

Greatest of These Is Love

by Corrie Ten Boom

The greatest of all is love, and understanding and experiencing God's love is the key to true freedom and joy.

Duration: 37:54

Scripture: John 3:19, John 12:46

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker shares their experiences and beliefs about the importance of spreading the word of God. They mention their work with feeble-minded children and how Jesus has a great love and concern for everyone in need. The speaker recounts a confrontation with a man who questions the value of converting abnormal individuals. The speaker also shares a story about saving Jewish people during the time of Adolf Hitler and the importance of winning souls for Jesus Christ. The transcript ends with a letter from a man sentenced to death, expressing gratitude for being able to share the message of salvation with his fellow inmates.

Transcript

I'm so glad that I can tell you a little bit of the reality of the love of Jesus Christ. The greatest of them is love, faith, hope, and love. The greatest is love.

And I am so glad that I can tell you about it, because I know that many of you know the Lord Jesus not such a long time. Some of you just came in, were born again, so you are babes in Christ. And of course, there can come in your heart moments that you think, you know, should it really be so good as the other people tell me? And then I can tell you that I was five years old when I asked Jesus to come into my heart, and He came.

He didn't say, you are too little. He just came. And He never left me.

And that is 75 years ago. 75 years I have walked with the Lord Jesus. Jesus walked with me.

And I had a very happy life, but it was not always easy. And I will tell you something what I have learned in the most difficult time of my life. For in a difficult class of a school, you learn so much.

And exactly there I have learned so much. Now, I have always been a watchmaker. I was the first licensed woman watchmaker in Holland.

I repaired watches the whole day. I had a jewelry store together with my dad. And I could sell good watches.

When you came to me, I could tell you now, when you buy this watch that is so good, that even if it makes a difference of two minutes in a month, you come back and I can change it. But then I thought later, I hope I have not boasted too much about my watch. What must I do when it makes a difference of five minutes in a week? You know, I do not sell watches anymore, but I sell the Gospel.

And I am so glad that when I tell very much about the great joy and love of the Lord, then I can never boast too much. For the reality is far and far greater than I can tell you and you can tell me. And I hope that when we come in Heaven and we look back at this time, we will not be ashamed that we have so lived as beggars.

And we are king's children, tremendous rich. And that's why I am so glad that I can tell you a little bit what I experienced. You all have heard of that terrible time that we have had in Holland.

And then when the Germans came under the leader Adolf Hitler, and he intended to kill all the Jewish people, we started to save as many as we could. I had never planned it, but God had planned it. After some time, I had a gang of 80 people, 30 teenager boys, 20 teenager girls, 20 men and 10 women.

And once we heard that in a Jewish orphanage in Amsterdam, all the babies had to be killed because they were Jewish babies. When we heard that, our boys said, we will save them and we will steal them. And they went to that orphanage and they stole all the hundred babies.

All right. You will say, how is it possible? I will tell you a secret. You know, sometimes there came to us good Germans and who were soldiers who were in the army.

And they said, we don't like to work any longer for Adolf Hitler. We will not kill the Jewish people. Can you help us? And I always said, sure, I will help you.

Just come in. And we gave them, of course, a sieve of clothing. And we took the uniforms.

I have not to go into details, but you understand how my boys stole the hundred babies. Hallelujah. One of my bravest boys was Piet Hartog.

And Piet said that evening, I believe we do the most important work that exists. Just saving lives from the morning till the evening. I don't long to go back to college.

This is life. I said, Piet, I am so happy when I think of the babies that we have saved. But Piet, there is a work that is more important even than saving lives.

And that is saving souls and tell the people about the Lord Jesus Christ. And then Piet smiled. And Piet said, I'm a Christian boy.

I go to church. I read my Bible and I pray. But telling people a gospel, telling them about Jesus, that is good business for my pastor.

I said, Piet, every Christian is called to be the light of the world. And every Christian must be ready to tell the way of salvation to anyone who needs it. And in your time, in your life, Piet, will come a time that you will see it the most important work for you to win souls for Jesus Christ and to show that the way of

salvation by believing in Jesus and inviting him into your heart.

