

For God So Loved

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the immeasurable and unconditional love of God, and how it can be experienced through a decision to follow Jesus Christ.

Duration: 35:22

Scripture: John 3:16, Romans 8:38

Topics: "Love Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the immense love that God has for every individual, regardless of their past or current circumstances. He highlights that God's love is so great that He sent His only Son into the world to save humanity. The preacher encourages the congregation to believe in Jesus and experience the incredible love of God. He also prays for God's light to shine in every heart and situation, and for God to work in a powerful way in this generation. The sermon concludes with the reminder that one day, everyone will stand before the throne of God and be enveloped in His immeasurable love.

Transcript

Father, I thank you for your presence here this evening. Thank you, Father, for the incredible grace that reaches into the deepest, darkest part of every human heart. And Lord, you shine a light in places that only you can.

Tonight, Father, we're asking God that you let that light shine in every heart, every situation, every mind, every inquiry that is found in this sanctuary tonight. God, we're tired of this devil beating up on this generation, not only in this sanctuary, but everyone who will be touched of God tonight. I pray that you open their mouths to begin to speak about you, what you have done, and who you are, and the hope, and the life, and the light that you give.

Oh God, it is time for you to work, Lord. It's time for you to do, Lord, what only you can do. Our enemies have ridden over our generation, but you are still God.

You still sit on the throne of absolute victory. You're still filled with compassion and love for your own creation. Jesus, reveal that love tonight.

Reveal it to every heart. And Father, we thank you for this in Jesus' name. You know, we sang that song tonight, Meet Me.

And you might be wondering, where? What are we talking about? And my son-in-law, when he first got saved, he thought that song was Beep Beep, oh, beep beep. He thought it was a great song. He thought it was an awesome song.

It must be the way they sing in church in New York. Meet me. You know, one day, we are all going to stand, we are all going to stand, at different times, actually, but we're gonna stand at the throne of God.

Whether or not you believe that, it is going to happen to you. You're going to stand in the presence of the purest love that you have ever been in, in your entire life. A love that is immeasurable.

A love that cannot be defined. If it were an ocean, you can swim in it, you'll not drown. You can never swim to the top, you can never reach the bottom.

You can't go to either side and never find the borders. It's a love that is unlike any love that you'll find anywhere in this world. It's not human love, it's a different kind of love.

It's the love of God. It's the love that's written about in one verse in the New Testament that's become a famous verse over the years, spoken by the mouth of Jesus, where he said, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That whoever believes in the son of God should not find himself in a place where God's love is not, but has everlasting life in the presence of God.

One day at the throne of God, we will be for a moment wrapped up in the totality of the love of God. A perfect love, John the Apostle says, that casts out fear. A love that I have come to experience in my lifetime.

I came to Christ when I was 24 years of age. And I remember shortly after that, laying in bed one night and I was weeping. And I was not really prone to weeping, but I was reading the text of scripture.

I was reading a lot of the New Testament and I was reading about the love of God. I was reading about where Paul said, I'm convinced that there's no height, there's no depth, there's no power, there's no walls, there's no principalities. There's nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And I'm reading it on the text of the page, but I can't feel it. I don't understand it. And I remember telling her, I don't understand the love of God.

I mean, I'm reading about it, but really, I don't really understand love, period. And I began to ask the Lord to show me. And over the years, he's begun to allow me to experience a little more and a little more and a little more to the point where tonight I can stand behind this podium and say I feel in great measure the love that God has in his heart for you.

No matter what you've done or where you're living or what kind of a mess you're bringing into the house of God tonight, God loved you and loves you. And he loved you so much that he sent his only son into the world to get you. One day you'll stand at the throne of God and I will stand at the throne of God and suddenly our minds will be opened.

We will experience this incredible love of God in a way that we never believed it was possible. We'll understand the cross of Jesus Christ. We'll understand why God sent his son into the world.

We'll see the depth of sin and what sin really is all about. How ugly rebellion against God really is. How vile it is.

How awful it is. How it can't dwell in the presence of a holy God. How there is nothing that can bridge that gap between those of us who had rebelled against God and this incredibly loving, perfect God.

Nothing can bridge the gap. There's no work we can do. There's no resolution we can make.

There's nothing we can, there's no clothes we can put on. There's no amount of doing something that can ever bridge that gap between us and God and God knew it. And because he loved us, he sent his son.

And on Jesus Christ was poured out the ugliness of our sin. The beating he took, the scorning he took, the whipping he took, the thorns in his brow, the cuts on his back, the nails in his feet and in his wrists were all done because God so loved you. That a price had to be paid for the wrong things that you've done.

