



BECKY COMBEE MINISTRIES INC

God So Loved

BY BECKY COMBEE

One verse of Scripture that is cherished by many, many people is John 3:16. When I read it, I am always captured by the little word SO. For God SO loved the world. In these two letters the extent of God's love is magnified far beyond our imagination. God's love is SO LOVE!

We use this little word SO as liberally as salt on our dinners. At work, we declare that our new assignment is SO time consuming and SO unnecessary. At lunch, we note that the line is SO long, the food SO disappointing and the price SO high. As we travel home, the traffic is SO slow and drivers SO impatient. The degree of our discontent in each situation is carried by this little word SO.

Yet, in contrast to the disappointment that is expressed by this little word SO, happiness is also raised to new heights by its use. At a wedding, we say that the bride and groom looked SO happy. We declare that the bride was SO beautiful and the bridesmaids' dresses were SO gorgeous. The groom, of course, was SO charming. The wedding reception was SO well-organized, and the cake was SO magnificent. Oh, how our vocabulary would suffer without the word SO.

Little Can Just

BY SUZANNE D. WILLIAMS

What must God think while we wallow around in our sins?

Filled with pride and selfishness. Hate and unkindness. Picking each other apart. Worshipping idols made with our own hands. Bumbling across the room in self-made confusion, knives extended, in case we run into anyone and they try to hurt us in some way. Eager to take offense, looking for it even. Segregating, separating, isolating because they are different. Not like us.

What does He think of the glass houses we've built? The walls lined with decadence and immorality we don't even try to hide, but flaunt in our bad behavior. Worse, we put up signs celebrating it. Hand out awards written in scarlet for things He forbid us to do, giving speeches to celebrate taboo accomplishments. Crowns made of tissue that dissolve in the wind.

What does He think of our fancy clothes and diamond rings? Worn while we roll around in the filth beneath our feet. Beggars, but unaware of it. Destitute, but blind to our poverty.

Surrounded by clean air and crystalline waters, but drinking from mud puddles.

(Continued from GOD SO LOVED)

When we were in the deserts of Africa, our host warned us, perhaps jokingly, about the herds of elephants that were often seen there. He informed us that elephants could only run in a straight line and if we saw them coming, we should run in a zig-zag pattern. I know you can see me zig-zagging across the desert to escape these creatures that are SO big.

In a similar manner, giraffes are SO tall. One year, we were visiting the zoo at feeding time and it amazed me how tall they were and how low they could bend in order to reach food held up by the zoo attendant. I was riveted there for just a moment because it reminded me of our Lord who came from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell to rescue man. Just as the giraffe bends lower and lower and lower, our Lord descended lower and lower to sacrifice His life for mankind. **He gave His life for us because God loved us SO much.** His love for all of us was SO much bigger than the size of an elephant.

In Ephesians 3: 18, the wonder of God's love is described in four dimensions – breadth, length, depth, and height. I love this because ordinarily we stretch our minds to comprehend three dimensions. Yet, the New Century translation prays that “all God's holy people will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ's love – how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is.” The Message Bible talks of “the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love” and challenges us to, “Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!” These four dimensions can be understood in one word. SO! God SO loved the world!

The word SO is only two letters, but its size is enormous. It carries the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice and the weight of God's love. A love that according to the Contemporary English Version is “too wonderful to be measured.” Other translations state that His love surpasses knowledge¹ and is greater than anyone can ever know.² But, here is the wonder of it all. God SO

loved me and God SO loved you. God SO loved the world!

What a wondrous love is ours! It is incomprehensible, unmeasurable, and beyond description. Yet, it is ours. In spite of our sin and rebellion, it is ours. God calls us to Himself and because of Jesus' sacrifice we can know and experience His love. This love means everything to us! Everything! It says “Now are we the sons of God.”³ From our heart, it cries “Abba, Father.”⁴ We are His children, in His kingdom, with His life and nature.

Oh, how we love Him! We love Him, because He first loved us.⁵ God SO loved us “that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”⁶ Certainly, WHOSOEVER includes me and whosoever includes you! God SO loved the world and we are included! We are grateful for the SO love of God!

¹NIV ²NCV ³1Jn 3:2 ⁴Gal 4:6 ⁵1Jn 4:19 ⁶Jn 3:16

(Continued from IF HE CAN JUST)

What does He think? “For God so loved the world, that He gave ...”⁶

As dead as we are, as helpless, as weak and disturbed, His response always has been love. For it is what He is made of, what constructs His every action, every motive. And the more we stumble, the further we fall, the greater His love grows.

Not weaker. He doesn't lose strength. But He stretches further, reaches out more, if He can only get our attention, one millisecond of our time ... If He can just ... **Love.**

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Is 1:16-18).