

'Concerning the Blessings of Christ'

by A.W. Tozer

The blessings of Christ are available to us, but we must go after them and insist on receiving them in order to experience their fullness.

Scripture: Joshua 14:6

Topics: "Blessings in Christ", "Pursuing Spiritual Inheritance"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the abundant blessings available in Christ, drawing parallels from Caleb's unwavering faith in claiming his promised inheritance. He explains that while some blessings are automatically given at the new birth, others require active pursuit and faith to obtain. Tozer encourages believers to rise above mediocrity and to insist on claiming the fullness of what God has promised, reminding them that the kingdom of God offers enough for all without competition. He urges the congregation to take hold of their spiritual inheritance during the communion service, recognizing the real presence of Christ among them.

Transcript

Concerning the Blessings of Christ

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

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For a brief preparation of minds for the communion service. Let me go to a section of Scripture not, I think, usually associated with the Lord's Supper, the 14th Chapter of Joshua beginning with verse six. Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadishbarnea to spy out the land. And I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me, made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day

fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

Now, the background of this I think is known to every Bible reader. Joshua had led the children of Israel into the land of promise. And they were now having the land portioned out to them. God had given them the land. It was theirs. And He had given to each tribe a certain portion. And he was making this grant free of charge. There wasn't any merit there, no character necessary, no deeds of merit, but only that they were God's Israel. It all belonged to them now, and there was enough for everybody.

And I want you to notice about this, that no one lost by anyone claiming that that belonged to him. In the field of athletics, politics, business, and almost everywhere in human life, there is competition. And if one wins, the other loses. But in the kingdom of God, there is no such competition. There is enough for all, and nobody loses anything by somebody else claiming more; and no one gains anything by somebody else's failure to claim his, because God has already portioned it out. If Judah or Gad or Zebulon, Nephtali, whoever it might be, didn't claim all their property, nobody else can take it anyway. So that if one tribe didn't claim all for himself that was his, nobody else gained. And if he did claim all, nobody else lost.

Now, that applies to New Testament things, too. And that's what I want to speak on briefly, that when we come into the kingdom of God by the door of the new birth through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, we are rich. And we are rich in three ways. That is, the riches of the Christian in Christ Jesus may be divided, for convenience's sake, three ways.

First, there is that which we received by virtue of the fact that we are in Christ and there isn't anything that we can do about it. We believe on Christ. We commit ourselves to Him and we have this. We have the new birth, for instance. We have a portion of the nature of God given us through exceeding precious promises. We have our name written in the Lamb's book of life. We have God as our Father. We have Jesus Christ as our advocate above, our Savior by the throne of love. We're members of the body of Christ. We receive a portion of the Spirit who unites us to Christ's body and makes us a member thereof. All this God does when we believe on His Son. And you don't have to know about this in detail. You will only have to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and this is yours now without you doing anything about it.

The second thing is, that is, the second division of our blessings in Christ Jesus is that classification covering the blessings that we cannot have now and that there had been no use to ask for now. For instance, you cannot have your new body now. There is going to be a day when you will have a body like unto His glorious body. If you're a true Christian indeed, He is going to raise you from the dead or transform you in glory so that you will have a body like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

So, there isn't any use for anybody to get down on his knees and say, glorify me, Father. God won't do it. He has laid His plans out here before us. He has sent us prophets and apostles and our Lord Himself to teach us, and we must use our intelligence. We cannot possibly turn back the clock. Nobody needs to go

to God when he's 65 years old and say, O God, please make me 25. God won't do it. There will be a day when he will be at the peak of human possibility, whatever that is. I don't know, Christ died at 33, and I have always thought that since Christ died at 33, He died at the peak time of human possibility. Some say that that's a little late, but I believe that Christ was at the peak of all possibility. I don't think there was any maturing to be done, anything to be done. When He was a boy it said He grew in the knowledge of God and in stature and wisdom. But I think that the moment He died, He was a human being in infinite perfection.

So, it's possible that will be the age that God will chose. I don't know that isn't important. I only know that you will someday have a perfect body, but that day is not now and there isn't any use for you asking for it. Neither is there any use for you to ask to sit down beside Him in the Kingdom at His right hand, because that will be for whoever earns it and wins it. He said that Himself. There are some things we will receive in the days that are ahead when our Lord comes, but that are not now to be ours.