You couldn't pay it, neither could I, but God's son could because he was sinless. He was the only one who really could pay the price for what we had done and he did. And suddenly at the throne of God, you're gonna see it and you're gonna understand it and it's gonna be overwhelming.

The love of God, this incredible love of God. And for many, it's going to be the beginning of an unspeakable joy. There's nothing in my vocabulary that can explain the kind of a joy that is going to be yours and mine, those of us who know Christ for all of eternity.

It's an amazing thing when the entrance, we experienced that joy at the throne of God, we experienced that love and now we're ushered into a place where God's love is in never ending measure. As I said earlier, like an ocean that you can never mind the depths of it. I can't begin to understand it, but I know it's going to be something that's beyond anything I can even remotely begin to convey to you tonight.

This incredible joy that God has prepared for those who love him. The Bible says, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Every person ever born will stand one day at the throne of God.

Everyone will see the cross. Everyone will understand what God did. Everyone will see how he reached out to his own fallen creation, his own fallen world, who in its rebellion against God, wants to be its own God, wants to make its own rules, wants to decide what's right and what's wrong, all by itself.

Even though it's leading all of humanity, most of humanity into an eternity that you and I can't even fathom what it's like to be where God is not. You know what would really make hell, hell? It's when people who did not receive Christ as savior on this side of eternity, stand at the throne of God and for whatever amount of time that takes, you finally understand how much God loved you. You finally see the cross of Jesus Christ for what it really was.

It was the sacrifice that God's son paid for the wrong that you have done. It was the entrance into not just salvation, but not just an abundant life on the earth, which is promised of God, but eternal life in heaven with God. It was the payment for the wrong that you and I have done.

It was the bridge that we needed to get back into right relationship with God. You'll suddenly be at the throne of God and understand why you were created, what life was all about. There'll be a sense of fulfillment come into your heart that there's nothing inside of you can describe what that's going to feel like.

Oh God, I now understand what life is about. The mysteries of the things that were mysteries are now open to my mind. I realize why I was born.

I understand and I know how you were leading me. You were speaking to me. You were guiding me.

You were trying to whisper into the recesses of my heart and I fall on my knee and I say, Jesus Christ is Lord. But for multitudes, it will be too late. Because the decision that God required concerning his son has to be made now on this side of eternity.

John chapter 14 and verse six, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the father except through me. There is no other name. There is no other way.

There is no other sacrifice. There is no other salvation. Every other thing is homemade by man and does not lead to everlasting life.

As sincere as it might be, Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life. And you and I can't fathom what it would be like to be where God is not. You see, because the scripture tells us that God is, we call it omnipresent in the church.

It just means God is everywhere. God is speaking constantly. He's everywhere in this world.

No matter how you're living, he's there. You wonder why, why is it that after you sin, you get up in the morning and you feel that whisper calling you to something deeper than the way you've been living? What is that whisper? It's God. It's the Holy Spirit drawing you, wooing you, saying I've created you for something other than what you've become.

I've created you for something deeper, for something higher, something farther, something eternal, something beyond anything your mind can even begin to imagine. Don't trade it off for things that don't satisfy. Then one day, you'll fully understand.

And many will realize that the decision they should have made, they didn't make. They put away the son of God to another day, another time, another place, only to find that these dreadful words are spoken. Take that servant and cast him into outer darkness.

I don't know if you can understand what it would be like to be where God is not. It's a terror, I think, that we can't comprehend. The Bible describes it as a darkness that's so deep you can touch it.

You can feel it. It's the absence of hope, the absence of kindness, the absence of contact, the absence of compassion, the absence of any sense of well-being forever. And it never ends.

And when you finally end up at the throne of God, what a tragedy to have heard these words tonight, to have heard the testimonies that you heard this evening, to hear what I'm speaking and have made the decision to put the son of God away for another day, another time. You've heard that a relationship with God through Jesus Christ is a miraculous relationship. When God's Holy Spirit comes into your heart, he changes you from the inside out.

He literally will prove to himself that he is God. You won't need any evidence from anybody else. You will know.

You will so radically change from the inside out. Things will begin to happen in your heart. God promises in the Old Testament, he said through one of the prophets, I'm willing to give you a new heart.

I'll give you a new mind. I'll give you a new spirit. It's called born again by the spirit of God.

