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THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S LOVE
by Paris Reidhead

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Summary: God's love is an everlasting love that gives his Son, Jesus Christ, to all people, that they may have eternal life and not perish.

Duration: 33:24 Topics: "God's Love"
Scripture References: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16-18, John 3:36, Romans 3:23, Galatians 4:4-5

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DESCRIPTION

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In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of witnessing a man loading wooden box cars with vegetables and sealing them with a sign that emphasizes the value and importance of not wasting the food. The speaker then connects this experience to the message of John 3:16, highlighting God's love for the world and His purpose in sending His Son. The speaker emphasizes that through belief in Jesus, one can avoid perishing and instead receive everlasting life. The sermon also touches on the concept of redemption and the role of Jesus in redeeming those who were under the law.

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CONTENT

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I wonder how many of you have noticed the lovely creche scene that Shirley Straley has prepared for us today. And each week, it seems to me as though each week she outdoes herself from the previous week with something attractive. Boy, they're so grateful to you.

Appreciate it so very much. I personally get real satisfaction from our almost antique creche scene that comes up when daughters get home at our

house. It does serve to remind one of the events that were there.

It puts it into that third dimension, that dimension of reality. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We've seen the fact of his love for God so loved the world, and the measure of his love that he gave his only begotten Son.

And today, the purpose of his love, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Think for a moment. Let's go to another scene and try to give in third dimension.

Let's go back to that first occasion, which we have record, when there was an encounter between Eve, mother of Azor, wife of Adam, made in the image and likeness of God, to whom God's ancient foe, once known as Lucifer, put in his rebellion against God, and his temporary overthrow and exile to a planet we've come to know as Earth. His name was changed, functionally changed, from Lucifer to Satan. Now, when God prepared a place for this long-awaited object of his love, because I've been trying to point out to you that we're loved with an everlasting love, never was a time when God began to love man, always has loved us, and has always yearned as father for children, as brother, elder brother for brethren, as eternal bridegroom for bride, because you see, love is incomplete without an object.

There must be someone that receives that love, that understands that love, that needs that love, and is capable of returning that love in such a way as to satisfy the heart longing of one who loves in the first place. And so, in the fullness of time, God made man in his image and in his likeness, because we can only love that which is like ourselves. Now, he gave to this being attributes that he possessed.

Intellect, the ability to think, to imagine. Emotions, the ability to feel. And volition, the power to choose.

And in giving those attributes, those powers to man, he also did a strange and really a wonderful thing, for he brought this pair into the very place where he had exiled his ancient foe. He'd recreated it, he'd

repaired it, he'd made it a fit, proper habitation for man, and he permitted Lucifer, now known at this time as Satan, to come to Mother Eve alone, and to talk to her, approach her intelligence, her imagination, move on her emotions, with the purpose of stirring her will. Now, for Satan so hated God, and man whom he made in God's image, that he gave an unmitigated lie that whosoever believeth that lie should perish and forfeit eternal life.

The reverse of John 3.16. Just the reverse. Precisely what happened? She listened, and she believed the lie. The lie was this.

God doesn't love you. Didn't he say you shouldn't eat of that particular fruit? Why? He knew that the day you eat, you'll be like him. He doesn't want you to be like him.

He's keeping the best from you. You think he's your friend? He's not your friend. He's your enemy.

He's cheating you. He's robbing you. That's what was said, implied, inferred by Mother Eve, and she believed the lie.

That whosoever believeth this monstrous lie should perish and forfeit eternal life. Now, the reverse. In the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him be lost by believing the lie, redeemed by believing the truth. Sin came into the world. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Christ didn't come into the world to condemn the world. The world was condemned apart from his coming. He came that he might redeem the world.

Now, I want to emphasize two words. I want to emphasize the word perish, and then I want to emphasize the word believe. When I first, when Marjorie and I first came back from Africa, the year was 1949, 48 actually, just prior to Christmas, almost 49.

