

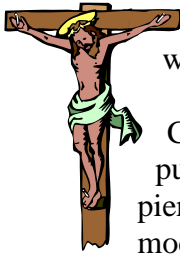


He's Coming Back



Most all of us have heard someone talk about Jesus coming back. It is called the Second Coming because He already came once, when He was born in a stable in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. As a man He went everywhere preaching and teaching this same message, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” (Matthew 22:37,39)

He tried in a lot of different ways to teach people how to love God and how to love their neighbor. He taught the people love through stories, called parables, and through commandments from the Bible, and through miracles of healings, and acts of mercy and compassion wherever He went. But, the greatest way He demonstrated His love was through His quiet and forgiving Spirit in the face of hatred, anger, physical violence, and finally the suffering of the most cruel and demeaning death known to man;



crucifixion on a cross in public view, exposed to sarcasm and mockery while He died, by those who hated Him.

Crucifixion only took place after He was cruelly beaten, spit on, slapped and punched, stripped of his clothes, had His beard pulled out, and endured the piercing of long, stinging thorns into his head and forehead from a crown of mockery – insulting His claim to be the Son of God. Love hung on the cross for us. One of His last words that He spoke was, “*Father, forgive them because they know not what they do.*” (Luke 23:34). With those last words He saved His tormentors from everlasting hell – why? Because He loved them.

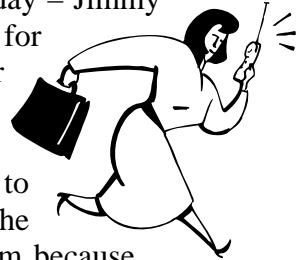
Those last words saved us from hell, too! When His blood flowed out from the wounds made by the nails in His hands and feet, and from His side where a sword pierced, God received the shedding of that blood as sufficient sacrifice to forgive all the sins that human beings could and would commit from that time on – on one condition only – that they accept Jesus as their Savior and learn to be like Him. In order to be like He was, they had to learn to love like He did.

“ . . . *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps: Who did no sin, and not once spoke anything that was wrong. They called Him every name in the book and He said nothing back. He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right.*” (1 Peter 2:21-23). This is not the world’s way of handling people who hurt you, trick you, hate you, and say bad things about you, but you don’t need to follow the world’s way because when you accept Christ as Savior, His anointing teaches you the truth about everything you need to know about yourself and Him.

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Stay with Christ, live deeply in Him, then you will be ready to receive Him with open arms when He comes with no cause for shame, guilt or lame excuses when He appears. Jesus said in Matthew 16:27, *“I will come in the glory of My Father with His angels; and then I will reward every man according to His works.”* The works that receive good rewards will be the works of love you have done. Works done without love are empty of value and go unrewarded.

Now, knowing we're supposed to be loving, and being loving are two very different things. It's easy to be loving when we're home and everything's peaceful, the praise music's playing, dinner is smelling delicious, you're humming a love song to Jesus – then the kids come home from school – you forgot soccer practice is today – Jimmy doesn't have a folder for his history report you have to type for tomorrow – Mary is sulking in her room because you won't let her go to the mall with her friends instead of doing homework – the phone rings and the new president of the P.T.A. is sick so you'll have to lead the meeting tonight – dinner is burning – you forgot to turn off the shower when you stepped out to answer the phone and the bathroom is sprayed with water – a friend calls you with a problem because you are such a good Christian – you wish you had not answered the phone, or better yet that you didn't have a phone! All feelings of love and compassion seem dead in you.



When pressures of this world mount within us, they seem to squeeze our ability to find time to love and care about others. Yet, Jesus was under pressure everyday of His life here on earth and always had time to love. But we don't want to give up our time to do something we know we should if we want to be like Jesus. We become so weighed down by the “should's” of this life that we are not willing to share another's burdens – to listen with a loving heart to another's hurts – often from an unattractive person that no one else will be loving toward, yet these are the wounded souls by the side of the road that Jesus stopped for – the unattractive blind beggar in smelly rags, the ten lepers in clothes with rotting flesh, mentally ill people, diseased people, crippled and maimed people – He found time for them all.



We are not often called to extend our love to those extremes, and it's a good thing, because we have trouble extending our love to the teenager with his cap turned backwards who cuts in front of us on the freeway – or the person with 15 items who gets in the “10 items only” check out stand ahead of us – or the relative that never said, “I'm sorry” when they hurt us, because after all, they don't deserve our love until they apologize. What pitiful examples of the love of Jesus we often are.

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Love is the key to the universe, love is why God created mankind. Love is why God sent Jesus to us. Love is why we will be in heaven forever. Love is why we are accepted in the family of God. Love overlooks slanders, backbiting and murmuring, but do we? Do we look down our noses at the faults and imperfections in others that we recognize because we have them too? You may be wronged, insulted, wounded and rejected; then you will know how Jesus felt – but knowing is not enough – acting in love as He did in those circumstances is the only way to be able to stand before Him without shame when He comes back. His return could be very soon – now is the time to start your love walk.



“I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8)

Will you receive rewards for your love at His coming?



He's Coming Back

1. Why is Jesus' coming back called the Second Coming?

2. What one Word describes the message Jesus preached?

3. What was the greatest way Jesus demonstrated love?

4. What must we do to truly be like Jesus?

5. What are the works that Jesus is going to reward?

6. What is the biggest thing that robs our time for caring for others?

7. Who are the hardest people to find time to love?

8. We are often what kind of examples of the love of Jesus?

9. What is the only way to be able to stand before Jesus without shame?

10. Who did Jesus say He was? (Revelation 1:8)
(The answer to this question will be your memory verse)

MEMORY VERSE _____

He's Coming Back

1. Why is Jesus' coming back called the Second Coming?

Because He came once before as a baby 2,000 years ago.

2. What one Word describes the message Jesus preached?

Love!

3. What was the greatest way Jesus demonstrated love?

Through His quiet and forgiving Spirit, and being hung on the cross.

4. What must we do to truly be like Jesus?

Learn to love like He does.

5. What are the works that Jesus is going to reward?

The works of love that have been done.

6. What is the biggest thing that robs our time for caring for others?

The pressures of this world that steal our time.

7. Who are the hardest people to find time to love?

The unattractive people no one wants to love.

8. We are often what kind of examples of the love of Jesus?

Pitiful.

9. What is the only way to be able to stand before Jesus without shame?

Acting in love as He did.

10. Who did Jesus say He was? (Revelation 1:8)

MEMORY VERSE "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."