

# Contradictions - That Incredible Christian - Part 2

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer's sermon delves into the paradoxes of the Christian faith, highlighting joy amidst suffering and the transformative power of hope in Christ.*

**Duration:** 54:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:6, 1 Peter 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-7, 1 Peter 1:9

**Topics:** "Contradictions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not surrendering to the world and maintaining one's power. He highlights the paradoxical nature of Christians, who are strongest when they are weakest and weakest when they think they are strong. The preacher also discusses the concept of making others rich in the kingdom of heaven, where being poor can lead to enriching others. He concludes by suggesting that the church should spend more time waiting on God in prayer and penitence, as this can lead to greater progress than constant activity.

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## Transcript

This time, please, is a book of 1 Peter. 1 Peter. I'm deliberately going to preach and not reminisce or try to say a lot of things, because if I did, I'd be there at 1 o'clock.

So I'm going to read the scriptures and preach. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Puntus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. He left them.

And he thanked them. Does that sound as bad to you as it does to me? Well, my teeth are in, but it sounds as if they're not. That's bothering you, is that right, sir? Where do you stand on this? Anyplace at all? And there are never two of these alike, they are always different.

Now I'll start again with verse 2. He elects according to the full knowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and to the obedience and splintering of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you and peace, thee multiply. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that faded not away, preserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto validation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Clearing you greatly of guilt, though now, for a season it may be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations, but the trial of your faith, to much more patience than a gold of ferocity, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the journey of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Him who, though now ye see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unseekable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul. Now, I have in mind particularly verse 6, Clearing ye greatly rejoice.

The Bible is very fair in its adjectives, and when it uses one, there's always a reason. It didn't say, Clearing ye rejoice. This is an adverbial, but it's a modifier, and it says, Clearing ye greatly rejoice.

Though now, for a season it may be, you are in heaviness through, and he could have said temptations, but he didn't. He said manifold temptations. Now, that's what I want to talk about.

He said in verse 5, unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Now, these Christians, to look for a state of sanctity, faith for them, to all the New Testament Christians, faith was not a nickel in the slot, pull down the lever and take what you want and go and write a tract about it. That's our idea of faith.

But to the old Christians of New Testament times, faith was a telescope, and they looked afar off, and oftentimes death interrupted them while they were looking, and they died with a smile on their face, looking afar off and seeing the things that were to come, and thus they all died in faith. Now, these Christians, through whom Peter wrote, Peter himself, looked for a state of immeasurably better than anything we know now, or they knew then. It was to be that state perfect and complete, and we that have begun a good work will perfect it until the day of Christ, and it was to affect your body.

1 Corinthians 15 deals with that, but there's a time coming when we're going to have better bodies. We're very body-conscious people. We even have a new disease called psychosomatic disease.

Psycho means your nerves and mind, and somatic means your body. So they teach us now that we get sick in our body because our mind is not well, and they think they've discovered something. Actually, John the Beloved knew that 2,000 years ago and wrote that, I pray that your soul may prosper, your body may prosper, even as your soul prospers.

He knew that. He knew all about psychosomatic long before these fellows from universities knew about it. The early Christians believed that there was a time coming, Paul wrote about it in a long chapter in 1 Corinthians, when we'd have a body somewhat like our own, but glorified and like Jesus Christ, and immortal so it couldn't die, and incorruptible so it couldn't rot, and perfect so that you couldn't add anything to it like Jesus.

Paul took a whole chapter to tell us about that. I didn't used to read that chapter with any great amount of interest, but I'm very much interested in it lately, and I think you know why. Because I am nearing a little nearer now than the time when I first was running around these grounds with my hair black and in place.

Now, what I have is gray, but where the rest of it is, God only knows I don't. Now, not only was the body to be affected for the better, but the mind and the soul also. John told us that, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and we do not yet know what we're going to be like, but we do know this much.

When he returns and we see him, we're going to be like him. Now, that's all I ask for, my brethren. I don't ask for anything more than that.

For that reason, I am not going to write any books on the state of the body and the glorified condition, because I don't know very much about it. But I know that if we're going to be like him, that will be enough for all the saints and angels and seraphim and cherubim for all time to come. Then in Romans 8, Paul tells us that even the earth is going to be better off.

He tells us that conditions at that time are going to be better. He says, I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. So the earnest expectation of the creature waited for the manifestation of the sons of God, for the creature was made subject to sanity, not willingly but by reason of the same who are subject to the same in hope, because the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bonds of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

So those Christians were looking forward to a time when even nature should be purified and we should be delivered from the curses round about us. There will be no tidal waves and no cloudbursts and no floods and no forest fires and no polio and no cancers, and nothing wrong with the earth. There will be no Memorial Park, which is a high-falutin' name for a graveyard, nothing like that, but that the whole creation, the earth and all its creatures, should be delivered from the groaning bondage of death and sin.

