

(John - Part 44): Having Loved His Own, He Loved Them Unto the End

by A.W. Tozer

Jesus' love for his followers endures unto the end, even in the face of rejection, betrayal, and suffering, and gives us hope and motivation to persevere through difficult times.

Duration: 45:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, John 13:1, Romans 5:8, Romans 8:38-39, Ephesians 2:4-5, 1 John 4:9-10

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the distance and familiarity that can hinder our understanding of the word of God. He highlights the repetition of Jesus' death and resurrection, which has made it lose its impact on us. The speaker then focuses on John 13:1, where Jesus expresses his love for his disciples before his departure. He urges the audience to examine their hearts and recognize that they may be carrying sins that are offensive to God, even if they appear outwardly righteous. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the importance of finding comfort in God alone, even in the face of rejection by others.

Transcript

In the thirteenth chapter of the book of John, John 13, verse 1. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. That is a complete unit in itself, though it's only the beginning of that chapter, and the beginning of the story. But it is a unit, and I want to talk tonight on the truth found in that verse.

Let us pray. Now, Lord, we have entered tonight through thy word a rich golden palace of carved ivory and jewels of the sea and of the mine, and all the beauty and all that wealth and all that loveliness could ever bring. And we simply don't feel ourselves worthy either to speak of it or to hear about it.

O Lord, this night we pray, help us that we might be worthy to even think about this verse, and that we might be worthy to hear it, and that I, thy servant, might be worthy to speak from it. O Lord Jesus, who became sin that we might become righteousness, who died that we might live, who died and gave thyself that we might be restored, help us this evening worthily to hear and rightly to understand that we might quickly obey it. Lest this congregation, an important congregation, Lord, very important in thy sight.

So wilt thou, we pray this night, by the Spirit, speak deeply to us, for Christ's sake. Now, Jesus knew that his hour was come. In some ways we living today, after the passing of 1900 years, have an advantage over those first believers who clustered fearfully and eagerly around our Savior.

We have the advantage of those 1900 years of history behind us. We have the advantage of tradition. They had none.

We have a long tradition. We have what men call hindsight, that is, we see back upon events, and what we see enables us to interpret what they could never foresee. And then we have the New Testament scriptures which were not in their possession, and we have a downcoming of the Holy Spirit to make those scriptures plain to us.

Those are the advantages which are ours which they did not have who were gathered around their Lord here in this story. But in other ways we have some serious disadvantages. There has been a long passing of time, and time always softens things.

If it happened long enough ago, it never seems as important as if it had only happened recently. And this happened 19 centuries ago. And then there is distance from where we are.

Thousands of miles of water roll between us and the little land where this took place. And then there is the chilling effect of familiarity. When you have spoken a word often enough, usually it loses its power over you.

And we have heard about his dying and his rising until it has become so familiar to us that it has lost its novelty, and constant repetition has dulled our faculties so that these things have become commonplace to us. Hence it is impossible, I say that it is impossible, for us to enter in and to hear these words with anything like the original meaning and with the charge of emotion and feeling that must have been in the heart of those who were present and in the heart of the man who first wrote these words. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

It is only by a work of the Holy Spirit, it is only by humility and penitence and long meditation and prayer and the operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that we are able to grasp this, able to enter into it. We can read it, but to enter into it and feel it and sense its values, I say that it is only by the Spirit of God that we know what he meant when he said his hour was come. Now when his hour came, let's look a little at what that hour brought to him.

It brought him the final rejection by his fellow men. Now we have so talked about it and sung about it and thought about it that it has excused itself of our minds, and we do not know that the rejection of our Lord by his brethren was an injurious or painful thing to him. Time and the passing of the years, familiarity, these have taken the edge off of this sharp razor.

This has taken the bite out of the wine of meaning here, and we forget that men were made for each other. Human beings were not made like wolves to be alone. They were made for each other, and the approval of and acceptance by our fellow men is necessary to us.

