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“In His Love, He Comes”

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

John 14:23

SPECIAL MUSIC: The Heart of God

Zach Williams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mneadLvxuql>



**GOD'S HOME IN ME**

Praise God,  
Creator of all things,  
Who stepped into my stench  
In order to clean me up  
And return me to righteousness  
In His eyes.  
Without condemnation,  
He crossed the threshold  
Into the fiery damnation  
Of my meager heart  
To rescue me from myself,  
Who, being engulfed in the flames  
Of my poor decisions and failures,  
Was doomed.  
With his hands, he covered me  
As he removed me from my distress  
Into wholeness with him.  
What joy and peace can be found  
In surrendering all that I am  
To all that he is.  
For now I am a temple  
And he has made his home in me.

On that bright August morning, Jason checked off his usual routine for the day. While Peggy slept a little longer, he grabbed his shower, dressed, and stepped downstairs where he popped a couple of slices of bread in the toaster. The coffee pot had done its job on time and the smell of the fresh brew helped Jason to start waking up. He poured coffee into his travel mug, then quickly buttered his toast, and grabbed his keys off the table. Cup in hand and toast in a paper towel, he headed out the door to the car. Sliding into the driver's seat, Jason started the car and headed for the office. After a couple of blocks, he called his wife to wake her up. Peggy thanked him between yawns and encouraged him to have a great day.

Not an unusual start to the day at all. And then that all changed as he received a phone call just blocks from his office. It was Peggy. "Jason", she screamed, "the house is on fire. The kids and I are cut off from the staircase. I have already called the fire department, but what if they don't make it in time? Come home, Jason. We need you!" And then the phone cut out.

Jason made a quick U-turn and sped back to their house. He could see the smoke in the distance. Sirens were wailing with the arrival of the fire trucks and firemen were pouring into the street, working like ants to save the house. The hoses were being deployed just as Jason arrived, but the firemen wouldn't let him cross the line. "This is my house," Jason shouted. "My wife and kids are trapped on the second floor. I have to get to them." But the firemen still wouldn't let him cross the line.

Jason paced restlessly back and forth on the fire line, waiting for the moment when no one was paying attention to him so that he could sneak past. He heard Peggy screaming out their bedroom window. "Jason! Help us! Jason! Please come and get us! We can't hold out much longer! Hurry Jason!"

Jason was furious, scared, frustrated, and ridden with guilt, all at the same time. The house was an older one and Jason felt that he could get to the old coal chute without anyone noticing. That would get him into the basement. He tore off his shirt and soaked it with water flowing in the street gutter. Tying the shirt around his mouth he ran to the chute. The key for the padlock was on his keyring and he opened the lock and threw the doors back.

Smoke was everywhere. He really hadn't thought this all through at all. If Peggy and the kids couldn't get to the staircase, how would he get to them? Then he remembered the old laundry dumbwaiter in the corner that led to the master bedroom. He tried to call Peggy on the phone but couldn't get an answer. He doubted that she could hear him above all the commotion of the fire and firefighters. He tried to yell up the dumbwaiter chute, but got no response. He also realized that he was too large to fit into the dumbwaiter.

There was a laundry sink in the basement and Jason wet down all his clothes, including the shirt on his face. Slowly he made his way up the basement staircase to the first floor. When he opened the door there was fire and smoke everywhere. He made his way over to the staircase that was engulfed in flames and carefully made his way upstairs, even as he felt the fire burn his flesh and the smoke fill his lungs.

Arriving on the second floor, he realized that there was a wall of flame between him and the bedroom. Well, he couldn't stop now. He ran and threw himself through the fire to reach the other side, feeling the floor creak beneath him. Opening the door to the bedroom, he found Peggy, Tom, and Jessy lying on the floor near the window. He could see that the firemen were trying to move the ladder truck into position to reach his family, but there were several large trees in the yard that were making a mockery of their efforts. His family was awake and coughing.

Jason put Tom and Jessy in the lift and began to lower them to the basement. He gave them instructions to pull on the rope when they were out of the lift and then they were to head for the coal chute doors. After a couple of minutes, he felt a tug on the rope, so he brought the dumbwaiter back up the bedroom and told Peggy to get inside. It was a very tight fit. She tried to resist but he was insistent. He then lowered her to the basement as well. When she was at the bottom, she gave the rope a tug and headed for the chute door. Jason had not had the heart to tell her that he would not be able to fit into the dumbwaiter.