And then society itself will be cleaned up, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And you know that those Christians lived, as a result, in a state of optimism. They were an optimistic crowd, these early Christians.

They were cheerful, they were alert and ployed, and the note of rejoicing is high and clear throughout all the New Testament after Calvary. Before Calvary there were sad, pensive notes that would creep in, even into the language of Jesus. That's when he said, You know, don't you, that the Son of Man is going up to Jerusalem to be betrayed and crucified? It was a sad note there.

But after the resurrection, there never was a minor note. They never sang a song in a minor key. Everything was major.

Everything had a clear ring. There were no cracked Liberty Bells in the New Testament. They all rang clear as the blue sky, because they knew that salvation was ready to be revealed, and they were looking for it.

They weren't too much concerned with what they had here, because they were looking for something to come. And he said, wherein he greatly rejoiced. I say that this note of rejoicing was in the New Testament, and it's in historic Christianity.

You find it all down the years. The Christians were a singing group, my brother. I have made something of a study, just a label from a layman's standpoint, of the other religions of the world.

And while they have some poetry, and they do have some songs, there is nothing in any of the great religions of the world that can even venture to be compared with the lyric beauty of the New Testament hymn release. We sing in the New Testament, and we sing because we can't help it. Jesus sang and went to the Mount of Olives, and he said, I will sing among my brethren.

When he rose from the dead, he sang among his brethren. Paul and Silas sang in the prison, and the angel's arm of might smote the prison gates at night. The Church is a singing Church, and every time the Holy Ghost fell on an area in any period of the Church's history, they sang.

They sang among the mystics, back in the days of Paul Gerhart and Persegian. They sang in Luther's time, when the Pope was scared to death of Luther's songs. He didn't hate Luther's theology half as bad as he sang it.

He said, why, they're sinning themselves into Lutheranism. He said, they'll sing themselves into Protestantism if we don't look out. So what are you going to do with a fellow? You can't make him stop singing.

If you pull his tongue out and pull his teeth, he'll sing in his heart, and if you sing inside, you sing. I sing most of the time inside, because I don't want to subject my friends around me to the necessity of hearing me sing vocally. So I sing inside.

I sing on buses and streetcars and airplanes, and wherever I happen to be, there's a song inside, you know. Now, the historic Church was a happy, singing Church. Now, why? We praise and rejoice.

Well, because of what she was looking forward to. But I want you to know that the contradiction here, I've had it said about me that I contradict myself. They say, Joseph, you're self-contradictory.

But I want you to know, if that is true, I take it as a very high compliment, because I'm in apostolic succession. Our Lord Jesus Christ was forever contradicting himself, that is, seeming to contradict himself. Actually, he never did, he just seemed to.

He said, for instance, in one place, Don't let anybody know your right hand know what your left hand does. In another place, light so shines before men that everybody will see it and glorify your Father which art in heaven. Now, you explain that to me, will you? That's a contradiction.

But if you know the meaning, it isn't a contradiction. And Paul is everlastingly getting up and sounding contradictory. And it's been that way all down the years, and that's the sermon this morning, how what queer birds Christians are, what self-contradictory people they are, and how hard they are to understand.

And as soon as you can understand them, they're not Christians anymore. And he says here, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now ye are in your heaviness. Ye rejoice in heaviness, and your heaven in your rejoicing.

Now, explain that to me, will you? You know, my friend, now is the time. Now is the time. A fellow told me yesterday on the grounds this.

He said he came to my rescue and fought for me, and he heard a conversation about me. And a fellow said this. He said, if torture was ever for anything, he'd have to tell what he was against in order to explain what it was for.

Well, I don't mind that, because, you know, as long as everything is wrong, you've got to be against it. But if it all started right, I'd be for it. If the parade was moving in the right direction, I'd fall in step and march along.

But if the parade is marching over a cliff, I'm going to stand and yell and try to turn the herd. And naturally, when you're trying to turn the herd, you're on the opposite side of things. And as soon as you go along with the herd, or maybe I'd better say flock, for the Lord said we were sheep, not cattle.

As soon as you try to turn the flock, everybody says you're against everything. Of course! I'm against the devil, and I'm against sin, and I'm against warliness, and I'm against the flesh, and I'm against Christianity that pretends to be Christianity and isn't. I'm against this spiritual ignorance that is trying to harmonize Christianity with the world.

