

Christendom

by A.W. Tozer

The error of Christendom is assuming spiritual succession from the apostles without living a life of holiness and separation.

Duration: 54:17

Scripture: Matthew 1:21, John 8:31-36, Acts 2:4-42, Hebrews 9:14

Topics: "Christendom"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spiritual descent rather than physical descent. He challenges the audience to reflect on their personal lives and the way they live, urging them to be affected by God's message. The speaker criticizes the reliance on gadgets and material possessions, highlighting the need for a genuine connection with God. He also mentions the marks of identification with the early church, emphasizing the moral elevation and the purpose of Jesus Christ's coming to save sinners.

Transcript

I asked someone who I thought would be able to help me in this job of introducing our speaker, and I said to them, how shall I introduce our speaker? And this fellow, I can't tell you what to say, but I know if you don't do it right, you'll know about it before he speaks. The thing that I could do to save myself would go and ask him, and to be obedient will now preach. I think it's a brother remembers I said brother Tozer will now preach the gospel according to John 8 chapter 31.

John 8 31 and then those Jews which believed on him, if he continue in my words, are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth shall make you free. And they answered him, we be Abraham and were never in bondage to any man. How says thou, ye shall be made free? This answered them, verily, verily I say unto you whosoever committed sin is the servant, and the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever.

Therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free. I know that ye seek, I don't think I read that right really, I suppose the way is something like this, I know that you're Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my father, and ye do that which is your father.

They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham, but now ye seek to kill me. That hath told you the truth which I have

heard of God, this did not Abraham.

Ye do the deeds of your father, and said unto him, we be not born of fornication, we have one father. Jesus said unto them, if God were your father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Now these Jews who lived in Jesus' time were said to be believers, just what kind of believers they were I wouldn't know, but the conversation Jesus had with them indicated that they were very far off the track.

Here's where they were off the track, in physical descent from Abraham, and they were proud of it, and they used it as men, and our Lord didn't deny it, he said I know that, you're Jews, you can trace your lineage back to Abraham. Their error was not in believing that they were in physical descent from Abraham, their error was that because they were, they were therefore in speech from Abraham. Now let me say that again so that, because a lot will depend on this, that they were under the false impression that because they were the physical descendants of Abraham, they were therefore automatically the speaker, and our Lord tried to explain, don't think they got it, but he did his part, he told them this, he said if you were actual succession from Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham, you would inject him, fault was to tell you the truth, Abraham he said never acted.

God reckoned internal life and external conduct, not by physical descent, and he unchurched these, and took them out of the covenant, and said to them you are not true sons of Abraham, you are not children of Abraham at all, you're the seed, you are descendants of Abraham, but you're not his children, because Abraham was a man and love, and you're none of these things. You hate me because you want to kill me, for no fault but preaching truth to you, said this did not Abraham. Now that is the basis of what I want to say, but I want to make an application of that, I never was much for digging up dead for generations, and I don't think I'm morally worthy to do it.

So we're going to leave these Jews of Jesus' day with God's image they were once created, for he is the judge and not I. But I want to make an application of this, now we're not dealing with Abraham and the Jews, we're a few Jews here, you're here as a Christian I presume, but there's something in the world that we call Christendom, it's composed in addition to the cults, it's composed of Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox and Protestant liberals, and then in addition to these, it's composed of believing evangelicals. Now the word evangelical is to be thought of tonight in lowercase letters, it's not capitalized because I'm not talking about the evangelical church, a denomination, I'm talking about us and others like our in it. We help compose Christendom too.

These five are believing evangelicals, there are the Pentecostals of course in various shapes, and then there are the holiness people, and then there are the deeper life people, old Calvinistic fundamentalists. And we'll put us all in there and shake it, some of you might feel a bit alerted, but it's all right, it won't hurt you. I won't put you among the Roman Catholics, nor the Coptics, but I know they're certainly not among the Protestant liberals, but I don't mind shaking you up, the Lawsons, and the holiness people, and the deeper life, and the victorious life, and the fourfold Gospels, and the fundamentalists.

What do I mean when I say we evangelicals, and where I'm a little afraid, are guilty of an error so, quite so tragically bad, it's an error nevertheless, the same error that the Jews were guilty of, and assume it rather proudly, and without any proof, that we are in direct lineal descent from Christ. Now those Jews in Jesus' day assumed, they assumed this, not only did they assume it, and that's always worse. Anything you're not sure of, and have to argue yourself too, that's something.

