

God Loves You If You've Failed

Jonathan Rue

Mark 1:9-11

God Loves You Now Series

10.18.09

Well, in 1985, Coca-cola was losing market share to Pepsi-cola. They were declining, Pepsi was growing. Well, they were slowly declining and in 1985, the coca-cola people had this idea. It was bold, it was courageous, and it was extremely dumb. They said, let's take our formula, our sacred coca-cola formula that we've used for 99 years and let's change it. Let's throw it out, and let's have new coke. So they rolled out new coke, and everybody hated it. Millions of people just revolted and said, we want old coke back. And so, after a very short period, 77 days, a very embarrassed Coca-cola company rolled out the old coke again and called it Coke Classic. And they've never looked back. So, new Coke failed.

Well, I don't know if you saw this movie in 2002, Eddie Murphy put a lot of hard work into a movie called, *The Adventures of Pluto Nash*. this movie cost 100 million dollars to make and in the states here it grossed 4.4 million dollars. And I think worldwide they added another 2 million on to that. So they lost basically 94 million dollars on this movie. Failed.

I don't know if you heard about this story last month. There was this guy in Pennsylvania who, his name was Jonathan Parker, and he robbed a house. He broke into somebody's house and he rummaged through the house. One of the things he took was a couple of diamond rings. But, Jonathan was like many of you, and he was a bit of a facebook addict, and he was in the bedroom taking the diamond rings. And he noticed a computer and so he thought, I better check my facebook page, see who's posted on there. So he logs on and checks his facebook page, see who's posted on there. So he logs on and checks his facebook page and then he forgets to log off of facebook. And so he leaves the house. The woman comes home, notices her house is rummaged through, her rings are missing. And she says, there's this weird facebook page person, Jonathan Parker, was on my computer. I don't know. So, the cops get him and now he is facing up to 10 years in prison. He failed as a burglar. Failed.

Well, nobody likes to fail. Right? Failure is a terrible thing, especially when it happens to me. We don't like to fail our parents. We don't like to fail our friends. We don't like to fail ourselves. And we don't like to fail God. Failure is a terrible feeling and yet there are so many ways to fail in life. Cause it's not even when we talk about failing God. It's not just this feeling that I did something terribly wrong. We're going to talk about that next week in our series. We're going to talk about when we blow it, and we sin, we do things that are wrong, that are outside of the bounds of what is right and wrong.

But, failure can just be really good things or if your parents have expectations, your parents want you to follow in their footsteps maybe. But, you don't want to. You go a different path. And you have to live with this feeling that you're failing your parents.

This happened with Hugh Laurie, you know, has anybody seen the TV show House? Well, the guy on House plays a doctor on TV, and the reality is that his father was a doctor and wanted him to be a doctor. And is just upset that he didn't become a doctor, he only became a pretend doctor on TV. So, sometimes our parents put these expectations on us about what they want us to be in our lives. But, there are all kinds of ways that we can fail. We can fail our friends by not being there for our friends, by talking bad about them and they find out. We can fail in school, you know? You can spend a little bit or a lot too much time partying as a freshman, and then you notice you're failing all of your grades and you have to drop out of school. At school, there is a passing grade and there's a failing grade. And if you don't make the passing grade, you fail, you're done.

We can fail in our jobs. You know lots of people, because of the downturn in the economy have unfortunately lost jobs, just gotten laid off, not because they were bad workers, but because the work dried up. But, then there are people that just do things really dumb at work and get themselves fired. They fail in some way.

Well, there's so many ways to feel like we've failed in life, so many areas where we can fail in life. We can begin to feel like we've failed God in so many ways. And as we've been doing this series last week we started a series called, God Loves You Now. And last week we talked about the universal love of God, that extends, it's so expansive. The universal love of God expands to all that God made, every creature that God has made, he loves, because he's their maker.

Tonight, I want to talk about God as Father. And there is a new dimension of God's love when we begin to come under the love of God as a father. And God's love as our Father is one that covers over all of our failures, that God does not love us because of how great performers we are, because we do all of the things that he wants us to do. God loves us because we're his children. So I've called tonight's talk, God Loves You if You've Failed. Let's just take a moment and invite God to speak to us through his word tonight. Let's pray.

