

God's Love - Corrie Ten Boom

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

God's love is the greatest reality for a child of God, and it is available to us through the Holy Spirit, empowering us to live a victorious life in the midst of insecurities.

Duration: 47:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, John 14:16, Acts 28:30-31, Romans 5:5, Romans 8:39, 1 Corinthians 1:18-19

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares two stories that highlight the power and depth of God's love. The first story takes place during a time of great suffering and cruelty, where a skylark singing in the sky serves as a reminder of God's mercy and love. The second story involves a pastor who notices a young boy in his congregation who doesn't understand his sermons, except when he speaks about God's love. The speaker emphasizes the importance of constantly reminding people about God's love, as it has the power to bring great joy and transformation. The sermon concludes with a plea for the Holy Spirit's power to work through the speaker and for everyone to experience a great blessing.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith, and powerful sermons from modern preachers too. This week we have Corrie Ten Boom with her message, God's Love.

For the first time when I came in America, I had to get used to the American way of being introduced. Sometimes I got almost a headache by the heat of the halo that people make around my head. But this time I learned very much from the woodpecker.

You know, the woodpecker, he was picking with his beak against the stem of a tree, and the very same moment, the lightning struck that tree and destroyed it. And the woodpecker flew away and he said, My, I didn't know that there was so much power in my beak. When there's power this afternoon, it is not by the power in my beak, but by the Holy Spirit.

And I hope you will pray that I will not stand in the way. For we all need a great blessing, all of us. We are standing in the front line of the battle.

And I have the assurance that never the battle has been so severe as in this time. The powers of darkness and the powers of light are fighting together, and you and I stand between them. And now it is very important that we realize and that we see the reality.

For I believe that not the communists are the greatest danger for this world, but I believe that powerless Christians are the greatest danger for this time. And it is not necessary that you and I are powerless, because the Lord means business with His promises, and when He has said, I will give you power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, then we know that we are living in a time that the Holy Spirit is here, and that we have all the power that we need in the Holy Spirit. And now it is only the question not to ask more of the Holy Spirit, but to give more to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is here, and He is willing to fill you and to give you the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. And I will speak today about 1 Corinthians 13, and I believe it is good that I tell you a little bit about what I have seen the last years, going over the world, speaking in many different congregations, and I have seen that the Lord is doing a great work, sometimes in congregations where I had not expected it. And the Holy Spirit is poured out in the churches, and miracles are happening so that I almost believe, or I really believe that these are the days of what God spoke through Joel, that He has said, I will pour out of my Spirit on all.

And old people will dream dreams, and young people will see visions. And now it is a very important thing that you and I see the reality. And that is why I will read for you now 1 Corinthians 14, 8-11, I read it from the translation of Phillips, because that is in English that even a Dutch can understand.

One man's gift by the Spirit is to speak with wisdom, and others to speak with knowledge. The same Spirit gives to another man faith, to another the ability to heal, to another the power to do great deeds. The same Spirit gives to another man the gift of preaching the Word of God, to another the ability to discriminate in spiritual matters, to another speech in different tongues, and to yet another the power to interpret the tongues.

Behind all these gifts is the operation of the same Spirit, who distributes to each individual man as He will. And then in verse 31, you should set your hearts on the highest spiritual gifts, but I will show you what is the highest way of all. And then chapter 13, if I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal.

If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge, but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. If I dispose of all that I possess, yes, even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing. This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience.

It looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive. It is neither anxious to impress, nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people.

On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails. Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its stress, no fading of its hope. It can outlast anything.

It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen. For if there are prophecies, they will be fulfilled and done with. If there are tongues, the need for them will disappear.

If there is knowledge, it will be swallowed up in truth. For our knowledge is always incomplete, and our prophecy is always incomplete. And when the complete comes, that is the end of the incomplete.

When I was a little child, I talked and felt and thought like a little child. Now that I am a man, my childish speech and feeling and thoughts have no further significance for me. At present, we are men looking at puzzling reflections in a mirror.

