

God's Love Letter:
February 15, 2026

When my daughter Liz was a senior in high school... **[1 Embarrassed]**
Just about ready to graduate...
I was asked... to be the speaker...
At the Baccalaureate service...

We were in a big honking Catholic Church...
With all of her classmates... and their families...
Worshiping God together.

And then it was time to speak.

One thing I should tell you.
Liz had asked me NOT...
To embarrass her...
Come on.
That was an unreasonable request.
And she knew it.

So when it was time to speak...
I just stood up and said... my daughter Liz asked me...
NOT to embarrass her today...
And of course... I will try my best...

But... before I begin... I want to say...
Hi honey. Hi Liz...
I love you... very much...

That's how I remember the story.
You can ask her for verification.

But it was true.
I did love her.
And I still do.
And I think it's really important...
For her to know that.
Right?

All of us.
It's important for all of us...
To know... hear... and fully understand...
That we are loved.

Because I don't know if you noticed this or not...
But life is hard sometimes.
The world is mean sometimes.
It takes a lot of courage...
To get up in the morning...
And to engage...
In the work...
God has given us to do.

And sometimes...
No. That's not right.
Every time...
It gives us strength.
And hope.
And direction.
And purpose.

If we know...
That we are loved...
Beyond... what we think about ourselves...
Beyond the trouble we face on a daily basis.
Even beyond our unfulfilled needs.

It is absolutely crucial.. that we know...
We are loved.

If you have ever attended a wedding... **[2 Boxes]**
At which I presided...
You may heard this story.

A couple had been married for 15 years...
They began having more disagreements...
Then they used to have...

They wanted to make their marriage work...
So they agreed on an idea... the wife...
Had read in a magazine...
At the doctor's office.

She proposed...
That for one month...
They use what they called a "Fault" box...

They would make two boxes...
One for the husband and one for the wife...

And every time... someone did something wrong...
Someone irritated the other person...
They would write it down...
On a little piece of paper...
And drop it into the other person's box.
Does this seem like a good idea to anyone?
Well... they did it anyway.

The wife was diligent...
She took her job seriously...
And wrote down... every little irritating thing her husband did...

"You got toast crumbs in the peanut butter jar,"
"You didn't put the toilet seat down"
"You left wet towels on the bed,"

“And dirty underwear on the floor,”

On and on until the end of the month...
Every time she was irritated...
She wrote it down...
And put it in the box.

The husband did the same thing.
Every time he was irritated...
He wrote on the little slip of paper...
And put it into the box.

At the end of the month... they exchanged boxes...

The husband read the papers...
And reflected on everything...
He had done wrong...

The wife opened her box...
And began reading the notes...

She unfolded the first slip of paper...
And do you know what it said...
I love you...

She opened the next one...
And it said... I love you.

They were all the same...
The message on each slip of paper was...
One little phrase...
“I love you!”... **[3 Love]**

Every time... life was challenging.
Every time... they faced something difficult or unexpected...
He remembered... he loved her.

I tell that story... in a wedding...
And then I challenge the couple...
And tell them... there is no reason...
You can't tell your spouse...
How much you love them...
Every single day.

That the first words...
That come out of your mouths...
In the morning...
I love you.

And the last words...
You speak to each other...
Before you shut your weary eyes...
I love you.

And then I turn to the people...
Sitting out in the gathering...
And say... the same is true for you.
You have no excuse.
There is no reason...
You should not speak love...
Into your relationships.

In a world... that is so uncertain.
And strange to us.
And against what we believe...

The one thing we can do...
Is speak out love.

It gives us strength...
To know... that someone...
Loves us.

Ok. I'm almost there.
One more story.
This was during the most difficult time...
Of my adult life.

When I was going through a divorce...
And it was hard for me...
To get up... out of bed...
And get moving.

I was situationally depressed.
Because I felt as though...
I had failed.

I had a mentor... named Marv.
And every morning...
My friend Marv....
Would call me.
Like at 6 am.

Sometimes I answered.
Sometimes I didn't.
But regardless...
The first words that were spoken to me... every day... **[4 Good Morning]**
Were... Good morning my son.

And then he would say a prayer...
Or read a bible verse...
Or give me encouragement.

