



“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” 1 John 4:10.

How can God love me? How can God love the world; a world filled with sin, anger, hate, and rebellion against God? How can God love me a sinner who is guilty of everything on the list just stated? We know the answer to this, Christ! Maybe it has been said so much; that we take it for granted.

People speak a great deal about love and compassion for others. Yet, the sinful world, of which we are a part, cannot really truly love. Only God truly loves, and only in Christ are we enabled to love others. True love, that is, unconditional, genuine love, which is compassionate, is demonstrated by God sending His Son to this world. This love is spoken of in the words of the sacred writer. **“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” 1 John 4:10.**

Because of sin, we are unable to bring about a reconciled relationship with God the Father. God provides His Divine solution to sin in His Son, Jesus Christ. By the death of Christ on His cross, the penalty of sin and guilt is paid. **“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” 2 Corinthians 5:21.** Our sinful human nature causes a great struggle with this concept. That someone must die in our place; receive the punishment of the wrongs we have done is most difficult to accept. The death of Jesus on the cross has fully propitiated the wrath of God toward all people, reconciling us to God. St. Paul teaches this in the book of **Romans 4:25, “Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”**

Yet, we still ask, “how can God love me?” Our enemy the devil is behind this. First the devil tempts us to sin against God. Once he has succeeded, he turns around and accuses of the very sin he tempted us with in the first place and then adds to it by tempting us to believe “God cannot forgive that sin for it is too great and you are too bad for God to ever love you.” We are overwhelmed with these thoughts as the devil leads us from doubt to despair trying desperately to shake then destroy our faith all together.

God’s love overcomes this in Christ! The devil’s temptations are always lies! God loves us in Christ by taking the curse of sin for us and placing it on Christ, as we see in **Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hanged on a tree.”** Christ has rescued us from this vicious circle by taking God’s anger against us for sin on Himself on the cross. The devil’s deception by first tempting then accusing is always a lie against God’s Word and of the mercy He offers in Christ. The love God has for us is always in Christ our Savior as clearly stated in **1 John 4:10.** The love God has for us, in Christ, is an everlasting love beyond our comprehension. “It was not a mere man who suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to God’s majesty and almighty power for us” (FC Ep VIII 13). It is the God/Man, Jesus the giver of our salvation, that is, God’s love. Through His suffering, death, and resurrection the devil and all his lies and accusations are defeated and we are secure in His grace through Christ and His cross. The hymn writer eloquently speaks of God’s love sending Christ in human flesh for our salvation.

**O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
Beyond all thought and fantasy,
That God the Son of God should take
Our mortal form for mortals’ sake!**

**For us He rose from death again;
For us He went on high to reign;
For us He sent His Spirit here
To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.**

**All glory to our Lord and God
For love so deep, so high, so broad;
The Trinity whom we adore
Forever and forevermore.**

LSB 544 “O Love, How Deep” verses 1, 6, & 7

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt