

Romans 8:26-39

We use the word “love” in so many different ways.

“I love the footy” – or ice cream, or chocolate, or barramundi or quiz shows, or quilting or Formula 1, or holidays with the family, or having my hair done.

But. A love of Australian cricket is miles different from the love of a faithful son or daughter caring for a dementia-ridden parent; The romantic love in millions of songs, novels and movies is quite different from the love between soldiers in a battalion laying down their lives for their mates.

Love that needs to be bought cannot be love. The Beatles said it this way:

I'll buy you a diamond ring my friend if it makes you feel alright

I'll get you anything my friend if it makes you feel alright

Cos I don't care too much for money, and money can't buy me love.

And love that is only given when certain conditions are met is NOT love.

Have you ever noticed that the Christian wedding vows (Which don't say I do, but I will, by the way), are all one way? Without any conditions being laid down both husband and wife say they will love the other, honour and respect the other, give themselves to each other “till death us do part”. End of story. The love they express for each other is all about how they will now give in love without any expectation in return.

But of course we all know life doesn't quite work out like that. Human nature – sinful human nature – affects us all at these most important levels in our relationships. Marriage vows can be torn by domestic violence or betrayal.

Love can be cruelly shattered by death, or will slowly dry up because of frailty; Once close friends may fall out or just drift apart because of time or distance.

So, when Christians talk about a God who loves we need to look carefully at what that means.

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The cynic in some of us will question whether God's love is a joke, when they look at what goes on in the world; The abused among us will doubt very much that the kind of love God says he shows to us is possible; And the self-satisfied among us will ask, "Why bother?"

Look again – or perhaps for the first time - at the love of God for his people in and through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a love which is rock solid.

It is showered upon us without us having to do anything – in fact while we were spending our lives doing our best to neglect God: In Romans chapter 5 we read: ⁸ *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* ¹

NOT when we were doing our best to live good lives; NOT when others would have thought us to be pillars of the community; BUT: while we were still sinners. Apathetic towards God. Grudging in our acknowledgement of God. Refusing to have anything to do with him. Blatantly disobedient. ⁸ *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* ²

And our Epistle for today, also from Romans, this time chapter 8, spells out more of what this means:

1. God's love for us means he has a perfect and secure future for us. There is no guess work as to what God's love for us involves:

²⁸ *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* ²⁹ *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* ³⁰ *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.* ³

¹ [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Ro 5:7–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Ro 5:7–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Ro 8:28–30). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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God's plan for those he loves is that they will be with him for eternity. The apostle Paul, the writer of this letter uses the word: "glorified". God's plan from all eternity for his ones is that they should be like the Lord Jesus Christ, who we know is now "glorified". Living as a perfect human being in full and harmonious love with his Heavenly Father and ours.

And this plan will certainly be fulfilled because "in all things God works for the good of those who love him"

2. God's love means he paid for our sins with gift of his Son to die in our place:

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.

3. God's love is absolutely watertight:

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

*"For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ⁴

These are the worries, aren't they? Our human experience of love, and what we know about other people's experience of love is that something always affects it, destroys it, interrupts it, weakens it. This breathtaking statement tells us God's love will not, and cannot be, affected by any of those things.

*NOTHING can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
NOTHING.*

⁴ [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Ro 8:35–39). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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4. That's all because the love of God is Christ-shaped. It is "the love of Christ" in dying for us on the cross. It is the Love of God "In Christ Jesus our Lord". As we so often hear in the Communion from John chapter 3: "*God so loved the world that he gave his One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*".

This is the love, which the hymn-writer says is:

Love so amazing, so Divine

Demands my soul, my life, my all.