

# (1 Peter - Part 8): Whom Having Not Seen, Ye Love

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer emphasizes the centrality of Jesus Christ in creation, the Bible, and the Church, urging believers to love Him whom they have not seen.*

**Duration:** 37:20

**Scripture:** Psalm 148:9, Malachi 4:2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 17:1-9, John 20:29, 1 Peter 1:8

**Topics:** "Loving Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the revelation of God's glory through the creation of all things. He refers to the vision described in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet sees a whirlwind, a great cloud, and fire enfolding itself. Out of this fire, four living creatures appear, each with the likeness of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. These creatures represent a heavenly and visible representation of God's creation. The preacher emphasizes that all things were created to set forth the glory of Jesus Christ, who is described in the Bible as the Star of the Shulun on Jacob, the one who comes down as rain upon the earth, and who is likened to a great sea and a strong cedar.

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## Transcript

...I have spent a very enjoyable, and I believe profitable, three days and a half in the city of Rochester, New York at a meeting held in the Baptist Temple, which corresponds to the Methodist Temple in this city, down in the, we would say, the loop, and I thoroughly enjoyed preaching to various churches. They said there were sixty taking part, and we all got happy together and hardly knew what we belonged to. A Plymouth Brethren was chairman of the publicity committee, a Pentecostal brother was chairman of the meeting one night, a Baptist brother led in prayer, Presbyterians were there, and Independents.

We were just one in Christ. Occasionally you could tell where somebody had been to school by his prayer. One brother prayed that all whom the Lord had chosen unto eternal life might believe, and I think I know where he had been reading, but we all had a good time in God together.

It's been very wonderful to mingle with all the denominations, and after the first night, forget what the denominations are, preach to them just as I do to you here. Now, in 1 Peter 7 and part of 8, I talked last Sunday morning about the appearing of Jesus Christ, and in verse 8 it says, continues, because there is merely a colon between Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love. Now, I don't think we'll get any

further than that, so we'll not read any more than that.

We've had our Bible lesson this morning. So Peter says, Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love. Now, I can't get by that name and that rich, resonant pronoun, whom, in our English, which refers back to Jesus Christ.

Peter didn't use the term Lord there, but he could have and did very frequently. It's Jesus Christ, our Lord. Now, this can be varied and called the Lord Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus the Lord, or Jesus Christ the Lord, or sometimes Christ the Lord.

The point is that there are three major names or titles here, one being a title, the other being a name, the other two being titles, and one being a name. Jesus is the name, but it's also a title, in that it means Joshua, Jehovah's Saviour. And Mary was told, I shall call his name Jesus, because he is going to be the Saviour of the world.

And then he went to the Jordan River and was anointed of the Holy Spirit, and he got the title, the Anointed, and that, in our English, is Christ. So we have Jesus Christ, Jesus the Anointed One. Then he rose from the dead the third day and took precedence over all creatures, heaven and earth and hell, and all the beings that are therein.

And that gave him the title, Lord. And Jesus means Saviour, Christ means the Anointed One, and the Lord means just what it means in English. It means one who is over, who has dominion.

And Peter says, this wondrous one is the one whom. Now this whom is what the creation is about. I don't suppose in this day of busyness, when everyone is hustling to keep out of the way of passing automobiles, that very many people stop and ask, what's this all about? Men used to go out and lie down under the stars and gaze up and say, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, but you can't see through the smoke now.

But maybe occasionally somebody will wonder what the creation is about. Was it an accident? Was God capricious and did it just out of whimsy? Or what is the creation about? And the answer is that this is what the creation is about. Whom? Jesus Christ the Lord.

Now I think I have in the Old Testament a wondrous illustration of this. And since the Old Testament and the New are one, and who preaches faithfully, one preaches the other too, I want to go back to a chapter in Ezekiel, the first chapter, and look for a little at this chapter. And show how Jesus Christ is the purpose of God in creation.

Jesus Christ is the setting forth of God, and that it was for his sake that God created and made all the things that are made and created. Now the man of God said, I saw heaven opened and I saw the end of God. Then in verse 4 he says, I looked and behold a whirlwind came out of the north and a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself.

And the brightness was about it. And out of the midst thereof was the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. And also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures.

And this was their appearance. They had the likeness of a man, and everyone had four faces, and everyone had four wings. And their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot.

And they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under his wings on their four sides. And they four had their faces and their wings, and their wings were joined one to another.

They turned not when they went. They went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side.

And they four had the face of an ox on the left side. They four also had the face of an eagle. Now these living creatures, coming out of the mysterious fire which enfolded itself, stand, it seems to me, for a heavenly and visible representation of their creation.

