

# gos.pel cul.ture

Making the goodness,  
glory, and grace of Christ  
visible through the church

a  
culture of  
love &  
grace

1 John 4:7-11

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

— John 3:16

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

— vv 7-8

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

— vs 9



Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, love Divine,  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and angel gave the sign.

— Christina Rossetti

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

— vs 9

In this is love, not that we have loved  
God but that he loved us and sent his Son  
to be the propitiation for our sins.

— vs 10

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

— Romans 5:8

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Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

— John 15:13

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Romans 8:35-39

May God grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

— Ephesians 3:16-19

Could we with ink the oceans fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the oceans dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.

In this is love, not that we have loved  
God but that he loved us and sent his Son  
to be the propitiation for our sins.

— vs 10

“The cross of Jesus displays the most awesome exhibition of God’s hatred of sin, and at the same time the most august manifestation of his readiness to pardon it. Pardon, full and free, is written out in every drop of blood that is seen, is proclaimed in every groan that is heard...Oh blessed door of return, open and never shut, to the wanderer from God! How glorious, how free, how accessible! Here the sinful, the vile, the guilty, the unworthy, the poor, the penniless, may come.

Here too the weary spirit may bring its burden, the broken spirit its sorrow, the guilty spirit its sin, the backsliding spirit its wandering. All are welcome here. The death of Jesus was the opening and the emptying of the full heart of God. It was the outgushing of that ocean of infinite mercy that heaved and panted and longed for an outlet. It was God showing how he could love a poor, guilty sinner. What more could he have done than this?"

— Octavius Winslow

Beloved, if God so loved us,  
we also ought to love one another.

— vs 11

“Jesus did not design the church to be a place where our dreams come true. Actually, it’s where many of our dreams are disappointed and die. And this is more of a grace to us than we likely realize, because our dreams are often much more selfish than we discern. Our personal expectations easily become tyrants to everyone else, because everyone else fails to meet them. When we are more focused on how others’ failings and foibles obstruct the ideal community we want to pursue than we are on serving those others and pursuing their good and joy, our expectations can kill love, which impedes the real mission.

Jesus designed the church to be a place where love comes true, where we lay our preferences aside out of deference to others. It is meant to be a living laboratory of love, a place where there are so many opportunities, big and small, to lay down our lives for each other that the love of Christ becomes a public spectacle. That's why when it comes to the church in this age, the picture of community we should have in our minds is not some utopian harmony, but Golgotha. In living life together, we die every day. We lay down our lives for each other.”

— Jon Bloom, Desiring God Ministries

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