

# Whom Having Not Seen Ye Love

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer  
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I want you to notice verses 7 and 8, again, of 1 Peter 1, where the Holy Spirit says, verse 8, I believe, and verse 7 we'll pass as having examined that to our satisfaction. In verse 8, whom having not seen, ye love, in whom though now ye see him not. Now that is what we're interested in this morning. Whom having not seen, ye love, and in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, we have these two expressions very much alike, except in their tense. Whom having not seen, and now, ye see Him not. Having not seen has to do with any possible seeing him in the past, and now ye see him not, has to do with any possible seeing him now. And these Christians, these elect brethren, who were God's by sanctification of the Spirit and sprinkling by the blood of Christ, were believers in that which they had not seen, and that that they were not seeing.

This is contrary to the current, and I suppose universal, proverb that seeing is believing. Believing that must depend upon seeing is a kind of believing, for it is a conclusion drawn from the testimony of the senses. But believing that depends upon seeing is not New Testament believing at all, for New Testament believing is a believing of a report about things unseen. And that is the difference between real New Testament faith and every other kind of so-called believing.

Now, I say they believed in the invisible, that's another way of stating it. And this brings it close to Hebrews 11, 27, where it is written of the man of God Abraham that he was able to endure because he was looking at the things that were invisible. If you and I could see, actually see the invisible.

Now let us put it like this. Being what we are, we pretty much trust what we see, humanly. And if we could see all around us the wonders, the invisible things of the creation, we would never be lonely for a moment, and we would never doubt for a moment. But the invisible things are there, but they're simply not seen unless you have faith. And Abraham had faith and was able to carry on because he could see that which was not seen and could not be seen.

And it says here that in so doing, these Christians experienced the invisible so vividly and so satisfyingly that they were able to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I suppose that outside of our seeing, there is no time when we're as dishonest as we are when we are praying.

We sing songs that are so dishonest that I hesitate to sing them, and yet I don't want to be a speckled bird altogether. I have speckles enough on me now that I don't want to become clear off my rocker. But the average song, when we sing it, if God Almighty were compelling us to be entirely 100 percent realistic, we just couldn't sing it because it's not true of us.

It was true probably of the man who wrote the song, My Faith Looks Up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior Divine. That's a beautiful song. And the man who wrote it said, the last line, oh, bear me safely up a ransomed soul. And the man who wrote it said, I was so moved by what I was writing and what I was thinking about that the last verse was written in a flood of tears. Now that man meant it. But I wonder how many of us mean it when we sing it today. My Faith Looks Up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary. It is only by a charitable adaptation of the truth that we are able to sing most of the hymns that we sing at all. Love Divine, All Love's Excelling, is another one of the hymns that we sing with very little meaning.

But I was thinking especially of a camp meeting number. I don't know whether we ever sing it here or not, but we've all sung it at some time. The waves of glory roll, my shouts I can't control, when comes the love of Jesus sweeping o'er my soul.

Now I can easily believe that the old brother who wrote that was so lost in the grace of God that when he said, the waves of glory roll, my shouts I can't control, that he was literally telling the truth. But how many of us have sung that song? The waves of glory roll, my shouts I can't control, and if the devil had a sense of humor, I am quite sure that he had both hands wrapped around his stomach to keep from exploding with laughter. For a lot of us who sing my shouts I can't control can control our shouts easier than we can control our lusts. We can control our shouts easier than we can control our temper.

If the average Christian were to sing the waves of glory roll, my tongue I can't control, he'd be telling the truth. But to say my shouts I can't control is to lie to the face of God Almighty. And yet we do an awful lot of it.

Now I don't want to work against Brother McAfee here and suggest that if you can't feel it, don't sing it. Rather, let's compromise it and let's put it like this. Let's sing it, sing in our hearts, Oh God, it isn't true, but I want it to be true. It isn't so, Lord, but please make it so. Then I think God will understand, as when we sang this morning, our souls, how heavily they go to seek immortal joy. Some people have made great fun of that song, and they have said, How could it be?

Well, how could it be that we could sing a song like that? We grovel here below, fond of these earthly toys. Isaac Watts wrote this song, and he says, Look how we grovel here below, fond of these earthly toys. Our souls, how heavily they go. Some editor got to this and spoiled it, but Isaac Watts wrote, our souls, how heavily they go to reach eternal joys. I've heard that made fun of and satirized and lampooned by holiness preachers.