You've had a physical birth and it's led you to this point in your life. But God says, I'll give you a spiritual birth, which you have to have to become a child of God. And the only way that that can happen is through Jesus Christ.

Folks, I started out by praying a simple prayer. This is not a game tonight. It's not just another theory about God.

It's not just another feel good religion. This is the truth. When I was a young man, I met a Christian police officer.

I was a police officer myself. I met a Christian police officer who told me these things. I didn't believe him in the beginning.

And maybe you don't believe me tonight, but if I can at least provoke you to open the gospel of John and read it for yourself, that's what I did. I got hold of a Bible. I opened the gospel of John that I'm reading from tonight and I read it and I prayed the prayer.

I said, God, help me to understand this. I'm not a theologian, but this thing is written in English. So please help me to understand what it says.

And I read it through. I read it from the beginning. I read it right to the end.

And God in his mercy helped me to understand that it was true. And I saw what the truth was. I saw that Jesus Christ died on a cross for my sin.

I had gone to church nominally for not very often, but once in a while. And I called myself on my birth certificate. It said was a Christian.

So I called myself a Christian because that's what was written on my birth certificate. But I wasn't a follower of Jesus Christ. And I realized he had a lawful right to my life.

And if I wasn't willing to give my life to him and receive him as my savior, I had no longer any right to call myself a Christian. It was a decision that needed to be made. I remember May 12th, 1978, it was a 3.40 in the afternoon.

I pulled over on the way to work on the side of the road. And I prayed a simple prayer. I said, oh God, if Jesus, if what this man has told me is the truth, if it's the truth, I open my heart and I invite you into my life to be my Lord and my savior.

Now you got to understand, I was an angry man. I was a selfish man. I was fearful.

I was unhappy. I could be the life of the party. Don't misunderstand me.

When I got a few drinks in me, I was the life of the party. I could play the guitar, I could sing, I could tell jokes, but I was a total fraud. I was completely unhappy inside.

And you can fool everybody around you, but you can't fool yourself or God. When you get home and you're sitting on the edge of your bed and you hate yourself, you hate what you're becoming, you hate what you're doing to other people, but you're powerless to stop. But I heard that if any man is in Christ, he becomes a new creation.

The old things in him pass away and all things become new. If this is real, if this is real, God says, I will come to you. When you acknowledge that I died for your sin and you make a determination to be a follower of Jesus Christ, this is what he spoke to my heart.

And you give your life to me. I will come into your heart and I will change you from the inside out. The change would be so radical.

The people who once knew you won't understand what hit you or them. And I saw it and I said, God, if this is true, I can't change. I've tried to change.

I don't understand love. I don't know how to love. I can't receive love and I don't know how to give it.

I'm selfish to the core of my being. I'm angry most of the time. And when I'm not angry, I'm thinking about the next time I'm going to get angry.

The only time I'm really fully happy is when I've had a few drinks, but that only lasts till about the third or fourth. Around the fifth or sixth, it all turns the other way again. Many of you know what that's all about and what that feels like.

If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. This is not a game, folks. This is not a game.

If it was a game, it wouldn't work. If it was a game, it would be just another head trip, just another lousy religious experience that leads to nowhere. And I wasn't interested in it.

As far as I was concerned, religion is just filled with hypocrisy and I wanted no part of it. But if this is real, I said, God, if this is real, God, if this is true, I open my heart and invite you in to be my Lord and Savior. Nothing happened.

Angels didn't follow to heaven. There was no organ music. I worked my regular shift, didn't feel any different.

Didn't even think about what I had done when home went to bed. I've told it here a hundred times. I'll tell it a thousand times before I die.

If the Lord lets me. The next morning I woke up and when my, I remember it like yesterday. My feet touched the floor.

I knew I was a different man. Something had happened to me. And the love of God began to come into my heart.

The love that one day I'll stand in the presence of the purest love that humanity could ever know. I remember the time I gave somebody a speedy ticket and I actually felt bad. It was the first time in my life I'd ever felt bad for giving somebody a ticket.

Their excuse seemed sincere to me. And I remember going back to my car. I think, that's odd.

I never felt bad before. God so loved the world. And little by little and line by line, old things began to pass away and all things began to be new.

And tonight, after a long, long journey, it's been 36 years now. I'm here to tell you. I'm here to tell you that God loves you.

I'm here to tell you the son of God came to this earth and died on a cross so that you could come home to God. I'm here to tell you that no matter what you've done, it can be forgiven. No matter what you are, God will change it.

That God has a purpose for your life on the earth, a divine purpose. He'll prove to you himself that he is God. Nobody else has to tell you.

