

It's a Love Without End. Amen!

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Every time I read Luke 13:34, it touches my heart all over again:

*"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"*

Knowing very well what's in store for him, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. He stops for a moment to look over the city, and, like any parent, grieves for his wayward children, who for generations have turned away from his love. There is sorrow, wisdom, and tenderness here. And we're reminded that although Jesus stood on that hill in human form, he is still God the Father: the Father who mourns the stubbornness and sinfulness of the children he loves.

This short passage and the verses that surround it give us a profound insight into the heart and nature of God. Jesus compares himself to a mother hen, carefully nurturing and protecting her brood. His desire is now and always has been that we, his children, stay close to him, receive his love, allow him to care for us and to trust him. It's an astounding offer. The God of the galaxies is also our Creator, our Parent, our Savior and our friend. His amazing offer includes the reality of joy, love, forgiveness, and peace of mind while we're on earth. He promises us abundant life! In Romans 10, he also promises us eternal life: *If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* God wants nothing less than to fill our lives with his grace – forgiveness, acceptance, patience. Did I say joy? And joy!

Scripture tells us that God's people, again and again, turned away from God and toward sin, toward idolatry in all its forms. Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we now live under God's new covenant of sins forgiven, grace, discipleship, and transformation of our hearts into the image of his Son. Too often, we still turn away. Or, sadly, we continue to live under the law, trying to earn salvation that's already ours, and trying to please God, who's already pleased with us because of Jesus.

Grace does NOT give us permission to sin as we please. But God doesn't legislate morality from the outside; he transforms us from the inside. He writes his true law on our hearts, so that we don't have to "act" kind; we ARE kind. Our job? Let him in. Be honest with him. Allow him access to the deepest part of ourselves. Offer him fertile ground where he can plant the seeds of the fruit of the Spirit. He's proven his love and faithfulness a thousand times. It's time for us to trust, and open wide the door of our hearts to his forgiveness and freedom through Jesus Christ.