

Beg to Be Filled and Resist Filling

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the necessity of surrendering to God and recognizing our spiritual poverty to experience true fulfillment in Christ.

Duration: 38:01

Scripture: Genesis 35:1, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:16-20, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:5-11, Philippians 3:10-14, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the struggles and doubts that believers may face in their journey with God. He emphasizes that those who have experienced defeat and setbacks are actually getting closer to God. He encourages the audience to let go of their fears and trust in God's will, reminding them of the sacrifices Jesus made on the path to victory. The preacher urges the listeners to have the same mindset as Christ, who humbled himself and became obedient even unto death. He concludes by highlighting the exaltation and triumph of Jesus, encouraging believers to confess him as Lord and experience victory in their own lives.

Transcript

I went to the barber shop to get what I sometimes refer to as my hair cut. The kind barber said, I've been sick a couple of days, said, you know, my throat. Said I had that, what do you call it, orange eye.

And didn't I get his orange eye? Couldn't be here this morning. But I didn't want to disappoint the people who I knew would come tonight to hear the first in a series of talks, the four stages in the path towards spiritual perfection. Fortunately, before I got my orangitis and had to go to bed, I got my sermon.

So Brother MacAfee, if you'll come up here and read me a page, I'll take your time. I want Philippians 4, 7 to 15. But what things were counted to me, Three, three things.

Three. Yes. Were gained to me, those I counted law, or Christ.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but law, and see of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, but done that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him, power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death. Any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as

though I had already attained, either were all.

But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, for which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded, if in anything we be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

For the less whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rules, let us mind the same. Now you give me your ears, as they once said, and we'll not miss anything, and by Wednesday I'll be okay and be teaching my class. Now, we have an objective before us, and I repeat again, it's to know Christ.

It is to win Christ. It is to know the power of Christ's resurrection. It is to be conformed.

It is to experience in us that which we see in Christ. And in order to do that, it is to count all things lost to the excellency of this knowledge. Now, I have read it, and we've referred to it often, the prayer of the author of The Cloud of Unknowing.

He says that he wants God to so help him that we may have the intent of our hearts so clean that we may perfectly and worthily praise him. Now, I listened today on the radio from early morning, lying in bed listening to the religious service springing from Catholicism down to spiritualist meetings. And it could be that some of you would say, well, he's a nice chap, but he is a bit off base.

No, I want to ask you, in light of the New Testament, this sounds fanatical. We are seeking a place in God where we may perfectly love him and worthily praise him and be united, not only judicially, but experientially. Now, if that's fanatical, then of course there's only one thing for you properly to do, and that is not to come back anymore because you've had a season.

But if this is worth listening, this is worth preaching about, worth living, that we might know Christ in the winning and know his power unto his death and gain a superior resurrection, an experience in all which we have in Christ, and be united with him experientially as well as judicially here in this present world, then let's relax and say this is not from Testament Christianity. Now, the object of the Holy Spirit is twofold. It is to convince Christians that this which I have talked to you about is possible.

And then it ends as Joshua led Israel into the promised land. Now, first of all, it is not hard to convince Christians that that which I've talked about is possible in this life. That's not hard.

People are ready to accept it. Will accept if you die hard at universities, Bible schools, and conferences, of every kind, of evangelical and fundamentalist persuasion are asking for this. So it's not hard to convince Christians that these things are true.

But it is impossible to lead them into it. For man, it's totally impossible, but not if it's for the Spirit of God. For it must be the Holy Spirit that leads any individual into the place of what we call a special kind of Christian to appear true and different from the common Christian.

Now, I want to read something to you, just a brief snapshot, from an old saint. He said this, A persuaded mind and even a well-intentioned heart is a long ways and faithful practice. Nothing has been more common in every age and still more so today, and we could add in our day.

Nothing has been more common than to meet souls who are perfect and saintly in faith. Do you hear this? Nothing is more common than to find Christians who are perfect and saintly in faith. But the Savior of the world says, You will know them by their works and by their behavior, and this fool which is never deceiving, and it is by this we should judge ourselves.