TITLE SLIDE:
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Well, as soon as we mention the word father, for many people, that brings up a lot of negative images. For those of us that may not have had a great father, our biological father may have abandoned us, or our stepfather may have abused us in some way or been completely distant as a father. So, many of us know not the love of our heavenly father, but know the love of a phony father. A phony father.

SLIDE:
The love of a phony father

See, anybody can be a father. You don't have to go to a special class for it, you don't have to get credentialed, all you've got to do is have sex with a woman, and it's got to be the right time of the month, and you're a father. It can be accidental, well kind of. It can't be purely accidental, even though people try to say that. It was an accident...really? Really?

But, anybody can be a father. That word just means that you procreated. But, the richness of meaning that God is our father, that God fathers us and the love of God as a father can be utterly lost on our earthly fathers, on our biological fathers or our stepfathers. And a couple of ways that we miss the fatherhood of God. A couple of marks of the love of a phony father is first of all that it's performance driven.

SLIDE:
Performance-driven

It says, I will love you IF you do good. IF you measure up to what I want you to accomplish in life. If you do all of these things right, then I'll love you. then I'll release my love to you.

There's a man named Sean O'hair who's a professional golfer and Sean O'hair has a very difficult relationship with his father, Marc O'Hair.

SLIDE:
Image—Sean O'hair

And when Sean was 17 years old, his father Marc directed him out of high school and to go pro at 17 before he had finished high school. And they drove all over the country. He spent the next several years just driving everywhere in a van with his father sitting in the front seat, trying to finish his GED by correspondence as he went to tournament after tournament after tournament.

Now his father sold the family business for almost 3 million dollars. And what the father claims is that he sunk 2 million dollars into his son during that period to try and help his son go pro in golf. But, that came with strings attached. It wasn't a free gift. It wasn't--son, let me bless you and really let me help you accomplish your dream. Marc O'Hair saw it as a business proposition. So, when his son

was 17 years old, he had him sign a contract giving Marc, the father, 10% of the son's income for the rest of his life. Because he said, I'm not going to dump this much money into you without getting something in return, without the guarantee that I'm getting it back.

They did an interview a couple of years ago on 60 Minutes on a segment that was called the Tiger, something with Tiger, I've forgotten the title of it, but something with Tiger Woods. This whole segment was about parents that drive their kids really hard like Tiger Wood's father did. So this is becoming more and more happening with children athletes that heir parents drive them. Well, Marc gets on this program and this is what he says. He says that, "I'm a business man." And he said that he didn't see his child just as a son he brought into the world, he looked at him as a commodity that he could turn a profit on, that he would get a return on investment. And so he said this.

SLIDE:

"I was in business 20-plus years and I know how to make a profit," he told CBS. "You've got the same old thing—it's material, labor and overhead. He's pretty good labor." --Marc O'Hair

Just blows your mind as a father. This is a business proposition. And so if his son doesn't make it, that's not ok. That his love is wrapped up into "you better perform." You better shoot really low scores and win some golf tournaments. I've sunk all this money into you. I've contracted with you. You better make this happen.

You know, sadly their relationship finally just snapped and up to that point, you know, Sean had been playing for three years and doing terrible. And finally he broke with his father. He moved out, they don't speak anymore, and Sean got married. He found a woman that he fell in love with. She was also a golfer, but it's really interesting that soon after he got married to a woman that loves him, that accepts him, and he broke with his father, he golf game went through the roof. He started winning tournaments, he finally, after six times through Q-school that qualifies you for the PGA tour, he finally got his PGA tour card and he's now winning tournaments on the PGA tour.

It's just amazing the difference between being a relationship that is transactional, that's based off of "you must perform" and being in a relationship that's loving, that's accepting, not just because of what you can do. But just who you are. And it's amazing how that affects our ability to perform.