In fact, I think it was the 23rd or 22nd of December that we landed in

West Palm Beach, Florida. We were homesick for Africa and going to get as near as we could. I guess that was, meanwhile, my folks had gotten homesick for us and moved from Minnesota down to Florida, moving in the right direction, but they were 40 years too late in making it.

At any rate, we arrived in Florida, and the next week my father took me with him as he had to represent a furniture company, and he worked in the finance office of this furniture company. He had to call on some people out near Lake Okeechobee, people that were in arrears on the payments of their furniture. So, I was seeing Florida, which, by the way, around Lake Okeechobee reminds me a great deal of parts of the Sedan, and I did feel as though I were getting a little swaging of my homesickness for Africa.

And he took me to a packing company right there near Okeechobee, and to his friend George, who was the manager of the packing company, and he explained where I'd been, what I was doing, and my interest in tropical agriculture and in seeing what they were doing. Now, I'd left New York.

We arrived about a week prior to the 22nd in New York City, and they had a 26-inch snowstorm, and we had tropical clothing, 26 inches of snow, hardly the appropriate greeting for a couple of folks.

At any rate, we'd left that, and we were now down in summer again. And we went, and I went out into the field in his four-wheel-drive vehicle and watched them as they gathered. I think it was celery and lettuce, some other vegetables, and these long wings that they pick it up and put it on, carry it in, and so on, and then bring it into the packing house, and there it was sorted and trimmed and put into boxes with ice.

They'd just pull a little chain, and ice would come in on a layer, and they'd spread it out, put some more in. And then they would seal the box and put it on a pallet, and there was a little loader there, and it was a lift truck, and it was carrying the boxes into this refrigerated car. I was very interested in the process.

A lot of people were working, and I could understand that these were vegetables that would be in the supermarkets in a few days, but I was most interested in one man who, after the car was filled and ice covered

the boxes, and the door was locked and sealed, he came along with, they were wooden boxes, wooden boxcars, with a staple hammer and a large, long, narrow strip of paper. I couldn't see what was printed. It was just the back side, up as you want, but he went over and he stood there and he picked this up and held it with his elbow and hit it two or three times, and then he stepped away, and when he did, I saw one word on the side of the boxcar, perishable.

What did it mean? It was instruction to the people of the railroad to let that particular car highball its way up the track and not to sit on some siding for a few days, because if it did, the value of the produce inside would be lost. What did perishable mean? Did it mean that they were intending to ship that carload of celery or lettuce all the way to New Jersey so that they could feed the swine out on the flats at Secaucus? Is that what it meant? That it was intended to perish? That it was viewed as waste? No. What did that sign say? There's value here, there's nutrition here, there's good food here.

Take care of it. Don't let it be wasted. Now with that, can I read John 3:16 again? For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted, not become refuse, not lose its value, and fail of its purpose.

That's what the word perish means. There's tremendous value in this being made in the image and likeness of God. Made for fellowship with God.

Made to be bride to the eternal bridegroom and children to the eternal father. To reign and to rule with him. Made a little lower than the angels that he might be crowned with glory and with honor.

Oh what a tragedy to be wasted. To be wasted. To fail of its purpose.

Isn't it strange? Back there in the garden, God's ancient foe tipped his hand and he showed us every weapon he has in his arsenal and every tool he has in his tool chest. Perhaps you've seen cartoons or pictures of the devil with a pitchfork. Well if you ever see such a fork and it has more than three tines on it, you know it's not biblical.

There's only three tines to the pitchfork of God's ancient foe. It's the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of right. Things, experience, and position.

That's all. That's what has been used through from time immemorial since that first of our parents. That's all there's ever been.

There's never been any new inventions or new additions to the arsenal and the tool rack. That's all there is. There's nothing more.

