

# Gospel Meetings s.h.c.- 08 God So Loved the World

by Stan Ford

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*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**Duration:** 44:22

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:28, Matthew 28:20, John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Ephesians 3:18-19

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Free Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a little boy who wanted to buy grapes for his deaf mother but didn't have any money. The boy decided to take some grapes from a prince's garden, but instead of punishing him, the prince gave him the grapes for free. The preacher uses this story to illustrate the concept of God's free gift of salvation. He emphasizes that God's love never fails and that salvation is offered freely to anyone who believes in Jesus. The sermon concludes with an invitation for the listeners to accept this free gift of salvation.

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## Transcript

I want to read, if I may please, those lovely verses in 1 Corinthians chapter 30. 1 Corinthians chapter 30. You know, I almost feel like asking you to quote it with me.

There it is, 1 Corinthians 30. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

And though I destroy all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. For love suffereth long and is kind. Love envieth not.

Love vaunteth not itself, is not perfect, doth not behave itself unseemly. Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.

Whether there be tongues, they shall cease. Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child. I understood as a child.

I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am now. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three. And the greatest of these is love.

May the Lord just bless the reading of his own precious word tonight, for thy love towards us. We're not unmindful that we owe everything to thee. There's a sense in which we have never met thee, we would have never met one another.

But, oh, we praise thee so much that, having met thee, thou hast drawn us in those great cords of love. And we bless thee for Christian fellowship. We thank thee for Christian service.

We rejoice in Christian worship. And we ask tonight, as we open thy word and hear thee speak to us again, that those that know not the Lord as Savior may come to know him this night, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I've been much in thought and prayer about this evening. I've had rather a busy day, it seems to me. I've been making recordings all day long.

Not quite that, but that's how it's been. And yet, we come this evening, and as I came, I was just asking that God would feel in my own heart what, in the early hours of this morning, I felt he would have me talk about. And I want, just for the few moments that are mine, to talk with you of the most loved text in the Bible, the only text you could associate with 1 Corinthians 30.

I want to talk with you about John 3 and 6. I want to remind you that it's still true, sir, it's still true. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. I've been trying to remember some of the outlines that, over the course of years, I must have used concerning this passage.

And I find that I would need two or three pages of a notebook to scribble them down. Sometimes I look at this text, and I dare to say about it, here is the text that tells me of the greatest gift he gave his only begotten son. Here's the text that tells me of the greatest goal.

Shall not perish. Here's the text that tells me of the greatest glory, but have everlasting life. I sometimes say here's the text that tells me of a fact, that God so loved the world.

It tells me of an act he gave his son. It tells me of a fact that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Here's a text that takes me away into the truth of the epistle to the Ephesians.

And I see the breadth of his love, for he loved the world. And I see the length of his love he gave his son. And I see the depth of his love that whosoever, and I see the height of his love, everlasting life.

Here's the text. Oh, there's no end to it, is there? There's no end to it. And the problem is this, that when you've said all the eight lines that you can think of, you still come back to this truth, that God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that if any man will trust in him, they'll not perish, but have everlasting life.

There's no way, really, you can say it differently. And so this evening, I want to talk, if I may, about this lovely text in a way that I'm sure every preacher who's ever preached on it has looked at. Now, I claim no originality for this outline.

If you've got any of those books on your bookshelf, you know, pithy points for pungent preachers, or something like that, you'll find it there. It's not mine, and yet it is mine because I made it mine. I want to talk to you about the greatest person for God.

For God. Name the people that have lived. Name the folk that they've bowed and worshipped.

Then write over them all, God, over all, blessed forever. I want to talk to you about the greatest person. I want to talk to you about the greatest place.

He loved the world. I could understand it if it said God loved the heavens. I could understand it if God said he loved his creation.

But that he loved this world. This world. I want to talk to you not only about the greatest person who loved the greatest place.

I want to talk to you about the greatest passion he gave his only begotten son. Could anything be greater than that, sir? Anything more wonderful than that? He gave his only begotten son for the greatest of purpose, that we should not perish but have everlasting life. Oh, it's a great thing.

The greatest purpose for God. And there for a moment we must stop. Of course, we will stop forever if we wait to fully comprehend God.

But you would not expect fully to comprehend God, would you? Because if you could fully comprehend God, you know what that means. It means that God is the size of your mind. And I don't believe any one of us here would like to think that our mind was as big as that.