It's absolutely futile to try to do it. There was a day when our religious leaders were made fun of and laughed at and opposed, even taken and put in jail, or driven out of town, or whatever. But nowadays, they're ridden on the shoulders of the mobs and the multitude, because they're trying to make Christianity as much like the world as possible in order to win the world.

That's the philosophy of the present hour. Try to make Christianity like the world. Show that it's like them, only just a little higher, and pretty soon you'll win them.

Well, don't we know this, that Christianity demands the impossible and secures it? Don't we know that Christianity cuts straight across the instincts of man? Don't we know that the message of Jesus Christ runs contrary to man and not in favor of man? And don't we know as one man sent? And he wasn't a Christian, but he just had a sense. And as we know Christians, I've given up on Christians. We're the dumbest lot that God ever allowed to walk around.

I don't know how we ever managed to remember our own telephone numbers. We're so stupid, and we accept anything, and we have no sense of proportion, no vision, no insight, no discernment, no knowledge. And we can be taken in, and we put a fact-check into an envelope and send it off to some scoundrel that ought to be in jail.

Then we wipe our misty eyes and think we've done God's service. And God's born-again people are helping to finance rascals that ought to be in jail and not to be allowed to be out at all. God's poor dumb children, I don't understand them.

Say how this man said this, that it is one of the anomalies of history that each generation has had to be converted by the saint that contradicted it the most. Instead of that, we say we make converts by harmonizing with the world and getting adjusted to it. And history shows that we make converts by contradicting the world.

Jesus Christ stood to contradict, John the Baptist stood to contradict and to oppose. He was a protester and a Protestant, a Protestant. And all the great Church leaders down the years have been protestors.

They stood in hostility to the times in which they lived, not of harmony with them. And the worst thing you could possibly say about a man of God, dear, is that everybody loves him and they harmonize with him and they feel he's a fine cat. Worst thing possible.

Now, though you are in great heaviness, and one version says even though for a little time it is necessary that you are pained by troubles of many times. Now, here we have it, rejoicing though pained and in trouble. Now, they were strange people, weren't they? They were rejoicing while they were in trouble.

But remember, my brethren, that the power of the gospel of Christ, the power of the Church, always lies in its antipathy and never in its agreement. It always lies in its contradictions and never in its compromises. As soon as a man compromises one inch, he's lost some power.

And if he compromises a little more, he's lost a little more power. And the further he compromises, he loses progressively more power until finally he has no power at all. And that's what's wrong with the world now.

But anyhow, I want to talk a little bit about these strange persons, Christians, these strange people. And when they call you strange, don't let it bother you. I hope you are even good enough, Christians, they call you holy rollers, say to me.

I hope that. When we last people got over being called holy rollers, we got over the power that used to characterize our meetings. I don't mind being called a holy roller.

The President of a seminary was talking about me the other day, and he said, "'Toser is a legalistic sanctificationist.' I didn't mind that at all. I'd rather take that as a compliment. I was afraid I was getting a little too popular with some of my fundamentalist brethren.

But this fellow, he rather scuttled my shit and sunk me there. He said I was a legalistic sanctificationist. Now, I don't know what either word means, but it's all right because he wasn't on my side.

He was against me. Now, have you noticed this about a Christian? You wonder why you don't get along so well and why people think you're queer. Well, I'll tell you, if you're a true Christian, not if you're a hypocrite or a half-saved, then I have nothing to say to you now.

Mason will say that tonight. But if you're a true Christian, I've got this to preach to you. Have you noticed this about a Christian, that he's dead and yet he lives forever? Now, that's an odd thing.

He says, "'I have died, and I am alive,' and the world says, "'Make up your mind, bud. Are you dead or are you alive?' Well, he says, "'I died, but I'm living, and I live by another's death, and the reason I'm alive is because somebody else died,' and they say, "'I knew they were all. I knew that there was a little head and bone somewhere when they joined that last church, that they're dead and yet living, and that the reason they're living is because somebody else died, and the one that died isn't dead anymore, but he's living, and they're living in the one that is living, and they're all too efficient.

Let's give it up. There's no useful thing.' You know that a Christian finds himself at home on the earth, you ought to have another dip, because a Christian doesn't belong here, really. Have you ever noticed the swan down in New Jersey, where I go to preach sometimes at New Jersey Catholic? They have two big lakes there, and they have swans.

These great big white swans, particularly the cobb, that is the male swan, they come out on the bank to take people away from his mates. He's shedding. He takes them away.

When he's out on the water, he is a vision of loveliness, pure, sparkling whiteness, gracefully moving along through the water. But when he gets up on the land, he looks like something that was sent for and couldn't be found. He wobbles and wobbles, and his great big old hump over the front end bumps on the ground, and his legs stick out.