And yet people made in God's image, made in God's likeness, made for fellowship with him, are prepared to sacrifice that high and holy and noble and eternal purpose for one of those tools, one of those three things. God has intended us to reign with him, to rule with him, to share all that he is and all that he has, and instead of that, willing to become, fail of that purpose and become refuse. No, even though the produce in that car at Okeechobee, Florida was good, wholesome, edible celery, lettuce, and could furnish many families with vitally needed nutrition, still, if they didn't take care of it, it would end up someplace equivalent to the Secaucus wine farm.

And God had to also recognize that there would be those who would deem themselves unworthy of the high and noble and holy and wonderful calling and would decide that they deserved nothing more than the eternal refuge pit. He knew there would be those who'd make that decision and make that joy, and so he provided it. He gave to it a marvelous illustration he called Indiana, from which we have gotten our word, hell.

You know where it came from? Well, outside the walled city of Jerusalem, down by the Brook Kidron, in a little cove that had been hollowed by the rushing water, the city fathers authorized that the people of ancient Jerusalem could bring their refuge. Now, go back 2,000 years and you will discover that there were no carcasses of used-up refrigerators, and there were no automobiles and no motorcycles or bicycle frame, and there wasn't a tin can anywhere, so refuge pit didn't have to be so big, did it? It wasn't like the ones we have today. What would there be? Well, there'd be the skins of watermelon, because they had those, and there would be some of the worn-out basket mats that they used to put around the back of their house, or they didn't use them for fuel.

Well, there'd be refuge, there'd be some that they'd take, but they were pretty frugal. They didn't have an awful lot. I mean, it wasn't a very big place, but it did have certain animals that died, and they'd be dragged off and so on, and strangely enough, when you get nitrocellulose piled up and it begins to get a little wet, what happens? Well, it heats, and sometimes it starts to burn, and sometimes when it doesn't burn with a lot of flame, it's burning underneath and cold, and so its smoke would ascend, wouldn't it? Night and day, just that little small smoke coming up from it.

Now, that is the picture of hell, a refuge pit of the universe, where all those who deemed that they were unworthy of the purpose for which they were made, and by their choice to continue in their rebellion against God, would of necessity have to go in order for sanitary reasons for the universe. And so, that is the picture of the place that's associated with the perishing of goods, whatever they are. So, whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted, fail of its intended purpose, or by final decision, rest in that place that wisdom and love determined had to be, if the universe could be protected from the evil that was in it.

And so, that's implied, that there has to be a place to which those will go who have decided that they would ultimately and finally reject God's love, God's overtures, and God's mercy and his grace. But God loved the world, and he gave his son that whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted, should not have the necessity of going into that eternal refuge pit. And the condition was, whosoever believeth on him.

Now, remember what Mother Eve did, as she listened, as she heard the argument and the lie that came from God's ancient foe, her intellect concurred, her emotions responded, and her will was activated. She would follow this new voice. Believing, therefore, is not an act of the intellect alone.

It's too easy for us to think that belief is nothing more than concurrence with a box full of ideas. He is not a believer who can pick

up the 39 articles of the Church of England and say, I guess they're okay, or sure, I hope they're true. That is not the believing that's here.

To agree with the statement of faith, or a list of biblical Bible verses, or a doctrinal expression, or the creed, we're not talking about a function of the intellect alone. Now, there's no believing apart from intellectual agreement. But we must distinguish between things that differ.

Intellectual agreement is only one third of believing. The other is wanting. Mother Eve wanted to be like God.

She wanted to rule her own life. That's what it means to be like God. It turned everyone to a woman.

She wanted to do what she wanted to do. She wanted to determine how to be happy. So, Mother Eve, therefore, had emotional response.

That's involved in believing. Not only intellectual agreement, but emotional response. And then there was a volitional expression.

She took the fruit, and she ate the fruit. Believing always leads to action. And in this case, it was an action of disobedience.

Now, believing, therefore, on whosoever believeth in him should not perish, has the same three elements. It has the intellectual element. It has that truth concerning the nature of God, and the nature of Christ, as the gift of God's love.

It has the emotional element. I do want to have the fulfillment of God's purpose for my life. I want to be all that he would have me be.

