

The Voice of God's Love

by A.W. Tozer

God's love is an everlasting love that is unconditional and unexplainable, and it is the reason why he loves his creation and fallen sinners.

Duration: 38:11

Scripture: Genesis 3:9, Genesis 3:17, Jeremiah 31:3, Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:8-10, Romans 8:19-22

Topics: "God's Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of revelation and how it relates to our understanding of the human condition. He acknowledges that we already know that the creation is subject to vanity and decay, as stated in the book of Ecclesiastes. The speaker then reflects on the lives of great geniuses like Albert Einstein and Ludwig van Beethoven, who had incredible abilities but ultimately died and took their talents to the grave. He questions the reasonableness of a being capable of creating such remarkable creatures like humans, only to have them end up in the ground and leave their work unfinished. The speaker suggests that something has happened to the human race, and the Bible provides sacred revelation to explain this. It declares that the inhabitants of the world are lost, but not forsaken, and that there is a voice calling them to safety and home. The sermon ends with the question, 'Adam, where art thou?', implying that humanity is lost and in need of redemption.

Transcript

I want to bring a short but important message to you. Important not because I bring it, but I bring it because it is important. In the book of Jeremiah, the 31st chapter, verse 3, the Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

If you have your Bible in your hand, a King James Bible, you will notice that the word Lord is spelled in four capital letters. In the Old Testament, in the King James Bible, wherever the word Lord is spelled with four capitals, it is the word Jehovah. The old Jews believed the name Jehovah was too sacred to pronounce.

They called it the incommunicable name, the tetragrammaton, and so they disguised it under the name Lord and spelled it here, and we have it in English, L-O-R-D, in capital letters. That name, that word, is Jehovah, spelled in four letters in the Hebrew and called Jehovah, a kind of anglicized word. So what it says here is that Jehovah hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Let me begin by reminding you that the world we inhabit is a lost world, and there are reasons for this. The earth itself is a lost planet. It is a lost planet not in the sense that it has been lost, as you might lose something and not be able to find it, but it is lost in the sense that if a province of this country or a state of the Union of the South would secede and set up its own government and refuse to, speaking by a province here, refuse to come under the national government, would reject the currency of the dominion, the laws of the dominion, and set up its own laws, elect its own president or prime minister or king or whatever they might call it, and wrench itself loose from the dominion and be a country within a country, it would be lost to Canada.

That's what I mean when I say this is a lost planet that we inhabit, lost not because God doesn't know where it is, but lost because it's been lost to God and lost to the kingdom of God. Cursed be the ground for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee. Now, why the never-ending, gigantic struggle that we read about in the Bible? Listen here, this strange passage so hard to understand and yet so necessary that we do understand it.

Romans 8, for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies. Here is a statement that would not have needed to be made.

That is, it's not revelation, it is simply a calling attention to what we already know. That is revelation which could not have been discovered and would not have been known, but is told to us by God. But this is not revelation in that sense, though it's an inspired utterance.

We know that the creature is subject to vanity. The whole book of Ecclesiastes tells us that the creation is subject to vanity. We know that it's under the bondage of corruption, change and decay in all around us, and we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain.

We know that. Now, there's something worse yet than that, and that is that the race that inhabits the earth is also lost, the human race, the race to which you and I belong and of which we are a part. It is a lost human race, lost not in the sense that God doesn't know where it is, but lost in the sense that it doesn't know where it is, and lost in the sense that a province would be lost to Canada if it seceded and pulled itself loose and set up its own government and became an independent country.

I hope that never happens. It would be ridiculous if it did. They tried it down south and had a civil war over it.

But the human race is lost to the Kingdom of God and lost within itself. Now, does it seem reasonable that a being like human beings, does it seem reasonable that they should be given such a brief turn in life? Does it seem reasonable that just when we get ready to live, we die? Does it seem reasonable that just when we have gone long enough up the highway that we know all the signs now and we're not likely to make any more of those blunders we made when we were kids, and just when wisdom was settled upon us and poise and a certain sanity we didn't have when we were younger, just about that time the arteries

start getting hard and the hair getting gray or getting gone, and we're ready to die. Just when you're ready to live, you've got to die.

Now, that doesn't seem like God, doesn't seem like anything reasonable at all. Does it seem reasonable that a being as God-like as man should take his God-likeness to the grave with him, as though God were to load a man down with treasures and then tell him, now do you see that hole in the ground over there? You take your treasures and go to that hole in the ground. Look, it wasn't very long ago that a man died by the name of Albert Einstein.

Now, we won't talk about his religion. He was a Jew, but he was not too much of a Jew either. So we're not for the moment thinking about his religion.

