

Love Incarnate

We long for it.
We crave it.
Without it we shrivel.

We sing about it.
We talk about it.
We go to great lengths to obtain it.

Poets write about it.
Artists sculpture and paint it.
But children know where to find it.

*"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."*

But many have protested, "I am not a child anymore.
Life has jaded my thinking, and I wonder if authentic love is really possible.
The words, 'I love you!' were spoken. I believed they were true.
But commitment faded, rejection followed
and 'I don't love you anymore' still echoes in my soul."

In varying degrees, this mock scenario reflects what is universal
when our flesh looks for flesh to satisfy our longing to be loved and accepted.

Into this heartache steps **Love Incarnate**, the only One who can salvage such pain.
Jesus not only offers love, **He is the embodiment of love**.

He knows that love is essential for security, growth, meaning and, most of all, for survival,
and perfect love, which does not mirror earthly love, is found only in a relationship with Him.
In the pages of Scripture, He comes in gentleness and says, "Listen to how your story intersects with My story
so that you, too, can sing 'Jesus Loves Me' with childlike wonder and trust."

Because we were made in God's image, nobody wants to die.
The Creator of life has indelibly inscribed abundant, eternal life on our souls.
We may lose hope and despair of life, but that is simply the heart's woeful cry
to be loved and accepted, understood and valued.
We were made to love and be loved, and **no one does love better than Jesus**.

When Eden was perfect, God set a limit; Adam and Eve were not to eat
from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God dearly loved Adam and Eve and did not want them to know evil.
He only wanted the pinnacle of His creation, which He declared as "very good," to know only good.
But they believed a lie, tasted evil, and sin and death entered the world.

Adam and Eve's love relationship with God was poisoned to death, and everything that was once beautiful,
harmonious and perfect became ruined, tainted, tarnished and shamed. And everyone since that time has suffered the
same catastrophic, disastrous curse of their sin.

If we fail to grasp this reality, we miss what Christmas is all about and the eternal blessing it offers. To all who look
into the manger and see the Infant as Almighty God, our Savior and Lord, Christmas holds promise –
to be loved, accepted, valued, chosen and eternally secure in Jesus, our **Love Incarnate**.

There's been a flurry of excitement the past several years about identifying our primary "love language" –
a personal expression of heartfelt commitment:
acts of service, gift-giving, quality time, meaningful touch and words of affirmation.

We all desire to hear someone say, "I love you!"

But just as faith without works is dead faith, so love without expression is selfish, shallow and questionable.

Scripture does not record that Jesus, during His three years of ministry, went around Galilee saying,
"I love you!" "I love you!" Jesus proved His love by His actions. If we were to quantify His love by the

Love Language concept, He possessed all five attributes infinitely and perfectly.

His miracles, His words of truth, His call to become His disciple, His acceptance of outcasts and children, His humility and His reason for taking on a physical body were extraordinary expressions of His love. All this and more point to His greatest demonstration of love never to be replicated: His violent death on a cross to save the entire human race from living an eternity separated from the love of God.

At its core, love is giving to another what is needed most when least deserved.

And **Love Incarnate** accomplished this feat on our behalf.

As stated in Ephesians, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved.)"

Oh, the wonder of God's mercy and grace!

The purity and intent of true love is so sacrificial that it does not demand that expressions of love be returned. But when we have become aware of how desperately we need the love of Jesus and have accepted it, we want to respond. If, in our imaginations, we put ourselves in Peter's place and hear the Lord's question to him spoken to us,

"Do you love Me?" What will our answer be?

Spending time with Jesus and sharing His love with others is our "Yes!" in action.

We sometimes hear, "Christmas is for children," mostly spoken in reference to the tinsel aspects of the holiday: delight at seeing Santa, cookies and candy canes, colorful lights, decorated trees and lots of presents.

But to the one who lamented over lost human love and says, "Remember? I'm not a child anymore,"

Jesus responds, "Oh...but you can be!

If you believe that I am God, that I died for your sins and rose again to give you eternal life,
you can be adopted into God's family and become His child.

Yes! Christmas is indeed for children – children who have welcomed My love."

For we are hungry and thirsty and desperate for love.

We have sought it on earth, but failed to consult heaven above.

We have found that counterfeit loves exhilarate but eventually disappoint.

But, Jesus, Your soul-quenching love desires always to anoint

all who humbly admit that You are the More we desire

Whose pure love never forsakes but always lifts us higher.

So come, **Love Incarnate**, come yet again.

Over, and over, and over befriend

the little girl, crying for her father's embrace;

the embittered harlot, who feels torn by disgrace;

the helpless, the hopeless, the forgotten, the lone.

Drench us with More, the More we've never known.

Like an artesian well, Jesus, shower the broken.

Quench our thirst with the truth

that Your Word has spoken.

You are **God with us**, Love unfailing and true.

Please give us More of Yourself
until we want nothing but You.

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During this second week of Advent, remind yourself frequently, “Jesus loves me, this I know...” and meditate on Psalm 143:8: “*Let the morning bring me word of Your **unfailing love** for I have put my trust in You.*”