I know myself. If I could fully comprehend God, then God would be the size of my intellect. And I do assure you, if he is to be the savior of the world, he needs to have a bigger intellect than mine.

So if you find yourself tonight saying, I don't fully understand God, you just bow your head and say, Thank you, Lord. Thank you. You're so much bigger than me.

But I must stop for a moment and talk about God. Because strange as it may seem, I am continually asked, and quite often by young folk with almost a high school education, Mr. Ford, why do you believe in God? Why do you believe in God? May I borrow the words of others? You know it as well as I do. Almost every other year there appears in your Reader's Digest an article.

An article that is continually being asked for. Folk are continually writing in, so says the editors of the Reader's Digest, that this article may be reprinted. And about every two years they reprint it.

You know what it is, don't you? Seven reasons why a scientist believes in God. Now let me explain something to you right now, just in case you didn't know, I am not a scientist. Understand that? Just in case you didn't know.

But that article always thrills me. It had its foundation with Professor Coultham, the Rice Hall Professor of Mathematics in the University of Oxford in my country. You will remember that they start off by saying that they believe in God.

The mathematician, Professor Coultham, says, I believe in God because as a mathematician I cannot do anything but. He asks all of us to do a little arithmetic, if that's the word for it. He says, I want you to take ten ping-pong balls.

Is that what you call them over here? Ping-pong? He says, I want you to number the ping-pong balls one to ten, and then put them in your pocket. I want you to shake your pocket up and put your hand in your pocket and take one out. The chance that you will take out the ping-pong ball with number one on it is one in ten.

I say, that simple. I mean, it's one in ten. Put the ping-pong ball back and shake your pocket again.

The chance you will take out number two is not one in ten, it's one in a hundred. Put it back in your pocket, shake it again. The chance you will take number three out is not one in ten or one in a hundred, it's one in a thousand.

I mean, that's simple mathematics. I mean, it's only allowing noughts, that's all it is. Put it back in your pocket and shake it out.

The chance that you will take those ping-pong balls from one to ten out of your pocket is one in ten thousand million. Now, that's ten ping-pong balls. One in ten thousand million.

If you don't believe that, just go home and work it out. Very simple, it's only ten figures, ten ping-pong balls. He says, to get ten things in order, the chance is one in ten thousand million.

Now, let me leave Professor Coulson for a moment, because I'm going to do just a little advertising, a little bit of salesmanship, for my good friend Mr. Ruth. He has amongst his massive collection of tapes a number, so he tells me, during the past week, a number of tapes of Dr. Walter Wilson, Kansas City. Is that right, Mr. Ruth? Thank you, sir.

Dr. Wilson, in one of his wonderful little booklets that's published by Moody Press, makes some wonderful statements that thrill my heart. Statements that you all appreciate. He dares to say, in his proof to God, is it not interesting that God puts everything in order? Go down to the seashore.

There rolls in to the shore, every minute, twenty-six waves. Not twenty-seven, not twenty-eight, not thirty, not eighteen, and it doesn't matter whether there's blowing a hurricane, or whether it's so calm, you could sail a toy ship on it. There comes in to the seashore, so every moment you can set your watch by it, twenty-six waves.

Please, to get ten things in order, what is ten thousand millions? How many millions of waves have there been that have rolled in? Or not. I have nothing to add, of course, to Australian America, because as I pointed out to you tomorrow, we in England, we're scriptural. We speak about a corn of wheat, not, you

know, a corn of wheat.

I know something about corn in my country, and of course that's what I'm talking about. Have you ever stopped to think for one moment that of the billions and billions and billions and billions of years of corn there's been? Prairies of Canada and Canada, the little trails of my land, there's never been an ear of corn unless it had an even number of grains. You look at it, and it hasn't an even number of grains, you're seeing mechanical or bug damage.

You like bananas, don't you? I do, anyway. You see a stem of bananas. The first circle of the stem of bananas is even number.

Second, uneven. Next, even. Uneven.

Even. Uneven. I don't care what variety you have.

Ever thought about the hatching of a potato bug? Seven days. Chicken. How many days for chicken days, sir? I wasn't asking you, sir.

I was asking my friend here. Listen, I'm going to speak at school tomorrow. I hope they don't shout out like that.

But he had it right. Twenty-one. How many duck eggs? Not very good.

Do you know I thought he was a sign writer. He's not. He's a farmer.

Have you ever stopped to think that every hatching of eggs has been seven days? Just happened? I mean, please, please. To get ten things in order. One.

Ten. Thousand. It just happened.