We're only thinking about his amazing ability, his genius. He was a genius, an old, fluffy-haired genius who looked way past the end of the future. Some young fellow was working out a mathematical equation on the board, and it took him a long time, and there were a lot of explanations, and a whole blackboard covered with it.

Mrs. Einstein was sitting there, and she said, My husband worked some out like that on the back of old envelopes. He was like that, you know. He just had that ability.

Now he's gone. He's taken that tremendous mind of his down into the grave with him. I think of old Stormy Beethoven with his great overhanging brow and his wild hair, that great Stormy genius that literally played upon the sun, moon, and stars, and made all the four winds of heaven to blow his organ, and took the very beams of light and made them into his strings, and gave the world, in my opinion, the richest music it has ever known.

And yet he laid down and died, and he took that amazing genius, that awesome ability of his, right down into a hole, and they covered it up. Now does that seem reasonable? I don't think that it does at all. Is it reasonable that a man should live consistently beneath his own ideals, pride and disappointment, or go hand in hand in everybody, and there isn't anybody listening to me but what's disappointed with himself and frustrated? Not anybody here.

We look at a man and we say he's sitting on top of the world. If you knew what was eating at that man's heart, you'd know that he was a disappointment to himself. Instead of sitting upon the world, he's lying under it, crushed by it.

That's two playboys and actresses, two of the leading actresses, the telegram said last night, two of the leading mayors of the United States. These curvaceous pink and white females that have startled and drawn the interest in the attraction of the world. Both of them miserable.

One of them so miserable she gets sick and can't fulfill her engagements. Quite common for them to take, not those two, but for others to take sleeping pills, too many of them, just weary of living. Everybody wanting their autograph, and everybody wanting to marry them, and everybody chasing after them, and everybody standing at attention in droves when they go down the street, and yet they want to take sleeping pills.

They're disappointment to themselves, and miserable and frustrated. Is it reasonable to you that God Almighty should make a being capable of frustration and then let him be frustrated, capable of disappointments and high ideals, and then let him be disappointed with his high ideals? I don't think so.

And that he should dream of a shiny world somewhere and not know how to get there? Whither goest thou, Lord? We know not the way.

How can we get there if we don't know the way? And when the man said that, he spoke for all the human race. Now I ask you, would it seem reasonable that a being capable of making a creature like man should make man to end his days in a hole in the ground and leave his work undone and die disappointed, frustrated and miserable? I don't think so. Something has happened to the human race.

The Bible rushes right in by sacred revelation to tell us what happens, and it declares that the inhabitants of the world are lost by a mighty calamitous visitation of moral woe. It tells us that they are lost but not given up, lost but not forsaken. It tells us that the planet we live on is a lost planet, and tells us that the inhabitants of that planet are lost inhabitants, and tells us that in spite of the fact that they are lost, still they have not been given up, that there is a voice calling them to safety and home as the shepherd searched for his sheep, calling for it until its weak bleat was heard somewhere out there on a mountain, and he went and found it and brought it home on his shoulder, calling as the woman searched, not with her voice but with the light searching for the coin.

Adam, where art thou? Sounds all over the earth. I think that I am not a visionary. I get accused occasionally by some of these hard-edged theologians of being a mystic, which I don't deny.

A mystic is simply somebody who believes it possible to commune with God Almighty right now through Jesus Christ in the Spirit, and know it, and have a sense of heaven all around him, and being in the presence of God even when he's in the presence of men. If that's being a mystic, then I plead guilty, and I am. I believe that there are voices sounding throughout the world, voices sounding right in Toronto, not always heard certainly because there are other voices that are louder, but there are voices.

The voice of God Almighty is the voice of God and the voice of God's love. I am to speak over the next weeks and evenings about the voices that entreat us, this lost planet and the voices that entreat this lost race and call us back to heaven and home and God and safety, back to recover and recuperate and have restored to us all the lost and more too. I say that there are voices calling, and yet they are all one voice, really.

They are simply inflections of one voice, and it's the voice of God's love. God is love, says the scripture. And God, being love, loves himself and must love himself with a pure and perfect love, and because he is holy and blameless, he can love himself with a holy and blameless love.

And the three persons of the Godhead can love each other, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost can love each other interchangeably and reciprocally and be holy in the doing of it. And God is himself the only being that can be loved directly. God has to love everything else for his own sake.

So God loves everything for his own sake. He loves himself because he is what he is, and then he loves everything else for his own sake. So he loves the new creation.

I believe that God loves his creation. I think that is why this passage is ever written over here. I think that God loves his creation and that the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, by the reason of him who subjected the saint in hope.