Why did God make the moon and the sun and the stars? And the answer is that there is one whom. That one who was with the Father, and who was God, and who is God. And who was given the divinely bestowed commission to set forth the mystery and majesty and wonder of the Godhead.

And in order to do this, God gave his creation. And so that the creation, therefore, sets forth the glory of God. And it is more than an accident that the New Testament, or the Old Testament and the New, the whole Bible, it's more than an accident that it combs heaven and earth for figures of speech, for similes, to set forth the wonder of God.

And it calls Jesus Christ, almost by every name in creation. It calls him the Son of Righteousness with healing in his wings. It calls him the star that shone on Jacob.

It says that he comes forth with his bride, clears the moon. And it says that he comes down as rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. It tells us that he is like a great sea.

It tells us that he is like a rock. It tells us that he is like the strong cedars. And it literally goes over the earth, looking down and seeing the wonder and the beauty of the lake.

And the river and the rock and the mountain and the plain. And it says this is like Jesus Christ. This is like Christ Jesus the Lord.

Jesus Christ existed, or these things existed to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ. Creation is the setting forth of Jesus Christ the Lord. That's what it's here for.

So that we ought to be always in the sanctuary. We ought to remember that a sanctuary isn't a building on a corner. A sanctuary is the entire creation.

And it is the supreme shekinah of God. Not quite the supreme shekinah of God, for the human heart is the supreme inner chamber. But it is part of the shekinah of God, part of the shrine that sets forth God.

So that instead of going to church to meet God, bidding God goodbye at the door and saying, I'll see you next Sunday. We ought to take our shrine with us and carry our tabernacle like the turtle on our back and always be in a holy place. So that then there will be no unholy ground.

There will be no unholy days. There will be no secular thinking or secular living. But everything will be sanctified because we realize that God has made his creation as a garment to show forth the Lord Jesus Christ.

Men wonder what it is that holds the world together. And they crowd and probe into the mysteries of it. Now, I don't claim to know too much about science.

I'm not going to be terribly modest about it. I know as much as the average. I read the Reader's Digest once in a while myself.

But I'm not a scientist and never studied it except for my own confusion and amazement. But I believe that we'll never know the mystery of creation until we admit that there is one whom, and that one is the one who holds together the universe. It coheres in Jesus Christ, so it says in Colossians, that in him all things cohere.

He is the magnetic one who holds together all of the world that there is. So this one, this Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom we have not seen, he is the one that creation is about. And those strange creatures out of the fire show forth in some large measure what our Lord Jesus Christ is like.

It says that he had one of them, they had on their one side the face of a man, and the face of a lion, and the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. Years ago it was called to my attention that this fourfold division of the character of Jesus corresponds to the four Gospels. That as a man, Luke set him forth, and as a lion, Matthew set him forth, and as an ox, Mark set him forth, and as the high-flying eagle, John set him forth.

Now, Jesus Christ had the face of a man, and he is a man, and indeed is a man. And then he had the face of a lion, the king of beasts, the fearless king of the forest, and Jesus Christ, the fearless one, walked among men. And then the face of an ox, the one that worked, the simple laboring one, and Jesus Christ in Mark is set forth as the one who labored.

He is not given there any history at all, and they do not tell where he came from, it just says the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then plunges in and tells how he labored. Then John goes way back of Luke, who goes back to Adam, and Matthew who goes back to Abraham, and John goes back to the beginning and says, In the beginning, God. So that he antedates all biography and all chronology and goes back to the beginning.

So that we have him set forth here. And I believe that the time will come. Now you will indulge me in a fancy that I can't prove, but I believe the time will come when it will be seen that all the laws of nature, and all the beings that are in nature, and all the beasts that walk on the earth, and the fish that swim the sea, and the birds that click the air with their wings, and even the tiny hoppers and creeping things that list their pitifully weak little note on the night breezes, I believe it will be shown that it took all of them to set forth even a little of the wonder that is Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So that the caterpillar on the leaf, instead of being something we shudder at and withdraw from, we must thank the Lord God for the fur-coated caterpillar as he chews on the leaf. He is necessary too. The Lord said about the little donkey, say the Lord hath need of him.

