SEEING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH THE GIFTS THAT CHRIST GAVE
1 Corinthians 2:9
By Raymond White

Can mortal words describe God's love? To a point, but never fully. Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 2:9 Eye hath not seen nor ear heard…the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.

Mortal eyes and ears cannot take in the whole of it, but that's okay because God's word does describe a part of it anyway. Love is best seen by what it gives. And so Paul most often describes God's love by what Christ gave. But what words could actually describe what Christ gave? Paul uses five.

[1] JUSTIFICATION

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

To justify means to exonerate in a court of law. It is a legal term. It means that we were guilty of crimes, and were acquitted (found innocent), or exonerated (freed without blame). Actually, what really happened was that Christ died in our place, so the law was executed, but on someone else. The best picture of that was the killer Barabbas walking free as Christ took his place on the cross. Or Sydney Carton taking the place of Charles Darnay on the guillotine in Charles Dickins' immortal story, "Tale of Two Cities". For whatever reason, the point is that we, the guilty, walk free out of court.

[2] FORGIVENESS

Colossians 2:3 …having forgiven you all your trespasses.

To forgive means to release an unpaid debt. It's a financial word that bankers use. Jesus used the word in a parable about two debtors: *Luke 7:42 And when they had nothing to pay, he* [the creditor] *frankly forgave them both.* Jesus then asked Peter which of the two debtors was the most grateful. And Peter correctly answered, the one with the bigger debt.
We are debtors and Jesus paid our debt. How big was our debt, well, that's for us to figure out.

[3] REDEMPTION

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law in the sight of God.

To redeem means to buy back that which was sold ― or hocked, as in a hock shop, getting back that which was left as collateral. It's the flip side of forgiveness. Forgiveness discharges the debt, redemption regains the collateral. When you consider Roman slavery, the

picture becomes clearer as you envision a person auctioned into slavery to pay an unpayable debt. We were (**Romans 7:14**) *sold under sin* with no hope of buying ourselves back. But then, we were (**1 Peter 1:18-19**) *...redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ.*

We were slaves and Christ bought us back and set us free.

[4] RECONCILIATION

Romans 5:10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* **:11** *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

The trick here is to understand that the Greek word is translated to two different English words. In **:10,** the verb katallasso (αταλλασσω) is translated reconcile. While in **:11**, the noun katallage (αταλλαγή) is translated atonement. Actually, that simplifies things, because now we know, because it's conspicuous, exactly what "atonement" in the New Testament means. It means to "reconcile."

When two enemies are brought together and become friends, they are reconciled. They have reconciled their differences. They are finally at peace, like the prodigal son and his father. **Colossians 1:20** *Having made peace by the blood of his cross.*

We were enemies of God, but Christ interceded and made peace with God for us.

[5] ADOPTION

Galation 4:5 *...that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

To adopt means to bring an outsider into the family with the same rights as a natural child. **2 Corinthians 6:8** *Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

We were strangers and the Son of God made us his brothers and sisters, which makes us sons and daughters of God. And that makes us (**Romans 8:17**) *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* And that is the most generous gift of all, to receive everything.