Let me tell you what I told you the last time I was with you. I'd rather believe the miraculous that behind all that's happening in this age there's a God who controls. Things are working in perfect harmony.

This whole world of ours. In the orbit in which it goes round the sun, if it was a hundred miles nearer the sun, I mean, you'd be grumbling because it's been ninety degrees. I'll tell you something, if it was a hundred miles nearer the sun, you wouldn't have time to grumble for it.

It'd all be fried up. And if it was a hundred miles further away, you'd all be frozen. I don't know whether you want to join Colonel whatever his name is with his chicken, or whether you want to go to bird's-eye frozen food, but I want to remind you of this, my friend, that I've got a God that keeps things in order.

He keeps things. You ask me do I believe in God? I can't do anything but believe in God. And yet the wonder is this, that my Bible says that that God, that God of order, that God of power, that God that upholds all things by the works of his power, that God loves.

For God. You know, one of the things that I've noticed as I've traveled from country to country, and there's a sense in which my dear friend, Mr. Malick, ought to be up here, but if there's one thing I've noticed when I go to countries where the Christian faith is written there, that there are people who worship gods, but their gods are corrupt gods and talent gods. Their gods are gods that have no expression of love at all.

I remember some years ago when first I was in Malaysia, if there was one thing I couldn't understand as I walked through the streets of Kuala Lumpur, it was the way that the people dealt with their beasts of burden. I find this exactly the same when I go to Spain. I find it extremely difficult to see how they deal with their beasts of burden.

And almost the first week I was there, as I saw them place upon their little asses loads that no little ass could really bear, and not only place it on them, but if the beast wouldn't move, just put it with sticks and beat it and no one would say a word. And when I spoke to one of the brethren, I said, I had a job, not just to go over and deal with the man. They believe in reincarnation.

They believe that a man, when he dies, if he's lived a good life, he will come back into this scene, maybe as a more insulting person than he was before. If he's lived a bad life, he'll come back as an animal, or he might even, if he's taken a wicked life, he'll come back with some sort of impact. And when they deal roughly with their beasts of burden, what they're doing is this.

We're punishing someone who lived here years ago. Who are they to punish them? I'm glad I haven't. My God's not corrupt.

My God's not talent. My God loves the world. For God so loves.

And the greatest person loves the greatest place. I'm glad of that. You see, when I think of God, then I remember that he's all wise.

When I remember that the scripture tells me he's a consuming fire, he's a creating force, that it dares to tell me that he's a compassionate father. Then I remember he so loved the world that he gave. What can I say? I am glad the message of the Christian faith, are you listening please? I am glad that the message of the Christian faith does not begin with logic.

It begins with love. I am glad that the Christian faith does not start with the mind. It starts with the heart.

And God so loved this world. And what a world. Not a world of trees.

Not a world of valleys and hills. Not a world of sea and sand. A world of men and women.

He created that world, but he doesn't love it. He created it. The world that God loves is a world of men and women like you and me.

Oh the wonder of it all. Oh the wonder of it all. And as I open my Bible, I get amazed.

I sometimes say, love the world because you love my home city. Oh please, not that I live in a city. You know I live in one of those little places, if you rode a bike and you rode through it and halfway through got a fly in your eye, you'd be out of the place before you knew you'd been there.

You know. But may I use the word? Love my home city? Oh yes, he loved that. My home county? Yes, he loved that.

My home country? Praise God, he loved that. Does he love the Anglo-Saxons? Don't want to give you a history lesson, but this text was written before there were any Anglo-Saxons, so he loved that. The more I look at my Bible and the more I think of this world, I have to say, does he love the Jews? Yes, and the Germans as well? Oh yes.

Loves the world. The Swedes? Oh praise God, he does. And the Swiss? Yes, thank God.

Okay, okay. Does he love the Americans? I am the Arab too. He loves them, he loves the world.

The Danes and the Dutch. The Finnish and the Fijians. He loves the world.

And as I open my Bible, I'm utterly amazed, you know. I'm told that he loved even those old Amalekites and Jebusites and Hittites and Midianites. And if you like that, a few more, I'll throw them in as well.

For he loves all of them. And dare I quote it, sir? I won't sing it to you, but dare I quote it? Or if you want? If you're short, correct, if you're tall, or if you're in between. God loves you.

He loves you when you're happy. He loves you when you're sad. He loves you when you're feeling good.

He loves you when you're bad. No matter what you look like. Oh, praise God for that.

