

Contradictions - That Incredible Christian

by A.W. Tozer

The Christian's life is a paradox of being dead and yet alive, strong and weak, poor and yet able to make others rich.

Duration: 42:17

Topics: "Contradictions"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses the analogy of a night hawk to illustrate the contrast between a Christian's behavior in the world and in their spiritual life. He explains that while a night hawk may appear awkward on the ground, it is graceful and charming in the air. Similarly, a Christian may feel out of place in worldly settings, but they are called to let their light shine before others. The preacher also discusses the paradoxical nature of a Christian's emotions, highlighting the ability to rejoice in heaviness. He emphasizes the importance of taking time to rest and seek God's guidance, as well as the power that comes from waiting on the Lord.

Transcript

I turn, please, to 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 it's one o'clock.

So I'm going to read the scriptures and preach. Peter and his Christ to the strangers gathered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Lithuania. Does that sound as bad to you as it does to me? My teeth are in, but it sounds as if they weren't.

Where do you stand here? Anyplace at all? In the never and ever to and fro is different. Now I'll start again with verse 2. He elects according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you and unto me multiply.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath forgotten us again, unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Incorruptible, undefiled, that faith is not always preserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be redeemed. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor unto Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love, in whom ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of

glory, receiving even the salvation of your souls.

Now, I have in mind particularly verse 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice. The Bible is very sparing in its adjectives, and when it uses one, there is always a reason. He didn't say wherein ye rejoice.

Well, this is an adverb, really, but it's a modifier. He says wherein ye greatly rejoice. Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through temptations, but he didn't, he said manifold temptations.

And 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 looked for a state of things.

Faith to 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 not faith.

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

Now, these Christians, Peter himself, looked for a state of things immeasurably better than anything that they knew then. It was to be that state, perfect and complete, and he that hath begun a good life, 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 a very body-conscious people. We even have a new disease called psychosomatic disease.

Psycho means your nerves and mind, and somatic means your body. It's now that we get sick in our body because our mind is not well. And they think they've discovered something.

And actually John 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 about psychosomatics long before these fellows from universities knew about it. And we, the Christians, believed that there was a time coming, Paul wrote about it in a long chapter in 1 Corinthians, when we were somewhat like our own, but glorified and like Jesus Christ, and immortal so it couldn't die, and incorruptible and perfect so that you couldn't add anything to it, and like Jesus.

And Paul took a whole chapter to 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'm a little nearer now than the time when I first was running around these grounds with my hair black and in place.

Half is gray, but where the rest of it is, God only knows I don't. Now, not only was the body to be affected, 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 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 any of 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, 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. And 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 good.

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. The earnest expectation of the creature waited 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, the glorious liberty of the children of God. So, those Christians were looking forward to a time when we would be purified and we should be delivered from the curses round about us. There'd be no tidal waves and no cloudbursts and no forest fires and no polio and no cancer and nothing on earth.

No memorial parks, which is a highfalutin name for a graveyard. But that the whole creation, the earth and all its creatures, should be delivered from the groaning bondage of death. And then society itself will be cleaned up and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters.

And you know that those Christians lived as a result in a state of optimism. Optimistic crowds, these early Christians, they were cheerful, they were alert and poised and the knowing is high and clear throughout all the New Testament after Calvary. Before Calvary there were sad, it would creep in even into the language of Jesus.

As when he said, you know, don't you, that the Son of Man is going up to Jerusalem to be betrayed. There 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, everything had in it the clear ring. There were no cracked liberty bells in the New Testament. They all rang clear the blue sky because they knew that salvation was ready to be revealed and they were looking for it.

There weren't too much they had here because they were looking for something to come. And he said, wherein ye greatly rejoice, that this note of rejoicing was in the New Testament and it's in historic Christianity. You find it all there.

The Christians, they were a singing group, my brethren. I have made something of a study, just from a layman's standpoint, of the other religions of the world. While they have some poetry and they do have some songs, there's nothing in any of the great religions that can even venture to be compared with the lyric beauty of the New Testament hymnology.

We sing in the New Testament and we sing because we can't help it. Jesus came to Mount of Olives and he said, I will sing among my brethren. When he rose from the dead, he sang among his brethren.