But brethren, if we are absolutely honest, the average Christian will sing, see how I grovel here below, fond of these earthly toys, rather than sing the waves of glory roll my shouts I can't control. For the average man can control his shouts better than he can control his love of these earthly toys.

Now, the invisible. They saw the invisible and believed in it and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I don't know how to tell you to get that. I only know they got it. They got it by believing in what they couldn't see. And I suppose that's the only way you and I'll ever have a joy unspeakable and a shout that we can't control.

Now, I want to call attention to this, that it's characteristic of a Christian, that he believes in things that he cannot see. That is, he's a believer in the invisible. He believes that there is a real world coexisting with this world, touching this world, and accessible to this world. I want you to get those three qualifying words, that there is a real world. I repeat, that there is never any contradiction between spirit and reality.

The contradiction is between spirit and matter, never between the spiritual and the real. So that the believer accepts and believes in a real world of which God is the King, an eternal kingdom, an eternal world, a spiritual and invisible world, coexisting with, touching, and accessible to this world.

Heaven is not so far away that we must take a jet airplane and continue through light years of speedy travel to get to heaven. That's what the average Christian thinks of heaven, as being so far away. And it's only again by accommodation that we sing about heaven being near and glory coming down our souls to greet.

The fact is, brethren, that the eternal world of which God is the King, which is inhabited by immortal spirits, and which has taken our dead Christian loved ones for a little time out of our sight, that world is as real, in fact, more real than the physical world at which we are so very familiar. And it coexists with our world. There is not a great vacuum gap between. As the stars in the heavens, there is a star. Then there are a few million light years of space, and then another star. No, my brethren, that is not the way with heaven and earth, but that the world you and I now see, and the invisible things of Him, are coexistent with each other.

Now, I said yesterday on the radio, maybe a couple of you listened, but I said yesterday that two things of equal density could not occupy the same place at the same time. And that is so widely and commonly known that I almost apologize for quoting it. But here is something we must remember on the other side, that two things that are not of equal density may coexist in the same place at the same time.

For instance, if you're sitting in front of your fireplace, nobody does anymore, but if you should be sitting in front of a fireplace with a fire on, there would be two things coexisting for you. There would be light and heat. They are not of equal density, they're not mutually exclusive, they're mutually compatible. And they are the two things that are coming out of that fireplace.

Or change the figure to the sun in the heaven above. We have two things coming from the sun at the same time, coexisting with each other, heat and light. We're warmed by the sun and were lighted by the sun. And light and heat do not exclude each other, they're compatible, they intertwine each other and live together.

So, the world that God has made, we call nature, and the world that God has made, and he calls the heavens, are coexistent with each other. And not only coexistent with each other, but they touch each other. And they're accessible to each other so that God could put a ladder up on the earth and have its top reach the sky, and angels ascending and descending upon that ladder.

The one world was accessible to the other world either way, the gates swung both directions, so that God could send His only begotten Son down, and He could carry Stephen up, and our prayers can go up and the answers can come down. The two worlds touch and are coexistent with each other and accessible one to the other.

Now, the believers in 1 Peter, that Peter wrote about there, were believers in that. They believed in the world that was real, the invisible world. And this distinguished them from every kind of materialist and materialism. Materialism has fallen on evil times in our day, so that the newspapers and magazines and radio commentators are all over on the side of the spiritual rather than the material, that is, in a carnal kind of way.

So, the materialism is not now the problem it used to be, but it's still a problem. And it recurs and has a recrudescence every once in a while, of interest, that all that we see is simply made of matter, and that's the end of it, that matter is all. We still run on to people that believe that, and if we live and the Lord carries another twenty-five years, it'll probably be back in the saddle, because materialism and spiritism chase each other in and out off the throne over the centuries, and Christians keep right on believing, no matter who may be on the popular throne, the materialists or the spiritists.

But a Christian is sharply distinguished from all kinds of materialism and all sorts of materialists. He does not believe that what he sees is of any great value. He does not believe that what he is able to touch with his hands ever is really worth very much. He endures as seeing the invisible, the immaterial, the spiritual in other worlds, not ghostly and phantom, but the spiritual, that which has real existence but is spirit instead of matter.

And a Christian believes that and lives in the light of it, and that distinguishes him forever from all of brands of materialism. But it also distinguishes him from all kinds of superstition and idolatry, for the idolater believes in the invisible too.

