

A Song of Degrees - Facing God

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of facing God and having a direct relationship with Him, rather than relying on secondary things or ecumenical movements.

Duration: 39:42

Scripture: Psalm 121:1-4, Psalm 121:7-8, Isaiah 30:21, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Song of Degrees"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of preservation and how it relates to our lives. He emphasizes that God is the ultimate preserver and that our actions of going out and coming in are significant in His eyes. The preacher also highlights the eternal nature of God and the importance of Christianity going beyond time. He criticizes the idea of religion being solely a social construct and emphasizes the individual relationship between each person and God.

Transcript

It's afternoon and I honestly didn't know whether anybody would be here or not, but to me as there would be at night, except for a little corner over there and they're coming in there. So you evidently want to hear the word and I am going to preach, but not on the attributes of God this time, but on one of the psalms. I'm shy about preaching on the psalms because I have found that when a preacher fishes all week and hasn't any time to take refuge in a psalm.

Anybody that can't preach on a psalm was never called to preach, because all you have to do is just stand up themselves. But I want to talk to you a little about the Lord in the 101st psalm. Will you turn to it, everyone? Turn to it, please.

Psalm 121. Suppose we do this. Suppose we read it responsibly.

I read verse 1, you verse 8, we'll all read that together. Psalm 121. Step mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.

Not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. The Lord is thy keeper.

The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul.

Going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even forevermore. This psalm is one of the psalms called A Song of Degrees. There are those who say that it ought not to start out, I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.

It ought to start out by saying, Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills? No, my help cometh from Jehovah. too slick to be true. Whenever an interpretation sounds real cozy, you can be pretty sure he brought that up out of his empty head.

This is A Song of Degrees, and it was as they marched up the steps toward the Temple. You know the Temple was on a hill, and they had steps leading down the hill. They would come marching up the steps to the worship at the Temple, and they had, David explained, they had singing women and synchronance.

And they sang as they marched up the steps to the Temple, which was, I think, a very nice, pretty thing to do. David wrote, and other of the writers, the songs to be sung as they marched up the hill toward the Temple. They lifted up their eyes, for the Temple was built on the hills of Jerusalem.

So I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. And this is one of those Songs of Degrees, which they sang as they marched up toward God, coming to the Holy Land, as we come here to Mahaffey or go to some of the great conventions. Only they went to one place only in Jerusalem, and then they went to one place only in Jerusalem, and that was the Temple.

So they sang, My help cometh. Their help didn't come from the hills, and their help didn't even come from the Temple. But their help came from Jehovah, who made the heaven and the earth.

The Jehovah whose dwelling place was in Zion, and toward whose preaching. I always like to think that we are marching with our faces toward God. Somebody says he's back on God, he's forced to walk in his own shadow from that time on.

And whoever faces God is walking in the light of God's presence, which we talk about. And when they walked toward the presence of God, they were walking into the light. We have a little saying, my friend Francis Chase and some of the other fellows of the Church, that we're not so concerned with how far a young man has come, as we are with the direction that he's facing.

You see, if you go out on the highway and start toward Pittsburgh, it doesn't make much difference just where you are on the road. The thing that matters is, are you headed toward Pittsburgh? If you got on and were purring along at a nice, comfortable 55 miles an hour, and finally found you were on your road to Cleveland or St. Paul, you'd be traveling along, but you'd be aiming wrong. The main thing is, get a young fellow started in the right direction, and he'll make it all right for himself.

When I was a very young preacher, I think it was my 2nd pastorate under H. M. Shulman, who was for 28 years or longer President of the Alliance, he was then Superintendent, I had in my home the great Dr. George Shaw, who was one of the great Bible teachers and great Saints of the Alliance, and he was wanting to know about reading. I said, Dr. Shaw, give me a little advice about reading. I said, What should I read, and what should I give to it, and so on.

He shrugged me off and wouldn't answer me. He said, I am not worried about you. I said, You're ancient.

He wouldn't give me any advice. But he saw that my face was in the direction of the library, and so he didn't worry. It's only whenever it goes beyond little Abner that they need to worry about.

