

The Voice of God's Love

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Strangely enough, we go back to the book of Jeremiah for the first text on this series. In the book of Jeremiah, the thirty-first chapter, verse three, the Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

So, I begin tonight a series of sermons to be called Voices That Entreat Us. And I wonder why it should be necessary for the voice of entreaty to be heard at all in the earth. It can only be because we are out of the way. The world we inhabit is a lost world. There are reasons to believe that the earth itself upon which we ride is a lost planet. Hints of this are found through the entire Bible, and I believe that through the anointed intellect, such traces, such evidence, may be found also in nature.

Back in the book of Genesis, God said about the planet, cursed be the ground for thy sake. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, until thou return unto the ground, for out of the ground was thou taken. Thus thou art, and unto thus shalt thou return.

Now, why were these words ever spoken? I believe that they were spoken to describe the planet upon which we ride. It is a lost planet. I quote from the writings of the world's profoundest intellect.

I believe that it might be generally conceded that the profoundest mind that ever set a pen to paper was the Apostle Paul. Quoting from the Williams translation, that is the British Williams translation, these words from the book of Romans, the eighth chapter. This world of nature was condemned to be without meaning, not by its own will, but by the will of Him who condemned it, in the hope that not only mankind, but this world of nature also, might be set free from bondage to decay, to enter the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For to this day, as we know, the whole world of nature cries out in pain like a woman in childbirth.

Now, this world of nature was condemned to be without meaning. That is vanity. And it's strange that the very words that the philosophers like to use are used here by the sacred writer, that nature is without meaning. And not only mankind, but this world of nature is to be set free from bondage to decay. It is a sick, fallen planet upon which we ride.

Now, worse than this, the inhabitants of this planet are also lost. The Bible declares this very plainly. But for any whom I doubt it, does it seem reasonable to you that beings like us should be given each one his little turn at bat, just one time, beings like us? There is a theology, or a color of theology, a pattern of theology, that squirms uneasily as soon as you say anything good about mankind. They're prepared to say that you're liberal, or a modernist, or a borderline liberal, at least, if you say anything good about mankind.

My brethren, except for sin, it would be very difficult to overpraise human beings. When you consider what we are, and what we know, and what we can do, our memories, imaginations, artistic abilities, and all that we have as human beings, when you consider it, you can't justly and properly sell mankind short.

Sin, God knows, is like a cancer in the heart. It ruins the man and damns him at last. But man is not all sin. Man was made in the image of God, and while sin has ruined him, and condemned him to death forever, unless he be redeemed through the blood of Jesus. Yet mankind is a being only one degree removed from the angels, and in some ways, superior indeed to the angels themselves.

And does it seem reasonable to you, if this were not a lost world, that such a being as man, such a being as a Shakespeare, or a Churchill, or an Edison, or any of the great writers, or artists, or engineers of the world, should it seem, does it seem reasonable to you that each one of them should, like a little kid, be given his one little turn at bat, and then told to sit down while the ages roll on?

Does it seem reasonable to you that a being so godlike as man is, should take all of this marvelous equipment of his toward the grave? That he should carry his memory, his brilliant imagination, his artistic creative powers, and all that we know that makes a man a man, that he should carry it toward the grave? That God should waste his time on such a being as he made man to be, and say, I'm just fooling around with a man, I'm just making this marvelous creature just for a day, I'm just having some fun, it doesn't seem reasonable to me.

Does it seem reasonable to you that this being should consistently live beneath his own ideals, that he should everlastingly be beneath what he knows he ought to be, and always be frustrated by living below his own ideals, and should be doomed to go to the grave, frustrated and disappointed at last, never having attained his ideals? It does not seem reasonable to me. And that he should dream of a shining world, and yet not know the way there. Lord, we know not whither thou art going, how can we know the way? No truer words were ever uttered by any man than that we don't know the way there.

That shining world of which men have dreamed, that every man secretly believes is somewhere there before him, is nevertheless lost to that man, or he is lost to it, so that the human race is a lost race. That is only reason talking now, but sacred revelation declares plainly that the inhabitants of the earth are lost. They're lost by a mighty, calamitous visitation of woe, which came upon them somewhere back there and is still upon them.