It's necessary. We must have it if we're going to be completely normal. Now in the upset condition of the world since sin has entered, sometimes it is necessary that men for a little while give up the approval and acceptance by and of their fellow men.

But that is an abnormal situation, and anybody that can be rejected by his fellow men and enjoy himself is not normal, because he is violating the deepest laws of his nature. He is violating the law of the community, the law of the social company. He is violating the very law that makes heaven heaven, and it could make earth a heaven if we only knew it.

When a man is forced to give up the fellowship of men and find comfort in God alone, he can do it. David said, When my father and my mother have cast me out, then the Lord will take me up. David was able to do it.

But David nevertheless wet his pillow with his tears because he knew that the rejection by his father and mother was not a normal thing, and he could not take the rejection of his fellow men easily, and he certainly could not enjoy it. I say that it's abnormal, and whoever enjoys it is in some degree abnormal. Rejection by men wrung the heart of Jesus Christ our Lord.

He was rejected, and because he was rejected he suffered. And when he said his hour was come, mine hour is come, he said the hour of my rejection is come, when my heart shall be torn and long furrows shall be plowed down my soul, because those I love will not love me. Those that I trust will not trust me, and those that I want to fellowship will not fellowship me, and those that I receive reject me.

Father, the hour is come, he said in one place. It says that when he knew that his hour was come, the hour of his rejection by his fellow men, but more than that, the hour of betrayal by a former friend, Judas, he was betrayed by this man who had dipped in the dish with him and who had gone up to the house of God and sat beside him or stood beside him while they sang the hymns. He said, my own familiar friend, in one place.

And when Judas came to betray him with a kiss, he looked up and said reproachfully, but sadly, friend, wherefore art thou come? He did not call him by any proper name that might have been his, a son of the devil. He said friend. Later he explained that he was a son of perdition and went to his own place.

But here he called him by his name friend, and he was betrayed by that friend. Now, you tell me that to walk with a man and know a man or anyone, any human being, and have friendship and let their souls be blended, and then suddenly to have that friend turn and betray, you tell me that that's not a sad, an awful, painful thing it is, and Jesus went through it. So that his hour was come, the hour of his betrayal, and the hour of his denial by still a closer friend, Peter.

To be denied, to have to walk out into company and to have someone meaningfully, now as a joke or in fun, we might do anything, and everybody understands it in good nature, but this was not in fun. When Jesus was denied by Peter, and when Peter said, I never knew him, he said it and meant it to believe it. And this was by a friend.

To stand up in company and have someone to save his own life, deny that he ever even knew you, this hurts. It's possible, I suppose, for a man to be so hardened in sin and so deep in his own pride and iniquity and egotism, that it might not hurt him. But as he of Jesus, it could not so be said.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was as sensitive as the apple of his eye, as sensitive as his own heart. And so when Peter, his friend, denied that he knew him, this was a pain to the Lord Jesus Christ. The hour had come for betrayal and denial and rejection, but worse did come for the sentence by his own people.

And when they cried, let him be crucified, it was the ultimate not only rejection, it was the final sentence of his own people upon him. Society had declared that he wasn't fit to live. Let him be crucified, let him be executed, they said.

And then there came the crucifixion, and when he knew that his hour was come, the hour of the crucifixion by the soldiers. Who can explain this? For 1900 years men have tried it. Orators and men of great eloquence have sought to make us understand.

Year after year and year after year, they go through the stations of the cross and try by songs and by every method known to try to recreate and rethink and visualize the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. Nobody can ever do that. There are some things that you will never be able to understand intellectually.

You will never understand them until you go through them. You must live through them to know what they mean. Jesus, our Lord, was crucified by the soldiers in between two thieves, and no imagination can picture it.

So let us pass over it in reverent brevity and say very little. And then he was forsaken, forsaken by his Father, and said, Let this cup pass from me. What was that cup? It was a cup of complete forsakenness, of abandon.