But even to speak those words today...
Good morning my son...
Reminds me... that in that moment.
When I was facing the hardest part...

Of my life... up to that point...

There was at least...
One person out there...
Who claimed me.
Who loved me.
Who called me his son.

Now. Peter, James, and John... **[5 Peter, James, John]**
Were Jesus' inner circle.
These three disciples...
Actually got see...
More than the others.

When Jesus needed to pray...
In the Garden of Gethsemane...
Near the end of his life...
In the depth of his humanity...
Swirling with doubts and despair.
He took Peter, James, and John...
To be by his side.

Earlier in his ministry...
When Jesus raised Jairus' daughter...
From the dead... there were only three disciples...
With him... to see the power he had...
To witness the miracle....
Peter, James, and John.

And in the lesson we have today...
It's the same three... the inner circle...
Who were honored to see Jesus revealed...
As the Son of God...
On the mount of the Transfiguration.

So... they were the witnesses...
Of all these things.

But that's not what I want to focus on.

Because on this day... there are others who showed up. **[6 Transfiguration]**
Moses... who represents the Law of God...
And Elijah... who represents the Prophets of God...

And both of these men...
Were long gone and dead...
Historical figures...
But still seen as the authority of God.

They were the old way...
The original way...
That God had spoken...
To God's people.

And there they were...
All bright and shiny...
And having a conversation...
With Jesus.

When suddenly...
The voice of God...
Boomed... into the air...
And then poor!...
Moses and Elijah were gone.
And Jesus was left alone.

In essence...

Jesus represented the new way...
That God was working in the world.
Moses and Elijah represented the old way.
Which Jesus fulfilled.

Or the way the author of Hebrews wrote it...
Long ago
God spoke to our ancestors
In many and various ways
Through the prophets,
But in these last days...
God has spoken to us by God's Son.

Which is awesome...
And theologically important and nifty...
But that's not what I want to focus on today.

I want to focus on God's words... **[7 The Voice]**
Spoken to... and about Jesus.

I want to point out the power...
Of what God said to him.
And how essential it was...
To what Jesus was fixing to go through.

I want to talk about the strength...
Those words gave him...
Because he was just about...
To go down to Jerusalem.

He was just about to face...
The most difficult opposition...
He had ever face in his life.

He just told the disciples... in Matthew Chapter 16...
That he was going to Jerusalem...
Where he would undergo great suffering...
At the hands of chief priests and the elders...
And be killed.

And on the third day...
Be raised again.

And sure...
That whole resurrection thing...
Is really good news.

But getting there...
Is the hard part.
You can't live again...
If you don't die first.

And so the words that God spoke that day...
Was an undeniable... unshakable... unfettered...
Love Letter to Jesus.

It was given to him...
To give him hope.
To give him strength.
To assure him...
That he was loved...
Beyond everything...
that was about to happen.

God said...
You are my Son,
My Beloved;
With whom I am well pleased;
Listen to him!

Good morning my son.
I love you.

Now listen. **[8 God's Love Letter]**
These lovely words...
Were not spoken...
Just for the benefit of Jesus.

They were witnessed by the three disciples.
They were written down...
In the gospels.
They were preserved...
And passed on...
For us.

Not just to give us confidence...
In the love of God... for Jesus.
God loved Jesus...
We all know that.

But also for us... to understand...
That same love is given us...
By the transitive property of God's love...

I made that up.
It's a math thing.
But still it works.

If God loves Jesus.
And Jesus loves us.
Then we can be confident...
That God loves us.

Or as Jesus said it in John 15:9...
As the Father has loved me,
So I have loved you;
Abide in my love.

Right?

Jesus loves us...
Like the Father loves Jesus.

Which means... when we abide in Jesus...
The words that God spoke... to him...
To give him comfort and strength...
To get through each day...
Become true for us too.

So what does it do... to you...
To hear the words...
You are my child.
My Beloved.
With whom I am will pleased.

Isn't that what we long for...
Isn't that what we really need...
Isn't that enough?

Someone to believe in us.
Someone to love us...
In the midst of all this chaos.

To know that our God...
Is whispering into our hearts...
Good morning my son.
Good morning my daughter.
I love you.

And nothing will ever change that.

Thanks be to God.
Amen!