My Name Is Lucky  Taken from “The Unconditional Love of God” (Mike Chance)

- We are just two weeks away from Easter Sunday
  - and, this morning, my mind is fixed on the cross.
- I’m going to deviate, today,
  - from our regular routine,
    - and just preach for a few moments
      - on the love of God.
- The cross is more than just a religious emblem,
  - it is more than just a historical event,
    - it is the one place
  - where God most clearly demonstrates
    - his great love for you and me.
- At the cross,
  - where innocent blood was shed,
- at the cross
  - where he who had no guile,
    - who lifted not his voice against his accusers,
  - who alone never committed a wrong
    - yet refused to defend his own innocence,
- at the cross...
  - The love of God is unmistakably put on display
    - for the whole world to see.
- It was the most lopsided exchange
  - ever known to humanity.
    - The just for the unjust,
      - the pure for the impure,
  - he who was righteous
    - for those who were unrighteous,
  - never before and never again
    - would such an unequal transaction take place.
      - Jesus Christ laid down his life for mine.
- At the cross, in that singular moment of time,
  - the love of God took on form.
- God, who robed himself in flesh
  - and he became a man
    - so that he could die for my sins and yours
- He demonstrated his great love for us
  - on that lonely hilltop outside of Jerusalem.
- The message of that moment
  - clearly echoes throughout
• the eons of time.
  o It was God,
  ▪ with all of his power and authority declaring,
    ▪ in a mighty display of weakness and humility,
      o just how much he really loves us!

• The cross speaks this morning,
  o the blood that ran red testifies
    ▪ of just how much God loves you and me.

• The cross declares
  o that he loves you enough
    ▪ that he would rather die
      ▪ a horrible and painful death
        o than to live without you.

• The cross declares
  o that you matter so much to God
    ▪ that he would lay down his life
      ▪ in order to provide you
        o with a way of escape
          ▪ from the bondage of sin.

• Oh! How he loves us!
  o I want someone
    ▪ under the sound of my voice, right now,
      ▪ to know that the love of God
        o is absolutely real.

• We aren’t talking about some fairytale
  o that men and women tell themselves
    ▪ to make them feel better about their condition.

• The cross was a real event,
  o an actual occurrence
    ▪ that has been independently corroborated
      ▪ as historical fact.
  o It is a very real and tangible display
    ▪ of the great love of God.
      ▪ And, oh what love.
        o What compassion!
  o There’s nothing fake about it.
    ▪ There are no false fronts, no façades.

• When God says that he loves you,
  o he is willing to put
    ▪ the full breadth and depth of his love
      ▪ on display for you at the cross.
  o The finality of death.
• The horror and wickedness of torture.
  o The understanding that,
    ▪ had he just lifted his voice for one moment,
      • all of heaven was waiting
        o to snatch him from that cross...
  o But mercy hid its face that day.
    ▪ The terrible and fierce judgment of God
      • was poured out upon the cross,
    ▪ the horror of sin was revealed
      • in the terror of that moment
    ▪ and, the prophet says,
      • that we all hid our faces from him
        o as he suffered and died for our sins.

• Isaiah, in one of the most
  o iconic passages of the Bible said of him
    ▪ that he was despised and rejected of men.
  o A man of sorrows
    ▪ who bore our griefs.
  o It was our weakness
    ▪ that he carried to the cross.
  o It was our sorrow,
    ▪ our sin, that held him there.
  o He, who by the power of his words
    ▪ formed the universe.
  o He who simply spoke
    ▪ and worlds sprung into existence.
  o He who formed man
    ▪ from the very dust of the earth.
  o He to whom all the host of heaven answers.
    ▪ He opened not his mouth,
      • lifted not his voice against his accusers...

• He was bruised for our transgressions.
  o He was wounded for our iniquities.
    ▪ The chastisement of our peace was upon him.
  o He was pierced for our rebellions.
    ▪ He was crushed for our sins.
  o He was beaten so we could be whole.
    ▪ He was whipped so we could be healed.
  o He was oppressed,
    ▪ and he was afflicted,
      • yet he opened not his mouth.
  o He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
    ▪ and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
• he was silent
  ▪ even as the heavy burden
  ▪ of all of our sins,
    ▪ all of our iniquities,
    ▪ was laid upon him.