But if a fellow is aiming in the right direction, that's the main thing. These people were aiming in the right direction, they were walking toward God. So they said, My help cometh from Jehovah.

Now, we don't have to say that, and when Jesus gave us his prayer, when you pray you say, Our Father who art in heaven, he didn't need to go to heaven and the earth, he didn't need to. But you see, back there in David's time, they were pagans. Pagans were all around about them, heathen of every kind.

And the heathen believed in gods that had not made the earth. They had local gods, you see. There were gods that had little local country they ruled over.

For instance, Aeolus ruled over the wind, and Neptune ruled over the sea, and Maroon ruled over hell, and Ceres ruled over the green fruit, and Venus ruled over love, and Jupiter ruled over war and Minerva. They had little local jurisdictions, the gods of the heathen, and David never quite got away from having to fight a little. David never was restful, and all through his psalms he was taking little blows at the dumb heathen guys and couldn't see.

And he was everlastingly saying, Among the gods will I praise Jehovah. Because there were gods everywhere, a thing that you could pick up and worship, and lug it off somewhere and anoint it, and they'd be down on their knees to it. And David knew that.

And to make it very clear here that the God that he was looking to for help made the heaven and the earth. He had no jurisdiction, but he had made the heaven and the earth, and normally he would have jurisdiction over what he made. Now, that was what we have here.

The God we adore is not a local God that isn't good outside the state of Pennsylvania, although some of you imagine that in a sly sort of way, I think. But God does spill over sometimes into Ohio and Illinois. But he made the heaven and the earth, he made everything, and therefore nobody can run out somewhere and serve a paper on God and say, Just a minute, here's God and his sovereignty here.

Your jurisdiction ends there. I get a kind of a sad and sour kick out of some forest. Some fellows will commit a crime and then run across the state line.

I heard about a fellow once that had a house built right on the boundary line of two counties, and he'd commit a sin in the bedroom and they couldn't arrest him because he just walked across the boundary. The fellow over here didn't have the right to come over there, his jurisdiction didn't exist. In Chicago we have Chicago, then we have Cook County, then we have the state.

And if you commit a crime in the city, you can be arrested by certain police, but if you spill over into Cook County outside the city, the county police will get you. And then if you get out into the state, state police will get you. So they'll get you all right, probably, if you don't buy them off.

But it depends on who has what jurisdiction. But Brother, God made my heart too big to ever be satisfied with anything local. I'm not such a good alliance man as some of you are, because I'm tempted sometimes at low moments to have sneaking suspicions in heaven that don't belong to the alliance.

And you know, it's just a little bit slightly off color, but I honestly think there will be people in heaven that don't belong to the alliance, unless, of course, we think jaunted that society, like our Baptist friends think. But Jehovah made the heaven and the earth. That means everybody ought to be a Catholic.

Brother, I'll explain what I mean. I don't say a Roman Catholic, just a Catholic. Roman means belonging to Rome, Catholic.

And incidentally, Roman Catholic, those two words cancel each other out, for Catholic means universal here in Rome. So how can they be both at once? I think they'd get straightened out on that sometime. It's like a guinea pig that's neither a guinea pig nor a guinea pig.

And a Roman Catholic is neither a Roman or a Catholic. He's just something. And we ought to all be Catholic.

I can say I believe in the Holy Catholic Church and not faint or fall dead, because I know what I mean. I believe in the universal Church of Christ. Everybody that's born of the Spirit and washed in the blood, no matter which way his eyes slant, nor the color of his skin, nor how high he is, nor what language he uses, nor when he was born or where, if he was born of the Spirit and washed, then he can raise his eyes and say, Our Father which art in heaven, he is my brother, no matter when he lived and no matter what.

He's still my brother. So I say we Christians ought to all be universal Christians. Are you bothered any about the tea, or hadn't you heard of it? Ecumenicity.

Now, that's a big word to mean the same thing that I've been saying, only meaning it wrong. It means all over, all over. And they're trying to get the Church together and get it solidly formed, consolidated.

That will go contrary to the antitrust laws or not, we'll ask you about that later. But according to the ecumenical view, everybody that says, I'm a Christian, all over the world, all gets into one Church. I am not, that may be the antichrist's way of getting us together for the final big blow-up.