No matter what you see. God loves you. God so loves the world.

This civilized world. This savage world. This cultured world.

This illiterate world. God so loves the world. Oh, my friends, there's coming a day when the cry will go out.

And from this scene and from the sea, the small and the great will stand before him. For he loves them, the small and the great. I say, the sad and the sinful.

He loves the world, the straitened and the sorrowful. He loves the world. So that means, please, would you grasp this? That means that there's not a man or a woman in this earth that God loves.

You might not appreciate that love. You might not realize that love. But you've heard me say a dozen times that the rich and the rented, the paver and the forgotten, the humble and the haughty, the Lord is so loved.

But if the greatest person loved the greatest place, he loved it with the greatest passion, he so loved the world that he gave his only forgotten son. Down from his glory, ever-living story, my Lord and Savior came. And Jesus, what he said, as I watch him as he comes down from glory to us, I have to say, God loves.

He so loves. So God loved the world and gave. Of course, God's love always means that he gives.

You've noticed that, haven't you? You learned it in Sunday school, of course, is to be committed to memory, and you've never forgotten them, have you? God so loved the world that he gave. Christ loved the church, and he gave. When Paul reaches the dizzy heights of Christian experience, he cries, he loved himself, and he gave.

He loved me, and he gave. Yes, God's love is always seen in what he gives. Does your love show like them? Could it be said of you? Can it be? Just as it was said of the church at Cohen? They gave first themselves to the Lord.

Well, he loved that he gave his only begotten son. And when I think of a savior who stooped to serve and to say, I love those words of Matthew 20 and 28, don't you? Oh, I love the words of Matthew 28 and 20, but I love the words of Matthew 20 and 28, because they precede the other words. Is it grand to know that

he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many? That's the message of the Christian faith now.

If I was to say amen now, I couldn't put it any better. For this blessed son of man, this glorious son of God, this majestic God the Father, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. No wonder I said he stooped to serve, died to serve.

For when I look at the cross, and I see him there dying for me, I can only say what I said years ago when, as a young man, I took Christ as my Savior. I can only say if it's true, if it's certain, that God had one son and he gave him for me, and the only thing I can do as a man is to trust him to deliver me. But God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

I like that word, don't you? I like that. C.S. Lewis sums it up very nicely, doesn't he? Some of you know it. He says his only begotten son.

Begotten son. He says a bird makes a nest, it begets an egg. A man makes a house, he begets a son.

And the very use in the normal English of the word beget is simply this, that that which is forgotten is of the same nature as that which begets it. You can make a nest, but it's not the same substance as the bird that makes it. You can make a house, but it's not the same substance as the man who makes it.

But you can't beget a son unless he's the same substance as you. My blessed God sent his son into the world. He's only the same substance as he, his only begotten son.

But it's the greatest person, loved the greatest place, with the greatest passion. He loved it to the greatest purpose, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Last evening we were talking a little, weren't we? As we looked at the vast subject of God's hell, and I only touched the edge of it, and that's all I wanted.

I didn't want to go any further. I had a job to sweep last night. I spent too many hours in the day thinking about it, and I don't like thinking about it.

Folks you know and folks you love, and they're bound there. They've not trusted God. But isn't it wonderful that if we'll trust in him we'll not perish.

Lovely. Let me just say what I say to children when I talk about this text. You know what it means, I say to the boys and girls to perish then.

Oh I don't talk to them about that. Oh of course I would. But I look at them and say, you know what it means to perish.

When I ask the boys and girls how many of them have a bike, all of the crowded youngsters have a bike. And I say to them, have you ever seen a boy who puts his bike down the road, and you look at him, and the tire is flat. Yes.

And you say, have you got a puncture? No he says, I haven't got a puncture. He's perished. Now it doesn't mean the tire's not there does it? You can see the tire, you can see it, but it's flat.

What it means is great. You know what it means, to lose it in its lowest form. That means that we call our height to perish in the highest of things.

But to lose it in the lowest term, in its lowest meaning, is wonderful, but it means not to lose no mercy. Because God loves us, and Christ does for us. But as we all know, our energy is lost.

But hey! Hey! It's everlasting. I don't want to go into a theological discourse to discuss with you whether there's any difference between everlasting life and eternal life. I'll let theologians argue about that.

I'll just enjoy it. That's what I'll do. I only know this.

That He's promised us both everlasting life and eternal life. And if they're not the same thing, well hallelujah, you can have both. Don't be greedy.