The time will come when we shall see reality whole and face to face. At present, all I know is a little fraction of the truth, but a time will come when I shall know it as fully as God now knows me. In this life, we have three great lasting qualities, faith, hope, and love.

But the greatest of them is love. Follow then the way of love while you set your heart on the gifts of the Spirit. During the last world war, I was a prisoner in a concentration camp because my family, my friends, and I had saved Jewish people in Holland.

My sister Betsy and I were in Ravensbruck. A concentration camp where 97,000 women were killed or died. Also my sister was killed.

We had a little Bible. It was a miracle that we had it. And every day, I gave a Bible message to the people who wanted to hear the message.

The Bible was a forbidden book. If they had known that I had a Bible, they should have killed me in a cruel way. But there was a great inconvenience in the room where we were together with 700 prisoners pushed together in a small room.

Three small bunks and all the bunks together. And the terrible thing was that it was so dirty that very soon our clothing was full of lice. And that was terrible and it caused many sicknesses, but it was also a help for the guards and the officers who would never come into our room.

They were afraid to get lice from us. That was good. The Bible was a forbidden book, but in barrack 28 we had twice a day a Bible message.

And God used for that lice. God can use everything. And what a joy to bring that message of salvation, of a joy unspeakable and full of glory to these people.

I have never spoken so often about heaven. And oh, what a joy that there is a peace that passes all understanding, a happiness that is not dependent on happening. Now, these people who came every day, I had often talked with them.

And I never asked them, when I so was talking with them, I never asked, say, what do you think about predestination? We were Dutch prisoners, and Dutch people always speak about predestination, but I didn't do that in that time. I didn't ask the people, say, what do you think is the most biblical way of baptism? I didn't ask them, say, what is now your idea about the millennium? A, pre-, post-millennium? I learned from Edwin R. that that is a preposterous question. You know, in these moments that 600 people every day were killed, and that we saw the smoke go up from the crematorium, in these moments we did not speak about such things.

Do you know what I asked these people? I asked them, say, do you know that Jesus died at the cross for the sins of the whole world? And she said, yes, I know it. Then I asked, do you understand that Jesus died for you? And she said, yes, I do. Then I asked her, did you make clean debt with your sins? Did you bring all your sins to Jesus? And then she said, yes.

Then I was so happy that I knew that. And when I saw that she disappeared that day into the gas chamber, I was so happy that I knew that she was saved. You know, there are moments that you do not speak about the second best, only about the best.

Now, I know it. We are not standing at this moment in front of a gas chamber and a crematorium, but everyone who has brains knows that we are living in a very dangerous world. And tonight I hope to speak about the securities in the midst of the insecurities, for that is the message that America needs, and the message that the whole world needs.

Now, I have traveled now over 41, or I have worked in 41 countries, and these last years I saw what the Holy Spirit is doing and giving to people who are open for the Lord Jesus and all what He is willing to give us, and closed for the world and what the world is willing to give. And then I see that people get a fullness of the Holy Spirit, some call it a baptism of the Holy Spirit, some call it a second blessing, some call it a third blessing. I don't know what people call it, but I am so happy that I see what the Holy Spirit is doing.

But I also find churches where there is a great confusion, just because the Holy Spirit is giving gifts. And I think that the reason is because when God is giving a blessing, then the devil is scared to death. The devil doesn't like Spirit-filled Christians and Spirit-filled churches.

And he will do his utmost to bring separation between these people. And perhaps I have not to tell you, but I think all of us know that some people say you cannot have the fullness of the Holy Spirit without the gifts of tongues, and others say you can have the baptism of the Holy Spirit without tongues. And I believe it is not good to quarrel about it.

Just enjoy it. And what the other people are concerned, just love them. And we have heard when you have the gifts without love, then you have nothing at all.

And don't criticize and don't quarrel about it. Don't use the time for quarreling about the gifts when the world and the church and everyone is hungry for the fruit of the Spirit, love. Sometimes I use this illustration.

Just imagine that your house is on fire, and that the firemen come. And then there is a very clever fireman who gathers all the other men around him and stands in the corner of your room and gives a very good lecture about the best methods of extinguishing flames. What is that? That's a crime.

