

How Do We Know God Loves Us

Have you ever struggled with knowing that God loves you? I mean not just that he loves you, but that he loves you unconditionally, that he loves you even when you fail. And I don't mean that you simply know in your head that he loves you, but that you know it in your heart. The Apostle Paul once prayed that believers would know Christ's love in all its fullness (see Eph 3.14-21). I too pray that each one of us at Larchmont would know God's love in a deep, personal, life-changing way. To help with this I would like to share three reasons why I believe God loves us.

We know God loves us because of who God is. In a simple statement that belies its profundity, John wrote, "God is love" (1 John 4.8, 16). Notice that John does not simply say, "God is loving" but "God is love." Love is the very nature of God. Love is not simply something God shows; it characterizes who he is. Thus, the reason God loves us is not because of who we are but because of who he is. Yes, we are defiled and sinful, yet God loves us because he is love. We do not draw forth God's love because of who we are or what we do. God sets his love upon us because he freely chooses to in accord with his nature.

We know God loves us because of what God says. The Bible repeatedly affirms God's love for us. In Lamentations 3.22-23 the Bible says, "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NRSV). Psalm 103.8 states, "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love" (NIV). One of the greatest affirmations of God's love in Scripture is found in Romans 8.35-39. In this passage Paul says that nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love. Rather than depending on your fickle emotions or changing circumstances that may tell you God does not love you, look to God's word that unequivocally affirms his love for you.

We know God loves us because of what God has done. God does not simply say that he loves us; he proves it by his actions. The greatest proof of God's love is the giving of his Son on the cross for our sins. John 3.16 says, "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" (NIV). Paul said in Romans 5.8, "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (NRSV). When Jesus died on the cross, it not only revealed the great sinners that

we are; it also revealed the great love God has for us despite our sin. In light of the cross, we should never doubt God's unchanging, unconditional love for us.