But the difference is that a Christian is one whose faith in the invisible has been corrected and chastened and purified by divine revelation, so that a heathen in Africa can kneel down before a stone, and if he's an intelligent heathen, you say to him, why do you worship that stone? And he answers, I don't. I worship the deity resident in the stone.

The Greeks used to kneel in front of Mount Olympus, and if you said to them, why are you worshiping toward Mount Olympus, they said, we do not worship a mountain, we worship the gods in the mountain. And even today, there are those who kneel before statues in churches, and if they're instructed in their own beliefs, and you say to them, why do you worship that image? They say, we don't worship that image. We worship God, of whom that image reminds us.

So that it's possible to be a believer in the invisible and not be a Christian. But it's not possible to be a Christian and not be a believer in the invisible. It's possible to believe that there's some kind of a spooky world somewhere that we've got to placate with rabbits' feet and chestnuts and strange sayings and chains around our neck and medallions and all sorts of things.

That's a belief in the invisible, but it's a pagan, erroneous belief. But when Jesus Christ came and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, and He stood upon His feet or sat down and opened His mouth and taught us, He corrected that false and sinful belief in superstitious things and told us what the real world really was. The only one who'd ever been there to come back and tell us.

Abraham died and sleeps, his body in the cave of Machpelah and his spirit is with God, but he's never been back to tell us what it's like. But Jesus had been there from eternity, and when He came, He told us of things of heaven and chided us because we didn't accept what He said when He told us of things above.

So, the Christian is not a materialist, believing in the validity of all material things, and he is not an idolater but just believing vaguely in the existence of another world. He is a Christian who believes in what he was taught by the One who had been there and come across the threshold into our world, smelling of myrrh and aloes out of the ivory palaces, fragrant from the presence of the eternal King.

Now, not only does the Christian believe in the invisible world, but he figures on it. He acts and plans and lives as one who counts on the reality of the invisible. The businessman doesn't. That is, the unsaved businessman. The man of the earth doesn't believe in, or if he believes in, in the sense that he nods dutifully toward the belief in another world, he doesn't let it change his plans any. He acts just the same as if there was no other world. He lays his plans precisely the same as if there wasn't any invisible world, and he continues to live as if heaven was a myth and didn't exist.

But the Christian counts on the other world, so that the invisible presence of Him, God and His eternal kingdom, and the spirits of just men made perfect in the holy Church of the Firstborn and the Holy Ghost and the invisible world, actually influences his life, actually shapes his plans, actually determines his habits, and as well as comforts and consoles and supports him.

It is a comforting thought that there is God near us. It is a comforting thought that there are invisible worlds near us, and it consoles us to know that when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, there came a legion of angels, or there came angels, to comfort him. And He said He could have had legions of angels by His side.

Now, nothing has changed, my brethren. The angels keep their wanted places. But it is we, it is we who have failed to see it. It is our unbelieving hearts that have missed the many-splendored thing. The angels are still here. There is a world, and that world, God and the presence of God and the Spirit of God and the inhabitants of that world into which really you and I have entered in our spirits, for we live in that world, too.

We live, as Thomas Kelly says, on two planes. We live on the plane of the natural, and we live on the plane of the spiritual. And that is why a Christian is such a wonderful and weird and strange and puzzling creature, because he is both animal and spiritual, and he insists upon living for the spiritual while he is down here in his mortal body. And that makes a Christian a funny fellow.

Oftentimes two men living on the same street together at 1631 and 1633, side by side, one of them is a good-natured, easy-going, relaxed, downright old sinner on his way to hell and doesn't believe it, and is easy to get along with, and nobody bothers nobody, and he is friendly and waves when he goes down the street. He is a sinner, an Esau, a good-natured rebel on his way to hell.

Alongside of him there lives a Christian, one who has been born again and who has been given the blessed Holy Ghost as the wedding ring, and he has his troubles. He weeps when there is apparently nothing to weep about, he is moody when apparently there is nothing to change a mood at all, preoccupied when somebody else or the man next to him is all wanting to talk, he is preoccupied.

When the man next door can't keep his radio off, he is worried about whether them bums will win the series. This fellow may put his Bible under his arm and start off somewhere to a street meeting or to a prayer meeting. He is not as comfortable a fellow as the sinner. He doesn't act quite the same. Why? Because the sinner lives on only one plane, the physical, and the Christian lives on both. In his body he is down here in the flesh, but in his spirit, he is up yonder with God. And the result is that he is not as comfortable a being to be around, maybe, as he might be. I have always said that prophets are never comfortable people to have around, but they are indispensable if we are not going to rot.

