

(John - Part 41): God and Man - the Duality of Jesus Christ

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the good shepherd, Jesus Christ, who gives his life for his sheep and cares for them with love and devotion.

Duration: 43:51

Scripture: Psalm 23:1, John 10:9-11, John 10:14-15, John 10:17-18, John 10:26-28

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the ultimate act of love for humanity. He highlights that Jesus willingly laid down his life for everyone, regardless of whether they believe or acknowledge it. The preacher encourages the audience to come to Jesus and find rest and joy in him. He also emphasizes that Jesus is the good shepherd who cares for his sheep and does not seek anything in return. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the listeners to be blessed and for the Word of God to be rightly and effectively preached.

Transcript

In the 10th chapter of John, John the 10th chapter, the 11th verse and the 17th and 18th, where our Lord Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Verses 17 and 18, Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.

This commandment have I received of my Father. Let us pray. Dear Lord Jesus, thou art the good shepherd.

In ancient days thou didst lead Israel and Joseph like a flock. And thou art the same unchanged Lord. And thou art leading them that trust in thee.

We pray that tonight I will add at least one sheep to thy flock, who is lost now but will be found. O Lord Jesus, encourage us on the hard, heavy, rough way. Make the clouds to roll back and the skies be a little brighter.

Our hope a little sharper. Our faith a little brighter. Help us tonight.

Bless these friends who have come out here this cold winter night. And we'll now listen while thy word is being expounded. O Lord, thou hast said, preach the word.

We pray thou grant that we might rightly and worthily expound thy truth. This is in Christ's name. Now, here in these verses we have wonderful, lofty truth.

Truth that is beautiful and inspiring. But we also have profound difficulties for the intellect. But I do not apologize, nor do I admit that there is any problem for faith.

There is none. I remember the little stanza by Faber when he says, How thou canst love me as thou dost, and be the God thou art. Is darkness to the intellect, but sunshine to the heart.

What is darkness to the intellect may be sunshine to the heart. The effort to simplify and explain all the profundities of the Christian faith are ill-timed and ill-considered. There will always be that which is blindness and darkness to the mind, but joy and sunshine to the soul.

Now, the difficulty lies in verse 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. But I might take it again.

Now, there is the difficulty. That God's love for the Son arose and arises from his willingness to lay down his life for his sheep. Because you remember that our Lord Jesus also said in praying to his Father, Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.

Back before time was, the Father loved his Son. Then, therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life for my sheep. Now, there lies the difficulty.

You might simply pass that over, but if you'll do a little bit of thinking, and certainly if ever there was a time when God's people ought to think, now is the time. If ever there was a time when we ought to consider deeply the things pertaining to our faith, now is the time. If we think deeply, we say, well, how could it be that if the teachings of the Christian faith are right, how could it be that God loved his Son only because he was willing to die on a cross and rise again? Well, it's darkness, or rather it's twilight to the intellect, but I do not think that it's beyond our explaining.

You see, my friends, the Christian faith teaches, because the Bible teaches, the two natures of Christ. Christ is not two persons, but the two natures of Christ. This is taught in Christian theology.

It has been taught down the years in Christian theology that Jesus has the divine and the human nature. Let me read to you from the ancient creed. You that are of the Dutch extraction and know something about the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch Reformed hymnal, you will find this somewhere in the back of your Dutch Reformed hymnal, and you'll find it also in the Bible.

It says this in a long explanation of the mystery of the Trinity. It says this, furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that we also believe rightly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, remember, this dates back to the fourth century and is called the Athanasian Creed.

This is part of it. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man, God of the substance of his Father, begotten before all worlds, man of the substance of his Mother, born into the world, perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and

human flesh subsisting, equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching his manhood, who, although he is God and man, yet is he not two but one Christ, one not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God, one altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by the unity of persons. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

Now, that is the teaching of the Church. Down the centuries she has believed that Jesus Christ was born or begotten of the Father before all worlds, but born of the substance of his Mother into the world, being perfect God and perfect man, equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching his manhood. Now, we'll explain that as we go along, because that says it for us.

You know, part of learning is not getting new information, but having somebody that's smarter than you say things for you that you wish you had said. That's part of learning, brethren. It isn't that you get new information so much as you get it said for you so you can get right hold of it, so it fits into your head and into your heart.

And this says for me what I never could have thought of if I lived to be 118 years old. I never could have said it. But now that somebody smarter than I am said it for me, and I realize that it's scriptural and fits the word of God to a T, I can quote it and say, now, I wish I had said that.

That is. Now, the two natures of Christ, that's where we find the explanation here. That he was a man and that he is man is not hard to prove.

He was born as other men are born. That is, he was born of a woman. He was baby-sized when he came into the world.

I don't know how much he weighed. I don't know how much Jewish babies weigh, but I suppose they weigh average, maybe eight, nine, six, eight, nine pounds, boys a little more than girls. But I guess maybe say that this man, Jesus, they weighed eight pounds.

Let's say he weighed eight pounds, nine pounds. When he was born of a Jewish mother into the world. And as soon as he was born, he began to eat and cry and groan.

