

The Magnitude of God's Love

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes that God's love is a commitment of the will, and everlasting life is a relationship with God that begins now and increases as we grow in our relationship with him.

Duration: 29:08

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, John 1:27, John 3:16, John 5:24, Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:8

Topics: "Love Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the tragedy of wasting good food that could have been used to feed people. He compares this to the tragedy of humans failing to fulfill their purpose of fellowship with God and being thrown aside without experiencing the true reason for their existence. The speaker discusses how sin caused humans to lose their abilities and connection with God, but Jesus Christ came to give spiritual gifts and eternal life. The sermon also mentions the story of Moses and his courage to obey God's command despite the challenges he faced.

Transcript

Perhaps you're aware of the fact that the chorus of that song we've just sung can be used with the words John 3.16. It fits perfectly. John 3.16 is the love-lifted name. I suggest that we have an addition to our responsive reading this morning and would like to ask you to quote with me that verse.

Make sure we have it. But lest we should have a variety of voices, would you mind using the King James Version? I don't know how many versions we have here, but would you mind using it as we quote it together? For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. In previous messages, we have gone phrase by phrase through this, and we've had some definitions.

For instance, we define the word love in the first of the series of messages. Love is not an emotion, it's a commitment of the will. God committed his will and his purpose to secure the highest good and blessedness and happiness of the universe and all in it.

That's really the meaning of love the world. Love was that intention in the heart of God to ensure the greatest possible happiness and joy and blessedness. And we must carry that through throughout the verse.

Then last Lord's Day, we looked at the word perish and discovered that it can have a synonym, wasted. That whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted, should not be thrown on the scrappy, should not fail of intended purpose. What a tragedy it is to see good food taken out of a boxcar and dumped to the animals when it might have been used to feed people had there been a little more care.

And what a tragic thing it is, what a colossal waste that someone made in the image and likeness of God for fellowship with God should fail of that purpose and should be thrown on the scrappy of the universe without ever having experienced the real reason for being. Now today we're having the last cause that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Everlasting life.

Now we've got to go back. What did God give to us? Give to the first of our family, Mother, Eve, Father, Adam when he breathed in them and they became living souls. What was it he gave them? He gave them life.

They became living souls. And what does that mean? That means that they have eternal existence. Did you understand that? The day thou eatest, he said, thou shalt surely die.

But the word death as it's used in the scripture does not mean become extinct. No, the word death means separation. For instance, with sin there came a sentence of death in four aspects.

And you only understand life by understanding death. In this sense, to die physically meant there would come a time when the spirit and soul would be separated from the body. But you see, man is not a body.

Man is a living soul housed or clothed in a body. And death is just that separation of the spirit from the body. But the spirit, that living part that God breathed in the man goes on in its entirety.

In cognition, in knowledge, in individuality, in personality. And the Bible does not teach that with physical death there is annihilation. Oh, there have been those who for their own comfort wanted so to believe.

But it's not taught in the scripture. It's invented by men that are prepared to accept the authority of the scripture. The man not only died physically, but he died spiritually.

That is, fellowship with God was interrupted. You see, God, in him we live and we move and we have our being. He's as near to us as the air that surrounds us.

He's as near as the light that comes from these fluorescent tubes. But God isn't air and he isn't light. He's God.

But in him we live and we move and we have our being. And when there is sin, when sin entered, man's faculties for knowing God were separated from God. They didn't function anymore.

Have you ever gone to the radio and switched it on and nothing came out of it? What's the matter? I thought you were going to get that program you like. Ah, the radio's dead. Now what's that mean? Did it all rusted? Fell apart? No.

It could mean one little transistor, we used to say tubes, but one little something or other is not functioning. And therefore it's surrounded by radio impulse and waves, but the radio doesn't work. And so the human spirit didn't work.

It couldn't tune in on God. But God was all around. He was dead because of trespasses and because of sins.

And man who was made for God couldn't tune in on God. Well, he died legally. As old as sin is, it shall die.

Man lost all claim upon God's protection. The result of sin was that man could no longer look to God to provide for it. The only thing a sinner has the right to ask God for is justice in judgment.

Now, there's not a great deal of consolation going to come to him from that. If he gets it, he's getting it, he'll get it all right. Oh God, be just when you judge me.

But that's not going to help when the world's on fire. That's not going to bring any great peace or joy or blessing. But that's the only thing the sinner can ask for on his own.

The only thing he can demand is justice in judgment. Anything else, he has to petition on the basis of God's grace and on the basis of his repentance in his faith. But he died legally.

He has no legal claim on God. And then he's going to be separated internally. Four aspects, physical death, separation of the spirit from the body.

Spiritual death, separation of the human spirit from God. Legal death, separation of the individual from all claim upon God. And finally, eternal death.

Which is eternal separation in the refuge pit of the universe where those that have deemed themselves unworthy of the great glorious purpose that God had for man are going to have to stay because they considered themselves worthy of nothing else or nothing other. So death, death is passed upon all men for that all have sinned. But what did God give when he breathed into that man and made him a living soul? He gave him continued existence.