Some people say, do you believe in healing in atonement? Now, of course the Christian and Missionary Alliance has always believed in healing in atonement, that is, they're supposed to believe in it. And somebody would press me and say, do you believe in it? The answer is, yes, I do. I believe that everything that Christ is to us is in the atonement. I believe that when Christ died for us on the cross, He died for a new body for us. He died for a new mind for us, a new Spirit for us. He died to deliver us from this earth. He died to deliver us from our bondage. He died to deliver us from the wrath of God. He died in order that we might have a body like His, that we might be members of His Body, and that we might be perhaps members of the bride.

And He, all this, is in the atonement, including a glorified earth where there will be no thorns nor briars nor graves nor prisons nor bones nor wars nor pain nor crying nor tears. All this is in the atonement. That isn't the question before the house, whether healing is in the atonement or not. The question before the house is, yes, it is in atonement, but when can we receive it? And some say we receive it now? And of course, they are very strong believers in this. And God heals some people in answer to prayer. There's no question about it. He's healed many in this church. Some of you here now could rise and testify to that fact. But it isn't a question or problem of whether the healings in the atonement, it's a question of whether it belongs in that class of blessings that we can receive now, or the class of blessings which we must wait for the glorious day.

I personally think that we can reach out by faith in the will of God and receive some measure of the glorification and many have in the healing of their bodies. But to expect that they will never get sick and that they will not get old is ridiculous, because God has said that the man should die. It was appointed unto man to die and all the saints who from their labors rest did die. They did, Paul did, and so did all the rest. I have heard men say you didn't have to die. All you had to do lie down like Moses. That's convenient and all right, and if anybody wants to die like that it's his business. And if he has the faith, far be it for me to talk him down. But I only say that a glorified body, you might as well not ask for it, it isn't yours.

There is a third classification. And it is vast, it is vast, and that is the classification of blessings which we have in Christ Jesus, but which are not automatically ours and which we will not experience unless we do something about it. Now is that clear? There are blessings which when you took Christ you did receive even though you didn't know it. There are blessings which in Christ Jesus you will receive in the day ahead at the coming of Christ when the children of God are manifest. Then there is the third classification. And that is the victory, the deliverance, the purity, the power, the God communion, the worship, the high

enjoyment, the fruitfulness, all of this, we don't get automatically any more than Caleb automatically got his mountain. We get them when we go after them.

Now I lay down four principles here, four little rules which I want you to hear about these blessings in Christ Jesus. One is that you now have as much as you really want. That hurt some people to hear that, but I believe it and I am believing it increasingly, that every Christian is as holy as He wants to be. He may not be as holy as He wistfully wishes that he were, but he's as holy as He wants to be. It is so in the will of God. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for what? They shall be filled.

Now, either Jesus Christ was wrong when He said that or it is true that everybody that thirsts is filled. But of course, the emphasis must lie upon the word thirst, hunger and thirst, depends upon the intensity of our hunger and thirst. Some people aren't thirsty enough or hungry enough, so they don't receive. At under high emotion at the singing of a hymn or in a revival meeting or at a time of prayer, they may yearn and even weep that they might be holy. But if they don't want to be holy bad enough to do something about it and take the means of grace toward it, they will fall short. So, everybody is now as holy as He wants to be and has as much as he wants to be.

The second proposition is that everybody will have as little as he's settled for. And this is one of the most heartbreaking things I know in the whole Christian life. If it's persecution I wouldn't mind that. If our people were dying in prison, I would have to lift up my hand and thank God for the privilege that Christians have of dying in prison. I don't mind that, but what grieves me is that everybody has whatever he'll settle for. And what you're willing to settle for is what you have of the riches that are yours in Christ Jesus. The intensity of your life of worship, the purity of your life, the power of your life, the fruitfulness of your life, the extensiveness of your ministry and witness, all this that's in Christ Jesus for us now that Paul prayed about in Ephesians. You'll have as much as you've settled for.

Remember that what you have is what you've compromised and told God you'd settle for. And that's the hardest thing I have to endure my brethren. The hardest thing I have to endure, is to know that I am among Christians all the time everywhere that have settled for less than enough. We've said to God, O God, I thank Thee I have it all in Christ Jesus. The Lord will come and I will go to be with him, but as far as this life is concerned, we have settled for less than enough. And if it grieves my heart to think about it, how terrible it must be to the Jesus Christ, our Lord. For remember that in the skies, He still remembers His grief, His sorrow and His cries. And He hears and knows about ours, and He still suffers for us in his heart.