And he drank, of course, his mother's milk. And when he got older, he drank the milk that they provided him and ate food. And he worked in his supposed father's shop.

And he slept, and they had to wake him in the morning. Imagine, come and pull him out of bed, as they do little boys. For he was a boy among boys, remember it always.

He was a man. And sin accepted, he lived like other men. Sin accepted.

And the weaknesses contingent upon sin, he had none of them. But he was a man. And I'm sure that Mary, his mother, had to come lots of times and wake him twice.

I never knew a boy to get up the first time. The boy that gets up the first time he's waked, unless it's Christmas morning, never was born. And so, never, never.

Nobody, no boy ever gets up. And I don't think any girl when they're first waked. I mention this not to, not to keep him, our conception of Christ, but to humanize him.

And to show you that this Jesus was born a baby and cried like a baby and ate like a baby. And was looked after like a baby and grew like a little boy. And ate and drank and worked and slept and finally died.

He was a man. And he called himself the Son of Man. He loved that title.

He was the only person that ever called himself that. I do not think that, if I think I'm right, that anybody in the New Testament ever called Jesus the Son of Man. But he called himself the Son of Man.

Just as Abraham never said, God is the God of Abraham. But God said, I am the God of Abraham. And Jacob, surely Jacob never would have said, God is the God of Jacob.

But God said, I am the God of Jacob. So nobody ever said, thou art the Son of Man. But Jesus said, I am the Son of Man.

And talked about himself as the Son of Man. And Pilate, when the great old judge there, or king, when he saw him standing before him the day before the crucifixion, or the morning of the crucifixion, he said, ex homo, behold a man. Look, there's a man.

He was struck with the manhood of the man called Jesus. Now, this is also shown in the scripture. Therefore, when he said before Abraham, and he said, he that hath sinned, quite surely did sin.

Yet the things that he said put him in the midst of a good sin. And my voice, and sooner took God as a rude cat, talked to people who eat their women and beads. He so rudely took the people like himself.

But this quiet, peaceful, peace-loving man makes others like himself. And the manhood died, and the peace died, and the healing of the liars, and the mean man died, and the evil woman died, and as it was called the age of the graving of his godhead. Oh, but you don't have to, therefore does my father.

If the father had loved, if he had been with the father, he spoke to his father, he spoke to himself, and spoke. Let's give you some examples here to illustrate what I have in mind. His teenagers are here, he spoke sometimes of his godhead, and sometimes of his non-human and unborn godhead.

When he said, all men, he spoke of his godhood. Nothing of himself, he spoke of his godhood. So there is a darkness of it, but I think there's a little light.

A man wrote me a five-page letter, and accused me, among other things, of being too metaphysical. He hadn't preached once, so I didn't like it, but he accused me of being metaphysical. I don't know whether it's all that metaphysical or not, but I know that it has gotten into our handbooks, and we have sung it, and the sinful people who don't know what the word metaphysical means, old ladies, old bearded men, as well as fine young people, have risen up, or a Montgomery, or a Washington, so we have here the good shepherd.

So when you read in the Bible, humble and lowly, and you just claim any credit, or any power, or any wisdom, or any goodness, no, he's talking about his man, the faithful lady, he's speaking about his godhood. Though he be both god and man, let it be not true that God could be man, but he might take God by his right hand, and man by his left hand, and equate them one with another, and introduce the wandering sheep to their heavenly father, and he said here, the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. No man taketh it from me, he was not a martyr.

Let not me think at all that he sent a picture of Jesus as a good man, who went too far. A good man, that was so extreme, and so zealous, that they finally clued him, and he became a martyr to a noble idea. He said no man taketh it from me, nor all the armies of Rome should have done it.

In the old testament we read in Elijah, repeated over and over, he said if I wanted to do it so, a region of angels would come to my help now. He should have come to my help, because he could say before Abraham was I, a Stephen that would kill, a James that could kill with the sword, but Jesus they could not accept. He said about the martyr, I am not to begin with Stephen and not with Jesus, he said that martyr first, whose eagle eyes could not see them, not Jesus.

No martyr lays his life down with Jesus, but he said I lay it down with myself, he was a sacrifice, not a martyr. John the Baptist said behold the land of God, and the land that is dear to the heart of every Jew, dear to the heart of every Jew's family, from the days of Moses in the Passover, the Passover land, and I still get in some Jewish churches they still do the dish back there. He said behold the land, well he said about again, he was a sacrifice not a martyr.

Now it was by the covenant between the father and the son, I have power to lay my life down or to take it again. This commandment have I received of my father, there was the covenant, and before he came from the heart of the father, the cook shall take place, that he might die for his peace. Now the shepherd has three officers.

The good shepherd John 10-11 we talked about dies for his peace, and the great shepherd in Hebrews 13 lives for his peace, and the chief shepherd in 1 Peter 5 comes for his peace. Notice that Hebrew passage, a very wonderful passage. It says, now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, makes you perfect in every good work to do his will.

Working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ to whom the glory forever and ever, Jesus is called the great shepherd of the peace. What is he as a great shepherd doing? As a great shepherd he is at the right hand of the father, caring for his sheep. Take off thy guilty fear as the bleeding sacrifice, and in thy behalf appear as Christ Jesus.