But when you're so cocked sure of it, that you don't even mention it, that's worse. And until our Lord pressed them, they didn't even mention it. They took for granted, without even mentioning it, that they were the disciples of Abraham, that all Abraham had was a disciple.

We rule out the Roman Catholics, we rule out the Greek Orthodox, and we rule out the Protestant liberals, and the prince sects, and all of the... But when it comes to Bible-believing evangelicals, such as we are, we rule ourselves in. We imagine and believe that we are in descent, in spiritual succession from the apostles, from our Lord and his apostles, and from the early Church. Now I'd like to say this, and I'm always glad to say something nice, at least in one sermon.

But I'd like to say that just as the physical descent from Abraham, and nobody challenged it, so the evangelicals are in creedal descent from the apostles, and not just that. We are in creedal descent from the apostles. We believe the same thing that Paul believed, we believe the same thing Peter and John believed, and the man who wrote the book of Hebrews, and the book of Acts, and believe what they believe, we evangelicals, we don't doubt it at all.

Here it is, it's the word of God, we believe in God the Father Almighty, and we believe that he made heaven and earth by an act of his power, and that he made man and his own, and through him the breath of life. We believe that man fell and incurred death and judgment. We believe that God is only begotten Son, the second person of the Trinity, to be incarnated in the womb of the Virgin Mary, to suffer under Pontius Pilate, to be dead and buried, and to rise again the third day according to the scriptures.

We believe in forgiveness of sin by repenting Jesus Christ. We believe all that, we believe it easily and restfully, and we don't doubt it. We are in the Apostle, nobody's going to challenge that.

Jesus said, I know that you're the seed of Abraham, so you know, you're all good, creedal, doctrinal sons of the Apostles. Nobody's challenging that at all. The error is in assuming that because we're in creedal descent, we're in spiritual succession.

Now, just a mistake, and the Lord straightened them out on it, and quietly ruled them out of the Abrahamic covenant. And so children of Abraham, though you're the seed of Abraham. So it is entirely possible that we may be assuming too much, that because we believe what Paul believed, therefore we had.

That because we believe what Peter believed, therefore we are all that Peter was. Because our creedally in conformity, we're spiritually an identity. Now this we dare not do, my brethren.

I will not for my part. I don't know about you, but I live in the light of eternity and the judgment. I'm afraid most of the time.

Fear, you know, it doesn't make your hair gray, you know, worry you, but it's that sense of eternity. I think the little son of eternity's values in view. And that's what I try to do.

And therefore, I don't want to take anything for granted. That's why I don't like creatures over and smooth me down and make me feel good, whether I'm good or not. If I'm not good, I think that's a terrible trap.

If I'm not good, I want to feel natural. But there are a lot of the dear brethren, you know, they haven't got blood enough. The whole crowd of them couldn't fill a fountain pen with what you got there.

They're anemic, you know, and weaklings. My technique is to paw over you, make you feel good. I don't want to.

I want to know the truth about all this. Oh, if we support our claim to be in living succession from the apostles, we've got to do it. That this is that.

Jesus disproved the claims and the assumptions of the Jews there by saying, not Abraham. He said, this that you have is not that that Abraham had. This is not that.

Did not Abraham. And he ruled them out. Now, there is only one, only one real proof.

Spiritual succession from the apostles, the Fathers, the New Testament, the Church Fathers. There's no proof of spiritual succession, and that is identity. If we can point to ourselves and say, and then point to the New Testament Church and say, is that, and make it stick, then we ought to be the happiest people in the world, and happy with a reason for being happy.

Not happy blind, but happy with our eyes open. If this that I'm looking at, I hope you're out there, the light's so bright here and the shadow's so great there that I got to take you by faith, but I think you're there. But if what I'm looking out on here tonight, if I can point to that and say, God, this is that, and then point to Paul and the rest of them as to that, and you as to this, if you're the same, then we're wrong in our assumption.

But if there is a difference, as there was between the Jews and Abraham, the Lord said, Abraham wasn't like you. You claim to be in spiritual descent from Abraham. You claim to carry on the spiritual succession.

One way, and Abraham was another. He are not children of Abraham, and he broke it off sharp and left it at that. In the Paul, now there are marks of identity.