I want to enjoy my reason for being. I want that. I want.

I want that. I don't want to be wasted. I want to have fulfillment.

Because that, of course, is what the enemy promises, but he can't produce it. Only God can promise fulfillment. You see, it was because God's the one who made us.

And he made us in such a way that nothing can complete and fulfill it but himself. He took care. After all, he's the designer.

He's able to design into it locks so that nothing else can succeed.

Nothing else can satisfy. Nothing else can complete it.

And so it is that we want what only God can give. And then there's volition. What is it? Well, it's twofold.

One, it's a renunciation of our right to rule. Because remember what the argument of the enemy was to Mother Eve? Ye shall be as God. And that continues down to the present.

Why it's so hard for people to receive Christ? Because they've got to renounce their right to be God in their lives. That's what repentance is. A change of mind about who's to be boss.

Not easy. The ruling and governing and all of a sudden you decide that somebody else is going to be in charge, going to govern and rule. So it is that that's involved, repentance, renunciation of right to rule.

And then the other element, a commitment to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. A total commitment, as long as one lives, as long as one has being, to the sovereignty of Christ. Now that's to the sovereignty of Christ and to the authority of his word.

It's very difficult for us to quite understand that. I know in some places where I have been, if you were to say that, the people would say, amen. But it would mean that no woman would have her hair cut, never have it cut, and never would wear a sleeve above the wrist, never would wear a gold ring.

That would be, in some spiritual environments, that would be a commitment. Another would be that the women should never and always wear a white cap and the men should never wear a necktie. I have no umbrage.

Some of my dear friends have been in groups where these elements are seemingly of great importance to them. And I'm not saying it in any derision. All I am saying is that the commitment to the sovereignty of Christ is not to the sovereignty of the opinions of men.

It's the sovereignty of the son of God and the word of God. Do you understand? Otherwise, one comes into a place of terrific bondage. So I'm not seeking to see you put into bondage to anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ and in the sovereignty of his word.

So many times we go so far beyond the word. Well, I've known people that

were so much holier than the Lord Jesus was that if he was there, they'd have been embarrassed for him. I remember one occasion I was telling my people who become so critical of church in New York of a problem I had.

I've been trying to get speakers for our missionary conference and I kind of doze as I frequently want to do. And I dreamed that in the dreaming, I dreamed that I had asked the Lord if I could send Abraham down and teach us about faith. And I said, no, Lord, we couldn't use him.

After all, he had that problem with Sarah down there in Egypt. I couldn't use Abraham. Well, I went through the whole roster of the saints and there wasn't one of them I could invite to our missionary conference.

We were so litmus blue, sterile, there wasn't one of God's honored servants that we could have put on our schedule. Now I'm talking about a commitment to the person of the son of God and a commitment to the word of God, to the truth of God. Whosoever believeth on him, what does that mean? That means repentance of your right to rule for total abnegation and refusal to be any longer be God and to let the word of God and the son of God to have sovereign place in your life, to leave on the son of God.

More than just an intellectual bundle of ideas, a personal commitment to the person of the son of God. That's what it says, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever should personally commit himself to the total authority of his son, Jesus Christ, and to his word should not be wasted, but should begin to live now in the full meaning of life and go on living that way forever. That's pretty good news to me.

That's glad tidings, great joy. Father, we thank you and praise you that you loved the world, that you gave your son. Oh, how grateful we are to thee, Father, that you have a noble purpose, a high and a holy and a precious purpose for us, not only in time, but throughout eternity.

And we're asking that somehow today we may have new insight into what it

means to perish, to be wasted, to fail of intended purpose, what it means to believe, to live in accordance with the commitment to the sovereignty of thy son and of thy word. To that end, Lord, bless us as we go now into the 168 hours that shall mark this week. Before we meet again at this place for the fellow renewed fellowship, may it be a precious time we ask with thanksgiving in Jesus name.

Amen.

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