

We see what God is like

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. My name is Mario, for those who don't know, and I'm part of the team here at Harvest Church. And today, I'll be continuing the series, Seven Things That Happen on the Cross.

However, today, we'll be looking at the cross and see what the cross reveals to us of how God is like. It's probably safe to say that most of us have a neighbor or a friend or someone we know that we've shared the gospel with.

We share the hope that we have. And their response has been, perhaps it's not really for me. Or we think evolution is more credible.

Or perhaps they say, I don't believe there's a God. Maybe a higher being. And perhaps we subconsciously given up on them.

We sort of dust the sand of our sandals. And then, later on, we get a sense of encouragement. And we go back, we try again, and we get the same response.

[1 : 12] And slowly, we start pondering. Maybe this person is beyond reach. Maybe there is everything. We've done everything we can.

And there's nothing else we can do. But let's see how the scripture may help us to get perspective on that. If we turn to 1 Timothy, chapter 1, verses 15 through 16.

Hopefully, it's on the screen behind us. It says the following. This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

And I'm the worst of them. But here's why I was treated with mercy. So that in me, as the worst, Christ Jesus could demonstrate his utmost patience.

As an example for those who are going to believe in him for eternal life. So here's my first point of view.

[2 : 20] God, in Christ Jesus, shows his patience. Jesus came into the world to save even the worst of sinners. Paul considered himself the foremost of them.

If we had met Saul, or if we lived in the time where Saul was persecuting Christians, we probably wouldn't have been thinking that God would use him to write nearly half of the New Testament. Probably the last thing we would have thought is to pray for him. Or entertain the thought that he might be following the way one day. In fact, personally, I think I would be thinking something along the lines that the disciples James and John asked the Lord when this Samaritan village wouldn't host Jesus.

They asked the Lord, Lord, should we call fire from heaven to come down and consume this village? But yet, Jesus rebukes them.

He shows total patience as an example for those who are going to believe in him for eternal life. We see in the Gospels that Jesus would always make time for those in need.

[3 : 45] He would often stop where or what he was doing to attend another's need even if he was tired or overwhelmed.

The Lord's passion should and must inspire us. When we look at the current state of affairs in the world, the wars, the scandals, we see this progressive decline in humanity's morality.

And then we start wondering, asking God, Lord, how long? How long must we wait? And then I'm reminded of God's patience.

In 2 Peter 3, verse 9, it says, The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard as slowness, but he's being patient towards you, towards me, because he does not wish for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

Jesus came into the world to save all sinners. We have all sinned. Romans 3, verse 23 says, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[5 : 10] And the defining moment in the history of humanity humanity has its focus on sinners. The fallen state of humanity. It's rather easy for us to forget those who are yet to encounter Christ and simply move on with our lives, our preoccupations, which in itself are valid, though often they can be quite fleeting.

In Luke 14, Jesus tells a parable of a great banquet. There is this master of the house, which I imagine a mansion.

He decides to throw a banquet, and he sends his servants out to invite all of those who were on the guest list. However, those who were on the guest list declined invitation, not because they didn't like the host, but because they were too busy.

Too busy with life's preoccupations. They were busy with work. They were busy with property, with family. And none of these are wrong or sinful.

They're just consuming. They're just absorbing. But the host did not counsel the feast. Instead, he extends the invitation out to the poor, to the overlooked, to the outsiders.

[6 : 34] It's interesting that those that potentially we would think that should be who we should be inviting are not always the case.

Though we should invite all. So, coming back to the parable, there's space for more. So, he sends his servants further out to bring anyone, anyone who's willing to come.

God shows no favoritism. The second point of view, God in Christ Jesus shows his love.

If we go to Romans chapter 5, verses 8 and 9, we read, He loved us while we were still sinners.

Before we could even acknowledge him, Christ died for us. God loved us to the point of death.

Death on a cursed tree.

[8 : 06] Death on the cross. Having lived a perfect life. But he went beyond that. He loved us to the point of declaring us righteous by his own blood.

His suffering is a gift that would save us from the wrath of God. This is how God and the way God loves us, all we have to do is receive and share it.

When I was going to university, I went to university in New Jersey, in the state of New Jersey in the US. I was trying to get my driver's license.

If anyone has been to New Jersey and took the public transportation, you would understand why the desperate need for a driver's license. And I got a permit. When I was filling in the application, I put my middle name.

Now, for those who don't know, I came from Cape Verde Islands, a country that used to be part of Portugal. And there, you could potentially have multiple names.