Everlasting existence. And every person born of human parents since that time has come in with that marvelous infusion. Life.

Always going to be in the recognition of being somewhere. So God loved the world and gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. It wasn't that he came to give people continued existence forever.

We got to find a better understanding of life than just going on being forever. Because that they have. Christ didn't have to come to give that.

They have that. That's going to be there and there's nothing that can change it. And everyone you meet breathes the breath of human life is going to go on endlessly being.

Endlessly being. Endlessly thinking. Endlessly remembering.

Endlessly for those that reject the offered grace of God endlessly wanting and never being satisfied. That's a horrible prospect isn't it? Endlessly lusting and never fulfilling. Endlessly wanting and never obtaining.

But they have eternal existence. Oh as I say there have been those who have been so appalled by the enormity of this thing of endless life that they've invented doctrines more congenial to their spirit such as annihilation theories and that after a certain period of time there will be extinction. It's not biblical.

It's not biblical. And the fire that burns forever and ever can be the fire of flame but it can also be the fire and probably will include whatever else it has. The fire of eternal lust and no fulfillment.

Eternal desire and no satisfaction. Eternal remembering with no repentance. So that isn't why Christ came.

Now we've said that death passed upon all men and that therefore there were certain losses sustained. Losses that were sustained. Do you remember what the argument of the serpent was to mother? He shall be as God.

Remember? And she ate. She listened. She decided.

She chose. She ate and she lost. All of that endowment that God had given her making her in his image and likeness.

Her ability to think and to feel and to will. But all those other glorious endowments that she, that God had intended for the pair that were to rule his created world seemed to have been forfeited. Or there were those that along the way that had contact with God.

Have you ever thought about it in any sense? Have you ever thought about God's dealing with Noah? Isn't that remarkable? Here is a man that is not part of his generation. His heart seeks God. By the way, did you know that Noah could have sat on the lap of Adam when he was a little boy? He could have sat on Adam's lap.

Yeah. That's how, if you just take the time and you run it out, you'll find a little overlap. He could have learned a lot from that great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather of his.

At any rate, Noah, Noah sought God. Noah believed God. Noah listened to God.

Noah obeyed God. Oh, what a task. How would you like to be known as a village fool for 120 years? That's right.

Up on a hill, building a boat that had never been built before, a great massive structure, terribly big for the time, three decks in it, everything on it but a wheelhouse and a rudder. God was going to do the steering, so he didn't need to put that on. But he built this vessel.

And 120 years, they come around and say, no, you old fool, what you doing that for? God told me. God talks to him. God told him, look at it there.

But then when the time comes, when it starts to rain, God shut the door. Noah didn't. God shut the door.

The people cling to it as the water begins to cause it to float away. You see, he believed God. He knew God.

He obeyed God. Strange, isn't it? And then when you go back down a little further, you discover God speaking to a man out of a burning bush and telling him to go down back to the place where he'd been reared, from which he was exiled, with a sentence of death on him, going back to his own brother with whom he'd been reared, who's now the pharaoh, whom he's known with great hatred on the part of his brother toward this adoptive Jew that he had, rather than relative, at least by adoption. And he's going down there.

What courage it took for Moses to go down back to Egypt, stand there and declare that he was there on behalf of God. What did he have? Well, he had a relationship with the Lord. And do you remember when Elijah was there on the Mount of Carmel and said, build an altar and dig a trench and pour on water and put on an offering and let the priests of Baal cry and I'll cry after they've done it.

And whoever the God is that answers by fire and takes the offering and the altar and the water and the trench around it, let that God be God. Oh, where'd he get those instructions? Where'd he get those plans? How did he know what he was to do? Well, God told him. God instructed him.

He had a word of knowledge that the others didn't have. He had something from God. And have you ever thought about Elisha? When Naaman comes and says, I've got this leprosy and they said that you could help and what should I do? And Elisha says, tell him to go down to the Jordan River and duck under the water seven times.

Billy Sunday had a famous sermon on that subject called Seven Ducks in a Muddy River. Well, that's exactly what Naaman did. He ducked himself seven times.

And when he came up, the leprosy was gone. Oh, where did Elisha find out how to deal with that? God told him. What did he have? He had a gift of the spirit.

We take it for granted that the gifts of the spirit were necessary for the work of God. We read it in the Old Testament and we don't hold up our hands in any kind of horror. Standard practice.

And Gehazi hears Naaman and Elisha say, keep your offering, take it back. The God I serve has not come to you. And Gehazi is lustful and greedy and he starts out and he trots along behind on his little mule and gets up and says, my master sent me.

And he's changed his mind and he likes the gold and the garments. Would you be so pleased as to give them to me? I'll take them back to my master. He's changed his mind.

And Gehazi buries them and he comes in. And what's Elisha say? Gehazi, where have you been? Oh, I've been doing nothing like your kids do when they just set fire to the garage. I didn't do nothing.