But I don't believe in ecumenicity because that means I can take my Church and take it into a movement that doesn't believe Jesus was the Son of God, he didn't die on us. Some people in it, some people don't. It means the Christian Missionary Alliance has to unite itself up and shake hands and say, Brother, will the man believe the Bible to be the word of God, doesn't believe Mary to be a virgin mother of Jesus, doesn't believe Jesus to be the very God begotten, not created, and doesn't believe the blood of Jesus Christ redeems men, doesn't believe you have to be born again, trying to get us all united in an ecumenical movement.

So every time you hear the word ecumenical, try to pronounce it unless you have your own teeth. But it's a big word, Brother. But what it means is, I want us all to band together and forget all our differences.

I won't forget my differences with these men at all. These differences are fundamental and vital, and they're the differences between heaven and hell, between life and death. I'm not a man, Brother, who denies the Deity of the Savior of mankind, or who holds this book up and says it's got good ideas and doesn't write it.

God did write this book. So I didn't intend to preach that part, but that got in somehow. What I meant to say was, he has jurisdiction over heaven and earth and all things that be, and that everything that is belongs to God.

And the Christian believer, when he goes to his knees in prayer, he goes past all secondary things. He's in these office boys and virgins, standing between me and the Lord. When I come to pray, I don't want to have to ask the Virgin Mary whether she was a darling little girl, and she gave us the Son, so it was in her

body that God prepared that body for which Jesus later took to the cross.

But she had to be redeemed by the blood of her own Son. So for that reason, they don't astonish me when they talk about Hail Mary, Mother of Jesus, and so on, because Mary doesn't stand between them. There's only one mediator between God and man, and that one is himself God and man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

So to pray, he goes back of all secondary things, of all matter, and back of all space and time and motion and life and mind. After all, when I've named those six or seven things, I've named about all there is in the universe, really in the universe, matter and space to contain it, and motion to keep it moving, and faith and life if it is a living matter, and mind, that's about all there is in the universe. And you and I go back of that to God.

We go to the unbeginning one. We go to the uncreated one. We go to the primal source of all things.

The praying Christian never deals with subordinates. When a Christian gets on his knees, he's having a meeting at the summit. We hear of the meeting of the biggest dogs there are, you know, meet somewhere, and they call that meeting at the summit.

But a Christian, my brother, when he comes to God, meets God. You can't go any higher than God. I never like office boys.

I never like to meet the second-in-command. I always want it to be myself. And when I go to prayer, I want to know that no archangel is straining my prayer through a sieve and deciding whether my prayer can get through or not.

And I want to know that I'm going straight to God at the summit. So my help comes from Jehovah that made heaven and earth, and you can't go any higher than that. Then he said, He will not suffer thy foot.

Now, that doesn't mean so much to you. Nowadays, if David had been writing that, he'd probably say, He will not suffer thy engines because nobody walks anymore. They ride around.

And my secretary lives less than one block from the office where she works, and she drives the Studebaker. And drives it right up and parks it out in front of the church. And then I usually leave a little ahead of her, so I suppose she goes and gets in that thing and drives it back.

There it is. We don't walk much. We didn't do much else but walk in those days.

And if a man cramped, looking away, cramped on a round stone, he'd take a plunge straight forward. And God will not suffer you to stand cramped on a round stone. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved.

He will not suffer it to slide. Now, that word suffer there means permit, but it also means permit with a connotation of pain. The pain of seeing your foot stumble and seeing you fall.

Now, if you don't walk in the light, if you lack righteousness, then the Lord will have to endure the pain of seeing you stumble. David, that the brother preached about last night so terrifically, the path of righteousness, did you ever hear this passage of scripture or notice it? It says that thou shalt hear a voice of thee saying, This is the way, when ye walk to the right hand or to the left. And at first that bothered me, because the scripture says, Be leading me.

And then it says you'll hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way. Do you ever wonder why that was like that? As long as you stay on the same path he's on, he's always ahead of you. He's in front of you.