He was abandoned by his Father. And he cried, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And so terrible was this, and so real, that it had stood for more than a thousand years in their sacred scriptures as a prophetic utterance of David in a painful and fearful moment. But when it was uttered again, it was uttered by the Lord Jesus.

Father, the hour has come. Jesus knew that his hour was come, the hour of his rejection, the hour of his betrayal, the hour of his denial, the hour of his execution, and the hour when he should be forsaken of his God, and the hour of his dying. For all this led finally to what the good lady called the hard dying of Jesus.

It led to his hard dying. O sacred head, wrote the German poet, O sacred head now wounded, by grief and shame bowed down, O sacred head, what glory! But that sacred head was bowed with shame and grief under the crown of God and the rejection of his fellow men. And is it any wonder we sing, What language can I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend, for this thy dying sorrow and pity without end? What language can we borrow? Where can we get it? All the languages of the world would not do it.

And this was his hour. Father, the hour is come. Now it says that he knew this.

Jesus knew that his hour was come. And knowing this, and having loved his own, he loved them unto the end. I have been reverently going over this this last week.

And I have been searching into the translations and back into the original to know what actually the Holy Ghost said here. Having loved his own, he loved them through to the end. And I find that the word end there is a word also that is sometimes close to being used, or close to the word used, by when it says uttermost or utterly.

And one translation says, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them utterly. He loved them utterly. Now, usually, love doesn't last that long.

It isn't unto the end, and it isn't utterly. Usually, I say. Usually, having loved our own, we love them unto the first disappointment, the first time they disappoint us.

Having loved our own, we love them to that time when interest begins to flag and people lose interest, or some new interest comes to sidetrack the mind. Having loved our own, we love them until absence dims down that love, and memory takes the place of love. Having loved our own, we love them sometimes to the first inconvenience or to the loss of something.

Having loved our own, we love them until they cost us something, until we lose something by our love. But having loved his own, he loved them utterly and unto the end. He loved them unto the death with the consequence suffering that we have enumerated above here, the rejection of his fellow men.

And he knew that to love his people meant to love them unto the rejection by his fellow men. And though this violated all the deep laws of his human life, he still loved them utterly and on unto the end. He knew that it meant betrayal by a friend and denial by another friend.

It meant to be sentenced by society, his own people, to die. He knew it meant crucifixion and hard dying. But having loved his own, he loved them on unto the end.

And it says, he loved his own having loved his own who were in the world. I want you to hear this. Having loved his own who were in the world, these that he loved were not polished saints.

They were not shining gems of spiritual perfection. They were not cut diamonds of holiness. They were not silver and gold bands of beauty wrought by the lapidary or the goldsmith.

These were those capable of betraying and denying and running away and being filled with fear and doubting. Having loved his own who were in the world, and I draw this conclusion that if he loved them when they were in the world, he loves us when we are in the world. He does not wait until that day when we shall walk in in all the holy poise of spiritual dignity that belongs to the angels above.

But he loves us now in our present state and in our present condition. Though we love up till the first disappointment, but he loves with a thousand disappointments, and there isn't anybody here at this hour that hasn't disappointed Jesus somewhere. There isn't anybody here that our Lord hasn't felt this sharp pang of disappointment, if he indeed in his human life, I know he feels disappointment.

In his divinity, his deity, there's no such thing as disappointment, because disappointment carries with it some idea of lack of knowledge. But Jesus, since he had all knowledge, could not properly be disappointed. But his human heart, no doubt, was many times grieved, and thus we say disappointed, by an extension of the meaning of the term.

But he loved us in spite of the disappointment. And having loved his own, he loved them on, past the time when absence was, they became absent, he became absent, and he left the world, and we are here in the world, and his absence from the world in his physical body doesn't in any way dim down the fires of his love. Neither does his inconvenience, nor neither does any other thing.

The loss of every dear thing he had, including his own life itself, did not dim down the fires of his love. Having loved his own, he loved them on unto the end. And Jesus knew, he knew that the time had come when he should go through this tunnel of hell, fire, and rise out of the suffering of it all unto God, and that he should go unto God who had sent him.