So, the first mark is performance-driven, the mark of a phony father. The second thing, the love of a phony father prioritizes other things.

SLIDE:

Prioritizes other things

And so, you know, some fathers spend all of their time doing everything that they're into and that they love and have no time for their children. My grandfather was like this. My dad was raised in a home where he would come home and whenever his dad would come home, he would go out into his trailer that was out in the backyard. He had his own trailer, separate from the house, and he would go into his trailer and he would drink and he would hang out. He would just hide out from the family and do his own thing. Totally absent father. Didn't want to spend time with the kids, wanted to do what he wanted to do.

And so many fathers unfortunately are like this. They're into sports, they're into golf, they're into fishing, and if it ever happens to include you...it's like Homer Simpson. Every so often there's a tender moment, but he basically is like the father that is totally selfish. If I want to do it I'm going to do it and if it happens to be a kid thing than I'll do it, but it's about me, it's about what I want to do. Prioritizing other things than kids.

Thirdly, the love of a phony father is passive.

SLIDE:
Passive

It's passive, it's non-expressive. Many of you have had fathers that maybe have never told you that they love you. They've never expressed their heart of love or acceptance of you, have never said, son I'm proud of you. Daughter, I'm so glad that you've really found somebody that you love, that you're happy in life. I'm just so glad for that. Some of us have experienced the love of a father that is cold and distant and passive, that isn't active; it doesn't reach out or demonstrate love to us. But it's passive.

Well, we carry; some of us carry elements of this baggage into church where we begin to hear about the love of God. And the love of God our father is different than these phony loves. It's totally different and the first thing I want to say about God's love to us as a father is this isn't just some thin metaphor in scripture. This is a strong theme that runs through scripture. Jesus talked about God as a father more than anybody else. In fact, the gospels ascribe the word father onto God more than double the amount of the rest of the New Testament. Jesus was very much relating to God as a father and talking about God as a father.

SLIDE:
The love of our Father in heaven

Now, this isn't strictly in the new testament. It also happens in the Old Testament. Psalm 103:13 says this.

SLIDE:
Psalm 103:13 (TNIV)

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

So, God has compassion on those who fear him like a father has compassion on his children. And there are many other places in the Old Testament that talk about this, but then Jesus comes and the gospel writer John, says this in the first chapter of John, starting in verse 10.

SLIDE:

John 1:10-13

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, **he gave the right to become children of God**— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Fascinating text. Because on the one hand, like we talked about last week, God is the maker, he's the creator of everybody, and so he loves with a universal love. He loves everybody. But when we start to talk about God as our father, there is a tighter circle that the Bible outlines about who is a child of God, in the sense that God has a fatherly love toward them. And what the Bible says is it's those who enter relationship with God, who receive through Jesus Christ our sonship. Paul talks a lot in the New Testament about us being adopted as sons and daughters of God. We're adopted into his family. And Paul tells us in Galatians 3:26.

SLIDE:

Galatians 3:26 (TNIV)

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith

So when we put our faith and our trust in Christ, we are made, we are given the right to become children of God. And that's a wonderful thing because that opens us up to the love of our heavenly father. And I want to go through a couple of marks about what God's love looks like. And as we do so, I want to look at a text tonight out of Mark chapter 1, the baptism of Jesus. And so why don't we read that text together. Mark chapter 1, verses 9-11.

SLIDE:

Mark 1:9-11 (TNIV)

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

You are my son, whom I love and with you I am well pleased. Simple text. Short text. But a powerful, powerful word from God in this text for you and for me. Because this text describes a couple of elements of what the love of the father looks like for us. And the first thing is that the love of the father is freely given.

SLIDE:
Freely given

The love of our father in heaven is freely given. Because the context is what tells it to us. Jesus is the son of God. He comes to earth, he's born to a virgin, we know the story, right? Christmas is coming in a couple of months, Christ comes to earth and then he's raised by this family. And it's not until he's 30 years old that he is baptized here in this text and then he is led out in the wilderness to be tested and then his is released into his ministry. And he ministered for about three years. Now this is the son of God coming to earth. And he's been living on earth for 30 years. I'm 30 years old, and I've been a pastor for a year now, so hey, I'm already ahead of the son of God in terms of my ministry productivity, you know? I'm doing pretty good.