So said Fenelon. Now, I'm going to go out on a limb tonight and claim to know something which I don't have to know except by a shrewd guess based upon known spiritual laws. I'm going to state here now that for some of you, now I don't know how many, but for some of you, this week was your worst week spiritually.

You have been disbelief taught. You heard about them and you said, This is what I've been looking for. And you heard four of them.

Now, last week was your worst week. You hoped it would be your best. And you hoped that the path would shine more and more under the perfect day.

But instead of that, you had more discouragement last week than any long week before. You were filled with doubt and deceit. And instead of what you've been learning these nights, lifting you up, you have cast it down.

But you know, I want to tell you something. Those who have been told and those who have known the rapt heat of doubt eating at them, and those who have bumped their phones on the sidewalk as a result of deceit are the same very ones who are getting nearer to God. But those who have been unaffected and are unaffected, and you can still look ahead, you can still be worldly and not minded, you have not been affected.

They're made the least positive. But those of you who have found things going against you, and in your longing to know Jesus Christ better, instead of it helping you, it is actually helping you. You're very close to the kingdom.

Now, I want to give you another little phrase of the child of unknowing. And this sums up the teaching of the Bible. He says this, See who by grace thee may.

I want you to put that down. See who by grace thee may. Or, to put it in our modern English, let those who can see by the grace of God.

Or to put it in the language of the scripture, He that hath ears, let him hear. He that hath eyes to see, let him see. For he talks about eyes instead of ears.

See who by grace thee may. Now, I explained the first night that I'm a bit different from the old gentleman who wrote the book, in that he simply walked out on people if they couldn't see, ganglers and rauners and fleshly bothers and gossips and money-lovers even to look at my book. But I'm trying to help you, so I'm going to be a little broader than that.

That God sits out those who cannot see in order that he may lead on by grace those who see. For remember that those will be as the sands of the seashore, yet a remnant shall be saved. He said that in the last days, few should be found who were right, but many should wax cold.

Now, here was a man named Gideon, and Gideon was going to go up against him, and he got 32,000 soldiers. And the Lord said, You got too many, who by grace may. So, he said, Everybody that's afraid, you turn, and 22,000 out of the 32,000 turn back.

He said, You've still got too many. See, people among you that cannot see, and that you'll never be able to make Israelite soldiers out of. So the reverend tested them, and it was all over, he had 300 left.

Now, there's scarcely a preacher anywhere outside of this terrestrial ball that what was given his right hand to get those 32,000. Now, morn in the night, to be cut down to 10,000. But 10,000 was too many.

Not thinking about numbers, but about quality. So, God sits out those who cannot see, but see who by grace see may. And he leads on those who by grace do see.

As an explanation of why you had a pretty bad week some of the last week, and why your efforts to go on with God only got you into more bumps, remember Christ's journey to immortal triumph. Pardon me, where he sweat blood. Remember Pilate's hall where they put a purple robe on him and smothered him.

Remember the desertion when they also took him and fled. Remember the journey of Calvary. Remember the nailing on the cross.

Remember the six hours. Remember the hiding of the flesh. Remember the darkness.

And remember the surrender of his spirit in death. The path that Jesus took to immortal triumph and everlasting glory. And as he is in this world.

Now, that's what some call the dark night of the soul. Especially a Christian that will be willing to go into this dark night of the soul, and that's why there are very few Christians that ever enter in. They don't know the morning because they won't know the night.

Now, but some people say, Mr. Tozer, I have known quite a while, God has chopped me down and cut me down and he's knocked down my business and he's made, I've actually been tempted by the devil, but the morning hasn't come in my heart. Why? Why does it take so long? Well, it doesn't need to take long. Here's what the cloud says.

This works on time before it be once truly done, as some men wean, as some men think, believe, for it is the short of all that men may imagine. For it is neither longer nor shorter, but even according to the stirrings in thee, even thy will. The trouble is, my brother, that the stirrings within thee aren't enough.