I've given you one of them already, and that is the creedal proof of identification with the early church. We got to believe what they believe. I don't think that it's possible to be a good Christian and not believe the truth.

I don't think that we ought to be off on anything. I think we ought to believe all the Bible. I never did enough thinking or got enough education ever to jar my whole scriptures.

I get happy about scriptures that some people get worried about. They worry about it, and they read them in different kinds of wonder. I read them, and usually in the King James, though I've got 25 or 30 others.

I just believe them, and I believe them all. It can be proved by any man of goodwill that the doctrinal position of the evangelical church is identical with the doctrinal position of the church fathers. Now, I want to give you some other indication which would be necessary to prove that this is that, and to show that we are in spiritual descent from the early church, and that this that we have among us today is truly the New Testament church.

Well, let me give them to you. I'll take them down sometimes after I've talked enough to say that in print, and the answer is no. Most everything that I preach is not in print because it's impossible to write it, and if you take it down and tape it, it sounds awful and looks awful when you get it, and it takes longer to edit it than it does to write it.

It's not in print. If you want to take these points, all right, if you don't, just sleep on. But the march of identification, that is the relationship, our relationship, to the early church.

First, or second, really, there's a tendency of moral elevation. Christ Jesus, our Lord, came into the world to save people. He said he came to save his people from their sins, and the whole tenor of it is that Jesus Christ, by his blood and his power, saves sinners.

Now, we got a lot of excuses put up, that is, drawing wrong conclusions from right doctrines. A lot of conclusions that you got to sin a little all the time and keep at it in order that you might prove to God that you are no saint. Prove to the devil that you're just a good fellow and mean well, and don't make the sinner feel embarrassed because he ought to be jealous.

So you don't preach what they call sinless perfection, but also I don't preach nor do I believe in the doctrine that we sin a little all the time. I believe that the grace of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost can take any man, even the mad as I by nature, and can help him to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And the evangelical church ought to have a height of moral elevation so great that the sinners would look themselves there.

But instead of that, we have edited it down, and watered it down, and diluted it. We've had a lot of people out showing us that we ought not to be holier than thou, but that we ought to have the same journey I have as Savior. It would be like two men dying on hospital cots in the same ward, both of them, and one of them saying to the other one, now I've got what you've got, but the only difference between us is that you don't have a physician and I do.

Well you couldn't interest a dying man in another man who fell off because he had a physician. If the physician couldn't cure the fellow, what was the good of the physician? You might as well have been out playing. And so if I go to a sinner and I say, now I'm just exactly the same as you, only the difference is that, but I do the same thing that he does.

I tell the same dirty jokes that he tells, and I waste my time the same as he does, and I do everything he does. And then I say, now I have a Savior. You ought to have a Savior.

Hasn't he the right to ask me what kind of Savior I have? Is it going to profit a man to say I have a physician if he's dying on a cot? What does it profit a man to say I have a Savior if he's living in iniquity? No, the Church of Jesus Christ in apostolic days had a very high level of elevation. Now the Church, any Church, your Church, back there in Ramshorn, Minnesota, wherever you are, that Church of yours, my Church if I had one, Bill Newell is the boss up there and I just stick around, but I'm up now. Well, our Church up there, any Church here, any Church, if it does not have a level of elevation comparable to the New Testament Church, then it has violated the law of spiritual success.

And it may be doctrinally in lineal descent from the Apostles, but morally it has broken its successful doubt. Now the next point is identity of attitude toward God. The apostolic everything, the triune God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, they hadn't invented the term triune yet, and they hadn't invented the term trinity.

They did that in order to state in few words, or in that case one word, a whole chapter. But they believed in God the Father, and they believed in God the Son, and they believed in God the Holy Spirit. Not only did they believe him trinity, but they were, he was everything to them.

God was at the center. They gathered unto the Lord, they worshiped the Lord, they obeyed the Lord, the Lord was everything to them. But you know, the Churches, perhaps most Churches, to them God is no

longer necessary.

I think that this is one of the most awful things. The knowledge of Gabriel won't be more awesome than the knowledge that there are Churches claiming to believe, and being full of belief by way of doctrine, that still have so arranged their Church that God isn't necessary to them. I stand before you tonight and tell you this, that I pray often, and I want to live in line with my prayer, that me in a state where he has to help me or I'll flop.

I want to be in a place where I have to have God. The thing I do, I want God to be to it. But the carnal human mind soon wants to geekly off on a shelf.

Oh yes, to the average Church, God is desirable, and he may even be useful, but he's not. I like to be in a place where God is indispensable to me. That is, I like to be where he lights you out, you know, when that time when he had teased those prophets of Baal.

I used to say 400, but I was reading it again the other day, and at 450 there were those prophets. And they'd kept themselves all day, and they were angry, and Baal hadn't heard them. And he'd needle them on, you know, and he'd say, your God's asleep, or he's hungry, or he's off in conversation with someone, and he said, they'll hear you, hear you after a while.

And when he got them so mad that they were in a state of frustration and bitterness, it came time for him to offer his offering. Now, if God hadn't helped to light you, you know what they'd have done to him. They'd have tore him limb for limb, from limb of health.

It wasn't a question of, now Father, we thank you, you're here, and we're here, amen. But he said, God, show them that your hair shows them all right. And the fire came down and licked up everything, including the water.

And I don't always want to be on the mount, and certainly I don't enjoy being surrounded, but I do want to keep in a place where I have to have God. I think that to be in lineal descent, to be in spiritual succession, those that I got to live a bit, what Dr. Brown calls, hazardously. And if you don't live hazardously, I think that you're too soft.

So they gathered around Christ, too. Christ's presence, Christ's power, Christ's lordship. He was, they were his disciples, all in all to them.

It never occurred to the apostles, nor to the apostolic church, it never occurred to them that they could bring in a big shot and forget God. Never occurred to them. They were God's followers.

They followed Christ. They found themselves Christians. They loved the Lord.

And the Lord added to the church, such as should be saved. So that they, their spirituality, by their attitude toward God. And we can prove ours only if we have a similar attitude toward God.

Churches, we can get on without God, but we just give God his place in a nice way as our guest. We have, then we say our honored guest is here tonight. And God's there as a guest, but he's soon forgotten in the midst of all the claptrap.

Well, now, my brother and sister, that isn't an apostolic church. Then the next point is the identity of the Holy Spirit. There's been a great indignity heaped upon the third person of the Trinity.

It is this that declared an end to his gifts and therefore declared an end to him. Now I'm not a, never been, and I have no intention to join them, but I want to tell you this, my brother and sister, that I believe in the gifts of the spirit. And I believe they ought to all be, I not only believe they ought all to be in the church, but I believe they all are in the true church of Christ somewhere to be found.

Otherwise it could not work at all. But there's been a great indignity heaped upon the Holy Spirit where they, we have said that the, that the gifts of this were the death of the apostles. Why they fixed on that arbitrary time, I don't know.

Because you know, we don't know the date of the last apostolic. And for that reason, we don't know when the Holy Spirit ceases to have any power among us. So the Holy Spirit gets into the benediction and verse three of hymn number nine.

But further than that, the Holy Spirit isn't necessary to the church. We have a reign necessary. He's been displaced by what we call programming and by social activities.

Now the New Testament is born out of fire. And if this is going to be that, then we're going to have to be born out of, and not all the books we have or the creedal niceties that we can quote will prove anything to the Lord said, I know you're Jews. You don't have to tell me.

I know the books, the records in Jerusalem shows that you're Abraham, but you're not the children of Abraham because you don't live like Abraham. You don't have the spirit of Abraham. You don't have the faith of Abraham, but you have Abraham.

This did not Abraham. So if the Holy Spirit is not a decoration that old fellows preach about pensively and remembering better days, the Holy Spirit for the apostolic succession as breath is necessary to you, you have to breathe to live and that is the Holy Ghost to live. And if we do not have the Holy Spirit, if he's not here in power, he, we, the apostolic church, we are creedal descendants of the apostles, but in creed only, we are not the children of the apostles.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit has gotten into disrepute and a lot of people are worried about it. And in our schools, I give you three or four theories and tell you to take your choice. The man that doesn't, isn't, is the man that isn't convinced enough about the Holy Spirit, have one theory, ought to go out and plow corn.

He ought not to be in the pulpit at all. He has a half a dozen possible theories may be true, but he is altogether too broad and too charitable ever to insist. He's just too broad and too charitable on people.