Jesus is just a carpenter for 30 years. The son of God. He's not preaching to the masses, he's not healing people yet, he's not raising the dead, he's making chairs and tables and I don't know what else, book cases? There weren't a lot of books. He was making stuff out of wood. And then verse 11, a voice came from heaven, you are my son whom I love, with you I am well pleased.

SLIDE:
Mark 1:11 (TNIV)

And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, **whom I love**; with you I **am well pleased**

God's love is not earned. It's not transactional. God isn't giving us a contract to make sure he gets a return on the love that he invests in us, when it starts to pay off. God's love is freely given. Jesus has done nothing yet to deserve this love. He has done nothing! Now he hasn't failed because he's the son of God so he didn't really do a lot of that. But he didn't do anything yet! There was nothing productive that he had done that God's love was in response to. The love of the father. The love of the father was freely given to him, right at the beginning of his ministry, saying you're my son. I love you and I'm pleased with you.

How might that change our lives if we experienced God's voice speaking that to us before we've done anything for God? Before we've done any kind of leadership? Before we're a small group leader? Before we go to long prayer meetings? Before we read our bible every day? Before we feed the poor and the hungry and do acts of service to people? Before we do anything that God

wants us to do? What if we really knew at bottom, God loves me? I'm his son. I'm his daughter. And he's pleased with me.

I think what happens for many of us that haven't heard that voice speak to us in our core is that we begin to develop a sort of external self that we present. And we try to look really good and we try to earn, we try to do the right things to earn God's love, to make ourselves seem like we're good enough to be loved by God. That we really do have worth. There's a great book that I want to recommend to you by a guy named, Brennan Manning, called *Abba's Child*.

SLIDE:
Image—Abba's Child

And this book is sort of Brennan's story out of the traps of trying to be somebody that he's not. And the traps of failure. And his walk into a life of grace and receiving God's love. He was a priest who struggled his whole life with alcoholism. And then ended up marrying a woman, which priests aren't supposed to do. So, he experienced the disdain of the Catholic church. And had his priest-ness, I don't know what they call it, but he wasn't a priest anymore. That was taken away. And I want to read you something that he says about this false self, he calls it, or an imposter.

SLIDE:
When I was eight, the imposter, or false self, was born as a defense against pain. The imposter within whispered, "Brennan, don't ever be your real self anymore because nobody likes you as you are. Invent a new self that everybody will admire but nobody will know." So I became a good boy—polite, well-mannered, unobtrusive, and deferential. I studied hard, scored excellent grades, won a scholarship in high school, and was stalked every waking moment by the terror of abandonment and the sense that nobody was there for me.

I learned that perfect performance brought the recognition and approval I desperately sought. I orbited into an unfeeling zone to keep fear and shame at a safe distance. As my therapist remarked, "all these years there has been a steel trapdoor covering your emotions and denying you access to them." Meanwhile, the imposter I presented for public inspection was nonchalant and carefree.

—Brennan Manning

See if we feel like God doesn't love us until we're a good little boy, we're a good little girl, we do things right, it causes us to invent this new self, to put on this self to other people and to God that looks like a really good self, but, really has no connection to who we really are underneath. I know I definitely went through this and in similar ways as Brennan describes. I was raised in a private church school that was great, it was great for me, but it was half home-school and when

I was in 11th grade, I transferred with my friend into this really academic school. It was still a private Christian school, but it was a college prep kind of school. And I didn't know if I could really make it. I'd gone to our little church school, and I'd always kind of had a sense, is this really as hard as other schools or is it easier?

So, I felt like I needed to prove myself. I'm young, you don't know who you are, you're wrestling with am I good enough? I poured my whole life into studying. I studied 3 hours minimum in 11th & 12th grade. Many many times pulled all nighters—in high school. I was nuts to the point where...and I did really well. And it wasn't a large school, so this isn't a big deal, but I was on track in my senior year to be valedictorian. There were only 60 people in my class, so some of you are like, my English class had more than that.

