

'God Is Wisdom'

by A.W. Tozer

The doctrine of Eternal Wisdom teaches that God is wisdom, and that this wisdom is incarnated in Jesus Christ, who is the power and wisdom of God, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:22

Topics: "Spiritual Identity", "Eternal Wisdom"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes that God embodies wisdom, drawing from biblical texts to illustrate that true wisdom is found in Christ, who is both the power and wisdom of God. He argues that the concept of Eternal Wisdom is deeply rooted in Hebrew scripture, predating Greek philosophy, and is essential for understanding the nature of God and our existence. Tozer calls for a deeper engagement with this truth, urging believers to recognize their spiritual identity and the eternal purpose of their lives, rather than being consumed by material concerns. He challenges the audience to embrace their divine heritage and live in accordance with the wisdom that comes from God, which is revealed through Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes with a call to transformation and a deeper relationship with God.

Transcript

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In the book of 1 Corinthians first chapter verses 22 to 24, Paul says, The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks, foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. And then Colossians 2:2 and 3, Paul prays, or indicates his desire that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Now, as some of you know, this is the second in a series of Sunday evening messages to be called "The Voice of Eternal Wisdom and I don't mind telling you that this should be given by a fire-baptized scholar. We need an Anselm or an Augustine. We don't have it. A large book should be written about this voice of Eternal Wisdom; none has been written. I know of none in the last 100 years.

And Christians should be exposed to this truth. Not over a period of a half dozen Sunday nights, but for a long, long time. We should sing about it, pray about it, preach about it, understand it from the Scriptures until it becomes a part of our lives. And I have nobody to guide me much, because nobody's written on the subject much. But my heart has stirred me up to talk about it. And I shall do the best I can. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt illuminate us and enlighten our mind. For they are dark, and we pray with thy servant, Thy blind servant, what in us is low, raise and support. What is dark, illuminate, that to the height of this great argument we may assert Eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man. We pray that Thou wilt help us as believers this evening to throw our hearts open to the Voice of Eternal Truth. And we pray for the unsaved man who's out of the fold living for the flesh. We beseech Thee that thou talk to him too and may he decide that he ought to be a follower of Christ. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Now, last Sunday night I said that there is in the Old Testament and in old Hebrew literature, a doctrine called, well I've called it the doctrine of Eternal Wisdom, but it is the doctrine of wisdom. And it is a Hebrew concept. It is this, that somewhere, out there, in God and with God and beside God and yet being God, there is an afflatus, a fullness of wisdom of word and idea and concept and expression of that wisdom and word and idea. And we find it of course in the New Testament in John the first chapter, particularly. And up until not too long ago, I had to somehow, to try to twist myself out of a bit of a dilemma. I had been told that the doctrine of the Logos, the Logos, the Word, where John says, in the beginning was the Word, that that was a Hebrew concept borrowed from the Greeks. And I didn't know why John would borrow a concept from the Greeks. But if he did, and the Holy Ghost wanted to borrow from the Greeks, I wasn't going to complain, or at least, I kept my heart right about it.

But you know, a further study of all this shows me that that's liberalism that teaches that. It is not, simply not true. The doctrine of the Word, the Eternal Idea, the Eternal Thought, is a Hebrew concept. Look at David's Psalm 33:6. Now look, what David said here, by the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. Now, that's quite different from the idea that God made everything by hand. Here it says, He made it by mouth. He made it by the breath of His mouth, by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made. That's 33:6 of the Psalms written by the man David. And that was written 1000 years before Christ, around 1000, maybe a little over.

And then, in the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, we find the same idea of that Eternal Wisdom which gave birth to everything. We find it in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, particularly. And that was about 1000 years before Christ. And then in the book of Job, which was written at the very least 900 years before Christ, and most people think it's the oldest book of the Bible, which would put it of course, way beyond that, so that Job believed the doctrine of the Eternal Word, the Eternal Wisdom, at least 900 years before Christ. And Solomon believed it and wove it into his proverbs and into the Book of Ecclesiastes, 1000 years before Christ. And David taught it not only in the text I have quoted, but all through his Psalms at least 1000 or more years before Christ, but now it was introduced into Greek thought, only 600 years before Christ by an old chap named Heraclitus.

