

How Can God Love Me?!
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Have you ever felt that what you have done was so bad that God couldn't love you? Have you felt sometimes that God has left you? That you could not be forgiven for what you did?

My wife and I have felt that at times. We had received some money from her father and although we had given some of it away to help others, and to help our children, we spent a lot of it on ourselves, and if we had asked God about it, we would have been better stewards of the money. Well the money is gone and we have felt like the prodigal son. He had squandered his father's inheritance and went back to his father thinking at least maybe he could go as a servant. At least he would get fed.

But to his surprise, as it says in **Luke 15:22-23**: "But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry."

In this parable, the father never said anything about him squandering the money, nor did he ever say anything to accuse or condemn him about not spending his money wisely. His father was not mad at him at all. In fact when he saw his son in the distance, he ran to him.

Actually, the custom of the times were that if a son left and acted as this prodigal did in living a riotous life, if he ever tried to come back to the community, the elders would crush clay pots at the village gate to show that he was not welcome back. The father ran to his son before the elders could smash the pots to show them that he had accepted his son back. We were told by (Jan Jensen) who had been to Israel that she had seen smashed pots at the entrance of some villages.

This boy's father loved him so much that it didn't matter what he had done wrong, he loved him anyway and was just so happy that he had returned.

How much more does our heavenly Father love us and never will leave us in spite of all our wrong doings? Like the prodigal's father, God, our Father wants to embrace you and show you how much you are loved. It is His good pleasure to restore to you what you have lost.

When we are frustrated that we have done something that caused us to lose heart, or lose finances, or lose relationships, or whatever, God our Father does not see the finality of the loss or waste the way you do. When you come to Him with it, He sees it as an opportunity to restore to you what has been lost or wasted.

Even as the prodigal son felt, you may feel far away from God, our heavenly Father, or you may feel that you disappointed Him. We need not despair. The truth is, that the

moment you come to Him, He immediately restores to you the honor of being His child. He clothes our nakedness, gives us the authority (which the ring signified in the prodigal), to declare your position of power and dominion, and the sandals on your feet to reinstate you as a son or daughter in His house.

We are assured because of what Jesus has done for us, that we have never lost the position of being a son or daughter. Jesus paid the ultimate price to restore us when we have gone astray, or done something we shouldn't, or made wrong choices. When we realize what we have done, we just need to go to our heavenly Father and repent and know that He loves us so much that because of what Jesus has done, we are completely forgiven, and He will restore whatever we have lost. We should not be dismayed or worried or anxious that we have lost His love for us. **Deuteronomy 31:6**: "He will never leave us or forsake us". He loved us so much that he gave His only begotten Son for us. (**John 3:16**) and in **1 John 4:19**: "He loved us first before we ever knew Him."

Many times we think that because it's our fault, we deserve a punishment, just as when we were kids, and we disobeyed our parents, we got a whipping. God is not like that. We just need to go to Him and repent, as in **1 John 1:9**, it says "He is faithful and just to forgive us."

Do we really know our Father, **REALLY** know Him and his character? What is His character? It's love. Pure and simple. Love. He loves us so much more than any earthy mother or father could because our love is imperfect. God's love is perfect. The sooner we can come to really know Him and His love, the sooner we will be able to love ourselves and love others as He loves us.

Lets take a look at **Song of Solomon 4:7**: "You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you."

Jesus tells us, His bride, "You are all fair. My love, and there is no spot in you." What would your reply be to that? "Oh you don't know me, Lord!" You don't know what I have done!"

But doesn't God know everything about you? In **Luke 12:7** He says He knows the number of hairs on our head and in **Jeremiah 1:5**, "I knew you in your mother's womb."

God sees Jesus in us; His finished work at the cross. He sees the perfection of His Son's finished work in your life. By His offering of Himself at the cross, Jesus has perfected you FOREVER! (**Hebrews 10:14**) You have been made the righteousness of God in Jesus.

(2 Corinthians 5:21) You will therefore never find any spot in this righteousness that Jesus died to give you.

God wants you to see yourself as righteous - all fair and spotless in Christ. It's not your works, so when you have done something wrong, you don't need to feel condemned and say "I'm not worthy. **You never were worthy!!! It's Jesus who makes you worthy!** It's what He did for you at the cross that makes you worthy in God's eyes.

You need to see yourself as God sees you---worthy because of what Jesus did for you. He loved and loves you so much that He would do it just for you. He desires that you live free of all chains, all burdens and all condemnations. Don't let any wrongs that you have done keep you from accepting His love for you. We have to remember that He never leaves us. It is us who leave Him when we think on our bad decisions and think we don't deserve His love. That's the enemy trying to convince us that we are not worthy of His love. But praise be to God and Jesus because of His love for us , through Jesus, we are made worthy!

We need to say each day, "I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. There is no spot in me thanks be to Jesus! His blood has perfected me." When we say this, we are honoring what Jesus has done for us.

If we are always conscious of our sins, what we have done wrong, then we are not honoring the work of Jesus. We think we are being humble or holy by focusing on what we have done wrong-- focusing on our sins. But do you know that the Bible calls sin-consciousness an "Evil conscious?"

Hebrews 10:21-22 tells us that since we have Jesus as our High Priest, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an **evil conscience.**"

What is meant by an "evil conscience"? In **verse 2 of 1 Timothy chapter 4**, Paul calls it a "consciousness seared with a hot iron." The Greek word for "seared" is "**kauteriazō**", and it means to carry about with you a perpetual consciousness of sin.

So we need to know and speak out daily who we are in Christ. Don't carry with you that evil or seared conscience. Your lifetime of sins has already been punished fully in the body of Jesus Christ at the cross. Be conscious then of your perfection and righteousness in Jesus. Because of what Jesus has done for you, you can boldly say, "I am all fair. There is no spot in me!"

We need to pray always, and pray in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers and requests. Bring all your requests to God. We need to pray for all the Lord's people. Pray for each other, pray for this church, pray for your family, pray for yourselves, and pray for your pastor that whenever I speak, I may speak only what the Holy Spirit gives to me, and pray that we would **BOLDLY** speak the truth of the gospel.