He ought to be somewhere else. Oh man, if God ever falls on you, if the Holy Ghost ever comes on you, your fears all go up in certainties and you'll be able to teach the word of God with prophetic certainty. You got to have the same relation to the Holy Spirit that the apostolic church had.

And I want to ask you whether you do and whether your church. Now the next is our attitude toward the flesh. Now the New Testament church repudiated the flesh.

I don't mean your mortal body. God hasn't anything against your mortal body. I think I've said that every council meeting now for the last 20 years.

But that is anybody's body. They're not all they ought to be. And they have a way of getting out of fix.

And they'd get hinged after a while and the top comes off. But you needn't worry about your body. I don't mean your body.

Your flesh, brother. Your flesh is your personality. Your flesh is your id.

Your flesh is your ego. Your flesh is that of which you are so in order. That's the flesh.

Now the New Testament church, they repudiated the flesh completely. They said by baptized into Christ's death. And when he rose, we rose.

And when we rose, we rose in him and the dead. And we are henceforth new creatures in Christ Jesus. Now that's what they taught.

Paul taught that. And the believers were baptized. That's what they thought happened.

They thought the old man, the old flesh was gone. They said the old boy is gone. Living new lives in Christ Jesus the Lord.

And we're hidden with Christ in God. But now we say that we are in spiritual from the apostles in the apostolic church because we believe their doctrines. But I wonder if our attitude toward the flesh there.

Many churches nowadays, of course, they incorporate the flesh. We manage somehow. And we even write books to show that it's, that it should be there.

One dear teacher, I won't tell you what it's a man or man. And uh, she said, she said, oh, impulsively, you know, I'm so sweet and coeey. She said, saints, she said, they do such awful things.

They get drunk. God's saints get drunk and hell go not into the holy place of the most high God. But we've incorporated the flesh and we've to give the flesh a good reputation.

Our daughter down in Niagara found a stray sick cat, stray sick cat and took it in the home and nursed it back to life again and kept it cat and nursed it up. Well, we do that with the flesh. We take the flesh that God has condemned and we nurse it back and feed it plant life or whatever you feed cat.

And we make it slick and smooth and educated and call it by night hymns and the church adopts it. We elect it to the board and make the ushers and deacons out of it. But it's the flesh, the flesh that they left in the waters of baptism.

That flesh that the early church said dies with Christ when he died on the tree. We don't even claim dead anymore. We, we give it nice names.

We've organized around the flesh now and with the value and the standards of the flesh. Now, I'm not an old man sour on the world. I'm not sour on anything.

I love every, even crew chef. God held mercy on me. But I, I love everybody and I'm not in the slightest sour, not because I'm older than I was 20 years ago.

It's just plain Bible truth. I believed it then. And I hope to believe it when the carrier comes for me, that the people of God and the, and the world have different standards.

Flesh has no place in the kingdom of God at all. And that we ought to rule it out. That we ought to feel about the power of the spirit and the power of the blood to get rid of the old man with these deeds, to put it off as you put off an old dirt and to put on the new man, which in Christ Jesus is renewed into righteousness and true holiness.

And then there is a density of attitude toward them. Now the apostolic church fled the world. It fled the world.

Those early Christians, they were crucified and that the world hated them. They were crucified to the world and the world under them. And they remember if the world hates you, it's because they hated me before they hated you.

And they heard the apostle John say, little children, these are the things that are in the world. Or if any man loved the world, the love of the father is not in him. We have a good deal of unpleasant things to say about the liberals because the liberals rule out certain passages of scripture.

I was reading a book the other day in which a was telling the gospels were valid and what parts were written in by a nice people who didn't know any better. Well, I believe that the Bible is including 1 John 2 15 that I just quoted, but it isn't a popular passage anymore. People don't want to have adopted the world.

We have conformed to it. We have identified ourselves with it all except of course, the worst and bank robbery and dope. We don't commit them, but then the average sinner doesn't either.

He doesn't want to do that with ourselves because we live as clean as the cultured people who attend the opera. We congratulate ourselves because we live as a school teacher who doesn't believe in God and a scientist who believes that God is energy. Why my brother and sister, our world ought to be so completely other than that.

We ought to be saved from it completely, but we have sold out to the time. Modern evangelicalism has surrendered to the world, excused it and explained it and documented it. And there are more of you young preachers now right now.