Half a year later, Piet came into prison. And when he came into the cell, he heard that he had only one week to live. And the day before he was shot, he wrote us a long letter.

And he wrote, all the men and the boys in this cell are sentenced to death. And I am so glad that I could tell them that when they receive Jesus as their Savior, that the Lord Jesus will make them children of God. And that when they go to be killed, that they go to the house of the Father with many mansions where Jesus is preparing a mansion for everyone who believes in him.

And Piet wrote, I see now that the most important work for a Christian is to win souls for eternity. Say, young people, I have a message for you from Piet Hattor. Don't wait till the last week of your life like he has done.

But give your life today to the Lord and say, Lord, use me. Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to me. How you will say it, I don't mind.

But tell the Lord that he will, that he may take you to use you as the light of the world. And then I can tell you he will use you. And my, when you really will be used to win souls for Jesus Christ, once when you enter the beautiful city and the saints all around you appear, many of them will tell you, it was you that invited me here.

Boy, that will be a joy. Then you will know that you have not lived in vain. Once there came a man to me and said, will you save my, my wife? She is arrested.

She has saved Jewish people and now she is in a police station. And there is one policeman who will run the risk to set her free if we pay him 600 guilders. But I have no money.

I said, oh man, what does money say? Let's see, I have 200 guilders. Come back after an hour. And in that hour, I asked all my friends, say, have you money? Give it.

It means to save the life of a good woman. When that man came back, I gave him 600 guilders. That man was a quisling, a betrayer.

His wife was not at all in prison. But the Gestapo, the police of the enemy had said, find out if Corrie ten Boom saves Jewish people. And he thought, I can do it and make some money.

And he made some money. He went home with 600 guilders. But five minutes later, the Gestapo surrounded our house and we were all arrested.

Later, when I was in a concentration camp, there came a prisoner from my hometown. And she said, say, do you know who has betrayed you? I said, no. And then she told that it was that man.

And there came hatred in my heart. The man I had given my last penny. But I know from the Bible that hatred means murder in God's eyes.

But I also know from the Bible what to do with your murder. When we confess our sins, when we repent and ask forgiveness, then he is able to forgive us. And the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all the sins that we tell him and ask forgiveness for and repent.

And I repented for my hatred. And the Lord took that sin away. That's the great joy.

The Bible tells very clearly what the Lord does when you repent. He takes such a sin and he casts it into the depths of the sea, forgiven and forgotten. That's what the Bible says.

The Bible doesn't say it, but I believe he put a sign, no fishing allowed. It's true. And do you know, when I had repented of that sin, the Lord, the Lord cleansed my heart with his blood and heart cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

He fills with the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit is love. Love even for enemies. And instead that I hated that man, I loved him.

And after a war that man was sentenced to death because he had caused the death of many Dutch people. And when I heard that I wrote him, your betrayal has meant the death of my old father was 84 years old when they brought him into prison. After 10 days he died.

My sister, who died after 10 months, terrible suffering. My brother, he came out alive with a sick man and died through that sickness and his son never came back. I myself have suffered terribly through in three different prisons, but I have forgiven you.

And that is because Jesus is in my heart. And when Jesus tells you to love your enemies, he gives you the love that he demands from you. And I send that man a New Testament and underlined the way of salvation.

And that man wrote me that you could forgive me is such a great miracle that I have said, Jesus, when you give such a love in the heart of your followers, there's hope for me. And I have read in the Bible that you sent me that Jesus has died at the cross for the sins of the whole world. And I have brought my terrible sins to Jesus and I know that they are forgiven.

Your forgiveness has shown me what it means that there is forgiveness through Jesus Christ. And that man was brought to death that same week, but he was reconciled with God and God had used me, who had hated him, to bring him to the Lord. The greatest of all is love.

In 1 Corinthians 13, I believe that Paul describes God's love. There are two kinds of love, human love and God's love. Human love fails on the long run, but God's love never fails.