But it also tells this glorious fact that this lost race has not been given up. There is a voice that is calling them, there is a voice that is entreating them, there are voices that are entreating them. As the shepherd went everywhere searching for his sheep, as the woman in the parable went everywhere searching for her coin, so there is a voice, there are voices that entreat us, that call us back. If we were not lost, there would be no voices behind us saying, this is the way, walk ye in it. If we were not far from home, there would be no father's voice calling us back home. I say that we have not been given up.

That is plain from the book of Genesis, where when Adam fled from the face of God among the trees of the garden, the sound of God's gentle voice was heard saying, Adam, where art thou? And that voice has never died out. The echo of that voice is sounding down through the years and has never ceased to reverberate and echo and re-echo from peak to peak and from generation to generation and from race to race and continent to continent and off to islands and back to continent again. All down the years, Adam, where art thou? Now there are many voices I say, but it's only really one voice.

Did you hear about that little two-and-a-half-year-old girl that was lost in the woods over in Michigan? I think it was only last week and there were bears loose there and some of those bears that were known to be man-eaters. And for a couple of days or longer, this little, was she two and a half years old, girl that was lost there. You hear about that every once in a while, a little one slipping away from a picnicking party and getting lost.

And they organized parties; whose back of that? Who does it? Is it not the throbbing distraught heart of the father and the mother? Who is it that organizes these parties to hover overhead with helicopters, to send out sound trucks, to organize soldiers and boy scouts and friendly neighbors, always calling, calling, calling, calling, calling in a soothing voice, always calling.

It may be the voice of a soldier here, it may be the voice of a boy scout around there, it may be the voice of a friendly neighbor over there, it may be a sound truck from the highway there, it may be a helicopter from up here, but always it's the same voice, it's the father's voice. Though there may be a dozen or two dozen voices calling, oh, they're only inflections of one voice. They're simply the overtones and undertones of the same loving father's voice that's organized it, that's backed it, and whose distraught heart is calling for his lost child.

So, there are many voices calling us, calling this lost planet, calling the inhabitants of this lost planet, and there are many voices, but it's all one voice. And whether it be the voice of God's love, or the voice of Jesus' blood, or the voice of conscience, or the voice of the dead, or the voice of the living, or the voice of the lost, or the voice of the saved, whatever the voice may be, it's all the inflection of the same voice. It's all one voice. It's a distraught heart of God seeking his lost race, calling them any way that he can call them, calling them from above or from below, calling them from around the bend, or down the road, or beside the river, or on the plateau, calling them, but always calling them; the voice of God as in treating us.

Ladies and gentlemen, with everything inside of my beating heart, chastened and criticized by everything inside of my mind, I believe in the voice of God sounding in his world, calling men. The planet's lost, lost to such a degree that the holy writer says that it's lost its meaning, it's full of vanity. And even the world around us is so lost that it is crying like a woman in travail, waiting as it were to be born back into the liberty of the sons of God and saved from decay and corruption. The race that inhabits it, the human race, is lost, and always this voice of God is sounding, always it's sounding.

Now I speak tonight of the voice of God's love, and I repeat that when it's all been said, all the voices are the voices of God's love, whether it be the voice of conscience, whether

it be the voice of fear, the voice of the pastor, the voice of the traveling evangelist, the voice of the teacher, the voice of the Sunday school superintendent, or the friendly neighbor that may be a Christian, whether it be the voice of reason or whatever it be, it's all one voice. It is the distraught, heavy-hearted voice of God calling his lost race back. Now he says here, yea, I have appeared of old unto you, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

The voice of the love of God is calling a lost race, and we members in particular, can hear that voice tonight if we would listen. Now let me say a few things about the love of God that you probably won't hear anywhere else that you go, at least rarely will you hear it said, but let me point out that God being who he is, God must love Himself first with a pure and blameless and perfect love.

Now don't go out and say Mr. Tozer didn't mean that. That's just exactly what I meant, that God being God, not being a creature but being an uncreated being, deriving from nobody, owing nothing to anybody, and being himself underived and uncreated, this holy God who is Himself the fountain of all the love there is, must love Himself forever with pure and perfect love.

This is the holy and blameless love which the three persons of the Trinity feel for each other. The Father for the Son, the Son for the Father, the Father and the Son for the Spirit, the Spirit for the Father and the Son. Divine Trinity in perfect and blameless and proper love, love each other with poured out devotion. Three fountains pouring into each other out of the same boundless, shoreless, depthless sea, bottomless, that is the eternal, infinite God.