He's the weirdest looking thing, but let him get into the water and he's a beautiful thing to look at. Same with a nighthawk. Did you ever see a nighthawk down on the ground? He's got little whiskers on the side of his beak, and his legs are placed so far back on the chassis that the whole front end of him tumbles over.

He's an ugly, awkward looking thing on the ground. But in the air at sundown, when he's dancing and turning and circling and diving and getting supper on the wing, he is a vision of charm and grace. Now, if a Christian belonged down here, then he'd try to fit in and be gracious and grateful, but he doesn't belong here, and that's why a Christian is very often awkward down on the world.

A Christian goes to a meeting somewhere where he has to be, and he's a businessman, he has to be with everybody around. Nobody around him is a Christian. He's all out of place, he doesn't know what to do.

And you find yourself with a little group of relatives, and none of them converted, and they try to be nice to you, but there's a difference, you know. Because you're a swan out on the land, you're a bird down on the ground. And a Christian belongs up yonder, and still he's down here and has another contradiction.

I ask, if he belongs up yonder, why is he down here? Now, let's look at some more of these contradictions. I notice that a Christian saves his life by losing it, and as soon as he tries to save it, he loses it. And if he seeks to save his soul, he loses it, and if he's willing to give himself up to death, he saves himself.

Now, that's unheard of, brethren. Yes, that's Christianity now, that's it. That's what the Lord said.

He said, he that would lose his life, he'll find it, and he that finds it and keeps it and cuddles it up to himself, he'll lose it. Jesus, our Lord, said that. And then have you noticed that a Christian is somebody that surrenders in order to conquer? Everywhere else they conquer in order to conquer, and when they can't fight anymore, they surrender and give up and admit they're defeated.

But a Christian wins by surrendering. There was an example in the Old Testament. A man named Joseph lived back there.

I always loved Jacob, because he was a boss like I am, and miserable and more or less when nature made him, he had a smile on his face, and put him together rather loosely. And God found each crooked old guy that he was and made him into Israel. But I haven't been made into Israel yet, so I'm still in the Jacob stage.

But have you noticed that Jacob surrendered on the banks of the Pine Isle in order that he might win the next day down in the valley? Jacob surrendered and gave up and said, O Lord, bless me or I won't let you go. He was hanging on the rope, asking God to bless him. And God blessed him, and by blessing a conquered Jacob, he won over an angry murderer he saw.

And God always has it that way. In the world you stick your jaw out, inflate your chest, and go out and tell the world who you are. And the Bible tells you that if you want to win over anybody, go to your prayer chamber and die, and surrender and give up.

You end up meeting, and when you meet him you fall on your neck and kiss him, as though a Utah did. Have you noticed this about these strange people called Christians? That they're strongest when they're weakest, and weakest when they're strongest. And if they think they're strong, they're weak, and when they think they're weak, they're strong.

So the Lord knows. That's why we're so awkward. We're like swans out on the lawn walking around.

We bump and our legs wobble, and we just don't belong down here. We're strange people looking for that salvation which is ready to be revealed. Have you noticed that a Christian is strange in that he's poor, and

yet he's able to make other people rich? And as soon as he gets rich, he stops making other people rich.

And as soon as a preacher gets rich, he starts making his congregation poor. And as long as he keeps his congregation rich. Now, that's a law of God, brethren, and it's a strange law of God.

In this world of ours, if you're rich, you make others rich. But in the Kingdom of Heaven, when you're poor, you make others rich. Paul said he had nothing, yet everybody was rich around the body.

That's the odd thing. Have you noticed that a Christian is highest when he feels lowest, and usually is lowest when he feels highest? When a Christian gets up with his liver functioning and everything going well, and he's feeling well, and he goes out and says, Amen, and prays to the Lord, and he doesn't have to eat, and before nightfall, he's dragging the ground. But if he gets up thinking that he doesn't amount to much, and he'll go down and just look to the Lord and trust him, he'll make it all right through to the night, and he'll be higher up at night than he was in the morning.

So that's strange. Now, what are you going to do with a Christian like that? Somebody said the Church has got two classes of people in it. The bad people who think they're good, and the good people who think they're bad.

And the better a man is, the less he thinks of himself. You know that? A priest's sanctification, and they blame you. They say, Oh, you imagine you're sinless.

Well, the odd part about it is that the baptism of the Holy Ghost does cleanse us from sin, but at the same time it delivers us from a feeling that we are, so that we're always ready to say, I am of all men the most miserable. I am the least worthy of all men. But soon as you hear a man say, I haven't sinned for 15 years, you know you're hearing a liar talk.