If you leave the path and turn your back and start to the right hand or to the left, then you hear the voice behind you. He's not ahead of you, he was ahead of you as long as you were following him. But when you stop following him and take a side road, then you hear the voice back on the path saying, Come on back road.

You'll hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way. Walk you in it. So the Bible is always right.

It just sounds odd sometimes, but if you figure it out, you'll find it was there ahead of you, and you don't have to apologize for it. It says this God will never sleep. Now, the pagan gods, of course, they could be caught asleep.

I've read quite a little of the Stoic and the Egyptian and the other gods, particularly the Greek and the Roman gods. Some of those old boys were really rascals, and if they could catch another god asleep, they'd just as likely as not rape his wife or do almost anything. They did those things in books about these gods, and you could overcome them.

If you caught one somewhere asleep, you could rule over his dominion until some other god got you. That was the Roman idea of God and the Greek idea of God. Scripture says that Jehovah's eyelids never close.

Why do God's eyelids never close? Because God never sleeps, because he doesn't need to sleep. Why do you need to sleep? You need to sleep to recoup your weight. Sleep is recharging of your battery, and you have a certain amount of energy, and when you do anything, you have a certain amount of that energy.

Then you have to stop and sit down and let your energizer work until the dial begins to move over again to show that you've got more energy than you've expended. When you expend more than you took in, when you take in more than you expend, you feel like a million dollars. That's why you have to sleep.

When I was very young and now, I fought for years against sleeping. I thought it was an awful waste of time, and I wondered why God ever ordained it in the first place. I went to bed against my will and got up as soon as I could.

I didn't think I ought to sleep, but somehow or other I'm getting wiser now. I've got my mind on some things, because the hills are steeper than they used to be, I notice, and the miles are longer since Eisenhower has been there. It costs me more energy to walk a mile than it did under Truman, because I'm getting older, that's what I'm trying to say.

Lecture 6 The Prophetic Vision of Zion, Christ's Coming to Zion 21 Brother and sister, here's what it is. Jehovah doesn't expend energy, and therefore he never needs to recoup energy. If God expended energy, where would it go? And if God had to recoup energy, where would he get it? If God expended energy, where would the power go to? And when God had to plug in somewhere and recoup his power, where did he plug in? You plug in to a building or a stake, but where would God plug in to? Where did God get any energy? God has all the power there is and all the energy there is, and therefore it's easy for God to go to look for energy.

God does everything he does without expending any energy, therefore God never gets tired, therefore God never gets tired. So rest about that, and don't imagine God ever fell asleep. But somebody says, how about Jesus? Well, Jesus was a man, and it was the miracle that you saw walking around on the earth.

Jesus never did a miracle as God. He never did anything as God, but he did as a man filled with the Holy Ghost. If he had unveiled his deity as he did on the Mount of Olives, nobody could have lived in his presence, because deity was veiled there.

He veiled his deity, he buoyed it. It was still there, but it was as a man, a human being, a perfect human being, full of the Holy Ghost that he wrought his miracle. It wouldn't have been any wonder if God the Eternal God should still the waves or quieted the winds or raised out devils, but for a man to do it, there was the wonder, and Jesus as a man cast out devils and stilled the wind full of the Holy Ghost.

But he never did it until he was full of the Holy Ghost. He said it was God through the Holy Ghost that did it. Lecture 6 The Prophetic Vision of Zion, Christ's Coming to Zion, Part 2 11 He never complained about it, blasphemed the Holy Ghost, for it was not a man, it was the Holy Ghost doing it through the man.

So of course, as a man, naturally he slept, and he slept in his mother's arms, and he slept in bed, and he slept when he got older under a tree or wherever he could sleep. He slept because he was tired. The man, Jesus, expended energy and had to eat fish to recoup it.

But the God never expended energy. So the scripture says, God never slumbers nor sleeps. Thank God forever.

Then he says here, The Lord is thy keeper. Notice a little verb here, a little verb is. He doesn't say, The Lord will keep thee, though that's true.

But he said, The Lord is thy keeper. And that's something quite otherwise than to say, The Lord will keep thee. You see, brethren, the difference between the Alliance and most other movements is this, that we started out enthusiastic about what God is.