Just imagine that one such day, listen, I think my uniform is far more practical than your uniform. What is that? At that moment it is a crime. My friends, the world is on fire, on flames.

The world is dying. There is a terrific fight, and you are standing in the midst of that fire. And now to quarrel about the gifts of the Spirit can be a crime.

But listen, isn't it important, the best method of extinguishing the flames? Isn't it important that you have a good uniform? Yes, but there are times that you don't quarrel about, but you do nothing but put out the flames. And this moment we have now in our churches and in our world. And I hope that we will get a new

vision on what it means that you and I are called to be the light of the world in perhaps the most dangerous moment of the whole world's history.

That is, do nothing else but winning souls and bringing the Christians to a realization that the Holy Spirit fullness is for everyone. And that is not quarrel about it, but just love. Now I will tell you something of what I have learned about that love of God.

I didn't know that there were in the original language two words for love, philia and agathe. And in that time that I didn't know that, I did not like to read 1 Corinthians 13, because I compared my love with this beautiful love, and my love was so inadequate and so small and so powerless, and I compared it with this beautiful love, and then I read, I heard it about that there are two kinds of love, the human love and God's love. And I read in Romans 5, that the love of God is shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.

And there I understood this love is not a human love that we must produce. It is just the love of God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and that's for you and me, because of Romans 5. And I learned to thank God for Romans 5. And it was really in that surrounding of hatred, when I was surrounded by people who had had a training in cruelties, when I was in that terrible concentration camp, that I learned that God's love is in fact the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen. I didn't know that.

I had to learn it. I remember that in the time that we were in the underground work, and so many people had to hide themselves from the enemy, there came a boy home, he was a teenager, and he was in danger because the teenagers and the men were just taken from the street and sent to Germany to be slave laborers and make the guns and the bombs to kill the allies. So we did not only hide Jewish people, but we hid also the young men.

And Tick, the son of my friend, came home and he said, Daddy, I cannot stand this life anymore. I feel myself a chaste animal. Always when I am happy in the house, then I hear that the Gestapo is behind me.

Then his father said a strange thing. He said, Tick, there is an ocean of God's love. I couldn't understand that.

I thought he was very impractical. I had not yet learned that God's love still stands also when all else has fallen. A year later I understood it better when Nolly, my younger sister, the mother of six children, was arrested because they found two Jews in her house.

And I ran to the police station and I saw her coming from the door going to the prison van that should bring her to a terrible prison where many people were killed. And I put my arms around her and I can confess you I cried. But Nolly said with a smile, God is love.

Had she said, can you believe that God is love? That he allows the enemy to bring me to a prison? I could have understood, but no. She said, God is love. And in the prison van she wrote on the wall, Jesus is victor.

And coming into the prison there were five women and they said, don't you cry? We all cry when we come for the first time into a prison. But Nolly said, no, I don't cry. God does not make mistakes.

That he allowed the enemy to bring me here. You see, she saw the things as it were from God's point of view. And she knew that God's love still stands also when all else has fallen.

And a year later she was set free very soon after six weeks already. But a year later she was again arrested. When my old father with all his children and a grandson and 50 friends were arrested.

And when Betsy, my older sister and I came in that terrible destruction camp Ravensbruck. And there we stood on roll call every morning. Often three hours from 3.30 till 6.30 in the icy cold mornings.

Some of the guards who were on duty had to stand there with us. And some used that time to demonstrate their cruelties. And one morning I could hardly bear to see and to hear what had happened in front of me.

And suddenly a skylark came and started to sing in the sky. And all the prisoners looked up and listened to the birdsong. And when I looked at the bird, I looked at the sky and I thought that Psalm 103.

As high as heaven over the earth, so high is God's mercy and love over all that fear Him. And suddenly I saw it. Oh love of God, how deep and great.

Far deeper than man's deepest hate. And God sent that skylark daily during three weeks exactly during roll call time. To turn away our eyes from the cruelty of man and to the ocean of God's love.

