

Indubitably!

“I doubt it.”

It's a common, quick response to a variety of questions: “Will you join us for dinner while you're in town?” or “Do you think you will pass the exam?” or “Is there a chance we might get a discount?” “I doubt it.” Though the response can be applied to both positive or negative outcomes, it seems to carry an apathetic tone that rarely leaves the hearer satisfied. It lacks a sense of certainty and clarity.

In contrast, **I love the word *indubitably***. Just the sound of the word makes me smile. When employed, it is almost exclusively connected to optimism and positivity. It carries with it a sense of anticipation that something wonderful is about to happen: “Are you going to have ice cream after dinner?” or “Do you have that sweatshirt in my size?” “Indubitably!” The word gushes with a tone of “without a doubt” and “of course”. It's definitely a word we should use more often and follow with a big, fat exclamation point, don't you think? **Indubitably!**

Clearly, there are some things that require hesitation and care, but there is one truth that should never be doubted - God's love for you! As the curtain falls on the Old Testament, God has one last message that will be delivered by His messenger, Malachi. In many ways, God's oracle is an echo of what the prophets preceding Malachi have told Israel: “Return to your God!” However, God has a powerfully personal proclamation for His people. Malachi begins his announcement this way:

The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

“I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob ...”

What a tremendous statement! “I have loved you.” In these four words, God communicates that His love is pledged, proven, plenary, and personal. He lavishes it on whomever He chooses (1 Jn 3:1). There is nothing particularly lovely or lovable about the recipients. As a matter of fact, neither Jacob, his brother, Esau, nor their father, Isaac, nor *his* father, Abraham, were particularly “good”. On the contrary, they were rebellious sinners, as were their descendants whom God was admonishing. None of them, including the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau, had anything that would make them worthy of God's affection. We too were once self-righteous, powerless, indignant, and given over to destruction (Rom 3:24, 26, 28). Yet God didn't leave us in our hopeless wreckage. He sent His Son as Savior - a Redeemer greater than all of our sin:

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

God sets His love on sinful, rebellious, hateful, and ignorant people. He doesn't find people who are beautiful to love. Rather, He makes the objects of His love beautiful! His love changes everything about us!

May we truly be grateful and confident in God's love for us. As objects of God's lavish love, our reasonable act of worship is to love our Heavenly Father in return. We should loathe our own sin, dream of being holy, and trust Christ to continue our spiritual transformation. Pray that our church would never doubt God's love for them and that He would always receive the glory due Him. Doesn't that make sense? Indubitably!

***Ephesians 3:16-21 (NIV)** - "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And **I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge**—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."*