Now, you know, boys, I don't mind saying this to you because you don't and I'm not up for election. So I'm not after your vote. And if I was up for election, I wouldn't be after your vote and I'd say it anyhow.

But you young fellows, now you might as well admit it, junior, that a lot of you imitate men in the world with a good deal. Then you imitate the holy saints of God. And you know a good deal more about the big celebrities in the world today than you haven't read the lives of the saints.

They're boring you. You don't want to hear about them. They made you read the biography when you were not one cent and you're not going to.

Because you're more interested in Allie Kahn and Allie Katz and other such things. You're not interested in the saints. And your imitation, you're imitating not the saints of God, you're imitating the world, the world and taking it in.

And then there is a tendency of worship. But I might say, incidentally, that the church that's taken the world in, or taken in, and the world usually takes the church in before the church takes the world in. That church is not a succession from the apostles, even if it has a creed drawn from the epistles of Paul, and even if it

takes from the doctrines of the faith.

I know you're of the seed of Abraham, but you're not of the children of Abraham. And we have more liberal morals in evangelical circles than we have bibles in our day in which we live. Well, there must be an identity of worship.

Now, Jesus Christ, our Lord, located the kingdom of God within. God is within you. And a lot of those old Greek jockeys, they've told us that means that the kingdom was among you.

It didn't mean anything of the sort. It meant the kingdom of God lies inside your breath. And Paul later said, the hope of glory.

And Jesus said that God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit. And through that, we have an inward worship. The whole center and core of Christianity lies inside the heart.

It's impossible to have a church and not have any of the accouterments of the church. I preached one time in a tent in a certain city. They ran it all week long, or all summer long, I guess.

And I took the week, and somebody else had taken a week before me, and somebody else had taken a week after me. And I came up to Saturday night to end my week, and during the day while I was off about my business, they had a whole lot of stuff backing me on the platform. And I said to the pastor that we sat there with that mountain back of us, I said, what's this? Well, he's following you tomorrow.

He said, that's his, that's his, those are his props. I said, well, he needed a prop. I'm pretty sure that he'd won the judgment day, that he had props.

Now, I don't know what they contained. I didn't look. But here's what I had.

That's all I had, you know, the book. Sixty-six books bound into one. And that's all a man of God needs.

And to run a church, just about all you need is a good Bible, and to get along without the hymn book, if you've got a fair memory. So, my brother, we have externalized worship. Jesus put it in the Ark, and we have put it in the side rooms.

Jesus put it in the Ark, and we put it in the projection booth. Jesus put it in the church, and we internalized it, so that the average fellow, he can't practice his religion now any more than a Catholic priest can without his oil bottle, and he can't practice Christianity. If you can't practice your worship with nothing in your hand but your Bible, you haven't got religion.

And nobody needs to claim he's in succession from the apostolic church, and that he's orthodox in the truth, if he has to support his Christianity with a lot of gadgets. We spend millions of dollars, evangelicals, that don't need to be at all. Some of you think I'm horrible now, and you'll shake my hand tomorrow and look me in the eye, but you don't think it was good at all, because you are an addict of gadgets.

And you've got the habit, and you and your church, without being cluttered up with a with a small truckload, a pickup truckload of junk, then you could try to blow up a moonbeam. You've got to be affected that way. They taught you how to do that.

No. It used to be that a boy on a log, and on the other end of the log, made a college. And it used to be that one man of God, surrounded by a little company of people, made a church, and more.

And yet we piously say that we're in lineal descent from the apostles. We've been out in bondage, we're not fornication. One is our Father, even God.

And Jesus patiently said, now I know your creed is the same, but same. This did not Abraham. He didn't act like that.

And when we get into politics, we want jobs, and Brown trying to push fellows into offices. God help us. We ought to be listening to what the Holy Ghost has to say.

The Holy separates me, Barnabas, and Saul. And anybody the Holy Ghost says separate, I'll not only vote for, I'll follow. I don't care who he is, and I don't care if he looks, has a personality that gets him by, or if he looks like me.

It doesn't make any difference to me. I don't care. What I want to know is the Holy Ghost said, separate him, and I'm on his trail.

I'll follow him as far as he wants me to go with him. Well, we've got to have a dent in that. Worship is absent in the average church.