And these three upspringing fountains always pouring up and mingling with each other in perfection of bliss and love. This is the love of God for His own holy self. And God being what He is, God is Himself the only being He can love directly. There is nobody else that mingles with those three fountains. No other creature, not an archangel, nor a seraphim, nor a cherub, nor a man. Everything else that God loves and everybody else that God loves, He loves for His own sake. He loves Himself as the Father loves the Son and the Son, the Father and the Father, and the Son, the Spirit and the Spirit, the Father and the Son, without referring that love to any other being, for God is God.

But when it comes to creatures, that perfect love cannot fall directly upon any man. It must come to God mediated through God Himself. God must find something of Himself there in order that He might love it. For God can only love Himself and that which is like Himself.

Do you hear me? God can only love Himself. And God being what He is cannot love anything unlike Himself. If God should love anything unlike Himself, it would be equivalent to a pure and holy woman loving a gangster. God must love that which is equal to Himself and like Himself. And so, when God looks at the mute creation that the writer here, the translator calls the world of nature, He loves it because it reveals to Him something of His own Godhead and glory and power and shows something of His own wisdom.

So, when God looks on His sun and His moon and all the stars that He has made, and His lakes and His rivers and His mountains and His seas, God loves them because they remind Him of His own wisdom and power and Godhead that gave them being. And when God looks at the seraphim and the cherubim and the holy angels before the throne, He loves them because they remind Him of His own holiness. They're holy angels and their holiness is derived from God. And God loves in them that which came from Himself. God loves them because they're holy beings. And He can properly and with moral propriety, He can love holy angels because they're reminding Him of Himself. And when God looks at a man, He loves in them, the fallen relic of His own image.

Now here again, there's going to be people that nobody's ever said it to me in person, but they've written me and abused me and said that I am a liberal. And I insist I don't have education enough to be a modernist, but they say now that he's a liberal. I'm not a liberal, I'm a Bible believer.

And the Scripture says that God made man in His own image. And when Jesus Christ was incarnated, He was incarnated in the body of a man without embarrassment and without change. Why could it be so? It was so because that man was an image of the God that created him said and said, let's make man in Our image.

But fallen man has another element there, a foreign element that has crept in. It is sin. It's the sting of the serpent that stung his bloodstream there in the garden, and that's sin. So that man, made in the image of God, is now a dying man, sick unto death, because sin, like the poison of the adder, has gotten into his flowing moral veins. But extract that sin and take it out and you have the image of God again. And Jesus Christ was the image of God because He was a man without sin.

There's no modernism there, no liberalism there, just Bible there. And the man who denies that fallen man bears upon him something of the fallen ruined Reich of what he once was is no true friend of the Bible. He is himself guilty of taking liberties with the Holy Scriptures.

And when God looks on a sinner and loves the sinner, never while the stars burn in their silence can it be said that God loves the sin in the sinner. Never can it be said that the Holy God loves an unholy thing, and yet God loves sinners. Why does He love sinners? He loves them for that which He sees in them of His lost and fallen image. For God can never love anything but Himself directly, and He loves everything else for His own sake.

So, you're loved of God, friend, but you're loved of God for Jesus' sake. You're loved of God, but you're loved of God for the sake of the Holy Son, Jesus, who is the Godhead incarnate, who is the second person of the Godhead incarnated. And God sees in Jesus Christ what you would have been. That is, He sees in His perfect humanity, not His deity. You and I never can be divine in that sense.

So, God loves lost men. Loves them not because He excuses their sin, loves them not because He's careless, loves them not because He's morally lax, but loves them because He once stood and said, let us make man in Our image.

Let's put it like this. A man and woman meet, fall in love and marry. They have a son, and they kid each other and play about that boy, and each one says it looks like the other, and then they change it around and say it looks like this one and then looks like that one, and they have a lot of fun, but that's their boy. And they try to see each other in that boy.

