

No Greater Love

From: **Know and Believe:**
A Lifetime Journey toward Rediscovering God's Love for You
Taken from Chapter 11: No Greater Love
by C. D. Hildebrand

*It didn't "just happen"
A man on a cross
Who though He had all
Considered it loss.
He humbled Himself
And a servant became.
It didn't "just happen"
Nor shall it again.
People are searching
For someone to care
Someone who'll promise
To always be there.
Their eyes have been blinded.
They don't want to see
That someone is Jesus
And always will be.¹*

Not too long ago, it came to me that the practice of communion should not only be a remembrance of the suffering and death Jesus endured but also a reminder of His love for us.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Jesus laid down His life for us. Why? Because He loves us. Yes, He was providing for our salvation and forgiveness, but why? Because He loves us. Why did He suffer? He loves us. Why did He endure false accusations and insults? Why did He submit Himself to the humiliating, unjust death on the cross? Because He loves us. He loves us!

Ephesians 2:4-5 AMP

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in

¹ "It Didn't Just Happen", second half of a song by C. D. Hildebrand, 1982

trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

The proof of His love remains forever because His love continues forever. Yes, He showed us He loved us by dying for us, but that demonstration is God's *ongoing* way of proving His love for us.

Romans 5:8-9

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Prior to this passage, Paul writes that it would be very rare for someone to die for a righteous person, and that someone might be willing to die for a good person. This is an expression of human love apart from God. This is immediately followed by, "But God," which sets up the rest of this glorious message. Paul is *contrasting* human love with divine love. Human love has limitations and qualifications quite unlikely to be extended toward an enemy. But God's love reached out to us through the cross while we were still sinners and His adversaries to reconcile us to Himself with His own love—not only to save us from sin and wrath through His death, but to continue saving us through His resurrection and life.

The use of "demonstrates" as the interpretation of the Greek word *sunistēmi* in my preferred translation of the Bible, the NKJV, does not fully communicate to us the full meaning.

It merits our time to elaborate.

The KJV uses the word "commendeth," which adds a much different dimension than "demonstrates."

*In Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers we read, "The English word (commendeth) happily covers the **double** meaning of the Greek. The same word is used (1) of things in the sense of 'prove' or 'establish,' here and in Romans 3:5; (2) of persons in the sense of 'recommend,' in Romans 16:1."*

So, God proves and establishes the fact of His love for us and recommends His love to us via the fact that Christ died for us.

Wuest comments,

*“‘Commends’ is **sunistēmi**, ‘to put together by combining or comparing, hence to show, prove, establish, exhibit.’ The word means here ... ‘to hold up to favorable view, to recommend.’ Denney says, ‘How greatly is this utmost love of man surpassed by the love of God. He commends, or rather makes good, presents in its true and unmistakable character... His own love toward us.’”*

Often, when trying to ascertain the significance of a word in the Bible, I will look in the older Spanish translations (since I speak Spanish). It delighted me to find the word “encarecer” for **sunistēmi** in the RVA.² “Encarecer” in Spanish means both to raise the value and to praise the worth of something.

≈God presents His highly valued love to us
as being worthy of our praise. ≈

Perhaps just as significant in our understanding of this passage is that **sunistēmi** is used in the present tense. God is right now proving/showing/recommending His own love for us favorably by the fact He gave His Son in death for us. His love is already on display and speaks to us today.

If you want to be assured of God’s love for you, look at Jesus on the cross. Remember that while dying there “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not holding their trespasses against them” (2 Cor. 5:19).

Romans 5:18-19

Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

¹⁹For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” Many interpret the word “so” in terms of “so much,” and

² “The Reina-Valera Antigua was first translated and published in 1569 by Casiodoro de Reina, after twelve years of intensive work, and later put out in 1602 in revised form by Cipriano de Valera, who gave more than twenty years of his life to its revision and improvement.”– biblegateway.com

yes, He does love us so much. However, the word “so” means “in this manner.” In what manner did God show us He loves us—by giving His Son in death so we will not perish but have everlasting life.

*By this the love of God is revealed to us
that God has sent His one and only Son into the world
so that we might live through Him.*

1 John 4:9 MOUNCE