Paul 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 came, in any period of the church's history, they sang. They sang among the mystics.

Back in the days of Paul Gerhart, they sang in Luther's time and the Pope was scared to death of Luther's songs. He didn't hate Luther's theology half as bad as he sang. Singing themselves into Lutheranism.

He said they'll sing themselves into Protestantism if we don't look out. But what are you going to do with a fellow? You can't make him stop. You pull his tongue out and pull his teeth, he'll sing in his heart.

And if you sing inside, you're singing. I sing almost the time inside because I don't want to surround me to the necessity of hearing me sing vocally. So I sing inside.

I sing on buses, airplanes, and wherever I happen to be, there's a song inside, you know. Well, now, the historic church was a happy, singing church. Now, why? We greatly rejoiced.

Well, because of what she was looking forward to. But I want you to notice the contradiction. I've had it said about me that I contradict myself.

They say, Tozer is self-contradictory. But I want you to know if that is true as a very high compliment because I'm in apostolic succession. Our Lord Jesus Christ was forever contradicting himself.

That is, predicting himself. Actually, he never did. He just seemed to.

He said that, for instance, in one place, don't let anybody in your right hand know what your left hand's a place. He said, Let your light so shine 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.

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

You can understand them. They're not Christians anymore. And he says here, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now in a heaviness.

Ye rejoice in a heaviness, and ye are heavy and ye are rejoicing. Now, explain that to me, will you? You know, 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 it.

And a fellow said this. He said if Tozer was ever for anything, he'd have to tell what he wasn't, what he was against, in order to explain what he was for. I don't mind that because, you know, as long as everything's wrong, you've got to be against it.

But if it all started right, I'd be for it. If it 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.

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, lock, for the Lord said we were sheathing out cattle. As soon as you try to turn the flock, everybody says you're against everything.

Of course, I'm against sin, and I'm against worldliness, and I'm against the flesh, and I'm against Christianity that pretends to be Christianity and isn't this spiritual ignorance that is trying to harmonize Christianity with the world. It's absolutely futile. There was a day when our religious leaders were made fun of and laughed at and opposed, even taken to jail or driven out of town or whatever.

But nowadays, they're ridden on the shoulders of the mobs 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. I hate to make Christianity like the world.

Win them. Show that it's like them, only just a little higher, and pretty soon you will win. 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 the favor of man? And don't we know, as one man said, and he wasn't a Christian, but he just had sense enough.

You know, Christians, I've given her 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 any sense of proportion, no vision, no insight, no discernment, no knowledge, and we can be taken in and we put a fat check in 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 then people are helping to finance rascals that ought to be in jail and not to be allowed to be out at all.

We're dumb children. I don't understand them. Anyhow, this man said this, that it is one of the anomalies of history that has had to be converted by the saint that contradicted it the most.

Instead of that, we say, we make converting with the world and getting adjusted to it. And history shows that they make converts by contradicting the world. Jesus Christ stood to contradict and to oppose.

He was a protestor and a Protestant. A Protestant. And all the Church's great leaders have been protestors.

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

Now, though ye are in great heaviness, one version says, even though for a little time it is necessary, 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 in trouble. But remember, my brethren, that the power of the gospel of Christ, the power of the Church, always lies in its antitheses and never in its agreements. It always lies in its contradictions and never in its compromises.

If a man compromises one inch, he's lost some power. And if he compromises a little more, he's lost a little more power. He loses progressively more power until finally he has no power at all.

And that's what's wrong with the world now. Now, let me tell you a little bit about these strange persons, Christians, these strange people. And when they call you strange, don't let it bother you.

Even good enough Christians, they call you Holy Roller occasionally. I hope that. When we Alliance people got over being called Holy Rollers, we got 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, Tozer is a legalistic sanctificationist. Now, I didn't mind that at all.

I'd rather take that as a compliment. I'm a little too popular with some of my fundamentalist brethren. But this fellow, he rather scuttled my ship and sunk me there.

He said I was a 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, what is this about a Christian? You're queer. Well, I'll tell you, if you're a true Christian, 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. What is this about a Christian? That he's dead, and yet he lives forever. Now, that's an odd thing.

He says, I have died. 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'm dead. And the reason I'm alive is because somebody else died.

