

HE STILL LOVES YOU

Do you think that you are a bad person and that God is angry with you? Ever felt that you are too bad to be loved and forgiven by God? I have news for you, and that is, God's love is greater than all your sins. Your sins, no matter how great, cannot quench His love for you! 'But the list of my sins is very long,' you may say. Perhaps you are even trying to count them in your mind right now: alcohol and drug abuse, stealing, cheating, lying, adultery, murder, fornication, assault, homosexuality... the list may seem endless. Surely you have cause to feel dirty, rotten and unloved by God, but the truth is that no matter how bad you think you are, GOD STILL LOVES YOU. He is able and willing to forgive, save and cleanse you.

The Bible says: ... God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4 NIV.) And the truth is that God loves you unconditionally, and knowing this will set you free. Let me tell you this: many of the people God used and we read about in the Bible were not perfect. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob sinned at one time or another. David, the man after God's heart (1 Samuel 13:14.), committed adultery and plotted the death of his mistress's husband to cover up his sin. Peter denied ever knowing Christ or having anything to do with Him. A few days later he preached the gospel and three thousand souls were saved. Paul persecuted those who were Christians before him, having them stoned and imprisoned. Yet he wrote two-thirds of the New Testament and started many churches. Even today, the men and women of God that we see, hear about and watch on the TV are also not perfect; they are just saved by grace like all of us, and forgiven by God.

I was captivated by the appearance of a guest preacher who came to my church recently. I knew he was a preacher before anybody told me. He looked so gentle and innocent in his well-tailored three-piece suit. I even assumed he was a preacher's son, raised in church and in a good Christian home.

I was proved wrong when he declared in his preaching that he was from a dysfunctional family, and that his father hated church. His father was an alcoholic, a constant abuser of his wife and had no time for his children. This preacher grew up following his father's footsteps. He became a terror at school and in the neighbourhood. He joined an outlaw bikers' club where he committed many atrocities. Alcohol and drug abuse, bullying and beating up innocent people and hanging out with gangs were his favourite daily activities. The police were always after him. Once, in a fit of rage, he beat and dragged his own mother and stepfather, and hit his pregnant girlfriend so hard that she fainted. Anywhere he went, his presence caused people to shiver and tremble. A friend of his who knew him well and wrote about his past life said 'his conscience was numbed' and that 'drugs had made a scrambled mess of his brain'. Such was this man's life - a total mess.

One day someone gave him a gospel tract. He took it reluctantly, read it and threw it away. For many days he could not get his mind off what he read from the tract. Finally, he knelt down in desperation, and called upon God to forgive and save him from his messy life. God answered and turned his life around. As you know, this man is now a respectable preacher, a writer and the founder of a home for the homeless and drug abusers. *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old (way of life) has gone, the new (way of life) has come!* (2 Corinthians 5:17.)

After listening to this man's story, I concluded that God's love to man is great. If He could save this man and turn his life totally around for good, nobody is too bad for Him to love, reach out to and save. His hands are not short. He is able and willing to save whoever calls upon Him. He can turn any life around, heal any hurt and wound, and make something beautiful of a messy life.