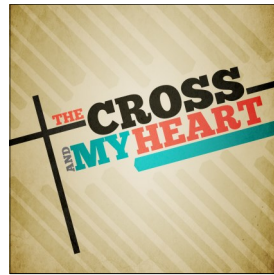


## **"The Cross Means Love"**

Series: *The Cross and My Heart*  
February 24, 2013

by **Senior Pastor, Tom Lundeen**

(You can sign up for Pastor Tom's e-newsletter  
for his thoughts on various subjects at  
[pastortom@myriversidechurch.com](mailto:pastortom@myriversidechurch.com))



While most people have an opinion on what they think love is, and books have been written to \_\_\_\_\_ and distinguish the various kinds of love, the Bible clearly indicates there is only one way to understand what real love actually is:

### **1. Love is Found and Ultimately \_\_\_\_\_ by Jesus Christ and His Cross**

*Note I John 3:16*

There is "only one act of pure love, u\_\_\_\_\_ by any taint of ulterior motive" that "has ever been performed in the history of the world, namely the self-giving of God in Christ on the cross for underserving sinners." (Stott)

When seeking to define love, our search shouldn't take us to a dictionary, Wikipedia, or a Hollywood movie script, but to a cross at \_\_\_\_\_ 2,000 years ago.

*Note Romans 3:23-26; I John 4:9-10 and John 3:16*

In sending Jesus, God sent His own self to \_\_\_\_\_ the full extent of this punishment, to die that death instead of us.

In light of the cross, evil and pain and suffering are properly illuminated, because in the pain, evil and suffering of the cross, God's love is publically and visibly \_\_\_\_\_.

### **2. How Does the Cross Demonstrate God's Love? (note Romans 5:8)**

- A. God gave *His Son* for us (*note Romans 5:10*) - in sending His own Son, God wasn't sending a created being or a \_\_\_\_\_, but was giving Himself. Since the heart and essence of genuine love is s\_\_\_\_\_, g\_\_\_\_\_, God's love is seen in giving His Son and Himself (*note John 3:16 and Romans 8:32a*). All other gifts from any source \_\_\_\_\_ in comparison to "...his indescribable gift!" (*II Corinthians 9:15*).

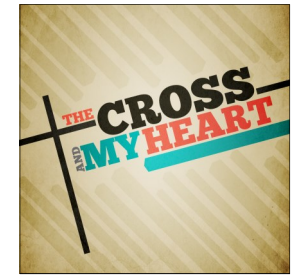
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(continued on reverse)

- B. God gave His Son *to die* for us (*note Philippians 2:7-8*) - sin and death are \_\_\_\_\_...but instead of the one who sins also being the one who dies, at Jesus' cross, this wasn't the case. This is "holy love", as God in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ sin's penalty by bearing it all Himself. "For the Sinless One to be made sin, for the Immortal One to die—we have no means of imagining the \_\_\_\_\_ or the pain involved in such experiences." (Stott)
- C. God gave His Son to die *for us*—the Bible uses these words to describe us apart from Jesus Christ:
- "sinners" (Romans 3:23)
  - "u \_\_\_\_\_" (Romans 5:6)
  - "powerless" (Romans 5:6)
  - "enemies" (Romans 5:10)
  - "\_\_\_\_\_ in...sins" (Ephesians 2:1)
  - "by nature objects of \_\_\_\_\_" (Ephesians 2:3)
  - "separate from Christ" (Ephesians 2:12)
  - "without hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12)
  - "\_\_\_\_\_ " (Luke 19:10)

*Note Romans 5:7 and John 15:13*

The value of a love gift is based on 2 factors:

- What it \_\_\_\_\_ the giver
- The degree that the recipient appears to \_\_\_\_\_ it.

The \_\_\_\_\_ blows this formula out of the water...He gave everything for those who deserved nothing from Him.

God's love is "expended in self-giving, wholly expended, without residue or reserve, \_\_\_\_\_, exhausted, spent." (Vanstone)

*So how is the Cross intersecting my heart?*

*Romans 5:8* (The Message): "But God put His love on the line for us by offering His Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him."

- God's love is not a feeling or an emotion that can \_\_\_\_\_ and f \_\_\_\_\_ depending on various circumstances
- God's love = choosing for the highest good of another.
- On the cross, God \_\_\_\_\_ for our highest good.
- He put "His love on the line" for us and invites us to receive His life and love.

Use the connect card to tell us about a commitment you made today, and tell someone you know or a Pastor or Staff person at Riverside about the spiritual commitment you have made today!

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