Now, the Christian is also, it is characteristic of him, that he is preoccupied with the invisible, but I think I've said enough about that. Now, I would speak briefly about the invisible and the Lord's Supper.

What is a sacrament? A sacrament is that wherein the invisible meets and touches the visible. The eternal meets and touches the temporal. Water baptism we call a sacrament, and there, material water and material river, material tank, is made to body forth an invisible and spiritual truth. The Lord's Supper is another sacrament wherein we use the material as a thin garment to disguise the spiritual. Wherein we use the temporal as a plate upon which we serve the eternal. That has always been the belief of the Christians.

Now there are two schools of thought about the Lord's Supper, the sacrament. One is that the elements actually become visible, the invisible becomes visible, and that when you take the cake from the tray, you are touching consciously and lifting the very body that Mary gave to Jesus. That seems to me unworthy of a serious answer.

There is another school of thought, and that is that the invisible is present in, underneath and behind the visible, and I believe in that. I believe that wherever faith has eyes to see, there is the smiling presence of the Son of God. I believe that in the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine, we can trace it, we know where it came from, we bought it, there is nothing magic about it. It could be fed to the birds, it could be drunk by any sinner, there is nothing magic about it. But it is an object lesson. It sets forth in material terms the spiritual. It sets forth in temporal terms the eternal. And wherever faith is present, we touch and handle things unseen.

Now, Paul rebuked the Corinthian Christians because they failed to discern the Lord's body. What did he mean by that? He meant you have been engrossed with the material, and you have not recognized the spiritual. He meant that you have drunk the wine and enjoyed it, eaten the bread and been full, but in doing it you have not had faith in the invisible. You have not discerned the Lord's body. You are materialists, he said, and your eating and drinking at the Lord's Supper is a carnal thing, and it will condemn you. And some of you actually will die early because of it. You will get sick and sleep because you have grieved God by your materialistic thinking.

He said, don't you know that this is the approach to the invisible, that this is the doorway to the spiritual? And when you take the Lord's Supper by faith, you recognize that you'll receive the spiritual, though you know what the elements are, and the chemists could tell you. Nevertheless, it is through the gateway of the material that we reach the spiritual in this instance. So that the spiritual and the invisible and the eternal are right here. Faith recognizes it. Unbelief waits until the service is over and thinks it is too long.

Now, said the man of God, now do we touch and handle things unseen, exquisitely said. Now do we touch and handle things unseen. If he had meant, now do we touch the bread, now do we touch the wine, he wouldn't have said unseen. Now do we touch and handle things unseen.

And Jesus said, I have meat to eat that you know not of. Here was the tired, dusty, weary Jesus, hungry from a long day of travel and fasting. And when they came to him, He said, don't worry about Me, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. He was feasting on the invisible. Be known to us, the man of God prayed, be known to us in breaking bread, but do not then depart. Savior, divide with us and spread thy table in our heart. Then sup with us in love divine, thy body and thy blood, that living bread, that heavenly wine, be our immortal food.

Some of the old Saints called the sacraments the food of immortality. Why can't we believe it today? Not believing superstitiously in the magic of words, not believing ignorantly in some woozy, ghostly ideas of another world, but believing with clean, sharp belief in the revealed truth that Jesus Christ brought. And believe that heaven is not far away only, but nigh at hand. That the eternal God is not in some Olympia, hidden in clouds, but is accessible to the human heart wherever faith is. That ought to transform our simple Protestant communion service into a heavenly service.

Now, Father, we would repent before Thee this morning. Lord, rather than just pray, we would repent before Thee, O Lord, for our materialistic minds, thinking in terms of this world, judging, weighing, measuring, valuing as men do. Father, this is wrong, forgive us.

And Father, our preoccupation with earthly things also, we would repent this morning. As a people, we would repent for our absorption in the things that pass away. O Lord, forgive us, cleanse us, wash us, so that as we quiet our hearts and in silence hear a voice, we may not have on us the ragged, lint and dust of unconfessed sin. That our garments may be white this morning, pure, shining, that we may receive as unworthy but believing people. Break the bread of life this morning, O Bread of Life, break it, Wine of the Soul, spill it, feed us, till we want no more. In Jesus' holy name, Amen.