And then the third proposition is that you will get nothing unless you go after it. Now, the first, yes, as a believer in Christ Jesus and the new birth, having been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost, that I have, so to speak, automatically. As a baby born into the world has certain equipment automatically by virtue of the fact that it's a baby and by virtue of the fact that you're a believer, certain things are yours. By virtue of what Christ did do, is doing, and will do, there are certain things out ahead that are going to be yours. But now in the meantime, there are vast riches of untapped treasure which you will never get unless you go after it. If you've learned to live with mediocrity, you will live and die that way.

A few funerals in my time I've had, that have been borderline revival meetings because there was something you could say. But the average funeral, even of an old Christian, the pastor has to walk on eggs to keep from hurting feelings. He doesn't dare tell all the truth about the dead. Any other time I'll tell all the truth and take the consequences, but I have never felt that God wanted me to make an assault on any human soul in the presence of the Grim Reaper. I believe with the poet, that once they're gone, you

leave with them, with their weaknesses to the bosom of their Savior and their God.

So, you are where you've settled. And you've got as much as you want. And you will get nothing unless you go after it. But the third proposition is, you can have as much as you will insist upon having. Caleb the man of God remembered 45 years before. Caleb carried in his heart, 45 years he carried in his heart, the promise God had given him. God had said, I will give you this mountain. It was within the bracket of the tribe in which he was a part, that this can be yours. And he remembered it. Forty-five years, he remembered it. And then when the circumstances came around where he could, he went straight to Joshua and said, Joshua, I come to claim my mountain.

Now, there was an awful lot against these getting it and do know there's so much against your obeying my sermon this morning that only the grace of God, or if the devil should fall asleep. And the latter, he's not going to do. But the grace of God we can always count on and it will help you to get there. For forty-five years, time was against him. The promise made to you forty-five years ago, it's hard to keep such promises untarnished. It's hard to keep them fresh, hard to keep them watered so they're still green. How many promises there are in your heart, brown, dried twigs?

And then there was age, a man when he's 85 years old to say the least about. He was not a boy anymore; and here he was 85 years old. He was 40 when the promise was made. And they had been traveling around and now they had been 40 years in the wilderness. Now they were some years getting into Canaan, and now he's before that mountain. And he remembered the promise. And Moses had been busy all the time, you know and there were giants that occupied the land. And then in verse eight, this poor little verse. I'm so sorry that it's here. But this poor little verse says, nevertheless my brethren, that went up with me, made the heart of the people melt.

Vance Havner, said once, I think it was in this church that he said it that, I forget how he worded it, but something to the effect that there isn't anything quite so happy as a new convert or anything quite so miserable as a new convert who had been worked on by Bible teachers. And I know what he meant when he said that. There was a lot of irony in it, but I know what he meant. I know that he meant that when the Christian bursts out like a newborn morning into the kingdom of God, nobody could be happier. But after he has been exposed to the brethren, his heart melts, after he's been exposed to the brethren.

A man wrote me from the south, a preacher. He's a former preacher running a store now. I think he will be a preacher later on, but he wrote me. I had written him a word and told him I was his friend. I wanted him to know it. I'd heard some things, but I love him. And he wrote me a long, warm letter back and he said, Brother Tozer, he said, I have been hurt so by a Christian, being pastor of a church where they never got along and I was just another victim. And he said, I had been hurt so by Christians and by those over me and by examples of people I saw, that I quit. He said, I just gave it up and quit. And he's a middle-aged preacher. And I believe God would bring him out of that. But the brethren made his heart to melt. And this man, Caleb managed to keep his heart hot and didn't melt. He managed to keep it strong even though the brethren around him were making his heart to melt.

Now, let me say this to you. This won't hurt anybody's feeling because each person will think he's the spiritual one. Let me say this to you. If you don't insist upon rising above the level of the church, you will be a mediocre Christian all your life. And if you don't insist upon rising above the dead spiritual level of this church, you will be mediocre Christian all your life. God's people just have to claw their way out of the mud. The kingdom of God suffereth violence. And God's children just have to claw their way out.