And they say, I knew they were all. I knew that the lid had blown somewhere when they joined that last church. 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, and they're living in the one that is living. And they all, oh, let's go fishing.

Let's give it up. There's no use, they say. And, you know, brother, if a Christian finds himself at home on the earth, he ought to have another dip.

Because the Christian belief, do you ever notice the swan down in New Jersey where I go to preach sometimes in New Jersey, Keswick. They have a big lake, two big lake swans. And these great big white swans, particularly the cub, that is the male swan, he'll come out on the bank, chase people away from his mates, chase them away.

When he's out on the water, he is a vision of loveliness. Pure, sparkling whiteness 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 he's got a big old hungover front end, bumps on the ground, and his legs stick out, and he's the weirdest looking thing. But let him get into the water and you'll look at it. Same with a nighthawk.

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 away that the whole front end of him tumbles over. And he's an ugly, awkward looking thing on the ground. But in the air, sundown, he's banking and turning and circling and diving and getting his 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 graceful. But he does why a Christian is very often awkward down on the world.

A Christian goes to a meeting somewhere where he has to be, maybe he's a businessman, he has to be, and everyone around him is a Christian. He's all out of place. He doesn't know what to do.

And you find yourself with a group of relatives, none of them converted, and 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. A Christian belongs up yonder, and still he's down here, and there's another contradiction.

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

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 and cuddles it up to himself, he'll lose it.

Jesus, our Lord, said that. And then have you noticed that he 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.

They can win by surrendering. There was an example in the Old Testament. A man named Jacob lived back there.

I always loved Jacob because he was about miserable and more or less, you know, when nature made him, she had a smile on her face and put him together rather loosely. And the crooked old guy that he was made him into Israel. But I haven't been made into Israel yet, but I'm still in the Jacob state.

But have you noticed that Jacob surrendered on the banks of the Pinal in order that he might win the next day down in the valley? He gave up and said, Oh, Lord, bless me or I won't let you go. He was hanging on the ropes asking God to bless him. And God blessed him and conquered Jacob.

He won over an angry, murderous Esau. And God always has it that way. In the world, they teach you how to 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 and die and surrender and give up and then go out and meet him, and when you meet him, he'll fall on your neck and kiss you the way Esau did. It's 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 think they're weak, they're strong.

So the Lord knows, you see, that's why we're so awkward. We're like swans out on the lawn walking around. We bump and wobble and we're just not, we don't belong down here.

We're strange people looking for that salvation which is ready to be revealed. And again, it's 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's poor, he makes his congregation rich. Now, that's a law 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, and Paul said he had nothing, yet everybody was rich around about him. That's the odd thing.

Have you noticed that a Christian is highest when he feels 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, he says amen and prays the Lord when he doesn't half mean it. And before nightfall, he's dragging the ground. But if he gets up from too much and feels low down and just looks to the Lord and trusts 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.

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 bad.

And the better a man is, the less he thinks of himself. You know that? I've preached sanctification and they blame you. They say, 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 to the thing 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. You hear a man say, I haven't sinned for 15 years, you know you're hearing a liar talking.

And as you hear, as soon as you hear a man or see a man talking about how a great 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 say, no, no, I'm not good, the Lord is good. But the bad people are prepared to say, yes, you can depend on me, you can trust me, I'm okay.

Well, there'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. Again, we have it. The only example of that I know of in the world is Washington, D.C., in our foreign aid.

This far away we'll get more, and we do get more, too, tongue lashings and cursings from the people we're helping. But back to where it belongs, phone in. Now, have you noticed, my brethren, that a Christian always has more when he gives, has less when he withholds more? You never know how much you're worth.

You say, how much is a man worth? Well, I don't know. But they tell me the average-sized man is worth 90 cents in the drugstore. That is, you can buy his component parts for 90 cents, but since inflation is so low, you're worth about \$1.13 in the market.

That's how much you're worth. But you're rich when you have much and when God gets it. Then have you noticed that a Christian sometimes does the most by doing nothing? That's always hard for me because by nature and temperament I'm always two steps ahead of everybody I'm walking with, always up in the morning before others, usually at least.

