forgiveness and grace. That same love of God is for us, too, when we call upon him. No matter how mundane or massive the terrible things (sin) might be, you've done in your life; God will forgive you, unlike forgiveness between people, which can be difficult and complex.

Often people can't, or won't: I've seen many examples of this. Furthermore, how that can lead to all sorts of bitterness. The forgiveness of God is not the same forgiveness that we are used (or not used) to showing or receiving with others. Here's what the bible says about God's forgiveness: 1 John 1:9 *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

Ps. 103:12 *He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*

When we confess our sin, God forgives us, he cleanses us, and he forgets it. Unlike my white Old Boys rugby jersey that no matter how much Persil automatic you used, the grass stains never came out! He forgives us, never holds a grudge against us and forgets all wrongdoing. His forgiveness is complete. It was made complete by Jesus death for you upon a cross. This is the single greatest act of love, where all the love I've talked about culminates.

Hard for us to imagine isn't it, but its true! And this is not because we did anything to deserve such forgiveness but because of who God is and the love He has for us.

My prayer for you is that you will be able accept the love and forgiveness of God in all of its fullness. Knowing that it is not and will never be about you, but who He is. Knowing that our actions will never be greater than His character. That one day you may find yourself loving and forgiving others in the same way that God loves and forgives us every day. Because the forgiveness we receive is forgiveness we pass on. It's not an option.

1 John 4:7-13 *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 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. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

The Love Of God Means We Worship

God's love is *incomparable*, it is *steadfast*, his love is *irrevocable*, it is a *forgiving* love, and lastly – and because of these 4 truths – God's love means *we worship him*. Our hearts are full of thanks for him, gratitude to him and praise for him.

Someone whose heart was full like that was King David. Here's just one example of what he wrote. Ps 103:1 *Let all that I am praise the LORD; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.*

Worship is an essential part of our Christian lives. In fact, it's not a part, worship of God is how we live all of life. We worship God in prayer, in song, in generosity, hospitality, in serving, in our living. We worship God as a sign of thankfulness and awe of who he is and because of how he loves us.

Worship is from my whole heart and is a response to who he is. *What is worship?* It is when God sees my heart as valuing him and treasuring him above anyone or anything else. It is when our lives a one-big-long-thank-you – for his mercy and grace.⁶

Rom. 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship*

Worship is not the warm fuzzies we get from an experience, it's not an emotional high, it is giving him my whole life, for him, for his glory. Sometimes we may not realize it, but we, even inadvertently, worship other things instead of God. That means we give affection meant for god to other things. Lifestyle, families, money, success and material things. Now we're not necessarily bowing down and praising these things, but in our hearts they hold a place that is meant to be only for God.

⁶ [What Is Worship? | Desiring God](#)

When we value what God has done for us, in the person of Jesus, it is only natural that our hearts are filled with worship towards Him. When I begin to get discouraged, or feel as though I need more from God, God says to me "hang on I died for you, gave my life for you, what more do you want?"

Take a moment and think about Gods love: it is incomparable, steadfast, irrevocable and forgiving. Think about all the ways you can thank Him and worship Him with your whole life: out and about, at the café, in church, your friendships, the people you meet here. Our lives a one-big-long-thank- you – for his mercy and grace.⁷.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of Lords: His love endures forever. to him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever.
Psalms 136:1-4