And I believe that this love that is described here is the love of God, not only in the heart of the Father, but shattered, brought into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us, Romans 5, 5. And when Paul uses the translation of Philippians, then he says, If I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass and crashing cymbal. If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge, but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. If I dispose of all that I possess, yet even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing.

This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience. It looks for a way of being constructive. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people.

On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails. Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its thrust, no fading of its hope. It can outlast anything.

It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen. How can you and I understand God's love? At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, and the burden of my sins rolled away, it was there by faith I received my sight. When we look unto Jesus, we understand, when we look at the cross, what an ocean of love He has for you and me.

I was questioned by a man in whose hands my life was. He was my judge. It was wartime, and if that man should say I had to be shot, I should have been shot.

He asked me much about my spare time, about what my certificates, and I told him all. When he asked me about my misdeeds, I did not tell him all. He has known only of eight Jews that I had saved, and I hope that there were more than 800.

But when he asked me about my spare time, I told him about that work that I had with feeble-minded children in my little booklet, *Common Sense Not Needed*. You can read about it. And when I told that, the man said, what a nonsense! Hasn't it far more value to convert a normal person than an abnormal one? And then I said, if you should know Jesus, you should know that He has a great love and concern for everyone who is in need.

It is possible that a poor feeble-minded child has more value in his loving eyes than you and I together. Then he was angry, and he called a policeman and said, bring her back to her cell. But the next day I was again brought to him, and then he said, I could not sleep this night.

I had always to think of what you told about Jesus. We have time enough for the questioning. First, you must tell me what you know of Jesus.

Boy, that was a chance. I said, Jesus is a light. Come into this world, that everyone who believes in Him does not remain in darkness.

And I asked him, is there darkness in your life? That man said, darkness, there's no light at all in my life. And I brought him the old, old story of Jesus and His love. After me, Betsy, my sister, was questioned.

With great joy, she testified to her faith, and she told about Jesus. And then she said, it is important to speak about Jesus. It is more important to speak to Him.

Do you allow me that I pray with you? And he said, yes. And she prayed with him, the prisoner, with her judge. Five times Betsy was questioned.

Five times she prayed with that man. Betsy died in prison. But after the war, I met that judge, and he said to me, I can never forget your sister's prayers.

Through her and through my testimony, God touched the heart of that man. And he became a friend instead of an enemy. But he had to do his job.

And suddenly he showed me papers found in my house. And to my horror, I saw names, addresses, and particulars that could mean my descendants, and the descendants of my family and my friends who were in prison. You will say, how was it possible that such dangerous papers were found in your house? But I must tell you that my teenagers have done a tremendous, courageous job.

But they were not always careful. And so it happened that these terrible papers were found in my house. The judge said, can you explain these papers? I said, no, I can't.

And I felt deep unhappy. But he knew how dangerous they were. And suddenly he turned, opened the door of the stove, and he threw all the papers into the flames.

Oh my, how happy I was. I should never have believed, and you should have told me that I could be happy when I was in a prison of an enemy. But that moment when I saw the flames destroy these horrible papers, it was as if for the first time I understood Colossians 3.20, where it's written that Jesus has taken the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, has taken them out of the way, and nailed them at the cross.

Say, do you realize that there are dangerous papers for you? Do you realize that in heaven all our sins are written down? And we have all to come for the judgment day of God. And if we have refused Jesus Christ in this life, the judgment day will be terrible, for we will have to pay and to carry the punishment for our sins. But when we have found Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, in this life we have nothing to fear, for we will find out that Jesus has taken all our sins and nailed them at the cross.

Hallelujah! What a love! What a Savior! Yes, I understood that better than ever before. I had a little Bible, when I was brought into that concentration camp Ravensbruck. I had a small Bible, but a whole Bible, Old and New Testament, specially printed for what they called the underground workers.

It was very small. I had it on my back. But when we entered, I saw that we all had to be searched.

And I saw that they took away everything that the prisoners had hidden under their clothing. And I got scared. I said, Oh God, these people may not see me.

