



Reckless Love

by Greg Albrecht

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it (Matthew 10:38-39).

When Christ-followers take up their cross and follow Jesus, losing their own interests in the greater cause of serving Jesus, by the grace of God they begin to experience the “reckless” love of God. **Reckless love** is the self-sacrificial, serving love of our Savior, and as a priority of life in Christ, **reckless love** stands opposed to a greater commitment on our part to safety and security.

Don’t get me wrong—let me clarify right away with a disclaimer! The desire for self-preservation is part of what it means to be human. It is natural to desire safety and security. The desire for self-preservation keeps us from danger and helps us avoid hazards that could be detrimental to our health.

But the desire to protect and preserve ourselves can grow into a priority that threatens our devotion and service to Jesus. *Safety and security are of course opposed to losing life for any reason—including losing one’s life for the sake of Jesus.*

“Losing” one’s life in the name of Jesus is “reckless love.”

Enslaved to Finding Security and Safety or Being Free in Christ?

Though some legalistic Christians may define God’s grace in such a way, when we speak of “reckless” love we are not speaking of a foolhardy, daredevil and irresponsible life. The **reckless love** of which we speak is the willingness to lose our life in serving Christ, whatever that may entail.

When safety and security become our priority in life, above all else, then we are doomed to a life of slavery rather than freedom. Safety and security, as the number one priority in any life, will lead to fear and bondage—ensuring a life based on this life and this life alone. Safety and security as the priority in life can become a god other than the one true God.

But Jesus, in his cross and through his resurrection, presents another value—another perspective—another way of living life. Jesus tells us that our only hope, if we accept God’s invitation to live in his grace and love, is to spiritually die to our own desires and goals (Galatians 2:20) so that we might live in Jesus, and he in us. Our ultimate goal as Christ-followers is

to set aside competing interests that war with our service to Jesus. Our ultimate hope is Jesus, who, when we die in and with him, resurrects us to new life—he becomes our risen Lord.

Jesus tells us that he has conquered death and the grave, and we need not live fearfully, as if our own inevitable physical death is the end of everything. Because of our risen Lord we are free to live lives *out of and because of* the **reckless love** of God.

That’s why Jesus said, *Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Matthew 10:39).*

Reckless love is making oneself vulnerable, which of course is the very definition of why God in Christ came to this earth, and what he did while he was here, culminating in the cross of Christ and his resurrection.

The love of God, as we see revealed in and through Jesus, is **self-abandoning love**. We see Jesus who recklessly gave himself away in love—he didn’t “save” his life, living it cautiously out of fear that he might lose it, but rather, gave himself away in love.

Everyone knows that dying on a cross is unsafe—but that’s exactly what Jesus did. Jesus’

death on the cross is the perfect illustration and demonstration of God's reckless love.

As Christ-followers (as Jesus lives in us and as we live in him) we need not hoard our love. In fact God's love and grace by its very definition is dynamic—it is going someplace—it is alive! As Christ-followers we give away the love of God, passing on the grace he has given us!

The Reckless Samaritan

During these turbulent times we now live in, fear pervades our world. We fear terrorists. We fear the North Koreans and the Iranians. We fear cancer. We fear criminals and the crimes they commit.

Fear breeds fear, and it can produce a potentially spiritually unbalanced commitment to safety and security. When we are paralyzed by fear, we can turn security and safety into a god. Fear enslaves us, as we hunker down in places where we feel safe. Fear depletes us of energy and courage. Fear is contagious—fear breeds more fear.

Of course, perfect and absolute security and safety that will make us immortal is impossible because humans are frail and mortal and prone to accidents and disease. When all is said and done, earthly safety nets are a mirage. No military—no matter how technologically superior and overwhelming in size and strength—provides ultimate safety and security to its citizens. History has proven that lesson over and over again.

We build safe cars, but people still die in accidents. We spend enormous amounts of money and energy developing new medicines, but people still die. We pray and we give and we study our Bibles and we try to be the kind of person we believe God wants us to be, but bad things still happen to us.

Consider the message and lesson of the Good Samaritan, considering his actions we might also call him the **Reckless Samaritan**. You remember the story—the Samaritan happens on a man who has been mugged, beaten and left for dead (Luke 10:25-37).

Before the "**Reckless Samaritan**" came by on the road, others happened on this poor, unfortunate crime victim—including two religious authorities—a priest and a Levite. These two religious professionals understood the dangers of stopping to help, thinking this man was acting as if he was in desperate need, but in actual fact other robbers may be waiting in the bushes to rob them. Perhaps they reasoned that they should keep themselves safe so they could serve in their jobs as religious professionals. They decided to *pass by on the other side* (Luke 10:31-32).

But the **Reckless Samaritan** saw this man in need and cast all caution to the wind—he determined the need of the man to be greater than his own need for safety and security.

In the interest of serving and loving his fellow man, he expressed **reckless love**. Those in the original audience who heard this parable no doubt characterized the **Reckless Samaritan** as acting imprudently or even foolishly, much as those who are determined to live by God's grace are often condemned by legalistic Christ-less religion as disregarding and disrespecting law.

Free in Christ to Live by the "Reckless" Love and Grace of God

When we are free in Christ (Galatians 5:1) we live by God's grace—which, like the wind, can be unpredictable. As Christ-followers we live as we are directed and led by Jesus Christ. **Reckless love**, as we experience it in and through the risen life of our Lord Jesus Christ, it not one long grinding life of "you must do that" and "you ought to do this" and "do this and you will be rewarded."

Reckless love as we serve Jesus, is not a predictable life—it is a life dedicated to serving others in his name. Freedom in Christ, the reckless love of God, is the life we live once we say "yes" to Christ, surrendering religious notions of



trying to earn something from God on the basis of our hard work and performance.

When Jesus empowers us to love others as he loves us, he is living God's **reckless love** within us—he is inviting us to a way of life where we give lavishly and generously, in such a way that we love others unconditionally.

Reckless love is the love of God which loves without expectation of return in kind—**reckless love** is love that is given and extended with no guarantee of a similar love being received. *God's love is so reckless and vulnerable and self-abandoning that it loves that which is unlovable, and that is the very thing that makes God's love what it is.*

And, thank God, when we talk about God's love being so reckless and vulnerable and self-abandoning that it loves that which is unlovable, that unlovable is not "them"—it's you and me! **Thank God for his reckless love!**

When we live in Christ and he in us, we are no longer enslaved to qualifications, calculations and self-protection. This is the **reckless love** of God. This is the life of trusting in our crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth.

The **reckless love** of God, as it is lived out in our lives in the life of our risen Lord, is not a life determined to please and appease God governed by distress, wariness or worry. The **reckless love** of God is illustrated in our lives when Christ moves us, empowering us to step out and love others, as he loves us. □