

'Spiritual' Love

by A.W. Tozer

True love for Jesus requires the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit, loving Him as very God of very God.

Scripture: John 4:24, John 14:17, John 15:26, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 2 Corinthians 5:14, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 3:16-19, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 4:19

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Love"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes that true spiritual love for Jesus transcends human affection and can only be expressed through the Holy Spirit. He argues that while humans can love Jesus in a way similar to loving historical figures, this pales in comparison to the divine love that the Spirit enables. Tozer warns against superficial expressions of love that lack the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, asserting that genuine love for Christ must recognize Him as God. He critiques modern expressions of love for Jesus that do not stem from a deep spiritual understanding or acknowledgment of human sinfulness. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a love that honors Jesus as the Eternal Son, empowered by the Spirit within us.

Transcript

The human heart can love the human Jesus as it can love the human Lincoln, but the spiritual love of Jesus is something altogether different from and infinitely superior to the purest love the human heart can know. Indeed it is not possible to love Jesus rightly except by the Holy Spirit. Only the Third Person of the Trinity can love the Second Person in a manner pleasing to the Father. The spiritual love of Jesus is nothing else but the Spirit in us loving Christ the Eternal Son.

Christ, after the flesh, receives a great deal of fawning attention from the liberal and the modernist, but love that is not the outflow of the indwelling Holy Spirit is not true spiritual love and cannot be acceptable to God. We do Christ no honor when we do no more than to give Him the best of our human love. Even though we love Him better than we love any other man, still it is not enough if He merely wins first place in competition with Socrates or Walt Whitman. He is not rightly loved until He is loved as very God of very God, and the Spirit within us does the loving.

There is much in present-day gospel circles that illustrates the distinction we are pointing out. A great many loud protestations of love for Christ leave the discerning heart with the impression that they are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Innumerable sweet love ballads are sung to Jesus by persons who have never known the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit or felt the shock that comes with a true sight of the sinful pollution of nature.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/spiritual-love/>

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