And as soon as you see a man strut around talking about how great a fellow he is, you know that he's missed it somewhere. So that in the Church of Christ, the good people are always ready to hang their heads and say, No, no, I'm not good, the Lord is good. But the bad people are prepared to say, Yes, it can depend on me.

He can trust me, I'm okay. Well, that's the way it is, so that he's most sinless when he feels the most sinful, and he's richest when he feels the poorest, and he has the most when he gives the most away. Now, there again we have it.

The only example of that I know of in the world is Washington, D.C., in our foreign aid. They think that if we give more away, we'll get more. And we do get more, too, tongue-lashings and cursings from the people we're helping.

Now, have you noticed, my brethren, that a Christian always has more when he gives more, and has less when he withholds more? You never know how much you're worth. They say, How much is a man worth? Well, I don't know how much you're worth, but they tell me the average-sized man is worth 90 cents in the drugstore that he didn't buy. But since inflation, it's \$1.13. So now, you're worth \$1.13 in the market.

That's how much you're worth, but you're richest when you don't have much and when God gets you. Then have you noticed that a Christian sometimes does the most by doing nothing? That's always hard for me to understand, because by nature and temperament, I'm always two steps ahead of everybody I'm walking with. I'm always up in the morning before others, usually, at least, and I'm like that.

I get ready my sermon long before time to preach it, start for the before long before the things do, and so on. That's temperament. It can be either good or bad.

It's just misfortune. But have you ever thought that a Christian sometimes does the most when he isn't doing anything at all? Jesus said to his disciples, Tell me your part, and the rest is a while. Do you notice again when the Lord said, You shall receive power and go preach the gospel, and Peter grabbed his hat and started, and the Lord called him back and said, You're not ready yet.

Wait. Peter said, Me, wait? I've never waited five minutes in my life. He said, It's all right, you wait.

You'll get more done by waiting sometimes than you will by plunging in. I am fully convinced that if the Church of Jesus Christ were to call a moratorium on all activity and call a universal retreat and spend ten days waiting on God in penitence and prayer, we'd go further in the next five hours than we've been doing in the last 50 years. We don't wait on God enough.

We think that we've got to be active. The magazines, the world in magazines now, are bringing out articles about why preachers are breaking down. I picked up Harper's magazine on the newsstand on my way here, because I wanted to read an article in there written by an ex-preacher.

He should have been ex. He was ex before he put the pulpit on, and he didn't find it out until later. About why preachers are forsaking the pulpit.

Well, the worldly men say we've got too much to do. Never stop to think what a preacher has to do, and some of you laymen expect your preacher to be that. a babysitter, a midwife, a counselor, a tea-sipper and a tea-teacher, and a golf enthusiast, and a thinking companion, and a doorbell pusher, and a house-to-house canvasser, and a strategical administrator, and a theologian, and a poet, and an orator, and he's expecting to be all that.

Well, nobody's that good, brother. There's just no comrade that. The angels get away with trumps that test, and yet you expect your preacher to do all that.

And the Devil has invented, and the Church thinks it's God, but I know who did it. I can smell, I know what it came from. Just like you smell a new car when it runs off the assembly line, I can smell these things.

The Devil knew that if the preachers, the prophets of God, spent enough time in prayer, he's out of business. And so the Devil invented a whole lot of things for preachers to do. And as a result of these, you poor fellows run your legs off down to your knees, running around doing things that God never told you to do.

Why don't you go to the New Testament and get your orders from Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, and do what they told you, and refuse to do what they want you to do? Long ago I quit a lot of this baloney that had been forced preachers to do. I haven't been but one to one or two wedding receptions in the last 25 years. I thought that if I had a wedding Saturday night and stayed around and heard stale jokes and off-color remarks and all kinds of things up until 11.30, I couldn't preach Sunday morning.

So I married the couple, greeted the bridegroom and congratulated him, and went home and took rest. The next day I was feeling good. Oh, yes, brother, they just think that you've got to always be busy.

But there are times, my brother, when you'll get more done by doing nothing than you will by doing something. There are times when the Lord calls a stop and says, Come on, come apart a while, get on your knees, open your Bible, wait, rest there on me and let me talk to you. And then you'll get up from there with a new vision, a new understanding, new power, and you'll go out to do ten times as much as you would have before.

Not only are they finding new things for us to do, but they're finding new subjects to preach on. By the grace of God, up to now, up to this moment, I have never preached on a subject that I was supposed to. I make it a solemn obligation to myself and God and my congregation never to preach on a theme that the world has undertaken.