For a great many movements are satisfied with what God will do. We begin to talk about what God does for us. That's good, I suppose, but that's secondary.

It's what God is. It took Dr. A. B. Simpson to retell the world that sanctification wasn't a hunk of glory that you could go to God and get. He said, Sanctification isn't a thing at all.

Sanctification is Jesus Christ. He is sanctification, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. And we went out to tell the rest of the religious world, much to their astonishment and delight, that God will give things to us, not only give them to us, but be that to us.

I would rather have God be my wisdom than to have God give me a bushel of energy. I'd rather have God be my energy than to have God give me a battery and say, Now, here, you can have this much, and be careful, because God is my energy, God is my wisdom, God is my strength, God is my sanctification, God is my tomorrow day, God is my yesterday, and God is my hope for heaven, and God will be our heaven. What would heaven be there? Brother Schuman down here used to hear, I won't mention his name because he did a baddie and we kicked him out, but he used to say that if he went to heaven and Jesus wasn't there, he'd sit down in a corner of heaven and cry for a thousand years.

It's particularly right, Brother. When John, you know, and I may get in a jam here, but I've been in them before and got out, we incline to think about heaven in too materialistic terms. We think about heaven as a wonderful summer home, a very wonderful summer home, infinitely past and beyond anything we've ever seen, but still a very wonderful summer home, quite like yours, only, of course, marvelously better.

John often used language like that. He said the streets were of gold and the walls were of jasper, and the gates were of rose, and he pictured a heaven there. Now, I'm going to whisper this to you, Brother, and please give it some thought, anyway.

I'd feel horribly alone, committed for eternity to a place that had gold streets and jasper walls and pearly gates. After a while that would be an awful prison to your friend, an awful place to stay. What makes heaven heaven? The gold on the street? No! What makes heaven heaven? The jasper walls? No! You can go to the jewelry store and buy jasper.

Or the pearly gates? No! The gold hanging around your neck came from Woolworth. What will make heaven heaven? Heaven because the triune God will be there. The Garden of Eden was the Garden of Eden because God walked in the cool of the day with his wife Eve.

God came down in the cool of the day and walked with them. And the presence of God in the Garden of Eden is Eden. And what makes hell hell? It is because God does not show himself there.

Wherever he does not show himself, that is hell. And wherever God reveals his face, that is heaven. So heaven will be heaven, and God will be there.

And we'll meet our loved ones. Some people blow their noses like a trombone and weep over the people they'll meet in heaven and the people in heaven. But if I were to go to heaven and meet all of the brethren that I've known and loved and would look around and there was no Christ there, no Holy Ghost, no triune God for me to gaze on, I think, as the Brother said, I'd weep for a thousand years.

But he is thy keeper, he is thy shade, he is thy wisdom, he is thy righteousness. So if you have God and you don't have God, you have nothing. You remember Levi, when God was apportioning out the land, he said, Well, Reuben, you can have this over here and get there.

He got a surveyor and he went around and surveyed the whole thing. And when they were done, it was all taken up. And Levi said, But just a minute, God.

God said, Levi, you don't get any. I am thine inheritance and thy exceeding great reward will be your inheritance. And when God said that, he made Levi richer than all the other 12 to 11 tribes, because he got God and his was the priesthood.

He walked into the presence and saw God and sprinkled it on the altar. He saw God. Most of us want God for what we can get out of him, as Brother Mason said.

He's a Santa Claus not too much inclined to question when we ask him for anything. He gives us what we want. We want to knock another fellow out, we say, Please, God, help me to knock this fellow out.

Let me see if I have my letters. When Floyd Patterson beat Moore, was it Moore for the for the Mason and all knows all about that prize. He said, The Lord helped me, the Lord helped me.

And I was nasty enough to do a little reasoning about it. I said, Now, just wait a minute. What kind of sportsmanship would that be? You put two persons in the ring against Floyd Patterson, against Moore, Floyd Patterson and God.

I said, If Floyd Patterson helped the other fellow out, or God helped Floyd Patterson knock the other fellow out, that fellow is fighting against two people. That's not fair. You can't have two men, and it wouldn't be any wonder if the fellow didn't get knocked out and then say, Well, God did it.