And the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. I believe that every mountain peak and every valley and every lake and every flowing

river and every ocean and sea and every planet and star and moon and satellite that floats out yonder in the illimitable space is dear to God and is ultimately going to be restored again, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, redeemed by our Lord. For don't forget that when Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, he didn't die alone for men, he died for everything that touches men.

He died for the home he gave men, and he died for the stars that shine on men, and he died for the sun that lights their way and the moon that reflects in glory the beauty of the sun. He died for the whole human race, that in Christ the whole creation should be gathered together in one, as he told us in Colossians. So our Lord died because he loves it all.

All of this mess we're in now is only the groaning and the travail and the frustration and the misery that comes because of sin in the world, because we were a lost race, live on a lost planet, floating through space, trying to recover ourselves. My dear friends, don't be taken in by anybody that comes to you with the answer apart from divine revelation, because there is no such answer. Nobody knows.

Let me tell you, the liberals don't know and the progressive conservatives don't know and the New Democrats don't know and the Republicans don't know and the Tories don't know and the rest of them don't know. Nobody knows. They may all mean well, and we honor every man who tries to do what he can do, but we're all a lost people and men don't know where they are, and that's a part of their lostness, and only God knows where they are.

The United States is going to explode a bomb, one of the high-power things, up yonder somewhere in the radiation belt, and they're wondering whether it won't disrupt all radar and all the rest, maybe start a chain reaction that nobody can talk to anybody else anymore because of the electronic disturbances and interferences. I don't know about that. I don't know they're going to do it.

When a nation says, We're going to do it, some other nation says, Don't do it, they'd do it just to show they can do it. They'll do it all right. I hope it won't turn out as bad as people fear, but they'll do it.

And Russia says, Because they're going to do it, you're driving us to do something like it. So we're having our troubles in our time, like fighting cocks in an arena, making the feathers fly in the blood. How long will it be before this Cold War heats up into a bloody hot war that will bring a third of the world to the grave? I don't know that.

I only know nobody can do much about it, but there is a God who made heaven and earth and who redeemed it by the blood of his Holy Son, Jesus, and he loves the creation. He loves it. I can understand why God loves it.

I can understand that God loves all the lovely world that he made, because he sees in it his own wisdom and power, and sees a reflection of himself. And he loves the angels and the seraphim because he sees in them a reflection of his holiness. And he loves men because he sees in them a fallen relic of his own image.

Now, God must and will love men, and he does love men, and God can't help it. God loves because he is God, and God is love, and he says, I have loved you with an everlasting love. It's an everlasting love, and God loves men because he sees in them his own image.

And he will love them until hell has erased the last remaining trace and relic of God-likeness. But you say the scripture says that God's love is an everlasting love, then won't it last forever? The answer is, God's

love is everlasting, but the object of God's love may not be. For instance, I do not believe that God loves the devil any longer, though there was a time when God loved the devil and loved the fallen angels and the demons and all things that he had made.

But they revolted from him, and they too are lost, lost along with the lost planet we inhabit, lost along with the lost race. And I do not believe that God still loves the devil, because there is nothing there that the love of God can light on. You say, why can God love a fallen sinner? Why could God love Hitler? Why could God love Mussolini? Why can he love old Khrushchev now? The answer is, in spite of how bad these men were and are, if you dig down far enough and go deep enough back into the deepened spirit of even a man like Khrushchev, you will find fallen relics and traces and old ruins that once were the temple of God.

I don't say that saves him. In fact, I know better. Except a man be converted and born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

But I do say that there is something in man for the love of God to light on, and there is nothing in the devil for the love of God to light on. Do you remember that beautiful and strange passage in the book of John, where our Lord Jesus said, When the devil comes, the prince of this world comes, he'll find nothing in me. He found nothing that was like him or that belonged to him or any relic of him in the bosom of Jesus.

Turn that around, and there are those in which God can find nothing, nothing that reminds him of himself, nowhere for his love to light, no handle he can get hold of, no receptacle for his love. And still the love of God goes on loving. Wherever there is love, there is goodwill.

God is inflamed with goodwill. This is hard to believe, because the human conscience says, I know better, I am a bad, and God is not inflamed with goodwill toward me. Such reasoning is false, because it fails to see that God loves us for his own sake.

He loves us not because of what we are, but he loves us because of what he is. And if God tells me that he loves me and I say to him, O God, I am not worthy to be loved, it means that I have misunderstood God. God never said, I love you because you're so nice.

He said, I love you because I love you. That's the only explanation he ever gave Israel. I suppose there never was.