[9 : 13] And I have five names. So my first name, my middle name, my mother's surname, my grandmother's surname, and my father's surname. So to me, when I was filling in the application, I put my middle name as the name in the middle.

Turns out, it was wrong. So in order to get my driver's license, I had to go to a central DMV location. Which was an hour's journey by train. It was in this city called Trenton.

And then I had to walk 40 minutes to get to this location. And I was afraid. It was my first year of university. I was sort of dreading this journey.

So I kept putting it off. Eventually, I decided to go. I was getting desperate. So I prayed before I went. I prayed and asked God for help and to guide me and to bring me home safely.

So I took the train. I went on this hour's journey. Arrived at the station in Trenton. I walked for 40 minutes. I finally arrived at the place. I did all the processes and corrected all the things that were wrong.

[10 : 21] And as I was coming out, I was very happy. I said, the Lord answered my prayer. Everything went so smoothly. So as I was coming out, it started, it was pouring down. There was a storm.

And I started wondering. I started panicking a bit. I said, how am I going to get to the station now? 40 minutes in this rain, even if I were to run, I will arrive all drenched and then I have an hour's journey by train.

So, and also, being from Cape Verde, some of you may be thinking, well, you should have checked the weather, the forecast. Why don't you do that? Well, I'm from Cape Verde. And there, you have sunshine for most of the year.

So, I wasn't used to checking the forecast. But, there we go. I had a situation. So, as I was walking out, there was a sort of a cover. There was a man. And I remember as if it was yesterday.

I'll never forget this image. There was a man right up to my right. And he approached me. And he asked me, do you need a ride? And I said, yes, I do.

[11:20] However, I was advised that I shouldn't take a ride, a lift, from strangers. And he said, oh no, that's fine.

No pressure. You don't have to. I'll tell you why I offered you a ride. He said, I'm a Christian and God spoke to me and he said, offer a ride to the next person that comes out through that door. And you were the next person. So, I offered you a ride. And I said, well, in that case, I'm a Christian too. Yes. Please. Please. Yeah.

And he asked me, where do you live? And I said, I live in Elizabeth. And he said, I also live in Elizabeth. So, we're going the same way. And I said, that's incredible. So, he pulls the car around. I go in and we started chatting, started talking. And I asked him his name. Now, anyone cares to guess what his name was? Yes.

[12:15] I think I heard the answer. His name is Mario. I asked him his name. I said, my name is Mario. He said, my name is Mario as well. So, wow. Okay. And then after that, he shares his life testimony.

He's from Guatemala. And he brings me to the front of my house. He draws me off. I say, thank you. And I never saw him again. But on that day, I realized that God loves us.

And also that he has a sense of humor. To my final point, God in Christ Jesus shows his grace. Let's look at Ephesians chapter 2, verses 4 through 7. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the 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 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

[13:35] So that in coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

Friends, God is rich in mercy. God's mercy could be said to be proportional to his love. He sees us dead in our transgressions, all of us, and he reaches out through Christ and he makes us alive.

He single-handedly saves us from our doomed fate and instead he places us sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. I think this transaction is bonkers.

Especially when we contrast that with the world we know. I think it's fair to say it's fair and wonderful in fact that we get to worship him for eternity.

God is immeasurable in kindness towards us. In Christ, he intends to show us how infinite he is when it comes to kindness when we're found in Christ.

[14:42] I think it would please him immensely to bless us by the richness of his grace found in Jesus. We were made in his image. I believe to have us restored once and for all in Christ and have him say it is good would be glorious.

May I call the band? Worship band to come up please. I hope that when we're reminded of God's attributes and promises of God already fulfilled and those waiting to be fulfilled according to his will and in failing ways were urged and empowered by the Holy Spirit to sprung into action in our faith to keep racing in the path that God has laid before each one of us to serve him in this new established kingdom in Jesus by following his lead and accomplishing all that he has set out before us in sharing our hope of the cross.

Lord we thank you. We thank you for your patience with us Lord. We thank you Lord that you loved us while we were still sinners.

We thank you Lord that you took us Lord dead in our transgressions and you made us alive with Christ Lord.

And you went further than that Lord. You placed us seated in heavenly places with Christ Lord. Lord I pray Lord that not only we're thankful for this Lord that we have the courage to share this Lord.

[16:34] To share with those around us Lord. To have the patience that you had Lord. To love one another Lord. To receive your grace Lord. And share it.

In your mighty name Lord Jesus we pray. Amen. Thank you.