I'm like that. And I get ready my sermon long before time to preach it, start for the depot long before the train is due, and so on. That's temperament, 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? Disciples, come to your part and rest a while. Have you noticed 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, Wait. Peter said, Me, wait? I never waited five minutes in my life.

And it's all right, you wait. You'll get more done by waiting, by plunging in. I am fully convinced that if the Church of Jesus Christ were to call a moratorium on all this 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 fifty years.

We don't wait on God enough. But we've got to be active. The magazines, the worldly magazines now, are bringing out articles about why we should be active.

I picked up 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 an ex, with the pulpit only he didn't find it out until later, about why preachers are forsaking the pulpit. Well, the men say, we've got too much to do. Think what a preacher has to do and some of you laymen expect your preacher to be that.

A babysitter, a midwife, a tea-sipper, and a cake-eater, and a golf enthusiast, and a fishing, and a doorbell pusher, and a house-to-house canvasser, and a ecclesiastical administrator, and a poet, and an orator, and he's expecting to be all that. Well, nobody that good could come like that. The angel Gabriel would flunk that test, and yet you're expecting your preacher to do all that.

And the devil had church, the church thinks it's God, but I know who did it, I can smell, I know where it came from. Just like you smell a new car when it runs off the assembly line, I can smell 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 people.

And the result is you poor fellows rub or run your legs off down to your knees, running around doing things that God never told you to do in the New Testament, and get your orders from Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, and do what you're told and refuse to do what they want you to do. Well, what is this baloney that they force preachers to do? I haven't been but one to one or two wedding receptions in the last 25 years, that if I had a wedding Saturday night and then stayed around and heard stale jokes and off-color remarks and all kinds of things up until Sunday morning. So I married the couple, greeted the bridegroom and congratulated him and went home and went to bed.

Next. Oh yes, brother, they just think that you've got to always be busy. But there are times you 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, please, open your Bible, wait, wait there on me and let me talk to you. And then you'll get up from there with a new vision and a new understanding and you go out to do ten times as much as you would have before. Not only are there any new things for us to do, but they find a new subject to preach on.

By the grace of God, up to now, up to this moment, I have never done anything that I was supposed to. I make it a solemn obligation to myself and God and my congregation never to preach on that the world says I'm to preach on. Mama's Day, for instance, Mama's Day.

We're all mamas these days. Momism has captured. In Chicago, everybody runs around, you know, sniffing, blowing his nose, and chances are when he was at home where Mama was, he was a nasty scoundrel, but now he blows his nose and is misty-eyed about Mama.

I got up before my congregation this Mama's Day this year, and I thank me for not preaching about Mother, because I said I operate on a commission from God Almighty, and I can't find anything in the terms of my commission on Mother once a year. So I don't preach on Mother. I honor all good mothers.

But motherhood just makes you 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, 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. And yet we go around and they spend a whole day when they could be talking about Jesus Christ in the door. And I heard a fellow on the air preaching from the city of Chicago.

He told about a dear old preacher. He said that he was getting old and sick and one day he said to me, he said, my friend, I'm old and tired, and I'm in 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 Bible? When you're old you can't go back in your mother's womb and be born again. Didn't he know that? But he evidently hadn't. So the next day he said to me, and this brother said about him with a catch in his throat, he said he had gone back to the arms of his mother.

Imagine it, the Bible tells us that Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Not Mama's arms, but Abraham's arms. My mother's in my mother in heaven.

I'll greet her and thank God she's there. But I'm not going to be a mummy, down on my knees burning candles and all that. I don't to do with it.

See brethren, if you're going to have power you're going to have to stand in sharp order. I with it. brethren, if you're going to have power going to have to stand in order.

I don't to do with it. See brethren, if you're have power you're have to stand order. I with it.

with it. if you're have power stand in order. with it.

See brethren, if you're going to have power going to stand in order. I with it. that distinction between fear and being afraid of it.

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

They placate their gods the best they can. They tremble and they die for fear of a curse that's on them. It's fear, psychosomatic death comes to them, because they're afraid of their god.

But no Christian is afraid of God. He reverences God with a high and beautiful reverence, and at the name of God he bows his head. God he keeps still.

