



Love the Unlovable

Nobody likes me; everybody hates me; guess I'll go eat worms. That somewhat familiar beginning of a kid's song-rhyme may have more truth behind it than we realize. There are days when life just isn't fair; everything seems to go wrong, and everyone around seems to dislike, maybe even hate, who we are.

Near my computer at home sits a small perpetual calendar. Recently, when I turned its page to begin the day, the phrase from G.K. Chesterton greeted me, "Love means to love that which is unlovable." The Bible verse on the same page read, *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:8 ESV) Have you ever thought of yourself as unlovable? Has your life produced times when the day's events seemed to put you down and give you a sense of feeling unloved? Or unwanted? Have you ever encountered someone whose actions, words, or demeanor caused your emotions to boil? Have you felt like lashing out at them?

Our gracious and heavenly Father created us out of love, even though He knew each of us, without Him, would be a despicable being, full of ugly sin. Yet He finished His plan of love for us by sending His one and only Son to take our place on the cross. Jesus carried our ugliness and all the unlovable parts of our being on His shoulders when He became our sacrifice. He covered our unlovable parts with His blood and by doing so transformed us into beautiful and lovable heirs of His kingdom. Because of Jesus, we are no longer covered with ugly warts, looking like something not even a mother would want to touch or hug. Because of God's unconditional love for us, we can claim Him as our Father, Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit as our Counselor, and heaven as our home.

*Jesus loves me – this I know, for the Bible tells me so:
Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me – the Bible tells me so.*

The words of that very familiar children's song are powerful in their simplicity. With confidence and assurance, because God says so, we are bold and free to say we are loved completely and forever by Jesus, no matter who we are and no matter what we have done. In essence, our warts no longer show.

Does the story stop there? Once we understand we truly are loved, with no strings attached, by a God who did the ultimate for us by giving up His life in order to redeem us, we can also *love the unlovable*. The child in kindergarten who refuses to cooperate...The homeless man on the street who pushes his hand toward our face...The newborn who cries incessantly because of colic...The teenager who defies her parent...The driver who cuts us off in traffic...The school bully who daily picks on my child...The coworker who cuts corners and lies in order to advance in position...The committee member who insists on doing tasks a certain way. We could probably add more descriptors of *unlovable* people around us. *We love because He first loved us.* (1 John 4:19 ESV) Without God, we are both unlovable and unable to love. He is love; therefore, true love and loving others can only come thorough Him and because of Him. Thanks be to God! *For God so loved (the world) (substitute your name), that He gave His only Son, that (whoever) (substitute your name) believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.* (John 3:16 ESV)

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