Where did I get that expression? The ocean of God's love? It was from Judge Fox. He once had a vision. And he wrote, I saw an ocean of darkness and death.

But an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that I saw the infinite love of God. And it is at the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light and the burden of my sins rolled away.

It was there by faith I received my sight. And in 1 John 4, 9 we read to us the greatest demonstration of God's love for us. God has been sending His only Son unto the world to give us life through Him.

And 1 John 3, 16 we know and to some extent realize the love of God for us. Because Christ expressed it in laying down His life for us. And that love of God is the greatest reality.

Some time ago I was just making clean deck with my sins. I needed it. I knew there was something in me that was not good.

And also a little bit dark. And that's not, that is not a standing of a child of God. We are children of light.

And I said, Lord, show me if there is perhaps a hidden sin. And the Lord showed me some sins. And I just claimed the promise of 1 John 1, 7 and 9. And I confessed them and He forgave and the blood of Jesus cleansed me.

What a joy! And I said, Lord, is there still anything between you and me? And God said, yes. And I waited and listened. And I thought, now I will hear some sin that I have forgotten.

Do you know what God said? My love. And suddenly I saw it. I was still thinking a sin that was between God and me.

But God said, my love is between you and me. Wasn't that a joy? My friends, God's love is the greatest reality for a child of God. And God's love still stands also when all else has fallen.

And here in America things can fall. And that's why we must realize it. And we must see the reality.

And I like to pray with an open Bible and say, Father, you have said it, now you must do it. And God likes it. For He has meant business with the 17,000 promises in the Bible.

And He likes it when we mean business with His promises. And in that terrible camp full of hatred and cruelty, the Holy Spirit taught me a prayer, a thank you for Romans 5i. And when the cruelty around me brought hatred in my heart and bitterness, He taught me this prayer, thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have brought into my heart God's love through the Holy Spirit who is given to me.

And thank you, Father, that your love in me is victorious over the bitterness in my heart and the cruelty around me. And there was no room for bitterness. But it is perhaps what Paul should call in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 the foolishness of God.

But it is so that the highest potency of God's love is available in everyday life. Life has perhaps 30 big crises, but 30,000 small crises. And the great joy is that the Bible says, whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1.27 and Ephesians 5.2, live your lives in love. The same sort of love which Christ gives us and which He perfectly expressed when He gave Himself in sacrifice to God. A lady came to me and told that she had such a difficult life.

Her husband was so dark, and she said, when I am in the same room with him, it is as if there comes a cloud of darkness over and into me. That is suffering. And I taught her the prayer that the Holy Spirit had taught me in the concentration camp.

And I said, when you are together with your husband and you feel that darkness, thank God for Romans 5 and say, thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have brought into my heart God's love through the Holy Spirit who is given to me. And thank you, Father, that your love in me is victorious over the darkness in my husband. Later I met her and she said, my husband is quite changed.

Of course her husband was changed. She had acted God's victorious love. And a bird cannot know that it can fly before it uses its wings.

And we cannot experience God's love in our hearts before we act it. A teacher could not manage his class and I taught him the same prayer. Thank you, Lord.

Not, oh Lord, bring into my heart your love. No, thank you, Lord, for Romans 5. You have brought into my heart God's love through the Holy Spirit who is given to me. And thank you, Father, that your love in me is victorious over this difficult class.

And that man later, I met him and he said, my class is absolutely changed. Of course his class was changed. He had acted God's victorious love.

And now think of the problem that you have to face when you come back, perhaps in your home, perhaps in your church, your office. Human love fails, or will fail on the long run, but now act God's love. And I can tell you that miracles will happen in your life.

I once met a parachutist. And I said, say, what did you think when you jumped for the first time from an airplane with a parachute on your back? He said, I had no time to think much. But there were two words in my heart.

It works. It works. And I can tell you, friend, if you, when you act God's... You know, some time ago I was in Manila.

I could speak for an ICL group, you know, these blessed breakfast groups who reach the up and altars. And so it happened that I could speak for the big shots of Manila. And I gave them a message about forgiveness and love for our enemies.