On Mama's Day, for instance, Mama's Day, we're all mamas these days, mamism has captured us. On Mama's Day in Chicago, everybody runs around, you know, twinkling, bowing his nose, and chances are when he was at home where Mama was, she was a nasty scoundrel and half-broke her heart, but now he's bowed his nose and is misty-eyed about Mama. I got up before my congregation this year, and I said, I hope you'll forgive me for not preaching about mothers, because I said, I operate on a commission from God Almighty, and I can't find anything in the terms of my commission that say I should preach on mother once a year.

So I don't preach on mothers. I honor all good mothers. But motherhood doesn't make you a good mother.

Motherhood just makes you a mother. And if you're a good woman and you have a baby, you're a good mother. But if you're a bad woman and have a baby, you're a bad mother.

Motherhood doesn't sanctify anybody. Why, the cow in the barnyard has a calf. That doesn't sanctify her.

That's biological, brother, that's not theological. And yet we go around and they spend a whole day when they could be talking about Jesus Christ in the glory, talking about mothers. And I heard a fellow on the air preaching from the city of Chicago.

He told about a dear old preacher. He said to me, he was getting old and sick, and one day he said to me, he said, my friend, I'm old and tired, and I want to go back to the arms of my mother. Now, this was on Mother's Day.

An old guy that ought to know better. Didn't he ever read the third chapter of the book of John? When you're old you can't go back in your mother's womb and be born again. Didn't he know that? Didn't he have it in his head? So the next day he died.

And this brother said about him of a captain who told, he said, he had gone back to the arms of his mother. Imagine it. The Bible tells me that Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's mother.

Not Mama's arms, but Abraham's arms. My mother's in heaven, and when I see my mother in heaven, I'll hear and thank God she's there. But I'm not going to be a mommy.

Down on my knees burning candles and all that kind of one thing. Then you've got the boys shouting all these kinds of animal hoots and the old maid hoots and all that. I don't know nothing to do with it.

Well, see, brethren, if you're going to have power, you're going to have to find in sharp contradiction for the world. For the world's wrong, and it's wrong in all that it does. It's wrong in everything spiritual and

moral.

It's wrong. And a Christian is somebody who knows what right is and does that right in the wrong world. And have you ever stopped to think that a furthermore Christian's a contradiction in that he's saved now and still talks about the salvation ready to be revealed? And the world says, Are you saved? And he says, Yes.

And he says, What? And his world says, What are you waiting for? And he says, Salvation. And the world says, You mean you're saved and still waiting for salvation? Now make up your mind. Who's side are you on? Are you saved or are you not saved? And the Christian says, Yes, I'm saved.

But what I have now is nothing compared to what I'm going to have. So I'm stopped thinking about the salvation that shall be revealed when Christ comes back. And have you ever thought that a Christian was born on the earth and yet is a citizen of heaven? Now, I was born in the state of Pennsylvania, and therefore I'm an American citizen.

But I was born in the state of Pennsylvania, and therefore, I mean I was born here and am a citizen of the United States, but I was born again, and now I'm no longer a citizen of the United States in the same sense. I'm a citizen of another country. Paul tells us that.

And a Christian is trained in this, that he loves somebody that he's never seen, and is deeply in love with somebody that he never saw, drops down on his knees and raises his hand and looks into the face of somebody he can't see, and talks to him as if he could. And the world says, Well, he slips his foot. He is talking to somebody.

Who's he talking to? Nobody around. But he hears somebody say, Oh, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. And he's talking to somebody that's there, only the world looks and doesn't see anybody and says, What's the matter? The fellow is talking to himself.

No, sir. A Christian is a strange creature. Have you ever stopped to think that a Christian fears God but isn't afraid of him? You know, it's possible to be afraid of things, but the Christian has no such fear of God.

He gets right up into God's arms because he's God's child. We've had seven children die out, and there wasn't a one of them ever afraid of me. Never one of them.

In fact, I don't know, but maybe they went a little too far sometimes in their liberty. And even my 17-year-old daughter will be 18 next week, and I am afraid sometimes that she takes just a little too much liberty, but she isn't afraid of me. And I am not afraid of God, though I fear God.

And so the world said, Now, tell me, you Christian, are you afraid of God or not? He said, No. Do you fear God? Yes. Well, he says, That's a semantic distinction between fear and being afraid of it.

It's not a semantic distinction, that is a distinction in meaning only. It is an actual meaning. The heathen are afraid of their God.

They irritate their God the best they can. They tremble and they die for fear sometimes of a curse that's on them. The sheer psychosomatic death comes to them because they are afraid of their God.

But no Christian is afraid of God, he just fears God. The reverence of God with a high and beautiful reverence. And at the name of God he bows his head.

At the name of God he is still. At the name of God he rejoices. At all he is free to move into the presence of God.