I'm not anti-Semitic. In fact, I'm very pro-Semitic and have always been, and was a member of two, and now I'm a member of one board of Jewish missions. And I fully understand the position and place the Jews have yet in the future.

They gave us our Bible, it was Jewish blood that we shed on the cross of Calvary. I understand all that. Yet if you just take the prophets of Israel alone and let them tell you, you've got to conclude that there has scarcely been a nation ever that lived in the world as unlovely as Israel.

Yet God says, I loved you, I loved your fathers, and I love you. I love you, and then he said, I love you, and maybe they were waiting to say why, and he didn't give them a why. He said, because I love you.

God's love doesn't have to explain. Everybody else has to explain, because we're all responsible. What disappoints me in politicians is they make so many irresponsible statements.

They're not responsible to anybody. They can get up and say anything they want to, and when it's all over, they receive congratulations and go to the next place and say the same. Nobody is going to get up and say, Hey, would you kindly tell me why you said this? Answer me! They don't do it, never have done it.

Adam and Eve down, not responsible. They are responsible, but they won't admit it. All the rest of us are responsible to somebody.

We've got to tell somebody why we did it, and they'll have to, too. And you know when? Tomorrow, here. They'll tell them why they said it.

It'll be tomorrow night along about 8 o'clock, we'll be glued to the radio. I'll be, I'll admit it frankly. Tomorrow night, have I got anything? No, no meeting tomorrow night, so I'll be sitting there waiting how it came out.

You'll be responsible to somebody. They made their speeches without knowing there was anybody going to jack them up and saying, Hey, why did you say this? Somebody's going to do it all right. Wait till tomorrow night.

Well, God Almighty is the one being in the universe that isn't responsible to anybody. God doesn't say, Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll explain this. No, never, never explains.

He doesn't have to. God says to the archangels, I love people. And if the archangels dare to say, But O God, why? Look, look at your heaven here.

Look at your golden glory and your silver beauty and the pearly gates and all the loveliness of angel and archangel and all the clean, pure beauty of heaven. Look at it. And you say you love that crowd of liars and adulterers and thieves and deceivers down there they call people.

Why? Nobody dares ask God that question. Why? Because God isn't responsible to anybody. He doesn't have to answer.

And so he says, I love them because I love them, and that's all the answer God ever gave. That may sound rather light, but to me that's tremendous. I don't have to say to God, Now, God, I'll never believe you love me until I discover why.

One song says, I'm going to try to find out why God loves me so. I think that's poor theology. I'm not very mildly concerned about why God loves me, but I'm powerfully and wonderfully elevated in my heart to know he does.

That's all I have to know. God isn't going to tell an archangel why he loved A. W. Tozer. No.

If he'd start explaining to an archangel, there would be some kind of revolt, because I'm sure I wouldn't get the vote of any archangel or seraph or any creature in heaven, any creature, unfallen creature anywhere would vote against me. They'd vote me the man least likely to get to heaven, because I just don't deserve to go. But God says, I love the fellow anyhow, and I'll love him through to the end.

Having loved his own, he loves them to the end. It says here, I have loved you with an everlasting love. So there is yearning, the lovingkindness have I drawn thee to himself.

A lost race in a lost world, from God there is a clear call to consider him, to consider God. You give attention to the voice. The voice of reason is speaking these days, and the voice of conscience and the

voice of Christ's blood is crying to us, and the voice of judgment and the voice of all who died and the voice of all who are saved.

But here tonight, the voice of God's love is calling us home, calling us to consider your ways and consider God, to believe concerning him and believe what he said about himself and believe what he said about you. And the voice of God's love is asking you to turn to him and make a moral about face and to throw yourself on his mercy, and to identify yourself with his son. This voice, I am hearing it, this voice of God all through the scriptures, all through his kindnesses to you, all through the prayers of his people.

The voice of God is saying to his lost race, come home, come back, come to the Father's house. I have goods unto spare. Come and receive the ring and the robe.

Come and consider me and consider my right to your love, and believe about me, and believe what I tell you, and turn to me, and throw yourself on my mercy, and identify yourself with my son in faith. Believe on my son. Augustine, that saint of God who lived back in the early centuries, said something later on along about the 1200s, I think, or maybe a little later than that, maybe the 1500s.

A German by the name of Gerhard Terstigen wrote about it, but he wrote it in German. So another man, this time an Englishman by the name of John Wesley, loved the writings of Terstigen so much that he brushed up on his German in order that he might be able to translate them. He perfected his German so that he could turn Terstigen's hymns into near-perfect English, and he did.