And even the little sad-faced, comical, long-eared donkey was necessary to set forth the glory of Jesus Christ and call forth Hosanna from the admiring multitudes. Now I didn't intend to say this, but I might as well make the application, and not that there is any relation between the little beast and us particularly, but I want you to love yourself more than you do, that is, I want you to think more of yourself, and love yourself not at all, but love Christ, and then love yourself for Christ's sake. Because you are very important, you are important to set forth the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has created you not by accident, and he has redeemed you, you are a Christian, not by accident, but that you also might tell forth the wonders of the one whom. And that one is needing you, that you also might set forth his glory, so that there aren't any big people nor any little ones in the kingdom of God, but we are all alike. The mountains skip like rams, but the little hills skip like lambs, and the lambs that skip certainly tell forth the glory of their Creator as well as the larger rams that skip.

So the little hills that skip are small, but they tell forth the glory of God as well as the ponderous mountains so much larger. So some great man we have recently, and I thank God for it, received in the city of Chicago one of the world's great preachers, now pastor of Moody Church. I am delighted, literally delighted, that Alan Redpath has become pastor of Moody Church.

He was raised as one of the apostles of the modern day, one of the great men of the day. But brethren, you are just as needful as he is, and you are just as important in the total scheme of things as he is. Just as important as the greatest church leader or religious leader living today, the Lord has need of you too.

When you are with these strange creatures with four faces and six wings coming out of the fire, mysterious beings, they exist to set forth Jesus Christ our Lord. That's what they exist for. Now, that not only is what creation is about, but that's what the Bible is about too.

You would be perfectly free to go to your Bible and find Jesus Christ any place you can find him there, and know that in doing it, you are not reading anything into the scriptures. For where he does not stand out tall and beautiful as a pine tree against the sky, he may be hidden behind a lattice stretching forth his hand. If he is not seen as the sun shining in his strength, he may be seen as the gentle rain that falls from heaven upon the place beneath.

You will find him all through your Bible. Read the book of Psalms. Don't be frightened out by those who say we mustn't read the Old Testament.

The Bible is a unit. You might as well say, I don't believe in anybody from the waist down. If you didn't have a man from the waist down, it would be very difficult to have a man from the waist up.

And the Bible is two parts of one organic revelation, and it's divided in the middle so that the Old Testament is the Bible from the waist down and the New Testament is the Bible from the waist up. And if you allow them, thus awkwardly to put it, you have one organic Bible, and when we cut it in two, we bleed it to death. So don't let's kill it by cutting it.

Let's read it, and wherever we find Jesus, that is Jesus. For the Bible is about Christ. From that chapter, that early beginning that says, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Let us make a man in our image. That is the plural of unity, the plural of the Deity, and we have there the Trinity. So the Bible is about Jesus Christ.

And men who can preach the Bible without finding Christ there are blinder than I dreamed it possible for anybody to be. For Jesus Christ, the Lord, is the Whom about which the Bible is written. And not only that, but Jesus Christ is the One about whom the Church is.

He is the One the Church is about, the Church of Christ. Now I mean when I say the Church of Christ, not Reliance, nor do I mean any other particular one denomination. I mean the Church of the Firstborn, which he purchased with his blood, the twice-born believer who has been inducted into the kingdom of God by

an act of the operation of the Holy The Church of Christ, about which we sing sometimes.

The Church. That's what the Church is about. That's what the Church exists for.

In Acts 13 we have an example. They had met together, they ministered unto the Lord and prayed. That's what the Church is for, to minister unto the Lord.

The problem of which denomination is no problem at all. The problem of the Church is a bigger problem than that. It's the problem of wherever Jesus Christ is.

And wherever you find Jesus Christ, the Lord, there you'll find the Church. Jesus and the company of his people, that's the Church. They used to say about an old educator that if you put that man on one end of a log and the boy on the other, you had a college.

And it is true that if Jesus Christ meets with two of these people, you have a Church. You have it without any upkeep and without any overhead and without any elections. You have a Church where you have the Lord and a company of people surrounding him.

And that's what the Church is about, my brethren. The Church is about the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what we're here for.

Not about a doctrine, though the doctrines necessary to the understanding of Christ. But the Church is about Jesus Christ, our Lord. And I'd like to go on and say that's what this Church is about.

And that's all it's about. Jesus Christ. This Church is dedicated to the showing forth of the Godhead.

And Jesus Christ is the word who utters forth the Godhead, and we're dedicated to the honor of him who shows forth the Godhead. That's why we're created. If we fail to do this, we have no right to exist as a Church.

None whatsoever. Going through the ecclesiastical motions means absolutely nothing at all. Jesus Christ in the midst makes the Church.

And that's what this Church is about. I suppose 20 minutes after I'm gone to Heaven or some other Church, there will be changes made, and people will say, we couldn't do a thing while Joseph was here, because he was old-fashioned and didn't believe in the modern things, the hep things, the things that are up to date. I hope I'm too pessimistic, maybe I'm just feeling low.