He knew that. Jesus knew that, and yet he braved it and endured it. And he knew that he was going back to the Father because he knew that he was going back to the Father, and because of his great love he braved this and endured it.

Now, I want you to notice that God never asks us to endure without end. He never asks us to endure without end. Whatever you may be enduring, it will have an end.

And he never asks us to endure without purpose. Whatever you are enduring has a high design. That is why I cannot find in my heart any sympathy, whatever, any intellectual sympathy, for those who say there is no future life, but we ought to learn to endure and be disciplined now.

We ought to learn what is right and do it now. We ought to do good for its own sake and be right for rightness' sake. And yet I do not believe in any future, but I believe we ought to do good now.

I cannot go along with those who thus talk to tell me that I am to go through the fires of this world, to endure the pains that the flesh is heir to, to endure bereavement and betrayal and disappointment and denial and rejection and the sufferings of the body and the weariness of the flesh and the pains of the mind, to endure all this without a purpose in it, and then die and say, Thank God that fellow is out of his trouble. No more suffering for him, no more discipline, no more hardships, no more tribulation, no more worry, no more pains of mind or anguish of body. If that's all there is to it, the God that made that kind of thing is not a God at all, but a devil.

For he made helpless creatures to endure without purpose. So is not our Heavenly Father. He made us with a high design.

He held his own blazing heart before his eyes and said, Be, they'll be like that before I'm done with them, and they'll have eternity to be like that in them. So Paul could say that the life afflictions, which are but for a moment, were for us a far more exceeding weight of glory. So Jesus Christ could walk into and endure all this suffering which was anguish beyond imagination.

He could do it because he knew there would be an end and a purpose, that it wouldn't be forever and it wouldn't be in vain. And I tell you, Christian, to endure a while and pray a while and believe a while and trust a while, it'll not always endure. There's a better day coming, I know, I know.

It will not always, not always be so. And that trouble you're in is for your holiness, that you might be partaker of God's holiness, for your sanctification, that you might be purged and purified and the fires might burn out the foreign material. But it won't be endless.

He knew the hour was come when he should leave the world. Ah, the leaving of the world was the anguish, and go unto his Father. But there was the reward.

And it only took six hours to leave the world, but he has a million eternities to be with the Father. Jesus knew, it says here. I want you to know, my friends, that Jesus Christ died redemptively.

And he's the only one in the wide world that ever died redemptively. In the Old Testament it knew they died as martyrs. And that martyr first, whose eagle eye could pierce beyond the gloom, Stephen, and all the martyrs that have died for the cross of Christ down the years, and they're still dying.

And the blood of the martyr still flows. And yet not one drop of the blood of the martyr ever redeemed a human being. If you could collect in some vast sea all the blood that ever flowed from the day of righteous Abel to this hour, not all that blood could save any sinner, not one of them.

Not one human being ever died redemptively. Only Jesus died redemptively. He did not get himself into a tight place by unwisdom or ignorance or recklessness or weakness or accident.

Many a martyr has died by accident. He didn't want to die. But he was a Christian, and he got himself in a jam, for Christ's sake, and he took his head off.

And he didn't want to lose his head. He didn't do it voluntarily. He testified voluntarily, but took the head off.

He won't hang on to that a while yet. But they took it from him, or they threw him to the lions or let him rot in prison or starved him or impaled him on stakes or sewed him in a sack and threw him into the sea. History will tell you about that.

But all of that, the fellows got themselves into jams. They couldn't help it. They didn't want to die like that, but they did.

They'd rather have died like that than give up their faith in the Lord Jesus. But they didn't have any pleasure in it, and they didn't want it. And there have been a lot of people who died by accident, and a lot died foolishly.