• As much as we may try
  o to comprehend it this morning,
    ▪ I don’t think it is humanly possible
      ▪ for us to grasp the full scope
        ▪ of God’s great love for us.
  o He loves us more than we understand.
    ▪ He loves us with a love
      ▪ that is deeper than we can comprehend.
    ▪ He loves us with a love
      ▪ that is pure and complete.
• We are so used to love that is limited,
  o to compassion that is flawed,
    ▪ to emotions that shift and change
      ▪ with the passing of time
  o that we fail to fully realize
    ▪ the broad scope
      ▪ and eternal persistence
        ▪ of God’s love for us!

• I want to speak to someone
  o for just a few moments this morning
    ▪ that has doubted God’s love for you.
• I want to talk to someone,
  o under the sound of my voice today,
    ▪ that has questioned the love of God in your life.
  o You look at yourself and you wonder,
    ▪ how could he love me?
  o You contemplate your own failures
    ▪ and shortcomings
      ▪ and you struggle to believe
        ▪ that he would ever care
          ▪ so much about you.

• You have sold yourself short.
  o God loves you!
    ▪ His love knows no limits.
      ▪ His love has no end.
  o His love is reaches further
    ▪ than you have ever fallen.
      ▪ His love gives more grace
My Name Is Lucky
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- that just lays on the porch
  - and waits for his master to come home.
- For goodness gracious sake,
  - his left ear has been chewed off.
  - His right eye is completely gone.
  - On one side he has a broken leg,
    - on the other side
      - his hip doesn’t work just right.
- How do you spend the money
  - on a classified ad
  - to find a dog like that?

- How do you spend that kind of money
  - on something so worthless?
    - Let me tell you how:
      - Out of love!
- The same kind of person
  - who looks at a dog like that,
    - a dog marked by life,
      - a dog with mange spots on it,
        - a dog with an ugly scar
          - where an ear should be
        - with a gaping hole
          - where an eye should have been
            - and names it... Lucky!

- Somebody loved that mutt!
  - In spite of the negatives,
    - in spite of the history,
      - in spite of the flaws and failures,
  - there was someone, somewhere,
    - who loved that dog enough
      - to put an ad in the paper and say,
        - “I’m willing to pay somebody
          - to find my dog for me!”

- Somewhere there was an owner
  - that said, I know it’s a mangy old mutt.
    - I know it has a tendency to run away.
  - I know that I spend more time
    - chasing after it
      - and helping it mend its wounds
        - than its worth.
  - I recognize that I’ll never get back
    - even a fraction of the love
• that I’m pouring into that ornery old dog,
  o but I just can’t help myself.
    ▪ I love that dog named Lucky!

• A more fitting name
  o has never been given to a dog
    ▪ than this one.
  o Lucky, really was lucky.
    ▪ Lucky that someone cared so much.
      • Lucky that someone loved it so deeply.
        o Lucky that someone never gave up on it...

• There are some of us here today
  o who can identify with that old dog.
• Some of us who are thinking to ourselves, that’s me.
  o My name is lucky.
• I mean, come on,
  o if we were really honest with ourselves
    ▪ this morning
  o we’ve got some mange spots on us.
    ▪ There are some places
      • where our hide has been ripped,
        o where the scars stand out.
    ▪ We’ve got some character flaws.
      • There is some brokenness in us.
    ▪ We are limping
      • and we’ve been wounded
        o from some struggles we’ve been through.
  o Life has not been kind to us,
    ▪ and the burdens of this world
      • have taken their toll on us.

• We’ve got more in common
  o with that mangy old mutt
    ▪ than we would like to think.
      • But we hide behind a veneer.
• We conceal our true selves
  o behind a lovely smile.
    ▪ We put on our Sunday best
      • and come to church and pretend
        o like everything is all right,
          ▪ like we’ve got it all together.
  o But we know that behind the façade,
    ▪ behind the false front,
      • we are empty
and we are broken.