Then he grows up, and the hour comes when he breaks with society, chooses to go outside the law and become an outlaw. He drinks, he gambles, he lies, he steals, he cheats, he murders. He's a fugitive from justice. He becomes snarlingly vicious and cruel, becomes a killer, cold-eyed in his own right. Mercifully, the father dies, and then the boy is caught and thrown into prison. The mother goes to see him. No hope, no chance. A thousand witnesses, fingerprints everywhere, evidence of every kind, direct and circumstantial. They'll get him. He's finished. Half a dozen murders, he'll pay for them.

The mother looks through the bars, and there's her boy standing now, full-grown, the man. Can she love his outlawry? Does she love his gangsterism? Does she love his cold-eyed cruelty? Does she love his murders? Does she love his robberies? No, she hates them with everything in her good heart.

But when he stands up there needing to shave a little bit, she sees the man's no longer with her. And she says, God, if he'd only been a good boy, he was the spitting image of his father. When I first met his dad, that's what he looked like, and she pours her heart out in tears. She loves the boy, but she doesn't love one thing in him that made him an outlaw. She loves an image of a man she once loved and gave herself to, and promised to follow till death did separate.

God looks down at the human race and sees us in our awful sin. The deeds of the flesh are seventeen in number, according to Paul, the works of the flesh, and that's only the beginning. It would take several sheets of paper to write down the sins man has been capable of and has done and is doing, and God looks. And you think that God loves jealousy, deception, lying, gluttony, uncleanness, impurity, outlawries, cruelty.

Do you think God loves sinners, carelessly, foolishly, loves them and says, I don't care, I love them anyway. I don't think it for a second. I think He loves them because He sees in them the image of what Adam was and what Christ is, and loves them for Adam's sake, but loves them now redemptively for Jesus' sake, who was incarnated of the Virgin Mary and became a man without sin.

So, the voice of God's love is sounding. I say you won't hear that probably in very many places, but it's so true it needs to be told again. It will deliver us from pride. Let no man go out and strut down the street and say, I'm a fundamentalist, God loves me.

Careful, Sonny, our sins have violated and lost to you every right you ever had to be loved by God. But God sees that you are of the loins of the man who once stood up on the earth, and looked about for a helpmeet for him, made in the image of God and wasn't ashamed of him. And He sees an image of the Man who went to the tree and died between heaven and earth, His only begotten Son. And He loves you for other reasons than yourself. Therefore, humble yourself, it'll pay. Thank God for the love that comes to

you, mediated through the man Christ Jesus. That everlasting love that is everlasting, not in its object, but is everlasting in its own quality.

Now God must love and will love man until hell has erased the last trace of the remaining image. Men are lost now, don't forget it, but they're still loved of God, because the blackest man, the deepest man, is still dear to God for Jesus' sake. Jesus who died on the tree for that very lost black man. I mean black morally, not racially, in his skin. I have loved you with an everlasting love, says God.

I say that love is everlasting not because of its object, but it's everlasting because it's the everlasting God that loves. God no longer loves the devil. There was a day when God loved the devil as He now loves the angels and archangels, because He saw in the devil traces and proofs of His own wisdom.

Thou art the covering cherub. I have made thee so. I have set thee to guard the stones of fire. Thy wisdom and beauty were created in thee in the day thou wast created. God loved that being because it was an image, not an image of Himself in the sense man is, but a reflection of what God could do and an evidence of His artistry, His moral artistry and His omniscient skills.

The devil sinned, and the devil sinned in a way not quite like man sinned. He sinned in some way that erased forever everything of which God could be proud and in which God could rest, so that God no longer loves the devil. He sent no redeemer for him. There isn't anything in Satan that could remind God of himself.

The last trace of that which might have reminded God of himself has been washed out in the filthy bilge water of iniquity while the centuries have added to centuries. So, God no longer loves the devil.

Now I confess to you, friends, this is speculation, and I want to brand it speculation right here. What I shall say in the next minute is speculation, and if you don't agree with me, let's not fall out over it. These are the things I'll stand by. This is speculation.

I believe the time will come when God will no longer love lost men. I believe that God now loves lost men, all lost men, lost men in prisons and penitentiaries and insane asylums, lost men in saloons and houses of ill-faith. God loves lost men because the last trace has not been erased, and he still remembers them and remembers His Son on the tree that has a body like theirs. He still remembers that the Second Being, Person of the Divine Being, was incarnated in a Man who has a body like that man without sin. The day will come, let him that is holy be getting holier still, and let him that is filthy be getting filthier still. So says the Bible.