But, I took physics class. And I didn't need it. I had everything I needed to graduate. But I took physics, I signed up for physics. I went for about two weeks and then I decided this is too hard. I don't want to do this anymore. I'm going to drop out because I don't want this to ding my grades and knock me out of the running to be valedictorian. And so I dropped out of physics class out of fear. Because my identity was getting messed with. I needed to be performing at the highest level. I couldn't take being second. It was messing with something inside of me if that was going to happen and so I made sure that it didn't.

And let me tell you that didn't make me many friends among the smart people in the school. The people that were taking all of the AP courses and were doing everything, but they had a .02 less grade point average than I did. They weren't happy with me when I signed up for study hall instead of physics, you know? But, I did because of this issue of needing to perform well. And I started out in college having to get "A"s on everything, not just because I wanted to do well but because I needed to do well. I needed to be at the top of my class because that's who I was, that had become a part of my identity.

And that's a terrifying place to be in when you discover there's smarter people than you around. I may have gone to a very small Christian school and felt decent about my intelligence. But when I got into college, I discovered that there are a lot of people that are smarter than me, and not just a little smarter than me, but way smarter than me. And so I had to confront this because all of a sudden I wasn't that great anymore. I was performing pretty average, you know? I was getting decent grades, but something did happen to me over the course of college where God started to work on my heart and I became ok with not getting "A"s.

And that may sound to some of you, like what is this guy talking about? I don't even understand. What's the big deal? Some of you though, are tracking with me. You know exactly what I'm talking about. And I had to come to a place of being ok as a person with my own limitations. With the fact that I wasn't getting

the highest scores and the highest grades. That God still loved me. That I still had worth as a person if I wasn't the top. And that was a huge lesson for me to learn in my life.

I want to read a little story here from a guy named Mike Yaconelli, who Brennan talks about in his book, *Abba's Child*. And Mike was a great youth leader. Tragically he's passed away a couple of years ago, but he started this large conference in youth ministry organization called Youth Specialties. And he's written several books and he's a great Christian leader.

Well, he was in full swing, doing all this Christian ministry and everything and then he took a period of time out to go up to this community with mentally handicapped people in Canada, called L'Arche, which is French for the arch. I have no idea if I'm pronouncing that right, so some of you French majors out there can correct me afterward. But he goes up there to spend some time with a guy named Henri Nouwen, who I have talked about before, who's another great spiritual writer. And so Mike says this about his experience up there at that retreat center.

SLIDE:

"It took only a few hours of silence before I began to hear my soul speaking. It only took being alone for a short period of time for me to discover I wasn't alone. God has been trying to shout over the noisiness of my life, and I couldn't hear Him. But in the stillness and solitude, his whispers shouted from my soul, 'Michael, I am here. I have been calling you, but you haven't been listening. Can you hear me, Michael? I love you. I have always loved you. And I have been waiting for you to hear me say that to you. But you have been so busy trying to prove to yourself you are loved that you have not heard me.'"

"I heard him, and my slumbering soul was filled with the joy of the prodigal son. My soul was awakened by a loving Father who had been looking and waiting for me. Finally, I accepted my brokenness...I had never come to terms with that. Let me explain. I knew I was broken. I knew I was a sinner. I knew I continually disappointed God, but I could never accept that part of me. It was a part of me that embarrassed me. I continually felt the need to apologize, to run from my weaknesses, to deny who I was and concentrate on what I should be. I was broken, yes, but I was continually trying never to be broken again—or at least to get to the place where I was very seldom broken..."