And I have no doubt that some of the Saints who have died for Christ and who have gone off to heaven expecting a huge crown will find their crown somewhat reduced in size by the fact that there was a whole lot that's human in it and a whole lot that didn't have a high spirituality there. They died for a certain doctrine, or they died for a certain denomination, or they died because they wouldn't give up on a certain interpretation. And I suppose there in heaven God will count the martyrs all right and reward them, but I don't think the reward will be quite as rich as those who died for bigger and vaster and grander things.

But anyway, Jesus was not a martyr caught by his religion in a jam, forgotten into it through weakness, or caught asleep. No, no. He walked straight into it with his eyes open, charmed by his own love, compelled by the beatings of his own heart, written by his own affection for his people.

Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end, and he walked straight into it. He loved them utterly, and though in his wisdom he knew that it would be betrayal and denial and sentence and ostracism and crucifixion and death. Having loved his own, he loved them utterly, and with his eyes open went straight out there.

What led him out there? Charmed he was, charmed he was. Compelled he was, and impelled and driven, and he could no more have stopped short of the cross than he could have violated any other deep law of his own nature. He was driven out there, led out there.

He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and it was not the Romans that brought him, nor the Jews that brought him. It was his own incurable love that brought him. It was the silver nail driven in his own heart with your name engraved on the head of it, and he couldn't get away from it.

In Hebrews it says that he's a fixture. What is man that thou art mindful of him? And I've looked up the Hebrew and Greek, and I find that it means a fixture in the mind, something driven in the mind like a silver nail. So men are fixed and driven in the mind of God and clenched there like a nail, and God can't escape.

He's impaled upon his own love, and it was this that drove him to the cross. And when he died, in one sense I suppose he died on a wooden tree, but in another sense he died on a golden cross, for he died impaled not by the iron nails of Rome, but by the gold nails of his own affection. And it was his own love that the cross where he was nailed, and it was his own love that were the nails that drove him there.

With our physical eyes and ears and fingers we see and hear and touch the physical cross where he died, and men did see it and hear it and hear him and hear the nail hammers ring out on the nail heads. But through the eye of faith we know what it was. We know it was the gold cross of his mighty eternal love, and we know that it was love that nailed him there.

He, the God Almighty, he, the God Almighty, could not have twisted loose from that cross and with one quick word burned every soldier in the legions of Caesar and destroyed them with one breath of his mouth and turned on Israel and destroyed Israel with the brightness of his beaming. All that he could have done. Not all the iron soldiers of iron Rome could have nailed him on that cross, nor kept him there.

Why did he go helplessly out there to die? He did it because having loved his own, he loved them utterly. He loved them utterly. I am not worthy of such a love as this, and I suppose you feel the same, I hope you do.

But I am not going to back out because I am not worthy of it and refuse to accept it and refuse to believe it. I do believe it and I do accept it. And it's up to us to try to be worthy of such utter love.

It's up to us to put out of our minds everything that would be contrary to such utter love. Absence hasn't changed it. Passing of the centuries hasn't changed it.

The years have not changed it. Changes in nature and the changes in history have not changed that love. He walked straight into it, knowing where it was going and knowing when and knowing what it would mean.

He walked straight into it. Now, because he did, he doesn't want your pity. I said around Easter time, around the holy season, as they call it, which is a misnomer, for it isn't any holier than any other day.

Who was it that said, Remember the weekday to keep it holy? Somebody gave us a new commandment, Remember the weekday to keep it holy. I think he said something there all right. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy is good.

Remember all the other days to keep them holy is better. But he doesn't want our gratitude, our pity. He wants our gratitude.

He doesn't want us to pity him. We have so many songs that pity the Lord. Pity him.

Be solos, get up. For me, for me, for me, for me. And I get weary of it myself.

I do. I get tired of it. The music is usually set in some minor key or to some slow, funereal, heavy affair.

And they go into that and they pity Jesus. He doesn't want your pity. He wants your gratitude.

He didn't pity himself. He pitied himself five minutes. He never could have got the consent of his own heart to die.

