

# Epistle to the Romans

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming discouragement and experiencing supernatural joy in witnessing, which comes by deep inward release and the presence of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 28:48

**Scripture:** Joshua 1:9, Psalm 32:5, Psalm 51:7-12, Matthew 11:15, Luke 1:68-69, Ephesians 2:8-9, Ephesians 3:20-21

**Topics:** "Romans"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God to a defeated and bound audience. He uses the example of a young man who realized the ineffectiveness of traditional prayers and sought a deeper experience with God. The preacher highlights the power that God has given to his people to win souls, but emphasizes that this power is only effective in the hands of a delivered and happy people. He concludes by emphasizing the role of joy in the lives of believers, stating that the joy of the Lord is the strength of his people.

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## Transcript

Chapter 2 and 3, chapters 2 and 3, you will find the same verse, the same statement made three, in the second, in the third, a total of seven times. In the opening of the second chapter, to the church at Ephesus, he says to the church, I know, and I have, and I will. Then he says, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

He repeats that six times, making a total of seven. The Lord is speaking to his church out of heaven to his church, our victorious human brother, in God's presence for us now, is speaking to us for our good admonishment, speaking through his word. And if you will read in the Philippians these words, where he says, Our Lord, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God? But he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Lest we imagine that that is written of a God, of God, we point out in the 2nd chapter of Hebrews that that is written of a man who is also God.

We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. We see him crowned with glory and honor. But before being crowned with glory and honor, he was made for a little time lower than the angels, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him that it was appropriate for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Wherefore, in all things he behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Now, that's our victorious Lord, our victorious human brother. I have said many times that it would be no great news if we were to say that God was victorious. But what we read in the New Testament is that he has joined his nature to the nature of man and has made a man victorious so that men might be victorious in that man.

And he has made him to be head of the Church, and he is in the meanwhile waiting for his return, guiding and keeping and instructing his Church. And he is doing it by the Spirit through the word, the word as heard by men of spirit. Now, last Sunday we heard him speak to new Christians what the head of the Church would say to new Christians if he were writing to us as he wrote through Paul, and we stayed close by the scriptures so that what we were saying would not be an introduction of human ideas but the Lord's own word.

Tonight we are going to hear what the Lord would have to say to discouraged Christians. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Lord saith unto discouraged Christians. Now somebody asks me, but should the true Christian ever know discouragement? Well, whether a true Christian should know discouragement or not, I can't tell you.

But they all do that I can tell you. Look at Joshua, the first chapter. That was a mighty soldier, that man Joshua.

And throughout that early part of the chapter, God is telling Joshua, Joshua, don't be scared, don't be discouraged, be of good spirit, have good courage, I'll be with you, all through. Why did he say this? He wasn't saying it to a little hen-pecked, undernourished fellow that was afraid to be shadowed. He was saying it to a soldier, a believer in God upon whom the Spirit had come.

And he warned him and urged him, don't be afraid, but be of good courage. So I say, I don't know whether a Christian should get discouraged, but I know they do. And if you will read the prophets of the Old Testament, why they got discouraged, one man said, I've decided to quit preaching.

So he went out of the ministry. And then he admitted, he said, while I was musing, the fire burned, then spake I with my tongue. Got his courage back and went back into the pulpit again.

And look at the Psalms. David admitted that he had wet his pillow with these tears many a night. According to what I read in the Psalms, the maid that took care of David's bed must have had to take off the slip from the pillow many a morning and wring it out, because David wept through the night because of a heavy heart and discouragement.

Look at those of the New Testament, and look at the epistles where we are told all the way through that we are not to be discouraged or defeated, but keep our spirits up. Now, what is the effect of discouragement? That's particularly what I want to talk about and how to be delivered from it. What's the effect of discouragement? Well, if it's allowed to become chronic, it causes persistent defeat.

Now, nobody wants to hear this, I'm sure. That is, there are other Christians who don't want to hear it, but it's a fact. Most Christians are defeated.

They have a deep, inward defeat. In the life of the individual Christian and in the company that is the Church, a perpetual defeat is a very evil thing. Christians are socially cordial, but there is that unspoken and unadmitted thing that we won't talk about.

Inwardly heavy-hearted, beaten and defeated. Inwardly bound and shackled and deeply unhappy and a little bit frightened. And yet we're Christians.

