

(SERMON SERIES: Transforming Society)

**SERMON TOPIC:** THE WORLD THAT HE LOVES by Rev Lorna Khoo

**SERMON TEXT:** John 3:16: "For God so loved **the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

**1. How big is my world?**

- a. World = *Kosmos* (entire created order)
- b. God's love extends to those beyond the people I know and care about, surpassing our own understanding of the world.
- c. God calls for *all* creation, not just Man alone!
  - i. (**Genesis 9:8-17** → God established His covenant with Noah and with every living creature on earth; **Jonah 4:10-11** → God knows how many animals there are, and He cares for them; **Psalms 36:6b** → God preserves both people and animals; **Proverbs 12:10** → A righteous person cares for the needs of their animals).

**2. How do we look at the world?**

- a. Perspective 1: The world is totally good, and the only real dimension we have
  - i. Self-centered, materialistic view focused on the desires of the flesh from the fallen world (liking and going for what we desire and what pleases us or satisfies our needs).
  - ii. We do not realize that this world is transient, and that there is an eternal dimension -- (**1 John 2:15-17** → we are warned not to love the world or anything in the world, for the Father is not in them, and that whoever does the will of God lives forever)
- b. Perspective 2: The world is totally evil, and this is therefore not my home
  - i. The focus here is on the end times, and so we are not bothered with righting the wrong in the world today.
  - ii. But we forget that God's love is constant and everlasting (**Jeremiah 3: 3-4, 29:11-14** → Christ died for the world, and God is not giving up on it).
  - iii. The world will be *renewed and restored*, and not completely destroyed (c.f. 2 Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 21 → the world will be *healed*, and the bad will be destroyed).
  - iv. If we stay away from actively battling against the evil of today, we are also ignoring the fact that God may intend to use us precisely for His purposes of righting the wrongs of today and to bring healing to others.
- c. Perspective 3: The world is the one He loves
  - i. The hymn "This is My Father's World" should be: "This is my Father's world, O let me ne'er forget, that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet/ This is my Father's world, the battle is not done, Jesus who died shall be satisfied, and earth and heav'n be one" → The battle is not done, and so we have to

continue engaging the world, for we are called to actively right the wrongs of today, and bring healing to those in need.

### 3. The Priority Game

- a. We always prioritize certain groups of people – e.g. the children, those from our own country, those from our own ethnic backgrounds, etc.
- b. We have to prioritize the marginalized, the voiceless, the helpless, the oppressed, and the underdogs who will always have nothing, as many prioritize helping those higher up in their priority lists → be godly (Proverbs 31:8), and fight for justice (Amos 5:21).

### WHAT WE CAN DO

- PRAY. Be involved in activism, welfare, and giving (sponsorship/donation).
- Speak out against injustice and cruelty. Do something ACTIVELY.
- What Would Jesus Do? → As disciples of Christ, how do we follow Christ's examples of speaking out against injustice and helping those in need and those who are marginalized?

### QUESTIONS

- A. How big is your world? How do you look at the world? (as reflected by the way you live)
- B. What is the Lord saying to you, if this is the world He loves?
- C. The 'priority game' leaves nothing for those who are at the bottom of the priority pile – which ones do you tend to give very low priority to? What is the Lord saying to you about attitude changes?
- D. Read the poem below again. What is He saying to you?

## Son, I Beseech You, Don't Sleep Anymore

*Edited, from Michel Quoist in his book "Prayers of Life"*

"I shall be in agony till the end of time," God says. I shall be crucified till the end of time. My sons the Christians don't seem to realize it. I am scourged, buffeted, stretched out, crucified; I die in front of them and they don't know it, they see nothing, they are blind.

They are not true Christians, or they would not go on living while I am dying.

Lord, I don't understand; it is not possible; you exaggerate. I would defend you if you were attacked. I would be at your side if you were dying. Lord, I love you!

That is not true, God says. Men are deluding themselves. They say they love me, they believe they love me, and, as I am willing to admit, they are often sincere, but they are terribly mistaken. They do not understand, they do not see. They think they love me because they keep to their devotions regularly.

But I am not made of plaster, God says, nor of stone nor of bronze.

I am living flesh, throbbing, suffering. I am among men, and they have not recognized me. I am poorly paid, I am unemployed, I live in a slum, I have tuberculosis, I sleep under bridges, I am in prison, I am oppressed, I am patronized.

And yet I said to them: "Whatever you do to my brothers, however humble, you do to me"... That's clear. The worst is that they know it, but that they don't take it seriously.

They have broken my heart, God says, and I have waited for someone to have pity on me, but no one has. I am cold, God says, I am hungry, I am naked. I am imprisoned, laughed at, humiliated.

For I am everywhere that men are, God says, Since they day when I slipped among them, on a mission, to save them all. Now I am rich and I am poor, a workman and a boss. I am everywhere men are, God says.

They tear me apart when they tear at one another. They kill me when they kill one another.

Lord, enough! Have pity on me! Not that! it isn't!! Yes son, it is you. You, and your brothers, for several blows are needed to drive in a nail, several lashes are needed to furrow a shoulder, several thorns are needed to make a crown, and you belong to the humanity that all together condemns me. It matters not whether you are among those who hit or among those who watch, among those who perform or among those who let it happen. You are all guilty, actors and spectators.

But above all, son, don't be one of those who are asleep, one of those who can still fall asleep... in peace. Sleep! Sleep is terrible! "Can you not watch one hour with me?" On your knees, son! Do you not hear the roar of battle?

God is dying for you, crucified by men.

*The notes surrounding this prayer state:*

*“We must contemplate Christ on the way to Calvary. We must relive with him the Stations of the Cross to become deeply aware of his love for us. But his Passion is not fully completed. Lived by the Christ who assumed all the sins and sufferings of men two thousand years ago, it is now relived in this world, and will be till the end of time. Christ, living in his members, continues to suffer and die for us under our eyes. The Way of the Cross winds through our towns and cities, our hospitals and factories, and through our battlefields; it takes the road of poverty and suffering in every form.*

*It is in front of these new Stations of the Cross that we must stop and meditate and pray to the suffering Christ for strength to love him enough to act.*

*~Michel Quoist*