



Why does God put up with us?

In one of our confirmation lessons earlier this fall, I had the students read passages that reminded them how we are all sinful - and how sinful we all are. At the end of each lesson, I leave a space for them to ask questions about things they didn't understand. At the end of this lesson, I was amazed that nearly everyone in the class had written down the same question: Why didn't he just 'nuke' us?" i.e. **"Why, does God put up with us?"** So... why does he put up with us creatures who so often rebel against our Creator? Why does he put up with us creatures who love to make gods of created things in place of the Creator who alone is God? Why didn't he just wipe us all out and start over with creatures who would worship him as God instead of trying to play god themselves? Good question.

The answer is simple to say, yet difficult to understand: God loves us. It truly is that simple. God puts up with us and our sin and our rebellion and our trying to replace him, etc... because he loves us. And it is difficult to understand how his love for us could go that deep.

Difficulty understanding the depth of God's love brought up a further question: "But why does He love us so much?" Quite simply: because He created us. God loves us with the kind of love that only a parent can have - love that keeps on loving no matter what the child does. If you are a parent, you can relate to that kind of love. If you have a parent you can hopefully relate to that kind of love.

That prompted yet another question: "If God knows everything, then He must've known we'd sin and reject Him and all that stuff. So why did He still create us - if He knew we were going to rebel against Him? Why didn't He create people who would love Him all the time with all their thoughts and actions as well as their words?" (These young people ask good questions!).

I had to think about that one awhile. I think that we have to go back to that most basic description of God in 1 John 4:16: "God is love." The single word "love" describes God better than any other word. It defines His character. And if God's basic characteristic is love, He has to have something to love, so He created humanity.

And the truest demonstration of love is to love something that doesn't deserve your love - and often doesn't love you back. God creating us with the ability to choose not to love Him further shows His love for us. He loves us too much to create people who are mere "robots" with no choice but to love Him. He could have made us that way. But then He'd have had no chance to demonstrate the true love that gives love even when love isn't returned. True love that He demonstrated by becoming one of us, and paying the price for all of our sins against Him - by suffering no less than death and hell.

What does all this mean for you? Most of all it is a reminder that God loves the world - and that He loves the world "one person at a time." That means God loves you. No matter how often you've rebelled. No matter how often you've forgotten Him. No matter how often you've tried to replace Him. No matter how often you've tried to "play" god yourself.

One final (very important) question for you: **If God loves you that much, what should you do?**

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net