Now, I say that this kind of thing affects the prevailing mood of the company. And the prevailing mood of such a company is set in a low, mournful key. The prevailing mood then is gloom, but it is unadmitted.

I'm quite sure that the average Church is not happy, but that the unadmitted mood, the key you are set in, is not a high, bright, happy key, but it's a low, growling key, a gloomy key. And then the Churches try to dispel this by a number of methods. One of them is by multiplying activities.

We're just so active, we Christians, we run in circles and chase each other around until you just look up anywhere, you'll see the back of a good saintly brother's neck on his way to going somewhere or see him coming from somewhere. We try to dispel our deep unhappiness by being very active, but the fact is it doesn't work. Or we try to do it by the introduction of religious fun.

That's been our method in the last few years. Instead of having a victorious inward life, we have a defeated, heavy inward life, and they can only keep from breaking down and really having a crying time by having some religious entertainment. Now, somebody says to me, Mr. Tozer, why don't you stop preaching to Christians and preach to sinners? Let's get people converted.

Two answers to that question. One is Psalm 51. Listen.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities, and create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and then will I teach transgressors the way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. That's answer number one.

Answer number two is, enough people are being converted here week after week in their presence, and many of them here tonight would be glad to get up and say so, who were not pressed into it by my urging, but who were brought into it by happy Christians they work with. So you see, if the Christians got inward release and freedom of spirit and got delivered from discouragement and that chronic, persistent, heavy-hearted spirit, the people would come to them because they would see they had what they wanted. Now, there is a great futility in defeated Christians trying to win souls.

It doesn't work, and it never has worked. You can make parasites that way, or you can bring in people cling, but you can't possibly make real Christians that way. The average effort to win men in the churches that I know is like a discouraged soldier trying to fight, a soldier who knows that he can't win and knows his country is already defeated, and yet he goes out obediently trying to fight.

He can hardly lift his gun, and yet he is going to be faithful if he dies in the effort, and he tries. But he certainly is not a very good sample of a soldier, or is like a salesman who hasn't any confidence in his own product. So he goes timidly to the door, and when the lady of the house opens the door and stands there, he says, You wouldn't want to buy one of these, would you? And of course he makes it easy for her.

She says no, and they are both agreed, and he goes off thanking her and repeats it at the next place. Well, he is a defeated salesman, you see. You can't believe in your product, you have to have it.

I smile, and yet it's a pretty serious business, that very serious-minded man, Charles G. Finney, the greatest evangelist since Paul, in my estimation. This man once was at a prayer meeting, and he wasn't a converted man, he was a young lawyer in the city. Somebody asked him during the prayer meeting, Would you like us to pray for you, Mr. Finney? And he stood up, and with the precision and logic that characterized his law cases and then characterized his preaching, he said, My friends, you have asked me whether I should like to have you pray for me.

And I appreciate your kindness and your good intentions, but my answer is no. And I will tell you the reason that I don't want you to pray for me. I have been attending your Wednesday night prayer meetings now for quite a number of weeks, and I have heard you pray for a great many things.

And I have observed that not one of them came to pass. Obviously God is not answering your prayers, and therefore when you ask, Do you want me or us to pray for you? My answer must be no, because God is not answering your prayers, and therefore there would be no use to waste them on me. I thank you.

And the young later to be evangelist went out of the meeting. I suppose that some of those old deacons stared him down, but he was right about it nevertheless. They were a defeated crowd, and they mumbled through their same old prayers, Wednesday night after Wednesday night, and this sharp-eyed young chap saw that nothing resulted from it, and so he said, Don't bother.

So God later converted him in the morning and baptized him as the Holy Ghost at noon, and he went out to be the greatest of all evangelists. But the effort to win souls, the preaching constantly in soul winners to people that are inwardly defeated and bound, it's like the inmates of a T.B. sanitarium holding a street meeting out in front, saying to the passersby, Come in and join us. We'd like to have you come in.

Well, they'd say, I'm doing better out here, I'm not in the sanitarium. So we'd be beaten, defeated Christians, inwardly bound, and our smiles are a waxy, sticky effort to be happy, when inwardly we're not happy, even though we say we've been saved. Then we'd say, Now, let's have a campaign.