It's given to you. You can have it. I only know this.

That I thank God when I met Jesus Christ, He gave me both life, that is quantity, and quality. I did not become less red-blooded when I trusted Christ. The thrill I could live in was not taken away from me.

But hallelujah, there's a sense in which I became more red-blooded. Suddenly life had a meaning. Suddenly I could look around and say, by, it's all worthwhile.

There is a purpose. There is a pattern. There is a plan.

I know this, as I said the night before last. Hallelujah, there's a place as well. And if you trust Jesus Christ, you can live down there, everlasting life.

Have you got it? You can have it, you know, but you can only have it on one condition, and that is that you receive it as a gift. God doesn't sell His gifts. There is a lovely story.

Please, it is told. And whenever a preacher starts a story like that, you have a right to say, I wonder whether it's true. No, it's told.

I can't really prove it, but it is told, and it's told so frequently in my land that I've got a feeling it's true. But our monarch, as you know, has a number of places where she lives. There are a number of castles, and I mean, they're not cataclysmic ones, they're fucking impalpable.

I've never been invited to have tea there. Windsor Castle, you go up to Scotland, Brimhall. Interesting place that is.

I'll tell you a little story about that, how she got it. Queen Victoria was given her family. Oh, I mean, they've got all sorts.

But the story is told that the Prince of Wales, the late Prince of Wales, you know, that fellow who tried to marry her, I'd better say no more. But nevertheless, that when he was a boy, he was down at Windsor, and he was walking through the great glass houses they have there filled with lovely grapes. Beautiful.

These black hamburger grapes. Make your mouth water. And as he was walking through the grapes, buying so, he saw a little boy from the very slum area of Windsor, and Windsor has slums.

From the very slum area of Windsor, a little boy, seat almost out of his pants, looking desperately for him. There inside the grape house, he was stretching his hand towards some grapes. The young Prince said, and what are you doing? Oh, of course, I expect he said it correctly.

The little boy nearly fainted. And the story came out of him, and it was simply this, that his mum was very sick, and he heard someone say, she needs some grapes. And he didn't have, and they didn't have money to buy grapes.

So he goes away to what you call, your piggy bank. But in my country, it mostly takes the form of a post box, you know. Letter box.

You turn it upside down and put your knife in, bleh, bleh, bleh. And he counted out his pence, and found he had just a few pence. He seen these grapes as he looked over the wall.

And then he went to look for someone that he could buy some grapes, and he didn't see them, so he thought he'd help himself. He should never have done that. But the Prince cut off a bunch of grapes, and then another, and then another.

And he placed three lovely bunches of hamburger grapes there in a little pot, and he gave it to the boy. And the boy thought he was just the lad that worked there in the greenhouses, and knew himself no value of the grapes, and put his hand in his pocket, and took out his few pence, and offered them to the Prince. And he said, here's the money for them.

The Prince had one look at him, and with all the dignity of the man who he thought would be our king, he said, we don't want your money. The king doesn't sell his gifts. You can understand that, can't you? Then can't you understand that the king of kings doesn't sell his gifts? You'll have God's salvation free, or you won't have it at all.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Tonight, sir, madam, that salvation is being offered to you. Will you accept it? Will you trust your life to the Christ who died on Calvary's cross to save you, and to prove God's love towards you, in that while you were yet a sinner, he would guide you.

Believe God as much as you will, for his name's sake. Amen. I would like us to sing that lovely little hymn.

I'm not sure of the number. Someone will help me. That lovely little hymn, Only Accepted Jesus.

Then why not take it now? Two thirty-six. Thank you, sir. Two hundred and thirty-six.

Only Accepted Jesus. Then why not take it now? And in thy sin confessing to him, thy savior thou, only accept, come, he waits for thee, come. In thy sin confessing, thou shalt receive a blessing.

Do not reject the mercy he freely, offers you. The first and last verse, please. Two hundred and thirty-six.

Only Accepted Jesus. Then why not take it now? And in thy sin confessing to him, thy savior thou, only accept, only accept, come, he waits for thee, come. In thy sin confessing, thou shalt receive a blessing.

Do not reject the mercy he freely, offers you. The last verse. Only Accepted Jesus.

Oh, why not come and share? So every today, my savior, I give myself away. Only accept, only accept, in thy sin confessing, the mercy he freely offers. I wonder if I may say again, before I close this prayer.

Oh, my friend, the decision's yours, it's not mine. I made my decision forty years ago. Yours.

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