"At L'Arche, it became very clear to me that I had totally misunderstood the Christian faith. I came to see that it was in my brokenness, in my powerlessness, in my weakness that Jesus was made strong. It was in the acceptance of my lack of faith that God could give me faith. It was in

the embracing of my brokenness that I could identify with other's brokenness." —Mike Yaconelli

When we recognize that God's love is freely given to us as his son or his daughter; that the only condition of becoming God's son or daughter is that we experience the forgiveness of Jesus on the cross and put our faith in him. And once we've done that, we have all of God's love at our disposal; everything of God is focused in on us in that moment that we turn toward him. Paul says we're co-heirs with Christ. Everything that is Christ's is ours. At the moment we turn toward God. If we really knew that, we could be free to really open up our hearts, who we really are underneath. Not just put on the church face, that everything's fine attitude around people. But we could really, as we come before God and as we relate with others, other friends in the Christian community could really say, here's who I am. Yes, I'm broken. Yes, I have problems. I have struggles. And it's exactly in those places that the power of God is coming to bear on my life. God's love is freely given.

Second thing is that God's love is fiercely loyal.

SLIDE:
Fiercely loyal

The love of our father in heaven is fiercely loyal. Back to Mark 1:11.

SLIDE:
Mark 1:11a (TNIV)

And a voice came from heaven: "**You are my Son...**"

You are my daughter. God has this fierce loyalty to his kids, similar to parents that have children today. Now, I don't have any children yet, Staci, my wife and I. We've only been married 3 ½ months...we're not there yet, but hopefully someday we'll get there. But, we've babysat before. And there's a difference between watching somebody else's kids and having your own kids, right? It's different. It's just not the same thing.

We were babysitting some friends of our's beautiful, beautiful little daughter, Ava. And Corey & Cyndia said goodbye, we're going to go out to dinner and so we'll see you later. They get in the car, they pull out. We're in the back yard. I kid you not, it was between 10-15 seconds after they pulled away, Ava is up on this little play slide. She's sitting there. Staci and I are talking. It's about this high, she's sitting up here with her back here and we're talking and she just falls off onto her head. I mean it was horrific. She kind of hit on her back, head area. I pick her up and she's crying so loud, I mean she can't even breathe. You know that kind of cry? I want to crawl in a hole and die right now. And I really want Corey & Cyndia to come back to take, you know, I don't know what I'm doing.

Take this child from me. It's different if it's not your child. It's like you want to give her back to the arms of safety and security.

I was babysitting my niece a couple of years ago. You know, my sister, I hadn't done it a lot. I don't know if she doesn't trust me, she's a pretty wise woman. She leaves me with all these instructions. And the one major thing was when you put Peyton down for a nap, put a diaper on her because she sometimes goes pee when she's sleeping. Ok, ok, whatever. Well I'm so concentrated on Peyton having a good time and her not crying and let's watch some videos and do some stuff. And then it's time for nap time and I'm like, ok, naps! So she lays down and goes to sleep and I'm feeling great about myself. I'm like Wow, this went really well. Jennifer's going to be really pleased to hear like, smooth sailing.

And then Jennifer gets home and goes in to get Peyton up and she's wet her whole bed. And I didn't put any diaper on her. And I just thought, I don't know what I'm doing here, you know? But, it's not my child. I think that if it's my child and I'm the one that has to clean up the pee mattress because it soaked through, I'm probably going to really remember to put the diaper on.

There's a difference with your own child, your own flesh and blood, there just is. I care about kids, I love kids, but it's different. The way that God loves you as his child is that there is a family bloodline. You are his son or his daughter. You have been adopted in and you are a part of the family, you're not just some friend that's staying the night. You are a part of God's family and his love for you is as deep as a mother is for her child. That's what Isaiah tells us. In Isaiah chapter 49, verse 15 it says.

SLIDE:

Isaiah 49:15-16 (TNIV)

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! 16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.”

What a beautiful passage. Even if a mother were to forget her child, even then God will not forget you. The love of God as a father to you is deeper than that. The father reinforces these same words that he speaks over Jesus at his baptism later on at the transfiguration. Which Jesus goes up on this mountain with a couple of his disciples. He's transfigured and he becomes very white. And this is what God says in Matthew 17, verse 5

SLIDE:

Matthew 17:5

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my son whom I love, with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

The first part sounds pretty familiar, right? And then I love this next part, “Listen to him!” It’s like God is reinforcing again his love and defending him with loyalty. Like, disciples, come on, listen to him. He’s the son of God, he knows what he’s talking about. So, Jesus is given these words of affirmation at his baptism and the same words of affirmation later on in his ministry as he’s healing the sick and feeding thousands of people miraculously, as he’s raising the dead, he’s doing all of these things, he’s again affirmed by God. God is loyal to him. God is loyal to us.