So we'd stand out and say, Come on in. Come on in for what? Come on in and get what we have. And the average sinner, if he had any sense, would say, I don't want it.

Who won you? Who won you, brother? Wasn't it some victorious Christian I asked you? Wasn't it some victorious Christian that won you? Wasn't it somebody with a sparkle in his eye, and somebody that was maybe a bit different, but he wasn't saying the same words over and over again. He had been somewhere and had seen something and experienced something and he was feeling something. Isn't he the one that

brought you to the Lord? I'm quite sure.

Often we can't win others because they don't have respect to our Christian profession. Let's face up to this. Let's not hide now and say, We shouldn't bring these things up.

I remember preaching some years ago over at Beulah Beach, and I told them the truth, and I mentioned the Christian Missionary Alliance by name. I was preaching to Christian Alliance people, and they of course got to discussing it afterward. That's one thing they usually do, discuss what I say anyhow.

And so they were discussing it, and one of the big leaders, he opined, sadly, that this might be true, what Tozer is saying, but he shouldn't tell the public. Oh, brother, the public knew that long before. So don't you worry a bit about telling the public.

The public knows it. John Wesley said that there is never anything lost or any harm done by confessing our wrongs and sins, but he said, the great wrong is covering them up. So when I say that the average Christian effort is like a street meeting in front of a TB sanatorium put on by the patients, and then because they don't come in, we wag our heads and say, So treated they the prophets which were before us.

The simple fact is that they don't want what we have. They don't respect our Christian profession, and we can't disguise our inward poverty. We're cordial.

We even teach our ushers how to smile and how to be cordial, but people know the difference. Why, a brush salesman will do the same thing. A man came to our door the other day, and he was from some other country, and he had a very thick accent, and he couldn't even pronounce the word brush right.

But I finally caught it. He was a brush salesman. Well, we can go and smile.

They tell us how to do it, you know. They tell us how to go to the door, and when a middle-aged woman comes to the door and says, Good morning, Miss, could I see your mother? And of course he's sold his product right there. So he's made at least one sale.

She blushes with joy and runs for her pocketbook. They teach us that, and you can teach that in the Church. And some people are used to that, and they wonder why some people don't fall all over them when they come to Church and run all after them.

Well, maybe those people are just Christians or want to be sincere. They're not feeling particularly up, and so they're not going to act up. Well, there's a power in supernatural joy, my brethren, a power in it.

John 20, let's look at that a little bit. This will make the Pope sweat, but let's read it. Then the same day of the evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he showed them his hands and his sides. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Here they were, hidden away, and rather I imagine gloomy, certainly I don't think I'm overstating it, but the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them, Peace be unto you, as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, then he breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. You see, I give you my joy, I

give you my spirit, I send you as I was sent, and whoever you win will be won, and whoever you fail to win will be lost.

You see it, don't you? Nobody with keys and a long robe and a shaved head, nobody formally put up here, no priest or somebody that's supposed to forgive sins, I remit your sin. No, no. He said they were glad when they saw the Lord, and he said, Now I breathe on you, I give you the Holy Ghost, I give you my joy, and now go in them and you'll win them, they're won and their sins are forgiven.

So the Lord has put in the hands of his people a tremendous power, but he's put himself in the hands of a delivered people, not a defeated people, of a happy people, not an unhappy people. You know what the poet said about Paul and Silas in their prison, saying, Of Christ the Lord arisen, and an angel's arm of might smote the prison gates at night. I wonder if they had been talking over in a deep, heavy spirit how defeated they were, I wonder if the angel would have come.

But they broke into song, and when they broke into song, the Lord came and delivered them. Dr. Simpson wrote, The joy of the Lord is the strength of his people, the sunshine that scatters their sadness and gloom, a fountain that bursts in the desert of sorrows and sheds o'er the wilderness gladness and bloom, gladness and bloom for sadness and gloom. Hear it? The Holy Spirit, the joy of the Lord, makes the difference between sadness and gloom and gladness and gloom.

Well, but you can't just work it up, you know, it doesn't come that way. We try to work it up, but it doesn't work it up. God's poor people trying to prime the pump.

And if that doesn't work, we paint the pump. And if that doesn't work, we festoon the pump. If that doesn't work, we spend a lot of money fixing up the pump.