We’ve been wounded,
  - even crippled.
    - Some of the stuff that we’ve been through
      - is going to leave us
        - with a life long limp.

We are emotionally scarred.
  - Our trust has been broken
    - and our faith in humanity has been crushed.

There have been more disappointments
  - than we can count.
    - We’ve been broken and abused.
      - And we try to suppress it,
        - we try to ignore it,
          - but we can’t escape it.

As much as we would like
  - to forget our past,
    - it’s always there.

Like the ugly scar
  - where Lucky’s ear used to be.

Like the nagging limp
  - that will never go away.

So we put up walls.
  - We protect ourselves.
    - We pretend that we have it altogether.
      - We pretend like we’ve got it all worked out.

We are careful not to let anyone
  - close enough to see the hurts.

We are careful not to let anyone inside
  - to actually catch a glimpse
    - of the pain that we live with.

We have convinced ourselves
  - that this is our burden
    - and that we have to carry it alone.

We have convinced ourselves
  - that we don’t deserve love,
    - that good things don’t happen
      - to people like us.

So we bow our heads
  - and simply focus
    - on getting through each day.

I’ve come to preach to someone
  - in this house this morning.
• If you aren’t careful,
  o you’ll let those feelings carry over
    ▪ into your relationship with God.
  o You’ll hold your wounds close,
    ▪ you will embrace your brokenness
      • but you will refuse to let God
        o meet you in your misery.
  o If you aren’t careful
    ▪ you will talk yourself
      • right out of the love of God.
• That’s why I want to turn the spotlight
  o on the cross this morning,
    ▪ That’s why I want you to see
      • the love of God on display for you.
    ▪ That’s why I want you to realize
      • just how much he loves you.
• You already know your name this morning,
  o but let me introduce myself to you:
    ▪ My name is lucky!
• I don’t deserve his love.
  o But he loves me anyway.
    ▪ I haven’t earned his love
      • but he’s freely given it.
  o I’m not good enough,
    ▪ I’m not faithful enough,
      • I’m not even thankful enough...
  o But the love of God
    ▪ has reached down to me!
• He loves me!
  o He loves me in spite of my weakness.
    ▪ He loves me in spite of my flaws.
  o He loves me regardless of my failures.
• Behold the cross.
  o Behold the great love of God.
    ▪ In that, while we were yet sinners
      • Christ died for US!
  o He loves us with a love
    ▪ that we cannot measure.
      • He loves us with a love
        o that this world cannot contain.
• I’ve come to tell somebody in this place today
  o that God loves you that much.
• That he would lay down
• his authority and power
  ▪ and robe himself in weakness and humility.

• That he would forsake his throne
  ▪ and make himself a little lower than the angels.

• That he would suffer at the hands of cruel men.
  ▪ They mocked him,
    ▪ they beat him,
      ▪ they spat upon him.
  ▪ They laughed and they jeered
    ▪ as they tormented him.

• The torturers whip
  ▪ ripped huge chunks of flesh from his body
    ▪ and the rejection of the multitude
      ▪ literally broke his heart.

• He was nailed to a tree,
  ▪ hung between two thieves.
    ▪ And he did it all for you and for me!
      ▪ **Your name must be lucky too...**
        ▪ Because that's how much he loves you!

• I come to tell someone
  ▪ that God is placing an ad
    ▪ in the paper this morning...
  ▪ Lucky isn’t much to look at,
    ▪ but I love him.
  ▪ Lucky is battered and broken
    ▪ but I would do anything for her.
  ▪ God has stepped into this place today,
    ▪ rearranged our normal schedule,
      ▪ put everything else on hold,
        ▪ because lucky is in this house this morning!

• This preacher has come to this pulpit this morning
  ▪ to tell you that God loves you
    ▪ just like you are.
  ▪ He loves you
    ▪ in spite of the wounds,
      ▪ in spite of your brokenness,
        ▪ in spite of your failures and defeats!