But I'm worried about such things sometimes. But whether that's so or not, I insist that this Church be dedicated to the high honor of the one whom Peter says, having not seen, we love. Only those activities can go on and only those objectives can be pursued that biblically point to the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world and that minister to the eternal welfare of man.

Now, he said, whom having not seen. Let's go on to that thought. And so that Peter here would have been expected, you might have expected him to say that, because Peter had seen him.

Peter's eyes had looked upon him. Once he was helping along the shore of the sea, and a quiet man went by, a man with a marvelous magnetism, a luminosity about his face, a wonder about him. And he took his pleasant finger at Peter, and Peter jumped up and followed him.

And he saw him for three years. And then after he saw him on a cross, he saw him again and wept bitterly. And then when he had risen from the dead, he saw him, and he came forth and put his hand on Peter's head and forgave him.

The Bible leaves the impression with us that he was the first one to whom Jesus appeared after he had risen from the dead. So Peter saw him after he had risen from the dead, and then Peter saw him going into the glory. And Peter had seen him before that in the glory, a preview of the glory, when he saw him on the holy mount.

So Peter had seen Jesus in the flesh. And Peter writes to the strangers scattered abroad, the Christians of the dispersion, and says, Whom having not seen, ye love. Now, does that recall to your mind a passage that says, Blessed are they that see and believe, but blessed are they still more who have not seen and yet believe.

So our Lord set his stamp of approval upon those Christians who would believe and yet never see him in the flesh at all. Oh, we sing, I think when I read the sweet story of old, how Jesus was heard among men, how he called unto the children as lambs to his fold, I should like to have been with him then. Now, I agree that's a nice song, and I wouldn't hesitate at all to sing a sour bass on that sometime.

I don't mind at all not objecting to the song. But the song contains a plaintive, pensive longing that has no biblical authority at all. You know Jesus better now without having seen him than Peter did when he saw him.

You can know him better now at least than they knew him when he walked on the earth. For Peter saw him with the eyes of the flesh, but you're seeing him with the eyes of the heart. Now, I'd like to point out that you can love one that you have never seen.

There are mothers who never saw, and they marry and bear children and never see their little children. Therefore, they feel their little faces, but they never see them. But they love them just as certainly and as much as any seeing mother possibly could.

You can love one whom you have not seen, but you cannot love one whom you have not experienced. Now, let's get that straight. It's totally impossible to love anybody whom you have not experienced.

If you are unfortunate enough, as some of our friends are, to be born totally deaf or to go deaf so that you cannot hear at all. I do not assume anybody here listening to me is in that state, but I'm speaking generally of the human race. That if we are born without ability to hear, we may see our friends and love them because we see them, we're experiencing them through our eyes.

If we're blind, we may hear their voices and learn all the sweet cadences of affection and love them through our ears. If we, like some, are deaf and dumb and blind, and there have been some, we can learn to love people by feeling their faces. That little deaf and dumb lady whose mind slips may not be blind, deaf and dumb.

Helen Keller, I read her life years ago and often think of her. She's still living, and she's something of a Christian. I don't know how much, but she leads praise and believes in Christ.

Well, when she heard the great tenor, the great Caruso, she couldn't hear him. So she said, Would you allow me to put my fingers on your chest bones? And he stood up, great, big, happy fellow as he was, and

buried his chest, and she put her sensitive fingers on his chest bones, and he went into those tremendous high notes of his, and she stood transfixed. She was hearing him through her fingertips.

If we can't even see and can't hear, we can still experience people. No doubt Helen Keller and others in her condition have held babies on their laps with shining faces. They felt the warmth of the little cheeks.

They felt the snug little warmth of the baby there. You can love people you haven't seen, but you can't love anyone you haven't experienced. It's a total impossibility for me to find any emotional response toward anybody that I have not experienced.

Abraham Lincoln is dead. I respect him, I admire him, I believe he was a good and great man, but I feel no emotional response, except as I might in imagination respond to an idea or an ideal. But there's no such thing as personal human affection for that one that you have never experienced.

You can fall in love with somebody by mail, it's done. But you're experiencing them through letters. You get the pulse of them through the things they write, and your imagination pieces it out, and pretty soon you'll love somebody through a letter.