Somebody said he and Luther prayed. It was an experience to hear him. They said, When he gets on these knees at first he prays with such awful reverence and Godly fear that you pity him.

But after he's prayed a little while he begins to break out into such boldness that you fear for him. He wasn't afraid of God, he was reverent, that's all. Amen.

And have you ever thought that if you fear God enough you don't have to be afraid of anything else? Do you know why some of you are scared to death about one thing or another? Because you don't fear God enough. Some of you go around and look at yourself in the glass and wonder if there is cancer forming in some place. Now, I'll tell you, I can't give you a cancer cure precisely, but I can give you a cure of fear of it, and that is fear God enough.

A Christian that fears God sufficiently never needs to be afraid of anything. That's what it is. And then he goes down in order to get up.

And when he refuses to go down, he's already on his way down. And as soon as he starts down, he's on his way up. Now, that's a contradiction I never could figure out, but it's a fact.

And that's why we have such trouble preaching this to people. It contradicts everything they learn, you know. And MacGuffey's just reading it.

It contradicts everything there is in the newspaper. But it's a fact that if you go down, you'll come out all right, but if you start up, you'll go down. Always it's so.

And why is this? It's because when you were born, you were born bad. And the only way God can redeem you is to contradict that badness, upset it, crucify it, destroy it, trample it underfoot, and leave you something new inside your heart. Now, they're telling us that we've got to be philosophers and scientists, and they're trying to equate Christianity with philosophy and science.

It's absolutely foolish even to try it. Because there's no similarity to any philosophy in the world in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul said back in the first Corinthian epistle that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.

But unto us which I say it is the power of God. It's written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. I'll tell you that's now closed.

It's all Brother Mason. He's here. He can hear it again.

But I was up in Canada in the end of our city last fall, and among the preachers there, that is, we two preachers and some missionaries and others, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, who followed Samuel Morgan in London and is now perhaps the outstanding evangelical of England, he preached a sermon on the authority of the Holy Ghost. I didn't know what I was going to get into there when I met this man. But I tell you, Brother, I haven't got over that sermon yet.

And years or more, some of the things he said. He said this. He said, all down through history the Holy Ghost has been sovereign in this church, and he won't let anybody else be sovereign.

He takes all the authority and demands it, and will have it. And if you take it away from him, he'll desert the church. He said, now history has shown that down through the years, down through the centuries, whenever the evangelical church got into a low state and needed a revival, usually a lot of learned brethren got together and said the trouble with the church is we're not respected intellectually.

So they began to write very heavy intellectual books. And to try to show that Christianity and philosophy were pretty close together, he said he told about the living movement that had tried that. He said in every single instance, God ignored them, poured the Holy Ghost out on some simple people and sent his revival.

He ignored the Oxford movement and sent the Holy Ghost on the Westridge and the rest, and thus they had their revival. There's a movement today abroad, I'm not going to name names, but I hope you're well-read enough to know who I'm talking about. They're my friends, too.

My friends. But they have the idea that our trouble is we're too ignorant. The trouble of you people is we don't have enough gray matter, and that Christianity is losing out because we don't have enough gray matter, we haven't enough education.

And they say that if we, from the standpoint of philosophy and science, can prove Christianity to be true, we'll win. Well, they were running high for a while, but watch out. God will pass them up, get you sure as you live.

For the wise man and the great man and the mighty man never had any standing before God Almighty. It's always the simple-hearted man, the lowly man, the humble man, who believes in the Savior at the right hand of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. You watch it now, you watch it.

Now, brethren, I won't stand here to prophesy. God will ignore this neo-orthodoxy, that part of their beliefs, at least marginal, but it's what I call evangelical rationalism. It is an attempt to explain Christianity in philosophical terms.

You can't know it, for it can't be done. It is a mystery. And no man knows anything unless it's been given to him from God.

And the simplest, hardest person in the state of Pennsylvania that believes in God and trusts his Son will have more understanding of things that matter than all of these learned brethren who are writing their great big books. For Christianity is a mystery, it is a wonder, it is in this world a contradiction, and it upsets us and backs us down and defeats us and humbles us. And we go forth in the strength of God Almighty, but as soon as we think we have some brains or we have some money or we have some talents or we have some gifts, as soon as we arrive there we begin to lose out.

And that's where we are today. The evangelical Church is trying to be like the world, and the result will be that in another short generation that same evangelical Church will be liberal, for we're moving toward liberalism in evangelical service. But you think that will be the end of the Church if the Lord says, Oh no, oh no, the Lord will find some little old freckled-faced fellow with ears like taxicab doors standing open, who may have never had much education in the Holy Ghost, will fall on him and he'll have to stand to contradict the world.