He stepped back out into the hall and saw that the staircase had collapsed from the flames. But the attic door was still accessible. He pulled the chain and the staircase unfolded. He could hear the firefighters on the roof cutting holes to vent the smoke. Carefully he climbed the folding stairs, reaching the attic just in time to see a section of the roof fall as the firefighters made their last cut. What a surreal vision it must have been as the first responders looked down at him from

above, like yellow angels waiting for him. He reached his hand up through the hole and the angels grabbed him, pulling him to the roof. They helped him over to a ladder and then one of them carried him down to the ground where the EMTs surrounded him, putting an oxygen mask on his face.

Jason looked over at the nearest ambulance and there stood his wife and kids, also with oxygen masks and receiving attention. Knowing that they were in good hands, he passed out as the med-techs loaded him into the ambulance.

When Jason woke up, he was in the hospital. Everything hurt. Peggy and the kids were there waiting to talk to him. He started crying uncontrollably when he realized fully that they were okay. He had been so afraid that he would lose them. There were burns over most of his body and the doctors told him it would be a long and painful recovery. But Jason didn't care. The love for his family, the love that drove him into that burning house, the love that meant more to Jason than life itself was still in his heart and now he could be nothing but grateful.

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Have you ever considered how much God must love us, God the father, God the son, and God the holy spirit? How can we begin to understand that Jesus was grateful for the privilege of surrendering his life for us? When we think of it that way, Jesus surrendering his life for us, we find it confusing. How could anyone love us that much? But take it a little deeper. Ask yourself, "Can I begin to comprehend how much Jesus loves me?" Make it personal. Make it personal because Jesus makes it personal. Even as individuals, we are

benefactors of the greatest escape plan in the universe. A plan that came at a tremendous cost. Salvation from certain death. Jesus rushed headfirst into the burning buildings of our lives to save us from certain death.

We may ask ourselves, “Why would Jesus do such a thing? He doesn’t even know me!” But there’s the rub. He does know us. He knows each of us personally. He knows everything about us. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows the number of hairs on our heads. He knows our every fault and every strength. Love is not selfish. It asks for nothing in return. It’s not quid pro quo. It’s not “I will love you if you love me.” True love is unconditional. Christ’s love for us is unconditional. We do not have to love Christ for him to love us. He loves each unique man and woman because we are God’s creation. His love for us is not an afterthought. And we should realize that our love for him should not be an afterthought either.

That is why it is so very sad when we see the evidence of that love and still choose to disbelieve. Why is it so hard for us to give God the glory for the providence he shows us in our lives? Why is it so hard for us to accept that God made each of us out of love. It was intentional. We are his children.

Let’s do a little deep digging on this scripture we have today from John 14:23:

**Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”**

In the verses prior to this verse, Jesus is comforting his disciples. He's told them that he has to go away, that things are going to get bad, that life is going to get very dark. But he doesn't want to leave them in this state, a state of hopelessness and despair. He reiterates multiple times that it is essential that they follow his path, his teachings. And to help them do that, God the father will send a spirit to help guide them and keep them on track. But Jesus does not approach it from a legal standpoint. It's not about law. He isn't forcing anyone to follow the path. It needs to be a choice. Following the path does not lead to the Kingdom. This is Jesus' way of explaining that it isn't in the law that salvation is found, it is the love of Jesus that encourages each of us to follow his teachings.

There are those who will follow the teachings of Jesus and leave Jesus himself on the sidelines. Are the guidelines that Jesus established for living a good and fruitful life on this earth relevant? Of course, they are. Humans have established great philosophies, governments, and legal systems based on those teachings while placing the teacher on the sidelines. And while it doesn't take the value of the teachings away, it does pretty much leave them powerless. And if anything, Jesus is never without power and influence in this world.

Let me make it clear in this way, while living a good life based on the teachings of Jesus is a noble gesture, those teachings did not die on the cross for our sins. It was Jesus, Son of the Most High, that died on that cross in the greatest example of love this universe has ever witnessed. Jesus dies on that cross to take away all the times we failed to live up to the standard of a perfect life. All of our moral failures. All of those times when we gave into our selfish



demands and impulses. All of those times when we placed our needs above the needs of others.