And therefore the day will come when lost man will no longer be loved by God Almighty. For God, I repeat, cannot love anything directly. He must love everything for His own sake if He continues to be God. And when a man has sold himself out to sin and the transfiguring power of iniquity has wrought to make him to be a devil and not a man, God will no longer love the lost man. So let us not imagine for a second that God will be pining over hell and grieving in His heart over a lost man in hell. It cannot be true.

God grieves over lost men now because man can still pray and believe and hope and dream and imagine and aspire, and there's still something that reminds Him of the Man who died on the tree. But when that is all gone, there will be nothing left for God to pour out His love upon. There will be no one to receive that love, and therefore the love of God, though it's everlasting in its source, will not light anymore upon fallen men.

And hell, wherever hell is, filled with lost men and the devil and lost beings, shall roll on through the cavernous recesses of some underground world forever and ever and ever, and there will be no love lost in heaven and no grief in the heart of the man Christ Jesus. For God can only love that which is like Himself and reminds Him of Himself.

Now, let me point out to you, brethren, that wherever there is love, there's bound to be goodwill. Nobody ever willed anything bad about anybody they loved. Sometimes a man will kill a woman because she looked at another man. He says, I loved her so that I killed her. The big billy goat, it was lust that led him to kill her. He wanted her for himself, and he was too much of a billy goat to allow himself ever to dream that anybody else could dare have that woman. So he killed her, not out of love for her, for altogether other reasons.

No, love never kills anybody. Love never wills ill nor evil to anybody, never. It's impossible. Love can't do it. Love can no more do it than light can be darkness or God can be unclean. Love must always have goodwill, and God is inflamed with goodwill. He's inflamed with goodwill. That means that whether God is near or far, and he's always near and always far, but however we think of him, God's always inflamed and thinking about us.

My friend Bob Battles, who wishes he'd been my son, but I'd have had to been married at 13 to have arranged it. But my friend Bob Battles, who loves me very much, and I him, he was in California with us where I got this cold that I have now, in California incidentally. I'm getting better since I came to Chicago, but Bob and I were out there together, and we were walking along, Bob said, well, it's 10 o'clock back in Orlando, 10 o'clock back in Orlando, and my five boys are all in bed, and Olive, that's his wife, Olive is presiding all alone over the mass.

My boys, he said, we walked along. I grinned to myself. He was inflamed with goodwill. He was busy, you know, running around carrying a portfolio, you know, and being chairman of this, and he was awfully busy, but he was all inflamed with goodwill. If anything, if just let a phone call come through and say, I got to have you, he'd have hopped on a plane without saying goodbye.

Love always has goodwill with it. Love always is full of goodwill, and the love of God is no different, and when the angels sang their song or uttered their marvelous chant, it was goodwill to men. I know some translators say to men of goodwill, goodwill to men, the will of God is good toward us brethren. Be sure of that.

It's basic, it's basic, you must believe that, that goodwill is in the heart of God for you. Now, that's very hard to believe. It's hard to believe because our moral conscience doesn't agree with it. We love each other because they're good things we love in each

other. We say, oh, he's got such a sense of humor, I love the fellow. Well, that's loving somebody for some assignable reason.

A young man will come in and say, one young Texan called me, Wilkins Wynn, he says his name. He used to come here to church, you know, a good Baptist boy that went to church here while he was attending Moody. He called me one day. He was always so spiritual and always talking about the Lord. You couldn't get him to talk about anything else.

One day he called me. He said, brother Tozer, he said, you know that song that says that, that, that I love thee so I know not how my transport to control. I said, yes. Well, he said, I have found a girl and that just exactly described my feeling toward her. And he said, what do you suppose I ought to do? I love her so I know not how my transport to control. I said, Wilkins, there's only one thing to do and I recommend it. And he did.

Now they have nice, he's, he's pastor of a Baptist church down in Texas and they got a nice little boy. Well, that you see, don't you, that, that, uh, that love is like that. And, and there's, there's the, the yearning. And, uh, he, he loved this woman because there, there were reasons for it. He talked to me afterward.

My, she must've been a paragon of beauty. To say nothing to be so intelligent that Einstein better watch out. Formed like the Venus de Milo. And she had all that. And he loved her for that reason. You know, you know, he, he, he'd had it. That's all. He had it. She wasn't like that. I suppose she's very lovely young, probably good looking young lady, but then he'd had it. That's all. He was that way.