But it's the same old dry well. The joy of the Lord, he says, when you give us the Holy Spirit, and he shall be in you a well of water springing up unto eternal life, and a mighty poor pump will bring up the water if you've water there. And that will be even an old rusty pump and a plain-looking pump, if you've got the water.

But you can paint your pump and festoon your pump and call your pump by a new name and call it Operation Rusty Pump and spend a hundred thousand dollars on it, and when you're finished, you've still got a rusty pump without water. But the joy of the Lord is the strength of his people, a sunshine that scatters their sadness and gloom. And I tell you, you can't just work it up.

It comes by deep inward release. You hear me? Release. Some Christians are like political prisoners.

They're God's people, but they're in a prison. They're alive and they're loyal, but they're despondent and weak. I think of a political prisoner put in prison by some dictator or despot, and that prisoner hasn't shaved and he hasn't bathed and his hair doesn't grow and he doesn't get enough to eat and he's yellow from not having seen any sunshine and he's weak for lack of exercise, but he's loyal and he's alive.

And that's two things you can say for him. And a lot of us evangelicals, the only two good things you can say about us is we're loyal and we're alive. But we've been the prisoner of our own gloom and the prisoner of our own discouragement and the prisoner of our own defeat.

And so we're despondent and weak. Well, the scripture says Christ has come to set us free. Now, I believe that.

Let me read here what it says. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. Now, this is the New Testament.

For he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began, that he should, we should be saved from our enemies, that enemy that you won't talk about and don't tell anybody about. Try to smile and cover up, but he's there eating at your heart. We should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us.

And that we, he would grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemy should serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness. You hear me? In holiness and righteousness. Holiness has to do with my inward condition.

Righteousness has to do with my outer conduct. So being delivered and without fear, we become holy and we live righteously all the days of our lives. Thou child, thou shalt be called the prophet of the highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercies of God, whereby the day spring from on high has visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.

That's what it says in Luke 1, 67-78. Is this for us? Is it true that we could be as a church a happy church, a people lifted up and inwardly released, a people happy from a spring of happiness within us? Well, now I want to read something here, a testimony of a young woman. I asked her permission and she granted it.

But of course the name will not be given here. She can give this testimony sometimes she wants to, publicly. But she wrote me this, and I just want to read bits of it, not all of it, but a little bit of it.

I'm glad for this because it seemed as if God's work here is all with men. We've got so many young men who are finding the Lord and coming about. A young fellow came down to the front this morning to talk with me and told me what a wonderful blessing he'd had here.

I think he said two people in his own works or where he goes to school or something, I didn't catch that too closely, who had been saved. So the young men have come. But here's a young lady who writes me this.

She wrote a nice little card for our wedding anniversary and included this letter. She said, she thanked the Lord by bringing you as a vessel to awake us out of our utter spiritual misery and darkness unto a glorious victory in Jesus Christ. Now here's a young mother, young mother, with at least one child, but a young mother.

My heart is filled to overflowing, she says. Oh, the miracle he has performed in my life. Praise the Lord, oh my soul, and all that's within me, praise his holy name.

We were a sheep wandering without a shepherd from church to church, so unsatisfied and with a terrible emptiness and longing. Then we came over to the Avenue Road Church, and I went to the inquirer room in terrible agony of soul. I knew so much in my head, but I had no real assurance of salvation in my heart.

I remember you shocked me with the question, Is your husband being unfaithful to you? And I snapped back, Of course not. Then you said, Well, if you can trust him so completely and have such utter faith in him when he's only a man, how come you can't trust Almighty God who cannot lie? She said that, and told me to go home and read Isaiah 54. That was the beginning of a long struggle and fight.

But praise the Lord, victory has finally come, and what a wonderful, blessed miracle! To me it has been so much more glorious than just being born again. Then she says, I don't think that sounds exactly right, but you will understand what I'm trying to say. Well, I know exactly what she means.

I gave a word of testimony one Wednesday evening, and this was when I knew that the Holy Ghost had come in. And there just aren't words adequate to express the wonder of God's miracle in our lives. She says, Our sometimes and I sometimes.

I assume she means her husband. I know he's going on, too. Then the continued filling and growing, she says.

Then, oh, it is so wonderful, the liberty and freedom we have in Jesus. When the Holy Spirit is in you, the words just flow out.

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