I've never seen Alan Redpath, but he's written me, and I love the man through knowing about him. Well, you can love people you haven't seen, you can love people that you haven't heard, if in some way in your mysterious being you can experience them. Now, Peter said, Whom have Jesus Christ whom having not seen ye love? But he didn't say, Whom have ye not experienced? One of the most hopeless tasks in the world is to try to drum up love for a man or a Christ that they have not had spiritual experience for.

I do not understand how it can be that churches that do not teach the new birth, do not teach redemption through the blood, do not teach the need of the Holy Ghost, can ever try to drum up any love for the Lord Jesus. Because no one can know Jesus except the Spirit of God makes it real to him. No one can say Jesus is the Lord except the Holy Ghost enables him to do it.

No one can experience Christ without he believes in Christ as the Lord and Savior. So how in the wide world it could be that a church could ever love a Savior whose very Saviorhood is denied from their prophets, I cannot imagine. Here we are dedicated to the glory of the one whom we have not seen, but the one whom we love, having not seen.

And that is the sum of Christianity, to know him and to love him. This is eternal life, that they might know thee and might know me, Jesus said. So the knowledge of God is eternal life, and the knowledge and setting forth of God is the business of the church.

That's why we're here. And that's the whole business of the Christian, to know him, to love him, and to love him because you know him, and know him better because you love him, to cultivate his love and his knowledge, to grow in the knowledge of him, and while you grow in the knowledge of him, grow in the love of him. Anybody that you really love, it's a pleasure to do things for.

And the Christian that loves the Lord really loves him, never finds anything irksome in the service of the Lord. I find certain irksome features in the work of the Lord, but they're never the Lord's work. They're always something somebody has added on.

The only thing in the ministry that I don't like are the things I don't find in the Bible. People have decided that, and so we've got a little organization and we have to do this and do that, and I don't like to do it,

because I don't find it in the scriptures and it irksome. But everything that is scriptural and that tends to the glory of the Son of God is a delightful thing.

Why do people carry their children's pictures around in their billfolds? It's getting awful. I guess wherever I go, somebody pulls a billfold on me and wants to show me the newest one, or how his has grown up, how big she is now. Well, it's always a pleasure, and it's never irksome to set forth the praises of somebody you really love.

Mr. Joss of the Rochester Lions Church. Friends drove in from outside the city, and the pastor there said, Did you see that couple? He said, Aren't they nice people? Isn't that a delightful wife? And Mr. Joss said, You haven't seen my wife recently. It's all good natured.

But I found out the man really felt that way about her. He took me to the train. He even asked me her age in her presence.

And I said, I'm too cagey for that, brother. I'm not telling you. And I didn't.

And then she told us her age, and I said, I would have thought you were seven years younger than that. That was the right thing to say. But the point I'm trying to make is that if you love anybody, you're likely to want to talk about them.

And to know him and to love him. Now I close with this idea. That there are two levels in which we live.

We Christians. Animals have one level. Angels have another level.

And you and I have the two levels. We're crossed between angels and beasts. We have bodies like the animal.

We have souls like the angels above. God has made us a little lower than the angels. But he's made us a little higher than the animals.

So here we are with the body of a beast, of an animal. You will take this kindly now. You there in love with your bodies.

Remember that if you were to throw a piece of your body somewhere, it would take a doctor to tell whether it was human or belonged somewhere else. You have a body that came from the earth. It's the body of an animal.

But in that precious human body, like of which our Lord carried to a cross, you have also a spirit like unto the angels above. And even beyond them. When it says he made us lower than the angels, he didn't mean he made our spiritual part lower than the angels.

He did not. He made that higher than the angels. For that was made in the image of God.

He only made us and cast us down here between heaven and earth, so to speak, lower than the angels. And so with these two levels of our being, we look at Jesus this morning. And these eyes of ours have never seen him.

These eyes that gaze out like the deer gazes out of the thicket, like the dog gazes or the horse. These eyes that look on like we've never seen him, but we love him. And why? Because there's another level,

another part of us.

The invisible, the eternal, the inward, the spiritual. And with those eyes we have seen him. With those eyes we have looked upon him.

And with those eyes we have beheld him. And with those ears we have heard him. And the sheep hear his voice.

And they don't see him with their animal eyes, but they hear him with their spiritual ear and see him with their spiritual eyes. So Peter was perfectly right thinking about the human side, whom having not seen, we love. But he didn't mean to say that we were to be forever without a knowledge of what Christ is like.

Because with the inner eyes we gaze upon God, and see Jesus and believe in his name, and look upon him and behold him and love him with the eyes of our understanding being enlightened. Now that's the glory of the Church, and that's the purpose of the Church, and that's the purpose of this Church. We exist to show forth the honor of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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