Well, you see, we love people for what they are. And when somebody comes and says to a sinner, God loves you and is inflamed with goodwill for you. He's inclined to say, I don't believe it. Why? Because he's measuring the love of God by his own love.

And he says, I know better. God is the moral God. The Bible says He is. God can't love me. I'm a low-grade center. I've lied. I've cheated. I've stolen. There isn't a sin. I haven't committed either overtly or in my heart. I'm worse than my friends know. I'm worse than my wife knows, worse than anybody knows. And God can't love me.

But you see, he's right. And he's wrong. He's wrong because he fails to see that God doesn't love him directly for his sin's sake. God loves him for His own sake. And therefore, God can love anybody no matter how sinful for His own sake, for His Son's sake.

But you know, that takes some theology to make people see that they don't see it. They imagine God loves them because they're good. Some little old bespectacled fellow, you know, that never did anything worse in his life but drink a half glass of Coke, you know, and that uses perfect English and always puts his shoes away at night, makes his bed in the morning, helps his mama with the dishes. He believes God loves him, the big sissy. Because he says, well, mama loves me. And the teacher says that I'm the best student she ever had. And therefore, I can see how God could love me and I'm going to be a fundamentalist.

Better watch it, better watch it there, my boy. Because God doesn't love you for the fact that you make the bed and never cause your mama a minute's trouble in all your life. He loves you for another reason altogether. He loves you because He sees even in you, if not some trace of manhood, then some trace of womanhood, he sees in you that which once walked in the garden but got into sin and was poisoned and bitten with the virus of iniquity, lost and ruined by the fall and on your way to hell.

And He loves you for His own sake and not for your sake. But the man who's such a sinner and knows it is inclined to doubt God's love because he judges God love by man's love. That's never any way to judge love. God's love is unique in the universe. And God loves us for His own sake.

Now, my brethren, where there's love, there's not only goodwill. Where there's love, there's yearning, yearning. Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee. And always drawing us toward the object, He draws us toward Himself, a lost race in a lost world.

And from God there is a clear call. And there isn't anything that can stand in the way, not character, reputation, past, nothing can stand in the way except our own sins. From God there's a clear call to consider Him. Will you stop and consider Him? There are so many things now in the world that we just can't consider anymore the serious things. There are just too many things in the world.

But God calls you to stop and consider. Won't you think on God now? Think on God. This God whose love is everlasting. This holy God who loves Himself and loves you for His own sake. Give attention to God. And He calls you to believe about Him. Start believing what the Bible teaches. Believe what I'm telling you. Believe what you've heard other men say. Believe what we sing in our hymn books. Believe what we read in our Bibles. Believe what the church teaches. That God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Believe that. Start believing it. He calls you to that. And He calls you to turn to Him. He calls you to turn around, turn to Him, and to begin to make a moral about-face, and stop things, and change things. And to throw yourself on his mercy.

Will you do it? No defense. Don't come into court with a lawyer. Don't come into court with a lot of alibis. Don't come into court with a lot of witnesses for your character witnesses to tell God how good you are. Come as the prodigal came back home. He didn't bring a lot of character witnesses.

Can you imagine if that prodigal had been like that? Like some people. He'd have gone back to the father's house. He'd have stopped and had his dirty old pants pressed somewhere down the road. And he'd have brought along a couple of fellas to tell his father that that smell that he detected on his garments was just a flower that had been in the far country, and it was rare. And there wasn't anything to get worried about. It smelled like pig but it wasn't pig.

He'd have had his story, but he didn't. He didn't try anything like that. He didn't bring any character witnesses with him to tell his father that he was a better boy than he thought. He said to himself, my father will remember me the way I used to be. And I know my father and I know that as long as I look like him and look like Ma, my father

will never stop loving me. So, I'm going to throw everything, I'm going to risk everything on one shot. I'm going to go home and say, Father, I have sinned.

And you know, it worked. It worked. And it was the only thing that would work. It worked. He said, Father, I have sinned. The old man who's getting old and lumpy and full of lime, you know, and couldn't get around much anymore and his heart bothered him.