You don't have to prove it to yourself. He'll show you. You put helium inside a balloon and the thing rises.

Nobody has to explain to the balloon why this is happening. But something inside it is giving it the power to rise up from where it used to be and what it used to be. God himself begins to prove the reality of who he is.

And he changes you and you begin to understand his love. Meet me. If you choose to reject Jesus Christ tonight, I hope that I'm not there to see that moment in your life.

I don't want to see it. I don't want to be there. I hope that somehow God will cover me in his hand or maybe have taken me to another place.

I don't want to see you at the throne of God at that moment finally realizing that you were sitting in Times Square Church way back in January 2014 and you heard about this cross and you knew this was true. There was something in your heart that was stirring you because this wasn't a game. This was real.

This was true. This was life. There was something inside of you that bore witness because the words you were hearing were coming from the heart of the God who created you.

You have to know this is real. There's something inside that tells you it's real. We're all created by God in the image of God.

And if you have the courage to just pray what I prayed and say, God, if this is true, would you stir my heart at least? Lord, would you give me the courage to rise up out of the crowd and to not be afraid of the sneers of men? Would you give me the courage, oh God, if this is true, if you really did die for me, if you really do love me, if there really is a heaven and a hell, if you really have made a way for me to have eternal life with God, would you open my heart to it, oh God? It takes courage to make the break from this world today that scoffs at the things of God. And you know what I love about New Yorkers? You guys have guts. You aren't cowards in this city.

Thank God. You're the kind of folks that say, just throw it in my face, man. If it's real, I'll take it.

You got a lot of men coming to Christ in this church now. On the last baptism, a lot of guys, tough guys, guys that shake my hand. And you know, you're walking away, you're trying to keep a smile, but half your bones are broken in your hand.

One guy got baptized recently, had an American flag wrapped around his head. And he looked at me, shook my hand. He said, this better work, man.

He said, you're responsible for this. I have nothing to apologize for. If you open your heart tonight, I'll never be apologizing to you.

You'll know. You'll walk up and say, it works. I've been at this for a year now.

It works. God's changing my life. He's changing my heart.

He's letting me experience his love. I not only have a purpose for living on this earth, but I have now a sense of eternity in my heart. I'm not afraid to die.

I'm not afraid of what tomorrow's going to bring. I'm not afraid because I'm not living for just today and tomorrow anymore. I've got a divine purpose in my life.

And I have an assurance that when I die, heaven is going to be my home. You say tonight, well, what do I do? It's not difficult. Acknowledge, admit that you've sinned against God.

That means that God has a way that you should, he's written in his book, the Bible, there's a way that is right. You should always speak the truth. You shouldn't lust.

Don't need to go much farther than that, do I? Pretty nailed everybody here that's not living for God. And you realize that I've not lived the way I should. I've not done what is right.

And the Bible tells us clearly that sin can't dwell in the presence of God. So God had to make a way and pay a price. And he did through his son.

Admit that you've sinned against God. Admit that you can't save yourself. Acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, the son of God who came to get you.

And open your heart. Say, Jesus, if you love me that much, and if you died for my sin, if you came to make a way for me to get back to God, then I open my heart to you. And I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and my savior.

The Bible says that when you do that, he will come. He will not cast you away. He'll come into the whole mess of your life, forgive your wrong, and begin to change you from the inside out.

There's people here tonight listening to these words. You can't believe for tomorrow, but God is gonna make a missionary out of you. And be amazed what God's gonna do in your life.

You're gonna be telling others because you're gonna experience it yourself, and you're not gonna be able to hold it inside. You're gonna be sharing what God has done in your life with other people. Yeah.

Yeah. There's nothing more that I could do tonight. There's nothing much more I can say, and you've heard the testimonies.

Now the choice is up to you. And I told you before, I'm not playing a game with you, and nobody is here tonight. We're not doing this to pack the seats.

If it starts, we're already full here. This is not about a church, this is about you. It's about God's love for you.

It's about a future that God has for you. David Wilkerson spoke these words in 1958 at a youth rally here in New York City. And sitting in the theater at that time was a young man called Nicky Cruz who was diagnosed by psychologists as unredeemable.

Raised by witches, made to drink pig's blood. Told he was ugly, beaten frequently, and left in closets. So mentally damaged, they said he could not be salvaged.

Violent to the core of his being. He heard these words. He heard exactly what I'm telling you tonight.

He heard it. And he got out of his seat and he came forward. He preached this morning in Colorado, by the way.

