

I Love You

Imagine you're out on an evening walk when you see your dream car. One look at it and you think speed and beauty. Then you notice a key in the ignition and its unlocked doors. The car seems to say, "Take me out for a quick spin." You glance around. The street is deserted, and no one is watching. "But that would be stealing," your conscience protests. "No way!" another voice blurts in. "You're not going to keep it -- you just want to see what it feels like." For an agonizingly long moment, the inner voices battle each other -- then adventure wins out. Your heart pounds as you slide into the driver's seat, and the engine hums to life.

"This is awesome!" you say, slipping the car into gear. You intend to make one slow trip around the block, but you notice that the speedometer goes up to 160 mph. When will you ever get another chance like this? You head for the open road.

What happens next is a blur. You remember the exhilaration of 143 mph, then flashing blue lights, cold steel handcuffs, being in court, and the judge's gavel pounding out a guilty verdict. The sentence is \$10,000 and six months in prison. You know you deserve punishment, but that's a severe penalty!

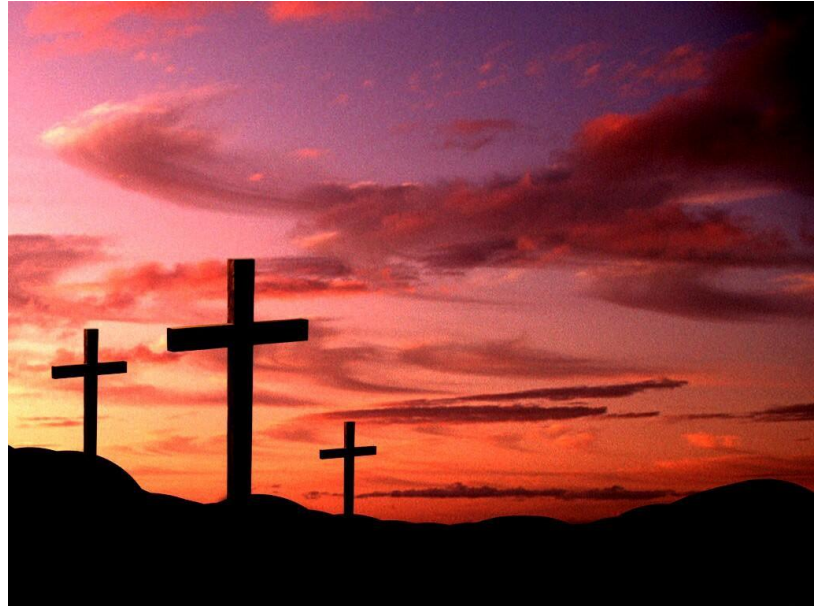
Then, the judge does something curious. He removes his robe, whips out his checkbook, and pays your fine. Next, he announces that he will serve your jail sentence. Then, He looks you in the eyes and says, "I love you."¹

On this Easter Sunday, the Risen Christ appears victoriously, having conquered death and sin. From the cross, he forgave not only those present but also He forgave us. Jesus took on the penalty for our sins and wiped them clean. Jesus was perfect, so He didn't deserve to die. Why did He do this? Because He loves us, regardless of anything we have done. It is love's greatest story.

He has risen. Hallelujah. As we celebrate Easter, we should no longer be the person we were before as we remember His sacrifice for us. Because of it, we have a new lease on life for eternity. 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* (*John 3:16*).

One of my favorite choir anthems is "Written in Red." It proclaims Jesus' love for us. His love for us is why He was willing to go to the cross for our sins so that we could be as "white as snow." Click on this link to listen to Written in Red on YouTube (skip the ad as soon as you can and enjoy the music):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nX51pgG5NVc>²



¹ Story from my file of devotional stories. Author unknown.

² Music by Brentwood Benson

Written in Red (lyrics)

In letters of crimson, God wrote His love on a hillside so long, long ago.
For you and for me, Jesus died, and love's greatest story was told.

(Chorus)

I love you; I love you.
That's what Calvary said.
I love you; I love you,
I love you, written in Red.

Down through the ages,
God wrote His love with the same hands that suffered and bled.
Giving all He had to give a message so easily read.

(Chorus)

I love you; I love you.
That's what Calvary said.
I love you; I love you,
I love you, written in Red.

Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.
There is no other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus

(Chorus)

I love you; I love you.
That's what Calvary said.
I love you; I love you,
I love you, written in Red
I love you, written in Red
I love you.³

³ Written in Red, Words and Music by Gordon Jensen