Oh, yes you did. I'll tell you what you did. You went after Naaman and you said to him if he would give you the gold and the garments and you buried them and I know where you buried them.

Didn't you know that my spirit would go with you? What is it? It's a gift of the word of knowledge. And what's happened? Because of sin, man lost all of these abilities that were part of that endowment of life. Lost them.

And God brought them back to individuals for the purpose of establishing his truth and carrying forth his work. But what do we read in Ephesians the fourth chapter? We read these words. He, Christ, led captivity captive and he gave gifts unto man.

Those are gifts. Those are the spiritual gifts. What did the Lord Jesus Christ come to do? What do we mean? To give us eternal existence? Continue going on? Never stopping? No.

Because Christians are going to physically die unless the Lord comes prior to their dying. But we're going to die. Our spirits are going to separate from our bodies at some point in time unless the Lord comes.

That's not what he came to give. Continued existence? We've had that. But continued existence in heaven? Yes, certainly.

He did come that we might escape from the consequences of sin. That we might be brought back into fellowship with God. But I want to say it further.

That wasn't something that was going to begin when we die. That was something that was to begin now. And if you read the history of the church from the book of Acts, you will find that they repented of their sin.

They expressed their obedience by baptism in water. The elders of the church gathered and prayed for them. They were filled with the Holy Ghost.

And certain gifts of the Spirit began to be manifest and were manifest in and through the church. Now what do we see in that verse? Everyone that was born of the Spirit had the witness of the Spirit to the newborn. Everyone that was born of the Spirit was entitled to water baptism.

Those that were baptized in water were then expected to desire, to wish to have the fullness of the Spirit. We're taught as John had taught, the one coming after me is preferred before me. He it is that baptizes you with the Holy Ghost with fire.

And then the gifts of the Spirit as we read, all were divided severally by the Spirit of God. What's he talking about? A vital, dynamic, personal relationship with God now. In time.

Not just when we die. The Christian life begins now. It begins first with the awareness, the witness of the Spirit to our heart that we're born of God, that we call Almighty God Abba, Father.

By that personal conscious infilling of the Spirit of God, as Dr. Joseph said so eloquently and so effectively in his little book, How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit. Everybody filled with the Holy Spirit knows that. Everybody filled with the Holy Spirit knows when.

And everyone filled with the Holy Spirit was filled suddenly. That's good alliance teaching by our Prince of Teachers, A.W. Tozer. That there's a relationship.

Certainly, we don't have to assume we're converted. We have the witness of the Spirit for that. We don't have to assume we're filled with the Spirit.

We know. How do we know? Because we know. We know.

There's no single gift that's the evidence of the baptism of the Spirit. The presence of the giver is proof himself. And the evidence of any gift is evidence of the presence of the giver.

There's no special gift taught in the Scripture as being the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That's the relationship. So, when he speaks about everlasting life, what's he talking about? He's talking about a relationship with God now.

In time, it begins and increases and goes on and enlarges. And just like Enoch, someone had taught the little boy in Sunday school about Enoch. And he got home and started to tell his mother.

She said, what was the Sunday school lesson about? He said, oh, about God's friend Enoch. One day, God said, Enoch, let's go for a walk. And they just walked and they talked and they enjoyed each other.

And finally, God said, well, Enoch, look how late it's getting. Well, it's closer to my home than it is to yours. Why don't you just come home with me? That's what he intended.

This everlasting life to be. A walk with him. Aware of his presence.

Enjoying his fullness. Enjoying and using his gifts for the good of the body and mind. And then, just go home with him.

It isn't something that begins when we die. It begins now. And it just becomes a little more intimate and closer.

Not much, but a little more. When we leave our bodies, or in his presence. Everlasting life, not continued existence.

That's why last Lord's Day, in giving you the paraphrase, I said God so committed himself to the total well-being and joy and happiness of the world, that he gave his only begotten son. And whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted. By going on living in the loneliness of never experiencing why we were made as we are made.

But should begin to live now, in the full meaning of life. And go on living that way. Forever.

Father in heaven, how grateful we are that we have this testimony of thy love. The way thou didst make us. The endowments thou didst give us.

The endowments that thou didst offer to us. All that thou hast provided for them that love thee. Oh Father of Jesus, should there be one in this company today who only knows thee with the hearing of the ear, but that never experienced thy presence.

Do not know the reality of Christ as thy life. Might this be the day when they, the soothsayers, receive the gift of thy love and grace in the Lord Jesus. And the witness of the spirit that they're born to thy family.

And for those of us that are, Father save us from blessing and happiness someday. Give us a thirst and a hunger and a yearning and longing to enter into our inheritance now. Everything that thou ask for us now.

We can't afford to put off until then Lord. The blessings you want us to have today. And so to that end, may this everlasting life not be something that we're going to enjoy in the future, but something that becomes wondrously real to us now.

We ask in the name for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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