

If you're a member of the human race then God loves you; not just with any old 'love' but with a love that will last forever (Jeremiah 31v3) and one which drove him to give his own son, Jesus to die in your place. As it says in 1John 3v16, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us."

You see love is not just something God does, it's what He is. He defines the true meaning of love. In 1John 4v16 it simply says "God is love".

But why would God love us; why would He love you?

If you have ever had a child then you may be able to understand something of how God feels towards you. When my wife was pregnant with our first child, I had a photo from the ultrasound scan which I was so proud of. I loved that baby so much. I had never before experienced the force of love like this.

But why? He didn't really look like much, he couldn't do anything to impress me or say anything to please me. He was just a white smudge on a black square. I didn't love my son because he deserved it, I loved him because he was MY SON! In a mysterious way, my wife and I had 'made' him. He was ours.

Whether you believe it or not, God created you. In Psalm 139v13 it says "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."

You are the work of His hands, His own creation and nothing you or anyone else may do can change that fact or His love for you. In Romans 8v38-39 it says "...neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God..."

You may wonder how there can be a loving God when there is so much sadness & evil in the world. The simplest answer to that is that God created us to have free will rather than running the world and us like robots. Much of the sadness in the world is due to mankind's wrong decisions and selfish actions. Ultimately the Bible teaches that evil, sickness & death only entered the world because of a wrong choice, the disobedience of the first man, Adam. Romans 5v12 says "...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men..."

The ultimate demonstration and proof of God's love for you is the death of Jesus on the cross over 2000 years ago but we'll come on to that in point number 3.



But There is a Problem
I Have Sinned

Romans 3v23 says "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". That means that every human being has failed meet the perfect standard of God's goodness and righteousness. We have failed because we have done things our way, not God's way. We have disobeyed His instruction which He wrote in both the Bible and in our consciences. God's law is like a pane of glass; it's either broken or it isn't. It's no good saying "I only lied, I never stole". James 2v10 says "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it". Whether it's murder or whether it's just a 'white' lie, whether it's adultery or just jealousy, every sin keeps us from meeting God's standard and has both consequences and penalty!

The consequences of sin can be numerous. If we lie we can get caught and break relationships & trust. If we steal we

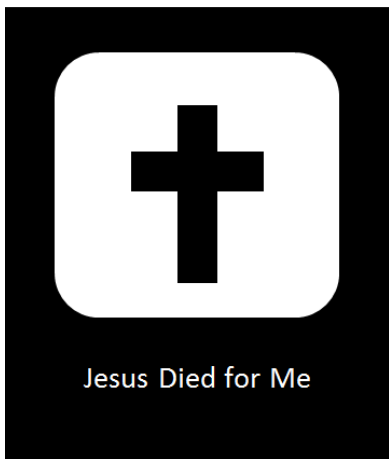
can be caught and prosecuted. But the most serious consequence of sin is that it separates us from God and from the relationship He created us to have with Him. Isaiah 59v2 says "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

Have you ever wondered why God feels so far away?

Even more serious is the penalty for sin. Romans 6v23 says "For the wages of sin is death" i.e. death is what you earn from sinning. Not physical death since that is inevitable for all of us. It's the ultimate statistic; 1 out of 1 die. The Bible is referring to spiritual death, that is the assumption that we are more than just physical bodies; that we have a spirit or soul which persists after our bodies die. It is unclear exactly what it means for us to face spiritual death but it is clear that it is the opposite of God's desired plan for you and I which is that our spirit goes to dwell with Him forever in His presence; what the Bible calls heaven.

So we all have a big problem. We have all sinned and because God is perfectly just, this sin means we must all face spiritual death and eternal separation from God; what the Bible calls Hell!

If you're unhappy about this you'll be pleased to know that because of His great love for you, God was even more unhappy with the situation (2 Peter 3v9).



The just penalty for our sin, the wrong things every one of us have done, is spiritual death; separation from God. In the old testament times, God allowed animals to be sacrificed for the people's sin and would accept the shed blood as a substitute for the people's own life. But ever since man had first sinned, God had planned a permanent solution. The ultimate sacrifice that could pay the punishment for everyone's sin and see justice done

In a letter to the Romans, Paul said "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The plan was this, to send his own son, Jesus who was himself God, to be born as a human baby and live on this earth leading a perfect, sinless life, and when He had done this, to voluntarily offer His own life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin. Not just death but separation

from God, the only time Jesus had ever been completely separated from His father.

This was prophesied hundreds of years before Jesus' birth by Isaiah in ch53v6 "We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way.

And GOD has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him".

And this is what He did. The fact that Jesus lived and walked on this earth is historically undeniable. There is more evidence of the existence of Jesus than there is of Julius Caesar. He was born in Bethlehem, grew up as a carpenter, lived a perfect life never sinning once. He loved & healed people, taught them about God and was then falsely accused and crucified by the Romans outside of Jerusalem. He did all this willingly because He loved you so much that He wanted to save you from the judgement you deserve. Hebrews 12v2 says "...for the joy set before Him [Jesus] endured the cross, scorning its shame...". Then Jesus came back to life again after 3 days in 'hell' since death could not hold the son of God.

This wonderful plan is summed up in one of the most well know Bible verses, John 3v16-18. "This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, His one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending His Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone

who trusts in Him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust Him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to Him" (The Message).

You might think that's the end of the matter but there's one more, all-important point that makes the difference between life & death.



I Need to Decide
to live for God

God has done His part. Jesus gave His own life as a punishment for OUR sin. We didn't deserve it. It wasn't 'fair' but that's how much God loves you.

But now you have to decide if you want to accept this gift of forgiveness, this promise of eternal life. If you want to be free from the punishment you brought on yourself by not doing things God's way, you need to decide to surrender to God and do things His way from now on. You need to believe that He exists, that He loves you and that He died for you.

Romans 10v9-10 says "...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

The choice is yours. You still have free will, just the way God created you. You can surrender your life to God, the creator of the universe who loves you more than anyone

else ever will and only wants the best for you, or, you can walk away and face the inevitable consequences. Deuteronomy 30v19-20 sums it up like this "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him."

If you want to know this forgiveness and know this God who created you for relationship with Him. If you want to have that separation between you and God removed and have the punishment and guilt of all the wrong things you've ever done wiped away, then you can, right now! Just say this prayer and if you are sincere, God will see your heart and save you.

Dear God, Thankyou that You died for me and want the best for me in every situation. I'm sorry for ignoring You and doing things my way.

I realise now that my sin has hurt You and the people around me and for this, I am truly sorry.

Thankyou Jesus that You came and took the punishment for my sin. Thankyou that you gave your life for me.

Please forgive me and help me now as I decide to live only for You. Amen