God, send your angels, and let them surround me. But then I thought, yes, but angels are spirits, and you can look through a spirit. I said, God, make your angels untransparent today.

You can pray very unorthodox when you are in great need. But God did it. God did it.

The woman who stood in front of me was searched, and then Matthew stood behind me, and they did not see me. So I came with my Bible in the prison. Strange story? No, that's not strange.

That is what is written in the Bible. Angels are ministering spirits, sent to this planet for your and my help. And there are far more angels than demons.

Yes, there are demons, and they can really come into your heart when you do these occult sins of what Ellen told. You go, you play with a witchy board, you go to a spiritualist meeting, you go to a fortune teller, then a demon comes in your heart. But praise the Lord.

You can send them away in the name of Jesus. And don't forget, there are only one-third of the angels fallen. So there are twice as many angels as there are devils.

And really, still far more, for many of these devils are already sent to hell. So we can know that those who are at our side are far more and far stronger than those who are against us. And what a joy, many of the people around me were killed or died, but many died with Jesus' name on their lips.

And that was worthwhile, even Betsy's death and all the suffering that I had to endure. Once Betsy said to me, Corrie, when we are free, we must travel over the world. We can tell from experience that the light of Jesus Christ is stronger than the deepest darkness.

A week later, she died. Another week later, I was set free by blunder of men and a miracle of God. For one other week later, they killed all the women of my age.

So I became a tramp for the Lord. Twenty-six years I have traveled over the world, and I could bring the Gospel to many people, also behind the Iron Curtain. Oh, it was a joy.

It is always a joy when we work in Russia and in the other communist countries. You know, I don't know if there are people here who have never received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Then I hope you will not leave this tent tonight before you have done that.

And Christians pray for them. And when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, when you ask, Jesus, come into my heart, then He comes. And then Jesus does that miracle that you are born into the very family of God.

And that very moment, all the promises of the Bible are yours. You have not to wait till you are a mature Christian or till you have studied much in the Bible. No, that's very good.

But these riches is yours. All the thousands of promises are yours the moment that you are born into the family of God. And I know what some think.

Some people think, oh yeah, that's good for that lady there, and for that boy there, for that girl, for these good people. But I can tell you a secret. The promises of the Bible are for sinners only.

So, but what a joy to know that all the promises of the Bible are in Jesus, yea and amen, and say that tremendous privilege that you have, that you can love your enemies. That was for me one of the greatest lessons that I learned. I was some time ago in a cell in Africa with a man who was sentenced to death, a political prisoner.

I was so sorry. I asked him, say, do you know about Jesus? He said, yes. I have a Bible at home.

I know that Jesus died at the cross for the sins of the whole world, also for my sins. I was so happy that he knew it. But then I asked him, say, do you know who has, who has caused your imprisonment and your death sentence? He said, yes.

I can tell you all the names of those who have betrayed me and caused my death sentence, and I hate them. I opened my Bible and I read what Jesus says in Matthew 6. When you do not forgive those who have sinned against you, my, your heavenly Father will not forgive you your sins. Just Jesus who said it must be true.

But a man said, I cannot, I'm not able. I'm young and strong. I have wife and children and now I must die.

I said, I understand that you cannot forgive. And then I told what Jesus had done in my heart. How I could bring that man who had really, by his betrayal, murdered four of my beloved to the Lord.

I told him a little experience some time ago that I was in Berlin and there came a man to me. And that man said to me, do you know me? Suddenly I saw that man. That was one of the most cruel guards in Ravensbrück.

And that man said, I have found the Lord Jesus as my Savior. I have brought all my cruel sins to the Lord and I know from the Bible that I have forgiveness. But then I have prayed, oh God, give me the privilege

that I ask one of my very victims forgiveness.

And now I saw that you were speaking here in Berlin and now I ask you, Fräulein Ten Boom, will you forgive me my cruelties? And I must confess you, that moment there came a bitterness in my heart. And I thought who my dying sister had suffered under that man. But then suddenly I said, Lord, I thank you for Romans 5.5. Thank you, Jesus, that you have brought into my heart God's love through the Holy Spirit who is given to me.