He's been preaching ever since 1958. I texted him last night and I said, Nicky, preach heaven down tomorrow morning. Married a lovely girl, has lovely children and grandchildren, everybody living for God.

Wonderful, kind, and loving man. Only God could do that. Amen.

And so tonight, the question is, what do you do with Jesus Christ? What do you do tonight? If you're here and in your heart, you have the courage to say, I want to give my life to Jesus Christ. I want him to be my Lord and my Savior. I'm gonna ask you to do that.

I'm gonna ask you to unashamedly, now listen to me, Jesus Christ died on a hill. And he died in that generation, he had a loincloth, but he was considered naked. He died shamed, he died publicly, and he did it for you.

And the least that you can do and I can do tonight is publicly give our lives to him. There's no shame in giving your life to the Son of God. If you'd like to receive him tonight as your Lord and Savior, and begin to know that love of God we've heard about, I'm gonna ask you to unashamedly just raise your hand with me wherever you are.

God bless, just raise your hand, nice and high. All over the sanctuary, the balcony, God bless you. In a moment, we're going to stand, and when we stand, I want to ask those who raised their hand and those who should have raised their hand, just to get out of your seat and make your way down to the front of this auditorium.

I'm gonna lead you in a prayer, that's all I'm gonna do tonight. We're gonna pray together, it's a short prayer, but it's a prayer that will help you to open your heart to the salvation that God offers you through his Son. For the rest of you that are here, when we stand up, if you brought a friend with you, feel free to turn to your friend, say, look, if you wanna go, I'll go with you.

Do that tonight, don't be ashamed to do that. Folks, this is not a game, this is reality, this is life, it's about eternity. Now we're gonna stand, Ivory's gonna lead us in a song, and as we do, please make your way down if you raised your hand, please.

Let's stand together, balcony, go to either exit, in the main sanctuary. Slip out, join these that are coming, God bless you. God bless you, God bless you.

Just come, come turn and talk to one another, will you just for a moment? If you got a friend with you, ask him or ask her if they wanna come with you. Folks, let's do this. Hallelujah, thank you, Jesus, thank you, God.

Thank you, Lord, go to either exit in the balcony, make your way down, we'll wait for you. Thank you, Jesus. God loves you, God loves you.

With all your struggles and all your frailties and all the mistakes, all the things you've gotten yourself into, God loves you. God loves you, and once you know the depth of that love, you won't be afraid anymore. You won't be afraid of life, you won't be afraid of tomorrow, you won't be afraid.

You won't be afraid of believing his promises to you. He's got something so wonderful for everyone. For every one of you, for your home, for your family, for your children.

Oh, I thank God tonight, because some children are gonna get a new father tonight. Oh, God, thank you, God, thank you. Moms and dads are gonna get new sons and daughters.

Thank God, thank God. God loves you, don't you ever buy the lie that he doesn't. God loves you, and it's gonna be your story from this day forward.

God loves me, God loves me, God loves me. God saw me, God came for me. God knew the mess that I was in, but God loves me.

God loves me, God loves me. You won't be beaten down any longer, you're not gonna be trampled by the devil anymore, because God loves you. You're gonna grow in the knowledge of God, you're gonna begin to understand his words, and you're going to know he has a purpose for your life, and the very foundation of everything is that God loves me.

God loves me, God loves me. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus.

I want you to pray this prayer with me now. And I want you to know that when you pray it, God hears you, and he will answer you. He does it his way.

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the way I have lived, and for pushing away your love for so many years. Tonight I realize that you love me, and you died for me, because you want me. And you care about me.

And so tonight, I open my heart to you. I choose to trust you, and I give you my life. And I ask you to be my Lord and my Savior.

Be the one who washes away all the wrong I've done, and be my life from this day forward. I thank you, Jesus, that you are not ashamed of me. You're not ashamed to call me your own.

So I won't be ashamed of you. I will speak about you, talk to you, and I will love you, as you teach me how. From this day forward, I give my life to you.

I accept the forgiveness that you offer me, and I give my life to you for your purposes. Lead me, teach me, guide me, and show me the plan that you have for my future. I'm sorry for the wrong I've done, and for the people I've hurt.

God help me to do right, and to hurt people no more. Jesus Christ, I belong to you. I'm yours, and you are mine.

When I get to the throne of God, heaven will be my home. I believe it. It's settled tonight.

I belong to God. I'm forgiven. Heaven is my home, and Jesus is my God.

In Jesus' name, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

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