One of them was this, Thou hidden love of God, whose height, whose depths unfathomed no man knows, I see from far thy beauteous light in me, I sigh for thy repose. My heart is pained, nor can it be at rest till it find rest in thee. Thou hidden love of God, he said.

Why is it hidden? It's hidden because to make a living, and to get along in the world, and to keep up with the Jones family, is buried of many beautiful things under the dust of civilization that ought to be out. Thou hidden love of God, whose height, whose depths unfathomed, nobody knows how high the love of God goes, and nobody knows how deep it goes. To introduce another little song into this greater one, that song that says, Could I with the ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry.

Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky. That's the love of God, the hidden love of God that's height and depth, unfathomed, nobody knows it. But he says, I see from far thy beauteous light.

Have you seen a little bit of the gleam of it? A little bit of the gleam of it? I see from far thy beauteous light, and inly I sigh. I like that word inly. It isn't used any more at all now.

We have other words now, but I like that word inly. It's a Methodist word, and I don't know anybody but John Wesley that used it. I'm not even sure he didn't invent it, but it's a beauty of a word.

Inly I sigh for thy repose. I believe that religion ought to be inly. If it isn't an inly religion, it isn't worth talking about.

And he says, I sigh inwardly. That's what we say now. I sigh inwardly for the love of God.

My heart is pain, nor can it be at rest till it find rest in thee. God made us for himself, Augustine had said, and we never can find rest till we find it in God. Someone else said a human heart is a God-shaped void and can never be at peace until God fills the void.

But I want you to hear this voice calling you back, calling you home, and calling you to hope and rest and expectation for the future. A fine old Christian gentleman whom I unfortunately didn't get to know very well. I've spoken to him, but I didn't get to know him too well, though my wife and others that have spoken to me about him tell about what a wonderful man he was, Mr. Johns.

He left for communion Sunday. When would that be? Two weeks ago? He left for communion Sunday after taking communion and said, I guess this will be my last time. Seventy-nine years old, and that was his last time.

Jesus, our Lord, said that I'll eat no more of this fruit of the vine until I eat it and drink it with you, eat and drink until I eat and drink with you in the kingdom of God. So our dear old friend won't take communion anymore at Avenue Road Church, but he will take communion in that great gathering when all the Saints have marched home and Jesus Christ, our Lord, sits down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Jews and Gentiles and black and white and red and yellow and good and bad around the world that have all come through the same washing and through the same deliverance and through the same regeneration. The love of God followed that old man, followed him 79 years and then won.

Followed him and then won him! I mean, took him home. He'd been won to the Lord long years before. Well, he's calling you now.

My heart is pained, nor can it be at rest until it finds rest in thee. God give us ears these days. Now the summer months are upon us, and motorboats are going to be putt-putting and people are going to be busy dashing around over the world, getting killed on the highways and all that sort of thing.

And I'm not as tough as the Associated Press made me out to be when they ran that piece about my opinion of people who run away from the Church in the summer. But I still think we as the people, serious-minded pilgrims, homeward bound, that we ought to take Christ seriously and Christianity seriously. And I believe that we ought to be thinking about this voice of God, sounding with many inflections and in many ways and from many directions.

And over these Sunday nights, will you do this? Don't come to church by yourself. Bring somebody. Get somebody in your car.

Somebody will come with you. Somebody. You have a relative someplace.

Don't tell me that you're so poor and friendless that you don't have anybody you could work on. You can get somebody to come. Get them to come.

Tell them we're going to hear about the voices that entreat us and hear good music and joy. Bring them along. Nobody will embarrass them by running and crowding them in a corner and trying to convert them right there on the spot like selling insurance.

Nobody's going to do that. We're going to treat them with the respect we'd want to be treated with if we went into somebody's church. But bring them unto the sound of the gospel.

Talk to them about the voice of God sounding in all ways and from all directions, trying to win them to him. Do you do that over these Sunday nights? Now, let's pray. O love of God, thou hidden love of God, we have found thee, we have found thee, for thou hast found us.

For we were not looking for thee, thou art looking for us. We have found and thou hast found, and we know thee, or rather as Paul said, we are known of thee. How thou bless this fellowship, this group that's heard these words tonight.

May we go out amid horns and airplanes overhead and noises of every kind. May we hear this gentle, insistent, sovereign, authoritative, winsome voice calling us to be Christians, calling Christians to be good Christians, and calling good Christians to be still better Christians, calling us to put the world away and focus our attention on eternal values that will be hereafter. Kingdoms have fallen and democracies have gone down in the dust.

Great God, help us over these days just ahead. We pray in Christ's name, amen.

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