There isn't a yet, and so the Holy Spirit can't rush in because there's not enough stirring within. I have said, God is as full as he wants to be and everybody is as holy as he wants to be. And we think we want and don't, then of course we wonder why it takes so long.

I'll tell you, we haven't gone on, Pastor, and why you that are, that are seeking but still troubled, why you have not up into the land, and it's because you have not come to the end of yourself. We interfere with God's working in us. We will, as thou do, but look on him and let him alone, but we can't get, God can't get us to let him alone.

Keep up a good front. Instead of being humble and neat, Christians want a good front. It's hard for a Christian to go to heaven when he dies to see old George roll, but he wants to have a good front while he's here.

As Paul, the apostate, said before him, he says, oh God, honor me now before and then we hide our inner state. It is the teaching of the Bible that we ought to expose our inner state, but we hide our inner state. And because we hide our inner state, God can't change that inner state.

And we disguise our poverty of spirit. I said I think once already that if we could look on the outside the way we do in our souls to almighty God, we would be the most embarrassed people in the state of Illinois. There would be people barely able to stand.

There would be people in rags. There would be people too dirty to be decent. There would be people that have, that have great sores on their body.

There would be persons that are, that are, that even Skid Row would turn them out. But we won't let go how poor we are in spirit and we won't tell it. That's why we have to wait so long.

And that's why we work with God, but why we don't. Because we disguise our poverty of spirit and hide our inward state, preserve our reputation. And then we want to keep some authority to ourselves.

We don't want to turn the last heel. We want to have a, a, a dual control and let the Lord run it, but have control before us in case the Lord doesn't. So we're not turning over all the authority.

We just don't tend to do it. And that's why we have to wait so long. We want to keep some glory for ourselves.

We want a little bit. We're willing to, to, to sing the glory of design. Design is the kingdom and the glory, but we want a little glory for ourselves.

Fenelon said again this. ...ingenious in perpetually seeking our own interest. And what worldly souls do cruelly, people who want to live for God often do more subtly.

You get that? It's almost humorous. But it is so that we're strangely ingenious. A man that couldn't invent anything can invent a way of seeking his own interest.

Because what worldly souls do crudely and openly, people who want to live for God often do more subtly with the help of some pretext which serving them as a screen prevents them from seeing the ugliness of their own behavior. I think that's a classic, brother, that our strange ingenuity, our strange ability to seek our own interest under the guise of seeking the interest of God. And I haven't the remotest fear to say that there are thousands of people who are using mission and prophecy and the deeper life and all the rest for no other purpose secretly to promote their own private interest but using it as a pretext and serve them as a screen so they'll never know how ugly they are inside.

Now, we contradict, I say. We rescue ourselves from the cross. Nobody wants to die on a cross.

I want to die on that cross and I want to know what it is to die on the cross in order that I might have a superior resurrection. But that's what he said. He didn't say, so he'll raise me from the dead.

Every Christian will be raised from the dead. But he said, I reckon like his, a superior resurrection. And in order to do it, I've got to die like him.

Now, we're a little bit and we're willing to die a piece at a time but we're always wanting to rescue a little else from the cross. And it's that part of yourself that you rescue that keeps you in trouble all the time.

We're contradicting ourselves and you know it's entirely possible to do it it's entirely possible to beg to be filled.

Beg and plead to be filled and yet hinder God from filling us. He wishes and wills on him and let him alone. But we beg him to help us and then won't let him help us.

Like a spoiled child. If you want to take care of her or give them a pill or do something for them and they howl and bawl and yet beg for help but won't take a thing. Won't take a thing.

And won't let you help you. Just stubborn little fellow. And so we beg to be something this fulfilling.

And there's that strange ingenuity. There's that strange contradiction that our wills won't stir enough. And what worldly people do crudely live for God often do more subtly.

Before God of course it isn't subtle but it's subtle before us. Like ourselves. And that's the problem.

We live in a state of contradiction. We beg fill me now. There's one song that I sing around here.

All you'll know. I don't make any show out of it and if somebody's announced it why it's okay I can sing it. But I think one of the songs ever written in all this wide world is the song fill me now, fill me now, fill me now, fill me now.

