

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that those who believe in Him may have eternal life” *John 3, verse 16***

**“This is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” *John 17, verse 3***

If I had £5 for every time I'd heard the words “God loves you” or “God loves us”, I would be able to afford a very nice cruise round the Caribbean on the proceeds.

And it can all sound a bit glib, even desperately insensitive. For someone living with physical pain each day, or for someone whose whole world has just been shattered by the death of a very close relative, what does it mean to say that “God loves us” ?

I believe that a lot of the answer to that question lies when we put these two verses from the gospel of John together. In the first, the demonstration of God's love is that he offers eternal life. In the second, we hear Jesus' clear definition of eternal life: it is how much we can know him and be in relationship with him.

So many people instinctively feel that if they are seriously sick or suddenly in difficulty, they may have done something to deserve it. Is how much wealth or comfort or health I have a measure of God's love for us ? If it were, God must have seriously disliked the apostle Paul and the prophet Jeremiah ! Such tame formulae have no place in our faith in God.

No, His love is far from tame in this way. His love is in His giving of Himself to us. He gave Himself totally to us on the cross, with nails and pain and gasping for breath. With one purpose only, that we might 'know him' fully. “God so loved the world.....that we might have eternal life.” “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God.”

According to Him, **that** is how we might begin to 'measure' His love.

Prayer:

To God the Creator, who loved us first, and gave this world to be our home;  
To God the Redeemer, who loves us and by dying and rising pioneered the way to freedom;  
To God the Sanctifier, who spreads the divine love in our hearts,  
Be praise and glory, today and always.