At the name of God he rejoices, but always he's free to move into the presence of God. Somebody said when Luther prayed, it was an expression. They said when he gets on his knees at first, he prays with such awful reverence and godly fear, 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 just reverent. 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 there's a death about one thing in another? Because you don't fear God enough. Some of you go around and look at yourself in the glass and wonder if there's a cancer forming.

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. The Christian that fears God sufficiently isn't afraid of anything. And then he goes down in order to get up.

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.

That's why we have such trouble preaching this to people. It contradicts everything they learn, you know. And MacGuffin's fifth reader, everything they read 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. And why is this? It's because when you were born, you were born bad.

And the only way God is to contradict that badness, upset it, crucify it, destroy it, trample it underfoot, and give you something new inside your heart. He's telling us that we've got to be philosophers and scientists, and they're trying to equate Christianity with philosophy and absolutely foolish even to try it, because there's no similarity to any philosophy in the world. Paul said back in the first Corinthian epistle that the preaching of the cross is foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

It's written, I will destroy the wisdom of nothing, the understanding of the prudent. I'll tell you this, and then I'll close. I told Brother Mason this, and he's here, and he can hear it again.

But I was in Canada with InterVarsity here last fall, and among the preachers there, that is, we two preachers and some missionaries and others, Martin Lloyd-Jones, who followed Campbell Morgan in London, is now the Outstanding Evangelical of England, giving 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 haven't got over that sermon yet. Here are some of the things he said.

He said this, "Through history the Holy Ghost has been sovereign in his Church, and he won't let anybody else be sovereign. He takes all the authority and demands it, and if you take it away from him he'll desert the Church. Now history has shown that down through the years, down through the centuries, whenever the Church, the Evangelical Church, got into a low state and needed a revival, usually a lot of learners would gather together and say, the trouble with the Church is we're not respected intellectually.

So they began to write very heavy intellectuals to try to show that Christianity and philosophy were pretty close together. He told about the different movements that had tried that. Every single instance God ignored them, poured the Holy Ghost out on some simple people and sent his revival.

The Oxford movement sent the Holy Ghost on the Westleys and the rest, and thus they had their revival. Now there's a movement today abroad with the same 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 with you people is you don't have enough gray matter, and that Christianity is losing because we don't have enough gray matter, we don't have enough education. And they say that if we, from the standpoint of Philost, can prove Christianity to be true, we win! Well, they're running high for a while, but watch out.

They are up just as sure as you live, for the wise man and the great man and the mighty man never had any standing. It's always the simple-hearted man, the lowly man, the humble man who believes in a Savior at the right hand of God's Ghost. You watch it now, you watch it.

Brethren, I want to stand here to prophesy. God will ignore this neo-Orthodoxy, that's part of their beliefs, at least marginal, but it's what I've called evangelical rationalism, an attempt to explain Christianity in philosophical terms. You can't do it, for it can't be done.

It is a lie. And no man knows anything unless it be given to him from God. And the simplest-hearted 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 people writing their great big books.

For Christianity is a mystery. It is in this world a contradiction. And it upsets us and backs us down and defeats us, tumbles us.

And we go forth in the strength of God Almighty. But as soon as 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 why the evangelical Church is trying to be like the world.

And the result will be that in another short generation, the evangelical Church will be liberal! For we're moving toward liberalism in evangelical circles. But you think that'll be the end of the Church if the Lord carries on? No. The Lord will find some little old freckled-faced fellow with a decap door standing open, who maybe never had much education, and the Holy Ghost will fall on him, and he'll stand in 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 fellow will bring the revival that we need. But we'll never get it the other way.

Well, you're a funny bunch. You're like a swan walking out on the sidewalk. You're awkward and queer, and you don't belong here, and yet you're here.

God wants you to tell this story while you're yet here. One of these days you're going to spread your wings and go where you're going. Glory to God, and then, like a swan in the sea or like a nighthawk in the air, you'll be at home and there.

And there won't be an archangel or a seraph that'll come and look at you and call you crazy. They only do it down here, and the reason is time and you're a citizen of heaven walking on the earth, and you're a strange contradiction. And I pray to God, though, I'll meet you until you die.

If you ever surrender and give up to the world, you've already lost your power. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/5/SID5706.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/contradictions-that-incredible-christian/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net