The acceptance and the love of God isn’t something that just comes at the beginning of your relationship with God. It’s something that comes again and again and again. God doesn’t get tired of you. He doesn’t get wore out by the same struggles of sin that you have, by the same feelings of failure, that you don’t measure up. That’s not how God sees you at all. God sees you as his son or daughter that he loves.

Lastly, the love of our father in heaven is focused on his beloved. It’s focused on his beloved. .

SLIDE:
Focused on his beloved

And we see this in verse 11 again

SLIDE:
Mark 1:11 (TNIV)

And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, **whom I love**; with you I am well pleased.”

That phrase, whom I love, in the Greek is the beloved. You are my son, the beloved. So he speaks this over Jesus, that he’s his beloved son. And the good news is, now there is a difference in the way that the gospels and the way Jesus talks about his own relationship with God the father and our relationship with God the father. There is a difference. That Jesus is the one and only begotten son of God and in a special and particular way that you or I are certainly not. But, this word—beloved—my son, whom I love, the beloved, that same word is also used for followers of Jesus, for Christians. And we see this, I’ll point out a couple of places, Ephesians 5:1.

SLIDE:
Ephesians 5:1-2 (TNIV)

Follow God’s example, therefore, as **dearly loved children** 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Same word, as dearly loved children, same word, beloved. Romans 1:7.

SLIDE:

Romans 1:7 (TNIV)

To all in Rome who are **loved by God** and called to be his holy people:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Same word. We are God's beloved. That he is passionate in his love for us. It's not just that God has this blanket love over everything he's made. He has a particular love for you as his son or his daughter. In a way that is not attached to how well you're doing in school, to how well you're doing in your job, to how well you're doing in achieving your goals and making yourself feel like mommy and daddy are going to be proud of me. God your father is proud of you right now. No matter what you've done because he loves you with a perfect fatherly love. the kind of love that we get to experience in a small part when you have a baby. We've had several of our members here in Joshua House recently have babies and so that's a wonderful thing.

And I want to tell one more story about my own family. Steal one of the stories that I remember as a boy hearing my father tell. He was a preacher so I feel like it's ok to take some of his preacher stories from time to time. When my sister was born, my father said he was there for the birth and she was the first born and I'm second and so this is their first child. So they haven't done this before.

Now my dad knew all about babies because he taught sex-ed at the university level. And so he had to go into hospitals and look at births and lots of things. He did a lot of that, so he knew all about how babies develop, how the births happen, and with kids, he taught second grade, he was around little kids. But he said, when Jennifer came out of the womb, and he held that little baby in his arms, and then that little baby peed all over him. It was one of those classic scenes. He holds up, oh my daughter, my firstborn daughter, and she just pees all over him.

And he said at that moment, he said I loved that little baby so much I would've given my life for her. That there was nothing she needed to do, right? It wasn't like, Jennifer, one day, when you graduate from college and you get a well-paying respectable job, I'm going to love you so much. One day, when you find a really great husband that takes care of you and is really kind and he makes really good money and then you guys have kids and establish a really nice family and have a really great house, I'm really going to love you then. That is not the experience of having a child. It is the experience of holding up this baby, being covered in urine, and feeling the strongest emotion of love you've ever felt in your whole life. That is the love of God for us, his children. When we step into God's love, through faith in Christ, we become children of God. We become the apple of God's eye.

God Loves You If You've Failed

Jonathan Rue
Mark 1:9-11
God Loves You Now Series
10.18.09

The love of a phony father

Performance-driven

Prioritizes other things

Passive

The love of our Father in heaven

Freely given

Fiercely loyal

Focused on his beloved