They say that Ted Williams, the great baseball player who hit .410 one season I think it was, or 20 or something, and still at 39 years old is knocking them over the back fence; you know what he used to do? He used to have two rubber balls, one in each side pocket. Wherever he went, he went squeezing them all the time. Why? To keep those big forearms powerful. So when he snapped that bat, he could watch the ball come in and then in a split second of arriving, he could snap and he didn't have to depend on the rest of them. Those big forearms cost him. It cost him to get that .400. It cost him.

And the musician, cost him. I sat beside a young woman with my wife and several others in a box, the only box I ever occupied incidentally, to hear a great pianist who was a concert pianist, who died of tuberculosis later. And I said something complementary to the sister of this man who was sitting there who had taken my wife and me. And she said, ah, Mr. Tozer, it isn't worth it. And I said, what do you mean, it isn't worth it? No, she said, it isn't worth it. She said, he's chained to his piano six hours a day. She said he's a great pianist and he was just a young fellow. He's a great pianist all right, and he's on his way, but it isn't worth it.

I think she was wrong. I think if anybody can do anything infinitely better than anybody else, no price is too much to pay. As long as it's not immoral, as long as you don't have to give up righteousness. And I think chained six hours a day, why there's some people that read the sports page that long, nearly that long and arrive at nothing. By the time they watch TV three hours, read the comic strip half an hour, sports page an hour; there's four hours and a half. Just one more hour and a half, you might have been a concert pianist. You've got to pay the price.

And so, it is with Christians. The Christian who won't claw his way up, he'll never get there. Caleb passed over everybody. And the beautiful thing about it was in doing it, he didn't have to hurt anybody nor take anything from anyone. It was his by right. The businessman who claws his way to the top does it over top of 100 wrecks that he leaves behind him, men that he had to beat in business. The athlete that claws his way up has to push out other men almost as good as himself. But the Christian who climbs Jacob's Ladder can climb all by himself and never hurt a soul, but He will bless a lot of people. And they will look and see him go and start up after him. So, keep that in mind.

Now, he pressed this promise and he asked for and he got and he took and he possessed. And it says until this day it belonged to him. He would have never gotten anything except he'd gone after it.

Today, this morning, I tell you, we're going to have the Lord's Supper here in a minute. We're going to go through another routine. You say this is the way we do that the Alliance Church. That's not important. What's important is that He said, you do show forth the Lord's death. He said, I'll be there in the midst of you? No, He didn't say that. He said, I am there. That's better. He is present, the Real Presence. Infinite riches are yours. Why don't you start now? This Lord's Supper, experience, and bow your head and say, O God, I set my heart now. I won't be mediocre. I won't be a common, average Christian. I insist, God, I insist.

And here are the promises and then show God the promise. Here are the promises, God. You tell me I can be filled, that I can be holy, that I can have prayers answered, that I can be fruitful. I will insist, God. Why don't you do that today? Start.

Caleb had to start somewhere. Caleb got up one morning and splashed cold water on his face, shook his grizzled head. He said, I've put this off long enough. He said, I'm going to visit Joshua. He's a big shot, but I don't care. God promised me the mountain and off he went. But he said where are you going grandpa?

And I have an earnest and pushed his way through the crowd, pushed his way past the policemen and guards around Joshua, the big man. Pushed his way up and into the presence of Joshua. And Joshua said, hello, good morning, Caleb. What are you doing here so early. He said I'm here to claim my mountain. He said, it was promised me and I've fooled around long enough. Joshua said, all right, get the records.

To Caleb, deed was made out and Caleb and his people after him had it down to whatever this day means, whenever that was written. I think when the glory breaks and Jesus returns and the saints go marching in and the glorified bodies of the saints are floating everywhere about in happy union and communion, I think Caleb sometimes will smile and go sit on his mountain, just to remind himself and God and the universe that there was a day when it wasn't his actually, his by promise, but not his by possession, and he went and took it.

But let's take this morning. Let's take. Let's not wonder how Strat Shufelt is going to lead the singing. How Tozer, when he's going to get through. That Mr. Chase is going to remember to do that right at the communion table. We're going to run over 12 o'clock. My visitors will be there when I get to them. Put such things out of your mind. We're in the presence of God and we're rich as King Midas, but we won't have a lousy dime unless we take it. Let's take it this morning. Will you? Let's take. Amen. Now, the brethren will gather as Shufelt leads us in a song. We'll reverently and prayerfully celebrate the Lord's death until He come.

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