I told them that there had been in my heart a battle, a battle against hatred. I told them that when I was in the underground works, a man came to me and said, my wife is in great danger. She is arrested by the Gestapo and they have brought her in a prison.

No, in a police station. But they will bring her next week to a prison and I'm sure they will kill her for she had saved Jewish people. Please help us.

I said, how can I help her? And she is already in the hands of the police. He said, I have found out that a policeman is willing to run the risk to set her free if we pay him about 600 guilders, about 200 dollars. He said, but I have no money.

I said, but listen, that may not hinder. Let's see, I have 200 guilders. I will give you, but come back after an hour.

And in that hour I said to the teenagers who worked with me in the underground work to save the Jewish people, I said, I need money. I need 400 guilders. Now in that time, Dutch people were not interested in money.

They were interested to save as many people as they could. And when that man came back, I could give him 600 guilders and I prayed, oh Lord, bless this money that his wife will not be killed, but that it will really, that it will succeed this policeman to set her free. That man was a Quisling.

He was a Dutchman who in secret worked together with the enemy. His wife was not at all in a prison. But the enemy had said, find out if Corrie ten Boom really saved Jewish people.

And he thought, I can find it out and in the same time make some money. And he made some money. He went home with 600 guilders in his pocket.

But five minutes later the Gestapo surrounded our house and we were all arrested. And I heard that that man had betrayed us. I hated him.

But I know that Jesus tells us to love our enemies. And I said, oh Father, in Jesus' name, forgive me my hatred. And the two things happened that always happen, that you bring a sin to God in Jesus' name.

First, he forgave me, and second, he cleansed my heart from the hatred with his blood. When the blood of Jesus does a job, he does a good job. Instead of hatred, I felt in my heart the fruit of the Spirit, love.

And God's love is even love for your enemies. And love for lovers is good, love for neighbors is better, love for enemies is best. And you never touch, so the ocean of God's love is that you love your enemies.

That man was sentenced to death after the war. Because by his betrayal he had been the reason that many Dutch people were killed. And when I heard that he was sentenced to death, I wrote him a letter.

And I wrote, your betrayal has meant the death of my old father, who died after ten days in prison. He was 84 years old. My brother, his son, my sister died.

My other sister and I have suffered terrible in three prisons, but both of us have forgiven you. And that is a fraction of the forgiveness that awaits you when you receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior and bring Him your sins. And I sent him a New Testament and underlined the way of salvation and that man accepted the Lord Jesus as his Savior and he was brought to death but reconciled with God.

So I talked about death and after I was through, the president of that breakfast group thanked me. And then he turned to the group and he said, French, I am so glad that at last I have met someone who can love her enemies. If there were only more Corrie ten Booms in the world, we should very soon have the brotherhood of men.

I was furious. Now I had told half and half these people that I could not love my enemies and I could only hate them, but that it was Jesus who did it. And I'm pleased.

I had to remain decent so I said, now may I say one minute message? She said, go ahead. I said, my friend, when I try to let a stick stand on my hand, do you think I have success? It is not the nature of a stick to be able to stand. But I can have it stand on the top of my finger.

Now it stands solidly. Why? Because my hand keeps it. When I try to love my enemies, my sinful nature and the power of the devil makes me hating and hating again.

But when I surrender to the pierced hands of Jesus, wounded for my transgressions, his hands will keep me from falling and will once present me blameless and with unspeakable joy in the great day and give me now already love for my enemies. So as so far it was all right, but what came after that, it was not all right. When I talked with this medical doctor Garcia, I was so sharp and I was so angry.

I said, now tell me, do you tell every week such nonsense to your breakfast group? Did you really listen to me or didn't you listen at all when I told you that I could not love my enemies? More corycembones the world needs? Do you know, do you realize that corycembone without Jesus Christ is a danger for the world? Now what I said was not so bad, but how I said it was very bad. When I came in the home of the missionary, he said, Cory, what's the matter with you? Has there happened something? I said, yes. And I told what had happened.