That's a hopeless song. It's so gloomy and hopeless. And I'll pay, I'll give that book to any man who will find me anybody who has ever filled while singing fill me now, fill me now.

It just doesn't work that way. We resist God and say fill me now and sing all four verses and repeat the last mournful melody. Fill me now, fill me now but we're resisting God.

We're part of it, we won't let go. We want to keep it alive and we're never going to let anybody know the poverty of our spirit or the terrible state. We're going to preserve our reputation and our glory, a little glory anyhow and thus live in a state of contradiction.

And that's one reason why Christians are not happy. A man who's always on the cross isn't happy. It's when he gets over with that and says, into thy hand I commend my spirit and ceases to defend himself and it's then that he dies but also there's a resurrection that follows.

Now, if we're ever going to be more than common, mediocre Christians you know, Christians halfway up that is halfway up from where not halfway up to heaven, that's not I've settled for that. But I don't mean that, I mean halfway up from where we were to where we ought to be. That's what I mean, halfway up to peace.

But halfway up to where we ought to be that's what mediocre means, you know I told you. And the reason that we're most all mediocre is that there's no not enough stirring within. And we'll never be anything but that until we give up and cease to defend ourselves and put ourselves in God's hands and then let not try to tell God how to do it.

I'm perfectly certain that being the kind of man I am that if I were having a surgery I'd want a spinal block so I could stay awake and help the surgeon and instruct him, I know it. I always am prepared to make arguments and tell the doctor what to do and said amen. But it's this thing carried into the spiritual life that hinders us.

We want to tell God what he ought to do. Get all out. We read the life of Adoniram Judson and we say now God I want you to do that.

Or we read Moody's life and then we say Lord we want Moody. Now God couldn't pour the Holy Ghost on you walking down the street of Philadelphia some of you have never been in Philadelphia. We want to tell God how to do it at the same time preserving a little bit of the glory and having some areas in our lives been crucified.

We want to be crucified technically and we're very happy to go listen to another the sixth chapter of Romans on how we're crucified with him. But nobody wants it. We want to hold out something.

And until we put ourselves in the hand of God and let him alone and let ourselves go and let go and let God we'll just be what we are mediocre Christians singing happy songs to keep me blue and trying to keep up a little the best we can but at the same time we're not and we don't know what it is to be one with him experientially to have the intent of our hearts so that we may perpetually love him and worthily praise him that we may be filled with his spirit and victory we just can't come to it and it's all our fault so remember remember this is no long time before it be once truly done as some men wean you're one of the fellows that wean it takes a long time I want to tell you right now you got it wrong he says it's one of the quickest shortest works ever men may imagine and it just as

sure will just as sure will this reminds me of the old cat meeting preaching I used to hear this old fellow he's saying the same thing that preached in the cat meeting times and people wanted to be holy now brothers and sisters what about you to let yourself go some of you young people are afraid of the will of God and I won't talk about the will of God next Sunday but you're afraid of the will of God and you're hanging on hard onto something you're afraid if you let go so you have a little baby and you love that little baby and if you let that little baby go you God will take him God will take him God will take him away you say and sob it out as I did and lay on the floor when we had two boys Bud and Law lay on the floor where I was being entertained when God spoke to me and I thought he

meant he wanted them to die and my wife was back home taking care of them and I was in evangelistic meetings and I lay on the bed and kicked my toes on the carpet and cried to God and finally gave up my two boys great big fellas except one of them was in the war and got his leg hurt and by the grace of God he didn't lie there and die in the cold but he's alright sounds fine both boys alright and four others after that so you see God didn't want my boy he just wanted me to get rich wanted to know he could have him that's all he just wanted me to know that I wasn't partly dying that I was willing to give up when we had our girl she'll excuse me I suppose be embarrassed but when she was born why I had to and I did some dying I tell you brother we dedicated her but that was nothing dedication