Downtown University, in February, I gave a, what they call a lectureship. There weren't, I told them that, but they called it a lectureship on worship. And I want to continue to preach about worship because I love to do, I love to worship the Lord, but I don't attend many prayer meetings, you know, because nobody worships the Lord much.

We have information that we obviously didn't have before, but we don't do a great deal of worshipping. I was at a Bible college, now it wasn't in Toronto Bible college for a day called Good Friday, I don't think it was better than the other Friday, but they called it Good Friday. And they had communion service, and they asked me if I'd come over and preach, and I did.

I went over and preached on Isaiah 53, and then I went back and sat down. And the faculty, not the faculty of, what are they? I don't know, anyhow, they ran the shack. They were sitting around there, and different ones prayed, and did different things.

And I was listening, I was waiting there, you know, seeing if I could get a spark. And then old brother Phillips, I think his name was, would you lead us in prayer? The old dignified, white-haired man bowed his head and began to pray. And he hadn't been praying more than half a minute, till my heart began to sink.

I was in tune with the infinite. God was talking to my dear old brother. He quoted a few nights, a few scriptures, and his low, reverent tones were the tones that a subject would use in addressing, and the tones that a lover would use in addressing someone dear to him.

Oh, he worshiped the Lord. This thing happened afterwards. I went to him, and I said, Brother Phillips, we don't often comment on prayers, but I said, I just wanted you to know I was praying, I was worshipping the Lord.

You know, the reason I tell that is because it happens so rarely. It ought to be regular, just as regular as we meet. But it isn't.

It only happens now and again. It's a four-leaf clover. It's a pearl in an oyster.

We'll have oysters, but we only find a pearl occasionally. And we've got bushels of religious gatherings, but only once in a great while. God is in the midst.

I'd walk through mud to get to a group where there was nobody showing off, only God was present. People that prayed talked to God, and when they sang, they talked to God, and sang about God. But we've ruined our time.

We've got programming now, they call it, that awful, hateful word, programming. So we go around programming, but absent. Now, if they were worshipers in the day, and they were worshipers, for you remember that Paul said that when the unbeliever came in, he fell and said, God is among them as a truth.

Now, it wasn't the personality of the speaker, they might not even have had one, but it was the presence that made them fall down in worship. I'll join anything, I won't leave the alliance, but I'll just join on the side. Anywhere, when I can go into and spend ten minutes and come away relaxed and saying, oh, I've been where God was.

They were like that. Now, we say we're not born of fornication, what do you mean? We believe what the apostles believed. Yes, we believe, but I wonder if we are one with them in the succession of spiritual worship.

I doubt it. Well, now, I'd like to hear and hear, and go rolling down the alley, and if it's a hollow sound, you'll know it had nothing in it. But here's what I want to say, of the C and M A. I'd like to say this to you, brethren, that there's a great danger that we shall assume too much.

A great danger that we shall meet, absolutely convinced that we are the people, and piety will peek around with us. It's nice to talk about the C and M A being a miracle, and I suppose it was, and is. But I don't want you to forget, my brethren, Jews had miracles in their history, too.

But all the miracles of Israel didn't prevent them, nor them, from the judgment of God. And the very people who were physical descendants of the miraculous nation, were scattered to the ends of the earth, and they haven't been restored since. Except a little in Palestine there, still scattered.

And the judgment came upon them in spite of the fact that they were the sons of the miracle. And it's perfectly fine to assume too much. I think, my brethren, we ought to examine our hearts.

We ought to examine our life. Young man, you ought to examine your relation to your wife. You ought to examine the way you will live in the home.

Are you the same good and gracious brother in the home that you are in the vestibule? Then I think we ought to examine our churches. Is God there, of course, to bring in attractions from everywhere, to get anybody present? I remember, I suppose I've told you, it ain't the place now where I've been around so much and preached to so many people, and I don't know anything I haven't said before. But anyhow, I remember, Cherubinack and somewhere at church, they had some sort of a pageant, pagan pageant, and they had at Christmas a whole bunch of things there, and among them they had a donkey, an ordinary hee-haw jackass.

And time came for him up on the platform, among the other actors, and he just chose to go. He sat down there. So they were coaxing him, you know, just frantic.

It was his cue. And there he was, sitting down on his little stumpy tail, and they were pushing and pulling. Now, that's as far as I got.

I don't know whether some other member of the cast took his part and probably played it a good deal more realistically than he could have done. But they tried to drag the jackass, and then they say, we are not born of fornication. We are the sons of Abraham.

