

Come and See 2024: The Way of Love

Two Ways: [Watch on YouTube](#)

Listen to these words from the Prophet Jeremiah, who lived in difficult times 600 years before the birth of Christ:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...”

“For I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

Welcome to Come and See: The Way of Love.

There are today two very different ways to see the world and your place in it.

The first is to see this vast universe as impersonal cold and inexplicable. As far as we know, we're alone among millions of galaxies and stars in the vast tracks of interstellar space. Humans are here by chance, just another part of nature, also here by chance; there's no purpose in life beyond the purpose we create, no meaning beyond the meanings we invent, there is no big story we're part of with a beginning and an ending, there is no hope for the future beyond ourselves and beyond this life.

There is no ultimate sense of right or wrong beyond the human customs we create, and no moral authority beyond ourselves. There are no deeper bonds of connection with each other or with the universe than the ones we choose, there is no maker or first cause of things, just matter evolving in ways we'll never fully understand.

This is the way of looking at the universe which is the consequence of atheism - denying or choosing not to believe in God. There is no God, the atheists claim, and therefore no meaning, no purpose, no moral authority. We are lost in a cold empty universe isolated and unconnected.

This atheism, sometimes seen and sometimes unseen, undergirds many of the governments and commercial systems of the world and shapes the lives of countless millions of people.

But there is a second way to see the universe and our place in it, caught beautifully by these two texts from Jeremiah and by so many parts of scripture. This is God speaking to you:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...”

“For I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm to give you a future with hope.”

This second way is rooted in the faith that almighty God created the heavens and the Earth, the universe is ordered and adored by God. The God who ordered and adores the world is a God of love, a God who designed this beautiful creation from galaxies to gravity, from granite gigantosaurs, and breathed God's own life into this creation in many and various ways.

This God is the God of love, God's creation is therefore bursting with purpose, meaning and significance. This God of love created humanity not as an accident of planets colliding, but as an overflow of love. Part of creation, but reaching beyond creation, conscious, mortal, but yearning for eternity, able to know God and enjoy God forever.

We are a vital part of creation with a mission to tend and steward and wonder at this world. Even when humankind does not acknowledge God, when we turn away from God's light and love, God seeks to draw us back again and again.

Long ago, God called a people to be his own, to know his ways and reveal those ways to the world. God sent his only son into the world to live among us, to become a person in one place and time as part of that chosen people, Jesus of Nazareth.

Human beings have within us a deep, deep longing for purpose and meaning and value and goodness. We cannot work out for ourselves what God is like, our minds are too too clouded by our own importance, too twisted by our selfishness.

But God has shown us his own nature, first in the scriptures and then most powerfully in his son, Jesus.

Jesus shows us what God is like; tender, compassionate, steadfast, patient, and merciful, and Jesus gave his life on the cross for the sins of the whole world, so that we can know the God who made us.

God raised Jesus from the dead as a promise of new life beyond death for all who trust in Jesus. The father and the son together send the spirit on the church to bring new life and joy and love among God's people.

The spirit of God is the comforter, the spirit within us assures us of God's presence and fills our life with love and joy and peace no matter what circumstances we might face. The spirit of God is for everyone.

These are two different ways to see the world and your place within it. We must choose where to place our trust - the cold dark way of atheism, the denial of God and purpose and meaning and morality, the way which shrinks our lives - or the way of faith and trust in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit the way of life and love, the way of warmth and light, the way which springs from the deepest longings of your heart for truth and beauty and acceptance.

Much of our society, much of the time, tries to suspend belief, to not make up its mind between these two ways, but everyone at least once in their lives needs to take a long hard look at these two ways.

One is broad and easy at first; it's the normal way now for most in our society. Jesus says it leads away from life to death.

But there is another, narrow way the way of Christian faith, the faith that God knows you better than you know yourself and may need you and loves you, the faith that God who made the heavens and the Earth is a god of faithful love and gentleness, the faith that God has plans for you for your welfare and not for harm with a future and a hope and the faith that God can make all things new.

This is the way that leads to life, though there are few that find it. There's so much more to this life than we can see or imagine, God who is love calls us on this narrow way and has given us the maker's instructions for living.

At the heart of those instructions are the two greatest Commandments, to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength and to love our neighbour as ourselves. This is the way of life, the way of love, come and see.