• His love is UNCONDITIONAL.
  ▪ It is Absolute.
    ▪ Unlimited.
      ▪ Without qualification.
  ▪ You don’t have to earn it.
You don’t have to measure up.
  • God doesn’t discriminate.
    o He doesn’t turn anyone down.
    o He doesn’t push anyone away.
• His love is absolutely unlimited
  • and without conditions.

• His love is IMPARTIAL.
  o Enduring through all of time.
    ▪ When I’m good he loves me.
      • When I’m bad, he still loves me.
    ▪ When I’m forgiven he loves me.
      • When I’m full of sin and rebellion,
        o he still loves me.
    ▪ When I’ve done right, he loves me.
      • When I’ve done wrong, he still loves me.
• His love endures through all times.
  • It is always there.

• His love is INFINITE.
  o It is endless.
    ▪ Subject to no limitations.
  o Human love is not endless.
    ▪ It has its limitations.
      • But God’s love is subject to no limitation.
        o It does not fade.
        o It does not grow old and weak.
    ▪ When man’s love reaches its limits,
      • Gods love keeps on loving.

• God loves us with PERFECT love.
  o Having no flaw or defect.
    ▪ Nothing defective about his love.
      • It has no flaw in it.
        o It is pure.
  o God delights in you.
    ▪ You my think you have no value
      • but God delights in you.

• What am I trying to tell you this morning?
  o There is nothing you could do
    ▪ that would cause God to love you more
      • and there is nothing you could do
        o that will cause God to love you less.
  o He loves you with an unconditional,
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<th>Notes by Pastor Tony McCall</th>
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- impartial,
- infinite
- and perfect love!

**Hello lucky!**

- He loves you just like you are!

**Romans 5:8**

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- While we were yet sinners, he loved us.
  - Not when we got it all together.
    - Not once we were all cleaned up.
      - Not when we got it all figured out.
  - He loved us while we were sinners.
    - He loved us when we were wrong.
      - He loved us when we were stuck
        - in the muck and mire of this world.
  - Before we even knew to love him back.
    - Before we even had the capacity
      - to appreciate his love.
        - He loved us first!

**CLOSE**

- Let me tell you what true love is.
  - It is easy to love someone
    - that you don’t really know.
  - It is easy to become infatuated with someone
    - when all you really know about them
      - is the view from the outside.
  - When you don’t know anything bad about them,
    - when you’ve never seen them at their worst,
      - when you’ve never seen
        - how they act
          - when they get angry,
        - how they respond
          - when they’ve been hurt.
  - It is easy to love someone you don’t really know.
- But real love is when you love someone that you do know.
  - Real love is when you know their faults
    - and you still love them.
  - Real love is when you are aware
    - of their shortcomings;
      - you’ve seen the ugly side of them,
        - you know their flaws,
• you’ve become acquainted
  o with their failings
    ▪ but you love them anyway.
  o When you know about the broken leg,
    ▪ the mangy spots,
      • the ugly scars
        o and the missing eye
  o but none of that is enough
    ▪ to extinguish your love.
      • That’s what real love looks like.

• Can I tell you this morning,
  o that’s how much he loves you!
    ▪ He knows everything about you.
      • He knows your failures.
        o He knows your shortcomings.
      ▪ He is acquainted with your griefs and sorrows
        • and he loves you anyway.
  o He delights in you!
    ▪ He rejoices over you.

• Every weakness and every flaw.
  o He saw you that way,
    ▪ He saw you at your worst
      • and still he died for you!

• That’s the wonder of the cross.
  o He took my sins upon himself.
    ▪ He bore the weight of my shortcomings.
      • My weakness,
        o my brokenness,
          ▪ my terrible failures...

• We had a lot of baggage.
  o While we were yet sinners.
    ▪ He loved us.
      • He died for us!

• He carried our sins.
  o While I was yet in my weakest place,
    ▪ Jesus Christ bore my burdens.

• The songwriter said,
  o He knew me, yet he loved me.
    ▪ He whose glory makes the heaven’s shine.
  o So unworthy of such mercy
    ▪ yet, when he was on the cross,
• I was on his mind!

• Somebody in this place needs
  o to lift your eyes to heaven
  ▪ and recognize...
    ▪ My name is lucky!