He pitied you, but he didn't pity himself. When some woman yelled out her pity to him, he said, Don't pity me, ladies. Pity these poor people.

Pity this poor dry tree. Pity Israel, but don't waste your pity on me. We pity the man who is being taken unwillingly to die, but we honor the man who goes out with his chin up, knowing he's going to die, and knowing why, and impelled by the mighty passion within his own breast.

So he doesn't want your pity, but, oh, he wants your gratitude. Now let's think a little bit in the next five minutes, in closing, about our love for him. How far does it go? Is it unto the end, and is it utterly? You'll never need to question the love of Jesus.

Having loved his own who were in the world, and knowing that he was leaving this world by way of the cross, he loved them unto the end. But what about our love toward him? Does it end where inconvenience begins? I think it does for some Christians. I believe that.

It ends where inconvenience begins. And the average Christian evangelical who says he's born again, the average one, the rank and file of us, we serve the Lord at our convenience. And where we're inconvenienced, our love isn't quite big enough, quite strong enough.

I don't know whether anything humorous ever yet illustrated anything spiritual, but they do tell about the man who wrote a love letter so warm and affectionate, it was dripping and red-hot when it arrived at the home of the young lady, and it said, and I'll be over to see it tonight. I'd go through blood and fire, and I'll be to see it tonight if it doesn't rain. And people smile about that, but when that gets into the Church of Christ, it's not funny, it's tragic.

I love thee, O soul, I know not how my transport's to control, but it's raining and I'll stay home. I love thee, soul, I know not how my transport's to control, but if I give commissions, I can't buy the new car. Goodbye, Lord.

I like the feel of a good car under my feet. I love thee, soul, I know not how my transport's to control, but if I don't get to sing a solo, I'll sulk for six months. I love thee, soul, I know not how my transport's to control, but if it's a question between eating or praying, sleeping or praying, or anything else in the love of God, we serve our own convenience.

He loved us utterly, and I'm happy to tell you he loved you anyhow, and he'll love me anyhow, and he'll love the ones I'm talking about anyway. And I say to him, I love thee, so I know not how my transport's to control, but I want a reputation, Lord. But he loved me anyhow, and loved me utterly, knowing that about me.

And there's the astonishing thing. Only God could do that. An archangel couldn't do that.

Only God could do that, because only God is infinite. But he wants us to love him as much as he loved us. Somebody said, Mr. Tozer, how can I love him? How can I? How can I find in my cold heart any love? Can I reach into a cold stove, where the fires have been out for six thousand years, and hope to warm anything? Well, let's illustrate by the sun and the moon.

We walk out into the June evening and say there's going to be a beautiful moon tonight, and by nine or ten o'clock the moon is shining in its silver brilliance down upon the world. We take out a piece of paper and say, I can read. I can read in the moonlight.

And we tell some friend, last night I actually could read in the moonlight. And yet that moon is as cold and as dead as your heart. That moon is as cold as this slag that's been pulled out of the furnace down here in Indiana, in Gary.

Cold as ashes and as dead. And that whole moon, there isn't one spark of fire, nor one spark of anything that's radioactive or alive. It's cold, dead cinder.

And yet you say that you read by the very light of that same moon. Where did you get it? Ah, moonlight is sunlight reflected, that's all. A great sun shining in its brilliant glory down around the edge of the earth where we can't see it, shines upon that moon and the moon catches it and reflects it back on our dark earth, and we smile and sing about the beautiful moon.

And yet that moon has nothing of itself. It borrows, it borrows it from the sun and sheds it down on the earth, and so it is with the love of God. My heart in its own nature, by nature, is as cold and as dead as the slag out of the furnace a year later.

Cold and hard and harsh and hopeless. But the love of God shines down upon it and then it's transformed and gives back the love to him and to the world, and so the love I have is his love reflected. Not that we loved him, but that he loved us and gave his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

So you and I are reflectors only. You can't carry an illustration too far, and of course I'm only illustrating. Your heart does not and will not remain always as cold as slag.

