

Loving Sinners, Hating Sin

By: Lenny Chapman

In Romans 3:23 we read, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Knowing that sin separates us from God may make one wonder how someone can ever reach heaven. If there is one thing, we all know for sure, it is that God hates sin! And, if God hates sin, would this not mean that God also hates the sinner?

Time after time throughout the Bible we read of those that forced God’s wrath to “wax hot!” We see with Moses, King Saul, the children of Israel, Ananias, and Sapphira that God’s anger became so “hot” that immediate judgment was issued. Moses was not able to enter the “promised land” even after he had led God’s people for many years to that very place. Ananias and his wife were immediately given the death penalty for lying to Peter and the church in Acts 5. If this was the penalty for those who sinned against God, what chance do we have as sinners to be found in God’s grace?

We can find our comfort in Paul’s inspired epistle written to the Ephesians. In this letter we can understand that the only way we can become free from the bonds of sin is to trust and obey God. It is His love for us that brought Jesus into this world. Jesus lived, taught, was sacrificed, and then resurrected on the third day, overcoming death, so that we have victory through Him.

Yes, God is able to separate the sinner from the sin, and we should all be thankful for that. It is while we are sinners that God extends His loving arms to us to help us out of darkness and into the light. *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* (Ephesians 2:1-10).

We should fall to our knees and pray great prayers of thanks to the Heavenly Father for the love that He has for us. Even when we fall short through sin, He patiently waits, desiring all to be saved. One of the most beautiful verses in the Bible can be found in the book of Romans, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8). Do you understand the magnitude of this statement? Even though much of the world was, and still is, living sinful corrupt lives, God sent His Son so that we may have salvation from darkness. What a spectacular gift! *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”* (John 3:16-17).

The cross is the exemplification of God's hatred for sin, and his love for mankind

We ought to be so thankful that God separates the act of sin from the sinner. We should be ready to accept God’s gift. Paul instructs us how to do this in Romans 12:1, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”* What will you do with the gift that God has for you? Will you accept it along with His almighty grace and live according to His will? Can you set aside your own desires to those things much greater in life?