The reason that we choose to follow the teachings of Jesus is not to be morally superior, it is because we realize that Jesus led a perfect life, and we love him for showing us the truth. We love him for sacrificing himself to set us free so that we can choose to love him. Not because we have to. And we example that love of Jesus to everyone around us so that they, too, can find a better way to live. And God the Father knew that we would still have trouble with that, so he gave us the Holy Spirit to help us stay on track, to remind us when we are prone to failure, to help push us back from the brink, to guide us in the path that is true. But that doesn't work if Jesus is not part of the equation. Jesus is the reason, not the afterthought.

**Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.**

Now, the next part of this verse is very revealing. If we read these two parts together it reads:

**Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them.**

If you love me you will obey my teaching and God will love you. This doesn't mean he isn't disappointed when we fail. But this love that Jesus is talking about is the love that we are guaranteed when we are adopted into the family of God. Adopted children are loved so very much. That is because they are chosen. They are invited into the family of God. They become so much a part

of the family of God that they are joint heirs of the Kingdom, never to be disinherited. Brothers and sisters of Christ.

And that leads us into the final portion of this verse with some very important revelations:

**and we will come to them and make our home with them.**

And we. Who is 'WE'? Why doesn't it say 'I'? Why doesn't it say God? It is so very important to understand this. It isn't just Jesus that comes to dwell in us but the Family of God. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. The great 'WE', the great "I Am", makes their home in us, sets up house in our hearts, becomes the very fabric of who we are. And by doing so, starts making adjustments in the way we live, starting from the moment they move in. Turning our hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. Giving us new perspective. Allowing us to be vessels of love to our fellow humans. What does John tell us in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, verse 35:

**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**

By allowing God to enter our lives, we overflow with his love into all those around us. Our love for Christ opens those doors, those floodgates. Our love for Christ is exemplified in our actions and behaviors. That is what allows us to love even those who do not love us. Jesus even loved those who had no love for him.

**Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do.**

**It is our love for Jesus that allows us to see others through his eyes, to feel their pain, to lift them up through actions, prayers, and deeds. That bond that come from mutual love with God provides us with the strength, guidance, and perseverance to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the world around us.**

**7 The Lord is my strength and shield.**

**I trust him, and he helps me.**

**I am very happy.**

**And I praise him with my song.**

**8 The Lord is powerful.**

**He gives power and victory to his chosen one.**

**Psalm 28:7-8**

**But all of that comes from our love for Jesus.**

**Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.**

**That doesn't mean just the teachings that we agree with or the ones that benefit us. Christianity requires commitment. Not a commitment to the law but to Jesus Christ. By committing to Jesus, we will see his teachings come alive in us.**

**I've been binging on a television show that I didn't know existed called "The Good Place." It's all about four people who discover they are dead and have arrived in what they are told is "The Good Place" as opposed to the**

**“The Bad Place.” Unfortunately for them, it really is “The Bad Place” and being there is just a new form of torment and torture. I won’t draw this out, but in the show every human being is judged on a point system. You must have more good points than bad points to get into “The Good Place.” But, as it turns out, human beings are not capable of earning enough good points to succeed. So, everyone winds up in “The Bad Place.” If their motivation for doing good is to get into “The Good Place,” then the points are negated. Only points earned through selfless acts are awarded. And since humans are selfish by nature, it is very difficult to earn points at all.**

**In spite of this being a television program, isn’t it the way so many people believe that they can get into heaven? By earning enough points? By living what they believe is a good life, that is more about making themselves feel good than about actually helping people? There is nothing in the Bible that tells us that when we stand in judgement, we get to tell God that we have lived good lives. That isn’t the question that will be asked of us. The question will be, “Did you know and love my son? Did you become my vessel, or did you just try to do things that you thought were good on your own? Did you think you were earning points?”**

**Again, Isaiah 64:6**

**6 All of us are dirty with sin.**

**All the right things we have done are like filthy pieces of cloth.**

**All of us are like dead leaves.**

**Like the wind our sins have carried us away.**

That sounds so dark, but it is truth. Our sins are so ugly in God's eyes. But he had a plan from the beginning on how to right our wrongs and scrub our souls. Jesus' intentional sacrifice is a bright place in that darkness, the answer to our failures before God.

This week, let's all reflect inward and check our motives and our commitment to our Creator. Let us compare the teachings of Christ to the way we live our lives. Let us ask ourselves if we are doing what we do because we are doing what Christ expects of us, or are we trying to rack up brownie points to get into heaven? Is our love for Christ driving our lives, or is our desire for reward overshadowing our actions?

**Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."**

**God bless you all!**

**AMEN**

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