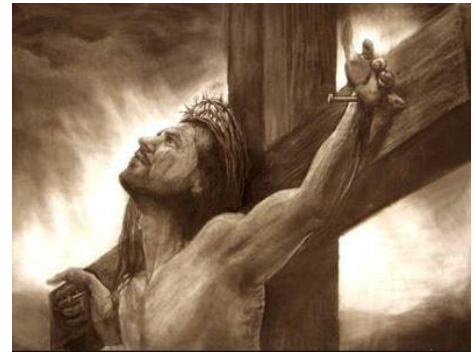


Much More Than Love

Love songs have always had a powerful influence in American culture. Their lyrics reflect our attitude for real life: when we truly love someone we are willing to go to great lengths to please them. Love can be a powerful thing but it pales in comparison to God's forgiveness. Forgiveness is based on much more than just love.

In a recent reading in an Oswald Chambers book, My Utmost for His Highest, he states that "God doesn't forgive our sins because He loves us." That would be shallow and a human response. Chambers says, "God forgives sin only because of the death of Christ. God could forgive people in no other way than by the death of His son, and Jesus is exalted as Savior because of His death." That statement caught my attention because it gave a much fuller perspective than our simplified human thinking.



We remember the final words of Jesus from the Cross: "It is finished." Those words are about the redemption of humankind. Chambers states, "If we had forgiveness only because of love, it would make the Cross unnecessary." Jesus did what He did because he loved us, but the objective was for our redemption. It wasn't easy. On the Cross Jesus endured the full blast of God's wrath. It was a big deal. Jesus, who was perfect, suffered because of our sins. He endured whippings, nails and ridicule. But, it was all done for a purpose. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

We can forgive others in our everyday life. Jesus already did the heavy lifting. We forgive because Jesus first forgave us. Certainly, Jesus loved us. But, the power of forgiveness is the Cross when Jesus took on our sins at the Cross. Love had something to do with it, but the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and being raised from the dead, is the power of forgiveness. Because of that we can have righteousness with God. It couldn't happen any other way.

Question: Do you believe that Jesus died for you?

Prayer: Most gracious, Heavenly Father. When we repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness, you grant it. The power to forgive is because Jesus took on our sins and overcame death on the Cross. You are our Lord and Savior. Thankfully, we can live a life of a relationship with God because of your forgiveness. Amen.