That's what you think, bud. But so did not Abraham. So did not Abraham.

We are the descendants of A. B. Simpson. We believe what he believed, or we say we do. But so did not A. B. Simpson.

Now, I think that we ought to examine our church and point to it with tears in our eyes and say, this is that. We ought to be able to go back to our church, big or little, and point one finger to the New Testament, the other finger to our church, and reverently say, this is that. And if we can't, we ought not to fall back that we're members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and we've got missionaries in 21 fields.

That doesn't mean a thing to God. God's spiritual succession with the Apostles. He wants us to be in moral descent from the early church, to give the Holy Ghost the same place in our church that they gave him in the Book of Acts.

He wants us to make Jesus' central figure in our church that he made him there. Not say we do, but do. And if we don't, then we're only fooling ourselves.

And I don't know about you, but I repeat, I don't want to be fooled by anybody. When anybody's fooling me, I want to know whether I am in spiritual descent from the Apostles or not. And if I'm not, I want to do something about it.

Wisdom of God speaketh, brethren. I'm about true. I believe the wisdom of God speaketh, and I want to read a verse.

If my called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land. Now, there's one way we can deal with this talk that I have. We can reject it and say that's what he thinks.

Or we can humble ourselves unto God, and we can hear the Holy Ghost say, if my people called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways and seek my face, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive and will heal their land. I want my little work, which isn't as big as lots of man's, but I want it to be genuine. I want it to be solid gold the whole way through.

I want it to my heart that I'm in descent from the Apostles. Not as big as they were, but as real as they were. Not as vast as they were, but spiritual as they were.

I believe that's possible for any one of us. I don't think there is an Alliance Church in Canada or the United States that can have the same intensity of spiritual devotion that they had in the Book of Acts. I don't think there's an Alliance Church anywhere in the world that can have the same purity of life, intensity of worship, and the same liberty in the Holy Ghost, and the same high moral level that they had in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles, in the Apostolic Church.

And if our churches do not have it, but wild flight of the imagination, can we dare to say that we are indeed in succession and in descent from the Apostolic Church? One point isn't enough. Physical descent isn't sufficient, just as physical descent wasn't sufficient for Israel. We must do something else.

Now, brethren, let me say to you that if God has hinted to your heart this night, if he's spoken to your heart this night, what about that? What about your own personal life? What about the way you live? What about it all? Maybe joy in your heart you can clear and say, thank God, brother, told you this is that. And if so, I'll be one to rejoice with you. Don't think it's true in too many instances.

And we who are ministers of the gospel, they'll be like us as the fruit is like the tree. And what we are, they will be. And if you are a quippy, smart, you'll make a people like that.

If you're an entertainment-loving people, you'll get a people like that. And if you're a loose-living people, the people. You must be what the apostles were and what the early church held as its alone.

And then your people will tend to be like you. And then with joy in our hearts, we can know that we are from the apostles. I, for my part, feel very shaky about saying I am in descent from A.B. Simpson.

Holy, quiet, reverent, poised, heavenly-minded, otherworldly man of God, who in another world while he walked into this one. I don't feel good when we assume that he was and we have what he had. Brethren, we'd better look to ourselves.

And I think tonight is the time. If my people, called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face. Now tonight, there are those who are going to stick, who are going to brace your feet and refuse to let me influence you in the slightest, and I can't help you.

Those then I suppose also in that class, they are going to argue and prove something by argument. That won't do. But there are those whose hearts want to be what the fathers were, and who are not satisfied with a sound.

You want to be spiritually right, so you can say without embarrassment, you know what we're going to do, I want you to sing. I don't care what we sing, it doesn't make much difference. Because if you've got to sing, people down there might as well stay in their seats.

But I thought we might have five or ten minutes of prayer tonight here. Later, but any missionary would be glad to have you pray five minutes. They'll wait that long.

I wonder brethren, particularly you young preachers, sorry for that matter, if in your heart of hearts, you'd like to spend five minutes on your face, and just get up and come here. Clear these front seats for us, and we'll have a little prayer meeting. All right, clear the front seats please brethren, and anybody to whom, clear them now please.

And anybody that is, get up and leave, get out of them, that's what I mean. And if you want to pray, of course, drop on your knees, but come brethren, come, come, come.

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