

The Love of God



It Cost All He Had (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

Tonight I want to deal with perhaps the most glorious theme of the Bible. And I have to say right now I feel unworthy to deal with it. But I feel God wants me to do my best and that's all I can do. I want to say tonight that the cross revealed the love of God in a way that perhaps nothing else could ever reveal it. And the love of God, I believe, is the greatest single fact in the universe. It's the explanation of the universe. That's why there is a universe, because of the love of God. All creation, all God's activities, all proceed out of His love. What a difference it makes when you realize that this earth and this universe is not just a series of accidents but it all proceeds out of the loving heart of a Father God. What a difference it makes to your life when you realize you're not an accident looking for somewhere to happen; you're part of a divine eternal plan conceived in love.

I want to turn for my first scripture tonight to Deuteronomy 7 and read verses 6, 7 and 8. In these verses Moses attempted an impossible task. He attempted to explain the love of God.

And it's very interesting to see just where he ended up. He's speaking to God's chosen people of the Old Covenant, Israel, and he's trying to tell them why God chose them and why God loved them. He explains one reason that was not the reason for God's love. But when he comes to explain the reason for God's love he just stops! Let me read the words and you'll see.

> "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself..."

I want to point out that God's choice is the decisive factor in our lives. Not our choice, but God's choice.

> "...he has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples [you were the most insignificant, the most unlikely]..."

How many of us could identify with that? God didn't choose me because I was so great or so wonderful or so talented or so righteous. In fact, I was the least significant, the least

important, the most unlikely. Have you ever noticed how God delights to choose the unlikely people? When I was at Cambridge University as a student and later as a member of the faculty of my college, Kings College Cambridge, I was far from God. I had abandoned Christianity, I had given it up as a outmoded relic from the past. I turned to philosophy and other studies to find the reason for life. And I lived a very carnal, self-pleasing, Godless life. And in some ways I was somewhat notorious. And during the seven years I was at Cambridge no born again Christian ever once witnessed to me of his faith.

Well, then called into the British Army in World War II, in my first year in the army I had a dramatic encounter with the Lord Jesus, came to know Him in a very personal way, was called into His service and about seven years later returned to Cambridge. And then I met some of the born again Christians. When they discovered I was a Christian they said we could have believed it would have been anybody but you! Well, I was glad God didn't have the same attitude.
So, when you see somebody really unlikely, just start praying for them.

So Moses says to Israel God didn't choose you because you were wonderful, because you were special, because you were righteous, because you were great. Why did He choose you? Well, now you think you're going to get the answer, don't you, in verse 8. But all he says is:

> "...but because the Lord loves you and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt."

So why did the Lord love you? He loved you because He loved you. That's the bottom line. The unexplained love of God is the greatest single fact in the universe. And no one will ever explain it. Don't try to find reasons why God loves you, just believe that He does. The apostle John said we know and have believed the love that God has for us. It's so important to know it and to believe it.

Tonight I want to try in some faint measure to give you a standard by which to measure the love that God has for you and me. Demonstrated, as I've said, in the cross. I want to turn to two parables of Jesus in Matthew 13. They're both very short and very simple. Matthew 13, we're going to be reading from verse 44. I have to tell you that parables can be interpreted in various different ways. I'm not suggesting tonight the way I'm going to interpret these parables is the only way. If you have a different way of interpreting them, that's fine. Just be patient with me. The way that God has made these real to me is very precious to me. It's given me a new way of estimating the love of God. It's made the love of God more real to me. And if I can do that for you then let's not bother if there are other possible interpretations, let's let the Holy Spirit just speak as He will.

I want to suggest to you that one way to understand the love of God, to appreciate it is to try to estimate the price that He paid to redeem us from our sins. Because when you see the price that God was willing to pay, it gives you some faint idea of the measure of His love. I'm going to use these two parables as a way of depicting the love that God has, the price that His love caused Him to pay to redeem us from our sins. Each of these parables speaks about a man who saw something that he valued so greatly that he sold everything he had to buy that thing and although he had to make these tremendous sacrifices he was just filled with joy for what he had been able to buy.

So let's look at the parables and then I'll give you my understanding of them. Matthew 13:44:

> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

You see, there's a close parallel. I want to suggest to you that tonight we're going to view Jesus as the man that made the purchase. You know that the word "to redeem" means to buy back. Redemption is buying something back.

Let's try and fill in the background a little. Why was the treasure hidden in the field? Well, the Bible doesn't tell us but if you know anything about the Middle East it's pretty easy to depict a scenario in which that could happen. The Middle East has been a very troubled area for many, many, many centuries and many times invading bands of marauders and robbers have swept across the country pillaging and looting and murdering. And let's suppose there's this man who's wealthy, he has a beautiful home and the message comes urgently that there's a band of marauders coming his way. And he looks at all his wealth and his treasures and he says I don't want them to fall into the hands of these marauders. So he takes everything that's truly valuable and packs it all up in a chest and carries it out into a field, digs deep and buries it, covers it up. Then we don't know what happens but maybe the marauders came and they murdered the man. But they never found the treasure. So for who knows how many

centuries that treasure was lying there in that field.

Then one day this man in the parable was walking across the field and he stumbled over something, kicked his toe against it. At first he thought it was one of the countless rocks that are scattered over that land. But when he looked down he saw that it was the corner of a chest that had been buried under the soil. And so, prompted by curiosity he began to get below the surface and see what was there. He managed to pry open the little corner of the lid and he saw incredible wealth: gold, silver, jewels. He realized that was hidden there in the field. Well, he knew that if he wanted legitimate ownership of that wealth he had to do one thing. What was that? He had to buy the field. Once he owned the field he owned the treasure, see?

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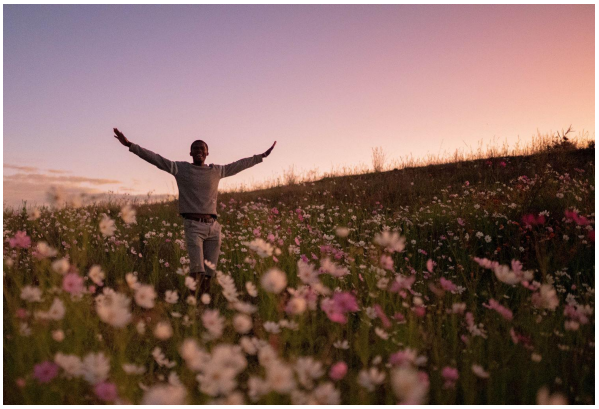
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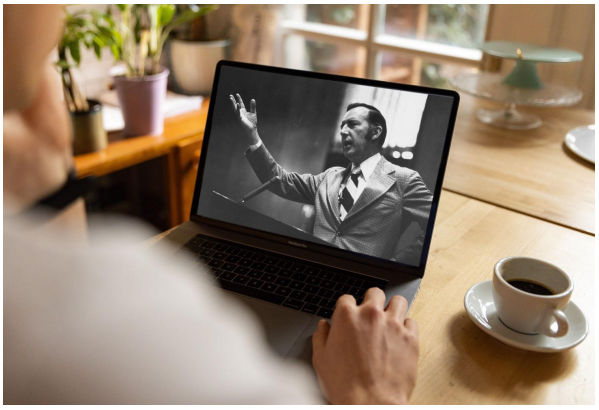
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