He said, my, now that's good. Now Dr. Garcia has at last heard what he should hear. I said, no.

What I said was not so wrong, but the way I said was very wrong. He said, now write him a letter. And I wrote him, Dr. Garcia, I'm so sorry for what has happened this morning.

I'm so sorry that I used my anger to tell you something we did not agree about. There was an ocean of God's love available to tell it to you, and I used my anger. Will you please forgive me? And that man went to the telephone, and he said, Ms. Ten Boom, I came home from the breakfast group, and I said to my wife, now I have had a scolding like I have not had since my school days.

And the terrible thing was that Corycembone was right. And I didn't know what to answer her. You know, Ms. Ten Boom, I felt so unhappy.

Till your letter came. Say, I have never realized that there is an ocean of God's love available for us. Why? I'm far richer than I knew.

Now, this man had to realize that. But do you and I realize it? Perhaps you have to tell something to one of your congregations. And when you do it in anger, I can tell you it does not help.

Incorrect. But there is an ocean of God's agony available. Be filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will give you so much love, and it will help these other people.

Oh, let us not live like beggars, but like king's children. And I can tell you it works. It works.

God's love. There was a pastor in Harlem, the hometown where I was. And he said, every Sunday there comes a little feeble-minded boy, Tonke, in my church.

And that boy always sits on the front pew. And I often said to my wife, Tonke doesn't understand one of my beautiful sermons, but he is so faithful. He is there every Sunday.

But he said, once I spoke about God's love through Jesus Christ. And he said, suddenly I saw in the face of that boy an expression of great joy. Tonke understood God's love.

Now, in my little booklet, Common Sense Not Needed, you can read about the work that I did before the war when I had a Bible class for feeble-minded people. And I experienced that they can never hear too much about God's love. And that pastor told, I had forgot the rest of the audience and only spoke to Tonke about that great love of God in Jesus Christ.

And he said, the next day I said to my wife, I will go to Tonke and I will know if at last he has understood one of my sermons. But when I came in Tonke's house, the mother told me that the boy had died in his sleep. And he said, there was an expression of celestial joy on the dead face of that boy.

I believe, he added, I believe that his heart has broken by joy because he would contain too much of God's love. And I can tell you, if you and I would try to contain that old sin of love, our heart could break by joy. But when we give room for the Holy Spirit, He gives us fast and strong hearts that we can have more and more.

And M. A. Carmichael said, put together all the tenderest love you know of, the deepest you have ever felt and the strongest that has ever been poured out upon you. And heap upon it all the love of all the human hearts of the world. And then multiply it by infinity.

And you will begin perhaps to have some faint glimpses of the love and grace of God. Two old negroes saw for the first time Ophium. And one said to the other, just look what all that waters.

But the other negro said, yes, but brother, we aren't seeing nothing yet. This is only the top. There are depths of love that we cannot see, not know till I cross the narrow sea.

There are heights of joy that I may not reach till I rest in peace with thee. We can only see a little of the ocean when we stand at the rocky shore. But out there beyond the eye's horizon there's more.

There's more. We can only see a little of God's love A few rich treasures of His mighty story. But out there beyond the eye's horizon there's more.

There's more. And then when Jesus face to face I see, and at His lofty throne I bow the knee. Then of His love in all its breadth and length, its height and depth, its everlasting strength, my soul will sing, the best is yet to be.

But now already God's love still stands, also when all else should fall. Let's pray. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have brought into our hearts God's love.

Through the Holy Spirit who is given to us. And thank you, Father, that your love in me, listen, Lord, who says in me, is victorious over that problem that weights me. When I come in my work, in my home, in my hospital, and Lord, you know that I have tried to overcome it with human love, and it failed.

But thank you, Lord, that your love still stands, also when all else has fallen. Holy Spirit, teach us to act God's love. Amen.

You've been listening to the From the Pulpit and Classic Sermon series. This week you heard Corrie Ten Boom with her message, God's Love. Tune in next week to hear Jim Cimbala with his message, A Descendant of David and Abraham, on From the Pulpit and Classic Sermons.

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