But sir, he jumped around there like a 21-year-old. He gave orders here and gave orders there and gave orders there and pretty soon that boy was all fixed up and bathed in the finest bath salts, perfumed and dressed in good shoes on his feet and a ring on his finger, the seal of his father's approval. They were all sitting around thanking the father and shouting the praises of this dad who loved his boy.

The elder brother stuck a sulking sour face in the door and went away and sulked behind the barn. They sent out for him, and he said, can you imagine it? Treating my wicked brother like this and I've always been a good boy. You know that story too well. He was pleading his own character, and the boy had none to plead.

So, throw yourself on his mercy. That's the safest place. No man ever dies when he throws himself on the mercy of God. Was it John Bunyan, that wicked, doubly wicked man who got under conviction and wished he was a dog? He said, there goes a dog. Oh, I wish I was that dog, and then I could die and be no more. But I've got to die and rise to judgment. I wish I were a dog. And God didn't change him into a dog, but he kept conviction on his soul and he went on praying.

So, one time he said, all right, God, you said that if I'd confess, you'd forgive me and I'm going to stand on that promise. And if I sink down to hell, I'll sink on a promise. You can't go to hell on a promise, brother. It doesn't go down. That's all. It goes the other way.

So, John Bunyan became the great John Bunyan by the grace of God because he couldn't die on a promise. He couldn't perish on a promise. The great German silk weaver wrote, Thou hidden love of God, whose height, whose depth unfathomed no man knows. I see from far thy beauteous light, inly I sigh for thy repose. My heart is pained, nor can it be at rest till it find rest in thee.

Do you tonight catch glimpses of the beauteous love of God, hidden to the world, but there so beautiful? And is there something in you that's like a pain? He says, O God, O God, I am pained, and I never can be anything else but pained until it find, my heart finds rest in thee. Thy secret voice invites me still, the sweetness of thy yoke to prove. And fain I would, but though my will seem fixed, yet wide my passion drove. Yet hindrances strew all the way, I aim at thee yet go astray.

Does that describe you? You hear the secret voice inviting you still. And you want to, but you can't. And you seem to want to, but yet your passions rove like a stray dog. Hindrances are all the way along. You aim to do right, and yet you go astray. Each moment draw from earth away my heart that lowly waits thy call. Speak to my inmost

soul and say, I am thy love, thy God, thy all. To feel thy power, to hear thy voice, to taste thy love be all my choice.

Would you say that tonight? Would you ask Him to draw your heart from earth away and let you hear that call as you wait lowly before Him? Speak to your inmost soul and tell you once more, I am your love, I am your God, I am your all? Would you do it? Would you want to do it? Do you? Will you do it?

O Love of God, so strong, so tender. It's the voice of God's love that I hear tonight entreating me and entreating you. Let's not trample on it. You can't, can you?

Do you find it morally possible to turn on such love and say, God, I don't care. I've got sins out there I've got to go do. I have my iniquities planned and I'm going to go do them. You can't, can you? Surely not. Over the voice of God's love that entreats you, that mighty love that's equal to God Himself entreating you home, back to the Father's house, back to the cross, back to the fountain that was opened.

Will you come? Will you come? Will you half-saved Christians tonight? Come. Oh, your heart is pained, nor can it be at rest till it find rest in thee. You'll never find rest, Christian, half-saved Christian, worldly Christian. You'll never find rest till you find it in God's heart.

Won't you come this evening? Voices that entreat us. And this voice of God's love is the first and the loudest. And all the others, though real, grow out of this great voice of God's love. Let us pray.

Father, we feel so deeply tonight and so keenly thy wonderful love for us. We feel as if we'd like to go down and stand in a seat and then get up and walk down the aisle and say, I do. Here I come, Lord. Thou art my love, my God, my all. As though we would like to feel as though we were coming all over again.

But, Lord, we're already here, so we can't come where we've already been. But, oh, we pray Thee for the lost. We pray Thee for the half-saved. Pray Thee for the confused and the puzzled and the bewildered and the wandering. O Love of God, so rich, so free, so measureless, so strong.

We beseech Thee that Thou would give ears to our hearers tonight, that they may hear that Voice and follow until at last they find Thee, their everything, their all. And old things pass away and all becomes new, and sins go down under the washings of the blood. And everything becomes new in Christ Jesus.

Grant it, Father, for Christ's sake. Amen.