If God knocks a man out, you can't pray God to help you paralyze an opponent in a prize ring. And you might just as well stop it, you big square-shouldered fellow, if you imagine that won't do. And then there are pictures that, you know, they think the atmosphere is right, their curves break, and they win the game.

And they say solemnly, God helped me, I prayed. Well, what about the other side? It isn't right, my brother, it isn't right. There are only nine men supposed to be on a team at a time.

You can't get God on there to win. You haven't won at all. No, God will help you, but God won't help you do nonsense, and God won't help you do things, and God won't answer you when you're asking God ridiculous things.

The fellow wants to get the best of a financial situation, so he gets on his knees and asks God, O God, in the name of Jesus, help things to break my way. Well, they break his way, except the Lord gets up in prayer meeting and testifies. But how about the fellow that didn't get to break? How about that fellow who helped him? Who is his helper? No one will help you to cut corners and put over a shady deal, mister.

Not even if you give a tenth of your dirty money to God, he won't even help you buy God off like that. God won't help you if some missionary is being on the field somewhere and he wants a house, and they can get on his knees and say, God, I'm here in the name of thy son and I want that house. He's likely to get the house.

God will work as long as he's working for thee, and for the good of all, but God will never take sides to help a man win a game or help a fellow paralyze another fellow while they count ten over him. Most people don't like that at all. But I have written that, and people have read it and written in about it, and some of them did.

Intelligent ones did, and the rest of them wrote in about it and said they didn't. Another point here. Tracy Miller would love this.

I've got seven points today. He says, "...thou shalt preserve thy going out and thy coming in." Preserve means to guard and shield and secure, and the idiom here describes just human activities. Just think back over your life, my friend.

What have you been doing all these years, going out and coming in? That's just about it. He said, I've been walking up and down the earth. That's about all he had done.

And I ask you, what have you been doing since I saw you last? That's just about our life. I heard of an Englishman who was bored to death with life. He was talking about suicide, and somebody said, Why do you want to commit suicide? Oh, he says, life is awful.

He said, I am so sick of getting up in the morning and then coming in at night and taking them off, and then getting up in the morning and putting them on and going, and then coming back up. He said, I've put on socks and taken socks off until I'm bored to death. He said, I'm sick of the whole thing and I want to die.

Well, of course, it does get wearisome after a while if you didn't have anything in between, but you think about it now. Going out and coming in, that's about it. And the scripture says God will preserve your going out, and he'll preserve your coming in.

He'll preserve that, but that's just about all we do from this time forth, even for evermore. You see, God never stops with time, and ultimately the only thing that will matter will be evermore. Evermore, that's all that matters.

Look at the clock now, I'm watching my watch here, and I've got two minutes to four if my time is right. We watch our watches and we hear somebody pound, we hear whistles and we see the seasons change. We're always changing, but God never stops with time.

And I couldn't embrace Christianity if it didn't go beyond time. It's a cheat, it's a cheat, and a fraud that only carried us to the graveyard and left us there to rot. But forevermore is in the Bible, forevermore.

I heard a young woman recently say that a certain preacher always preached sermons that always ended in heaven. I didn't say anything to that thing since, and I wonder what did criticize a man like that for doing a thing like that. Where should a sermon end but in heaven? Where does the Bible end? The Bible begins this way.

In the beginning, God made the heaven and the earth, and it ends with a new heaven and a new earth, and I, John, saw the holy city. Take the 23rd Psalm. Incidentally, that 23rd Psalm is personal.

The old Schofield Bible and some of these teachers kind of intimidated me so that I got afraid to say, I and me and mine. I was afraid of that. But you know that the Psalms are all full of the personal I. If it's an uncrucified, rebellious I, it's bad.

But if it's a redeemed, worshiping I, it's wonderful. Take my brother Schumann and I, he'll know who I mean. We know a dear old brother who has now gone to heaven and has a high place there.