And thank you, Father, that your love is stronger than my bitterness and hatred. And that moment my heart was full of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit, love. And I could say to that man, brother, give me your hand.

And I shook hands with him and I said, I forgive you everything. And it was as if I felt God's love stream through my arm when I shook hands with that man. When I told this to that prisoner in Africa, he sent his wife a message.

And this message was, don't hate, love the people who have brought me here. You are not able, I am not able either, but Jesus in us is able. And I knew why I had to be in Africa.

Say, can you forgive your enemies? I cannot, but Jesus in me can. And I will tell you one story, one experience of a short time ago. I was in Russia.

You may not speak as a foreigner in a church, but I asked if I could say, bring the greetings from America and from Holland. And they said, yes. And my greetings took 30 minutes.

And then we sang a hymn and I asked the pastor, pastor, may I say goodbye? He said, yes. And I said, goodbye, 30 minutes. So my sermon was a whole hour.

And oh, it was a joy to speak to the Christian. And I say, don't lose courage. The suffering of this time is not worthy to be compared with the common glory.

God himself will wipe away the tears from the eyes. And the best is yet to be, this world will be covered with the knowledge of God, like the waters cover the bottom of the sea. Jesus is alive and his light is stronger than the deepest darkness.

I have experienced it, that you cannot go so deep. Always deeper are the everlasting arms that carry you. Oh, it was a joy.

It is always a joy to give these people comfort. But one morning I was in my hotel room and I said, God, I like to bring the gospel to the, to the communists. They have an eternity to lose or to gain, Lord.

And you died for the sins of the whole world. But Lord, I cannot reach them. Lord, I need a miracle, but you are a God of miracles.

Give me the miracle that I can reach the communists today. And the same moment I saw on the floor, little holes in the form of a pepper box, the holes in the pepper box. And I understood there is the secret microphone.

In all the hotel rooms in communist countries, there are secret microphones. And they take every word you say on that microphone, on the, on the tape. And I said, thank you, Lord, for that answer.

What a joy. I could give a message to communists. If they listen, they not only listen, they took it on a tape.

And they did not keep the tape. They gave the tape to, to their chiefs. And we prayed for all the people who had to read these tapes.

And boy, I had a joy. I said, I have here in my hand a book, a book almost bursting by good news. In this book is, among all other riches, the great answer for the two paramount problems that every human being has.

And that is the problem of sin and of death. For in this book, you can read everything that you have to know about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died at the cross for the sins of the whole world. And when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and you repent of your sins, then he will cleanse your heart from, from your sins.

And that is the, he will fill you with the Holy Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy and love. And Jesus gives you everlasting life.

And that means life in heaven. That is the answer for your death problems. And Jesus has said, come unto me all, and all that is also you there.

What a joy. I can tell you, I have brought after that every day what I call my pepper box messages in the communist country. Say, people pray, pray for your fellow Christians, especially now for the fellow Christians in China.

Pray that your president will be used, that there comes an opening, that Christians can come into China and help the Christians there and bring the gospel to the many who have never heard the gospel. You know, half of, the greatest half of the body of Christ is suffering persecution. And watch many said, when my feet were whipped, my hand felt pain.

And the feet are whipped of the Christians over the great part of the world. Pray for your fellow Christians in these countries and be sure that you cash your check, so that you will be strong in times when you should come in difficulties of persecution. And the great joy is when you surrender all to the Lord.

He will fill your heart with the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is a spirit not of fear, but of love and of power and a sound mind. I have here a glove that cannot do anything.

But when my hand is in the glove, it can cook, it can write, it can do many things. No, I know that is the glove, that's not the glove, that's the hand in the glove. You and I are nothing but gloves.

And the hand, that is the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit does the job that he makes you children of the light, the light in this very dark world. But you must give room to the Holy Spirit.

When my hand is only in the midst of the glove, now the glove cannot do anything. No, you must surrender every finger, every corner of your life to the Lord, and he will fill you with the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah! Amen, we pray.

Thank you, Lord.

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