God will warm and refresh and recreate and renew your heart, but always the only love you'll have will be his love reflected. Always, always. None of it will originate with you.

It will all originate in him, catch fire in your own heart, and go back to the poor world and back to God who gave it. So that's how we can love. We can love with his love.

We can love with reflected love. We can love because he loved us. And if we'd meditate on this long enough, perhaps the fires in our own heart would begin to glow and we'd reflect back the fires of his love, which is the only fire that we have.

But you know that our love doesn't go much beyond convenience, and it doesn't go very much beyond rejection. There aren't very many who would be rejected for Jesus' sake, and there aren't very many who would be denied for Jesus' sake, and there aren't very many who would suffer loss for Jesus' sake. There aren't very many who would sacrifice for Jesus' sake.

Not very many. We sit here and sing and preach. That's about all we do at this church, sing and preach and do good to the poor, give to missions.

We scorn the dance and liquor and the rest. But you know that it's entirely possible, more than possible but not quite probable, that we may be carrying in our hearts sins as offensive to God as the dance in the church parlor Sunday night. Jealousy, animosity, malice, bad temper, unforgiving spirit, pride.

We may sit here Sunday nights and be proud of the fact that we don't show movies in this church Sunday night, and yet God may find more tolerable some people who do show movies. He may find more compatibility with some who do dance tonight. And I'm not arguing for movies nor dance, either one.

They come in, I go out, and don't come back. But I'm only saying that sins aren't always visible sins, and the worst and most heinous and offensive sins may be sins of our hearts, the sins of selfishness, the sins of pride, the sins of self-righteousness, the sins of contempt, feeling of contempt for others. Those things may be as serious and are as serious as any sin of the flesh.

Now, it isn't an either-or. It isn't a choice. You must either have one or the other.

You don't have to take your choice. Between being a sinner inside and a sinner outside, you don't have to take your choice. You don't have to be any kind of a sinner.

You can give up the world and its ways and put away in behind you all of this insufferable foolishness and still have a clean heart, and a clean mind, and a tolerant disposition, and a friendly spirit, and a charitable soul. You can have in you all the love of God and still hate all these other things. It isn't an either-or.

I don't say you must either choose to sin inside or outside. You don't have to choose either. He that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

So we can keep our hearts gentle and kind and friendly and tolerant toward everybody. Pity the people who don't see it as we see it or don't see the truth as God's people see it, not just us here, certainly, and yet can love them and be compassionate toward them and friendly. And yet I wonder how far our love goes.

I'm bothered about it myself. I just wonder how far it goes, this love. He loved us utterly until the end.

And we love him limitedly until we get to the first jam, where it's a choice between loving him or loving ourselves, and then we love ourselves. Dear God, how long will it be? Miss Bailey, who is a managing editor, sends something every week back to my office two or three times a week. She keeps a stream of stuff coming in both directions.

She said in a little note that the missionary, so-and-so, had sent that article and didn't like it, that it was condensed and put on the back page without his name on it. Well, she said, I guess he was human, and then added, is there anybody that's selfless? A missionary is supposed to be very saintly, have two or three invisible crowns just an inch or two above his head, and yet he was jealous or mad because he didn't get his name on his piece. Is anybody selfless? What do you think about it? I want to be.

I want to be just as little of myself and as much of God as is possible in this life. Don't you? Do you, or don't you? Do you want to be reduced just as far as you can until they can't offend you and can't hurt you, can't miss you, can't make you feel bothered? You want just so little of yourself, God to reduce you so little that there's anything there to be jealous of or be offended about? If you do, I'm preaching to you by the cross, by the blood of the covenant, by the cross, by the Holy Ghost. God will reduce you.

Do you want to be reduced so that your love shall go on and be as great as his love, because it's his love reflected? Having loved him, we love him utterly. Oh, brothers and sisters, I want to love him utterly. Do you?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2131.mp3>

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