But somewhere he had gotten the idea that you never ought to say I, and he would tell a story of when one was in Philadelphia, one saw he meant himself, and he didn't like to ever say I. In the 23rd Psalm he probably said, The Lord is one shepherd, one shall not want. He maketh one to lie down in green pastures. You see what that would have done to it? It would have taken days.

And what's the good of religion if you're not in it? Religion is a relationship between you and God, and there are just two of you. They are talking about social religion all the time, social religion. They say, this fellow condemning Billy Graham, he said, We ought not to preach redemption, we ought to preach social redemption.

How can you? Suppose that there were 5,000 people, all of them sick, and I'd heal all of them. How could I heal the whole business in the mass? You'd have to heal them one at a time. Ever stop to think that everybody in the world was born one at a time, even twins or triplets, they were born one at a time, and when they die, they die one at a time.

Marvelously personal about this business. If a plane goes down and kills 50 people in one instantaneous crash alone, each one died by himself alone. Others were around him, but the dying was his alone.

So why should I allow a grammatical and semantic old-made idea to steer me away from, I am my shepherd, my shepherd, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. And he had I, I shall dwell, will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. God linked in a bundle of love forever.

So David wrote the 23rd Psalm, and it ended in heaven, in the house of the Lord forever, in the house of the Lord forever, our Scotch friend said. The Bible itself is like that. Well, I said this about never preaching any sermons or singing any songs that end in heaven.

I got to wondering, what is the matter with that person? The songs I knew, and you know the great songs all end in heaven, every last one of them. Rock of ages cleft for me, let me hide my, remember how that ends, when I rise to worlds unknown and behold thee on thy throne. Rock of ages, let me hide myself in thee.

He wasn't going to die when they dug a hole in the ground and chucked him in. He was going on to see God on his throne. Wesley wrote, Jesus lover of my soul, let me hide myself in thee.

Do you remember how he ended it? Spring thou up within my heart, rise eternity. And the man who wrote Love Divine, also Wesley, he said, Love Divine, all loves excelling, and he prayed for God to come into his soul and deliver him from the love of sinning, and all the rest, and finally he ended. Till in heaven we take our place, till before thee, lost in wonder, love and grace.

Hymn is no good unless it ends in heaven, and the man who sings it is no good unless he goes to heaven. Absolutely not. And then look at that Welsh song by William Williams.

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, piper of barren land. He ends, he says, when I come to the verge of Jordan, says, land me safe on Canaan's side. Up to thee, top laddie's great hymn.

He said, no, no, this was a woman that wrote this. Sun, moon, and stars for God upward I'll fly, and my faith looks up to thee. Oh, bear me safe above a ransomed soul.

My hope is built on nothing less. When he shall sound, oh, may I then in him be found. And amazing grace, how sweet the sound.

What would amazing grace, how sweet the sound. Why, it wouldn't have any finish to it unless we sang, when I've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, I'll have no less days than when I first begun. So, my dear friend, the gospel of Jesus Christ begins wherever you are, and the saving, redeeming power begins wherever you are.

I don't know where you may be in your migrations and peregrinations inside your soul, but wherever you are, it is there. Spurgeon said the gospel begins where you are and ends in heaven. I hadn't thought of that, but it just was right, perfectly right.

So the Lord will come anyplace. He came to David Fant in the cab of his locomotive and saved him. Farmer said he fell in the well, and the mightiest prayer he ever made was upside down in the well.

Wherever you are, and I don't care where, I've prayed in airplanes. I think my prayers have a little more suction in airplanes than they do anywhere else, because I don't like airplanes. They're uncertain, you

can't get your feet on the ground.

But I pray up there, wherever you are, wherever you are spiritually, wherever you are theologically, Jesus Christ will come right where you are there. And God will be your helper and your protector and your keeper and will preserve your going out and your coming in as long as you live and from this time forth and forevermore. And you'll see a new heaven and a new earth when the old heaven and the old earth pass away and there'll be no more sea.

God, thank God for a gospel that's enough. Thank God for a Savior that you don't have to apologize for. Thank God for a God whose boundary, who knows no boundaries, but who has sovereignty over heaven, earth and hell.

This is the God we adore, our faithful and changeable friend, whose love is as great as his power and neither knows...

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