That great shepherd is a good, faithful, loyal shepherd. He voluntarily laid down his life for you whether you knew it or not. He laid down his life for you whether you ever knew anything about it or not.

He did it. He put you everlastingly in debt, great shepherd, by laying down his life for you. You turn against him and smite the very sheep that was want dead on a cross for you still true.

The shepherd laid down his life for his sheep, the good, faithful shepherd. Now the great shepherd above all man's hate, and above death, and above sickness, and above time, and above faith, and at the right hand of the almighty God, he sits and advocates above the Savior by the throne of love. Into his bosom, like the high priest of the ancient temple, he carries the name of his people, my poor little name so little known in this great church, the great shepherd.

The shepherd of Israel and the shepherd of his sheep. So he's there, the great shepherd, but that's not all. Peter 5 says, Seize the flock of God which is among you.

You see he had this in mind. Peter had heard this tense chapter of John spoken by Jesus himself, and so he said, Seize the flock of God which is among you. Take me oversight thereof, till he loses it, but of

already mine.

Neither did the Lord over God have his dominion sampled to the flock, and when the chief shepherd shall appear, as the good shepherd he dies for his sheep, as the great shepherd he lives for his sheep, and as the chief shepherd he comes for his sheep. But brethren, the next major event in the history of the world will not be the dropping of a cobalt bomb on Moscow or New York. It will not be the defeat or the victory of Russia.

It will not be common commercial supersonic satellites. It will not be any of the scientific wonders that will certainly develop within the next few years. The next major event in the history of the world will be when the chief shepherd appears to faithful people and takes his flock out of a dingy, tin-clad world to take them to be with him.

That's the next major event in the world. Now I don't know when it'll happen. Don't you dare to interpret what I say as being that I teach that the Lord will come tonight or tomorrow.

I don't know when he'll come. That's close to the end. It may not be as major as that event when he does come.

If it's a thousand years or a hundred, when he comes, it'll be an event second only to his first coming. When the chief shepherd appears, then he shall crown those who have been faithful to him. There's a motive in his sheep.

There's an objective. There's something to drive at. There's a reason for being a faithful.

I want to close now by asking. He is the good shepherd, and he died for you. He is the great shepherd, and he is pleading for his sheep.

He is the chief shepherd, and he's coming for his sheep. You women have found the good shepherd. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest.

Lay down thou weary one, lay down thy heart. I came to Jesus as I was weary, worn, and sad. I found in him a resting place, and he has made me.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light. Come unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy days be bright. I came to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun.

Many his light of life are washed with traveling days of dance. Have you heard his voice calling you home? Have you come? Will you come? Will you come now? The good shepherd who claims you by right of life laid down. He wanted your money, or wanted your vote.

I wouldn't, I wouldn't represent him. I wouldn't make you a victim and a blind follower. I wouldn't represent him.

But he proved that he had nothing to claim from you by giving you all he had. He poured out his life for you, wonderful love. And when the good shepherd gave his life for his sheep, surely he wasn't out to get anything from the sheep.

He doesn't want anything you have, he wants your love. Remember that the shepherd-sheep relationship is a relationship of faith and love, not a relationship of law, but of faith and love, and loyalty and trust. So

you can right now, where you are, turn your faith and love to the shepherd of the sheep.

And right where you are, you can this minute believe and put your trust in the great good shepherd who died for you. And from the right hand of the father, he'll be your great shepherd. And when he comes as a sheep shepherd, he'll receive you and take you to himself.

Are you his sheep? I think of myself as being a pretty scrubby sheep. Sheep come in with cockleburs in their wool, and Spanish needles, and where they sleep under a barbed wire fence, and bruises where they carelessly batted up against a sharp rock. But they're still sheep and they're still recognized by the shepherd and they're still known by him, and they still know his voice.

And that's what he meant when he had David write, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want him. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, and leaves me beside the still waters, and restoreth my soul. What does that mean? Restores my soul.

By his soul God bid out a plaque, and the great shepherd restores his soul again. And he knoweth my head with oil, and only one person out of ten thousand knows what it meant. He knoweth my head with oil.

But the old Jewish shepherds used to call their sheep in at the cool of the day, when the night birds were beginning to croak, and the dark shadows of the trees, and the first stars were appearing. And stood in the door and they passed by him, and he grabbed each head and pulled it up and looked down at the face. And if there were any scars, or rather new faked wounds, or maybe had gotten bumps, or some other old sheep had battled them, or they had bumped into a rock, or carefully poured this oil and rubbed it into the sore.

And my head with oil. My cup runneth over, and how many know what that means? The shepherd not only had his horn of oil for the sheep that had a bruised head, but he had a bit of water there for the sheep that had been too slow, or too stupid, or too stubborn. When the Lord let them inside the pure water, the sheep was too busy and didn't get a drink.

And so when the shepherd looked at him, he knoweth that he's thirsty, and so he has some water for him. Runneth over. He gives him a cup of water, and not a little stingy, grudging cup, but runs it over.

And he gets all the water. Well, all I want to know is, tonight will be your supper. If it isn't, this would be the night, the very night.

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