before before the congregation that's possible as much but my dedication was a terrible bloody sweaty thing and I finally before God said yes you can have her I knew God wasn't going to let her die cause I'd learned my lesson when I birthed her two older brothers but I didn't know what he wanted and I told this in the testimony I said the dearest thing we had she was a little tight then a year old or so and I said but God can have her whenever he wants her somebody came and said afraid to talk like that aren't you afraid and I said afraid why I put her in the hands of perfect love can't wound anybody and love won't hurt anybody if Jesus Christ was the devil if he was a cruel beast shield her from him but his name being love and his hands being pierced and his face shining like the sun and

his heart being the tender heart of God in compassion and loving kindness I know Jesus so she was safer with him than she was with us and nobody was ever better than my wife and I said it to her and I say it to you that they never came better and we kept those things and she didn't die God didn't want her to he just wanted me to put her in his perfectly loving hands it's not something I don't know what it is but it's something you got a boyfriend and you hang into that boyfriend you can't say you can't say you got a girlfriend you can't say I'll give her up you've got a job you can't say I've got an ambition you've got a passion and you can't bring yourself to say yes God you've got money you got a nice or a nicely lined nest a nest egg in it and you just can't bring yourself calling it

yours you just can't let go you don't know what it means to look on God and let him alone you hope he's alright and you believe he's alright and you know it says God so loved and all that but still you're afraid if you let go what'll happen to you I was going to tell a story about a man who was down in a well today on the radio I heard a preacher I think he was a Lutheran if I remember I don't know where and what it was supposed to illustrate but it perfectly illustrates what the old Cervantes old book that's the way to pronounce it remember that there was a kind of a clown in the book by the name of Sancto Panza one night Signor Panza hung to a window sill all night hung all night long afraid to let go for if he let go he knew he'd plunge down and die below and when the morning light

came he found he was two inches off of the green grass but he hung all night on to the window sill and in the morning he saw if he'd just let go he'd been down on the ground perfectly safe now that's on tumorous some of you whose knuckles are white from hanging on to the window sill and the Lord's been saying to you look on me and let go but you won't do it you won't do it you are not going to do it you're going to go to heaven you couldn't miss that because you accepted Christ of course the books but but I may know him and affection and the fellowship of his suffering being made conformable unto his death better than I have apprehended but this one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind and you can't and reaching forth unto those things which are bid to I press toward the

mark for the prize of the high calling of God and Christ Jesus six female and the rest can sit around get old and wait for the undertaker voter conferences year after year and get through sermons year after year and not get anything go in Bible studies year after year and not make any progress just barely keep yourself above the water see who by grace he may but we're ingenious surprisingly in fixing our Christian life so we get a little glory out of it and get our own way instead of what about you Bert Miller I want you to come up to the platform please while I talk Brother Reverend Bert Miller here and will come yes he should all right now my friends what about it here we are we're the church the deeper life church here in the city we're not Pentecostal and we're not eradicationist

there's a life of supreme victory in Christ a union with him that will lift us above and will take us through the dark valley of of dying and bring us without the weight and burden of sin having given up everything and yet having everything and still being safe now what about you that's all my talk for tonight we'll make some advance next Sunday night and I'll feel better and I'll preach a little longer but that's all for tonight now what about you my friend do you remember Jesus remember what was said about him that let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found as a man he humbled

himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross now do we stop there and close the book no wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him of every name that at the name of

Jesus every knee should bow for things in heaven and things in earth and things on earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father up out of each tomb he raised a basket up out of each dying came a living and exultation and triumph and victory and so it is for every child of God we won't let him conquer we'll never conquer it up and the way we conquer our enemies is to let God conquer us not rush out at your enemy let God conquer you and by doing that God conquered every enemy will you do it are you interested to be supremely victorious in

this life filled with God's spirit gifted of his spirit so what special kind of Christian not to be proud of it but to be meekly meekly humbly thankful good grace of God you see for remember see who by grace he made he that hath ears to hear let him hear but there's a lot that he won't hear you have too many Gideons too many too many tell everybody it's afraid to go back 22,000 still got too many Gideons put them to a test down by the river 300 of them went out to victory the 32,000 what is that 1%

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