Not to be taken in by the world and kissed and loved, but to contradict the world and to tell the world it's sinful. And that's all in the revival that we need. But we'll never get it the other way.

Well, you're a funny bunch. You're a funny bunch. You're like a swan walking out on the sidewalk.

You're awkward and queer and out of place, and you don't belong here, and yet you're here. God wants you to tell the story while you're yet here. One of these days you're going to spread your wings and go where you'll be at home.

Glory to God, man, like a swan in the sea or like a night-hawk in the air, you'll be at home, and they'll understand you up there. And there won't be an archangel or a seraph that will come and look at you and call you crazy. They only do it down here, and the reason is you're born out of due time, and you're a citizen of heaven walking on the earth, and you're a strange contradiction.

And I pray to God Almighty you'll be a contradiction until you die. If you ever surrender and give up to the world, you've already lost your power. Well, that's enough.

Go on. Can I be pleased with the book of 1 Peter? 1 Peter. I'm deliberately going to preach and not reminisce or try to say a lot of things, because if I did, I'd be there at 1 o'clock, so I'm going to read the scriptures and preach.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Lithuania. He left. Do you think, does that sound as bad to you as it does to me? My teeth are in, but it sounds as if they weren't.

Is that water in back there? What are you saying in here? Anyplace at all? And the never and ever two of these alike, they're all different. Now I'll start again with verse 2. He elects according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the spirit, and through the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace unto you and peace, the mother's life. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath forgotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that faded not away, preserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein you gravely rejoice.

Though now, for a season it may be, you are in heaviness and manifold temptation, let the trial of your faith be much more precious than a bowl of service, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the hearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Him who, though now ye see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul. I have in mind particularly verse 6, wherein you gravely rejoice.

The Bible is very fair in its adjectives, and when it uses one, it is always a reason. He didn't say, wherein you rejoice. This is an adverbial, but it's a modifier.

And he says, wherein you gravely rejoice. Though now, for a season it may be, you are in heaviness through, and he could have said temptation, but he didn't. He said manifold temptation.

Now, that's what I want to talk about. He said in verse 5, unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. These Christians, to look for a state of things, faith for them, to all the New Testament Christians, faith was not a nickel in the slot, pull down the lever and take what you want and go and write a tract about it.

That's our idea of faith. But to the old Christians of New Testament times, faith was a telescope, and they looked afar off. And oftentimes death interrupted them while they were looking, and they died with a smile on their face, looking afar off and seeing the things that were to come, and thus they all died in faith.

Now, these Christians, to whom Peter wrote, Peter himself, looked for a state of things immeasurably better than anything we know now or they knew then. It was to be that state perfect and complete, and he that hath begun a good work will perfect it until the day of Christ. And it was to affect your body.

1 Corinthians 15 deals with that, but there's a time coming when we're going to have better bodies. We're very body-conscious people. We even have a new disease called psychosomatic disease.

Psycho means your nerves and mind, and somatic means your body. So, they teach us now that we get sick in our body because our mind is not well. And they think they've discovered something, and actually John the Beloved knew that some thousand years ago and wrote that, I pray that your soul may prosper, your body may prosper, even as your soul prospers.

He knew that. He knew all about psychosomatic long before these fellows from the universities knew about it. And the early Christians believed that there was a time coming.

Paul wrote about it in a long chapter in 1 Corinthians, when we'd have a body somewhat like our own, but glorified and like Jesus Christ, and immortal so it couldn't die, and incorruptible so it couldn't rot, and perfect so that you couldn't add anything to it like Jesus. Paul took a whole chapter to tell us about that. I didn't used to read that chapter with any great amount of interest, but I am very much interested in it lately, and I think you know why.

Because I am nearing a little nearer now than the time when I first was running around these grounds with my hair black and in place. And now what I have is gray, but where the rest of it is, God only knows I don't. Now, not only was the body to be affected for the better, but the mind and the soul also.

John told us that, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and we do not yet know what we're going to be like, but we do know this much. When he returns and we see him, we're going to be like him. Now, that's all I ask for, my brethren.

I don't ask for anything any more than that. For that reason, I am not going to write any books on the state of the body and the glorified condition, because I don't know very much about it. But I know that if we're going to be like him, that will be enough for all things and angels and seraphim and cherubim for all time to come.

And in Romans 8, Paul tells us that even the earth is going to be better off. He tells us that conditions at that time are going to be better, for he says, I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. So those Christians were looking forward to a time when even nature should be purified and we should be delivered from the curses round about us. There will be no tidal waves and no cloudbursts and no floods and no forest fires and no polios.

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