



## ***HOW DEEP THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR US***

BY MATT BLACKWELL

The gospel resounds in every verse of “How Deep The Father’s Love For Us.” Stuart Townend wrote these lyrics so we and all God’s church could proclaim and explore a profound tension in the gospel: the coexistence of God’s infinite holiness and His infinite love.

God’s infinite holiness requires humanity’s perfection, but not one of us has measured up. All of us have sinned. Paul left no room for interpretation when addressing the pervasiveness of our sin: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God ... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10 ESV).

The great theologian A.W. Tozer expounded further on human depravity:

“Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and things were allowed to enter. Within the human heart things have taken over. Men have now by nature no peace within their hearts, for God is crowned there no longer, but there in the moral dusk, stubborn and aggressive usurpers fight among themselves for first place on the throne ... the roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die ... God’s gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution.” —A.W. Tozer, “The Pursuit of God”

The tension we feel in singing this song is precisely because its words bring us to confront our deep guilt as we receive the love of our holy God. Because of our sin, we are in fact responsible for every negative force against Jesus in the song. We are the “*wretch*,” we are the “*scoffer*,” our “*wounds [marred] the Chosen One*,” our “*sin held Him there*” on the cross, our burden pressed out “*His dying breath*,” and we earned the death He died.

What Townend was onto in his writing this song, along with Paul and Tozer in their writing, is that we humans are totally guilty, woefully undone, and in desperate need of rescue. It was in the midst of that need that our heavenly Father’s love led Him to send His Son to take

our place on the cross. It's this truth Paul wanted to convey when he wrote, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8 ESV), and it's this truth we celebrate when we sing, *"That He should give His only Son."*

Because God sent Jesus we have hope in His infinite love providing a way for the great rescue of His people. In singing this song we celebrate all the cross and resurrection have accomplished for us:

- The wretch is made God's treasure, meaning our identity is renewed.
- He brings many sons to glory, meaning our eternity is secured.
- His death has brought us life, meaning our destiny is heaven.
- And He has paid our ransom, meaning our sins are forgiven.

What's so great about singing this song is that though the tension between God's love and holiness is real, at the end of the song we remember that God Himself resolved it for us. When Jesus rose Christ's righteousness overcame our sin, presenting us holy and blameless to God. As Paul again tells us, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (1 Corinthians 5:21 ESV).

Our greatest need was indeed answered by the Father's love, and that's why we sing this song. As somber as it is regarding our part in Jesus' crucifixion, it brings us to express and encourage the response Jesus's sacrifice deserves: pure and utter joy that *"His wounds have paid [our] ransom."*