So, Heraclitus was at least 400 years later than Job was or Solomon or David, so that the Christian doctrine of the Eternal Logos, the Eternal Word is not the Greek concept borrowed by the Holy Ghost. It is a Hebrew concept which dates way back, long before the Greeks ever began to think about such a matter at all. So therefore, shake your head and see if you can shake some of the fog out. And the next smart fellow you meet that tells you that you're a follower of Plato and Platonism and that the ideas of the New

Testament particularly the book of John, were borrowing from the Greeks, you tell them that you happen to know that before old Heraclitus was ever born, who in the mature life introduced into Greek thought the idea of the Word, that it had been believed and taught by David and Solomon and Job and the prophets long, long before there was any Greek idea about it.

Now my Brethren, the teaching of the Old Testament on this is that there was a creative impulse, that God had an idea, that God had a thought. And you know, when you get to thinking about it, Scriptures come to your mind. I know the thoughts that I think about you, saith the Lord. And My thoughts are not as your thoughts. As the heavens are higher above the earth so are My thoughts high above your thoughts.

Well then, John and Paul were illuminated to see this. In the Gospel of John, in the beginning was the Word, which was just what the man David had said. The Word of the Lord, by that Word were the heavens made and all the hosts then by the breath of His mouth. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And I said and repeat that the idea of this Eternal Wisdom which was with the Father, and looked at another way, He was the Son. And looked at another way, was the Fountain, the Creative Fountain out of which everything came. That was the teaching of the Old Testament Hebrews, the old fathers, the rabbis, and the old men of God who lived and studied the Scriptures. And John simply picked it up, not from the Greeks, I repeat, but from the Hebrews.

And then Paul was illuminated in Colossians 1:15 and 17 to see the same thing. He said, Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him.

Now, that's what Paul said about it. And this was the flowering of the Old Testament teaching. It flowered over into the New Testament. And so, Jesus Christ came, who was Himself that Eternal Wisdom. And He took upon Him the form of a man and He was incarnated in mortal flesh, and he walked among men. And they said, how hast this man learning, having never been to school? And He needed not that any man come and snitch on anybody else, because He Himself knew everything that was in man. And at twelve years old, He put the doctors to flight and asked them questions which they couldn't answer, and answered questions which they asked Him. And Paul says that the Jews were after signs, and the Greeks were after wisdom, but Jesus Christ is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. And in Him, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden away.

So, my brethren, don't you see that this doctrine, this beautiful doctrine of the Presence of something the old mystics called her. They said was a woman and I'll show you in the Old Testament that, they're almost the same thing. And they're called her Sophia, which of course is to make her equal with wisdom. So, if your name happens to be Sophie, well, that's where you got it Sister. And we hope that you're touched with some of that divine wisdom. But I asked you to notice here now what the the prophets taught, what the men of God back there taught. They said, the Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth. That's Proverbs 3:19. By understanding, He hath established the heavens. Jeremiah 10:12, He hath established the world by His wisdom and has stretched out the heavens by His discretion.

Now here are three triads. There's the earth, the heavens and the world, founded and established and stretched out, done by wisdom and understanding and discretion. Now, I wouldn't stand here and say it, but I have a perfect right to believe it. And I do believe that this is a hint at the Trinity. This is the Old Testament doctrine. Here is the earth, which was founded by wisdom; the heavens, which were

established by understanding, and the world, was stretched out by discretion. And if you read Job, Ecclesiastes, the Book of Proverbs, you will find that this wisdom and understanding and discretion was a person, that this was a person; that it was somebody that you wooed and won. It was something, an afflatus, a holy oil that God poured out on people. You find that there. And all, that same thing David said when he said, by the Word of the Lord, and by the breath of His mouth.

Now, I read out, a little out of an old book called, "The Wisdom of Solomon" last week, and I was very careful to show you that the wisdom of Solomon is not an inspired book in the sense that the Proverbs is an inspired book, but it represents the good word. Nobody would complain if I were to quote from Spurgeon. Nobody would complain if I were to give you a paragraph from D.L. Moody. Nobody would care at all if I were to stand up here and say, this is what Augustine said. Here's what Luther said. Nobody would complain about that. They were the fathers. We would skip Moody on that. But they were they were the fathers. And we would say, while that's what they said, it wasn't inspired. It represented a distillation or a condensation of truth from the inspired Scriptures.

So, I want to quote from a book called Ecclesiasticus, not Ecclesiastes, but Ecclesiasticus. It was written about 200 years before Christ. And here is what the brother said. Now, he wasn't writing as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; neither was Augustine or Luther. But he was giving the beliefs in the teachings of the fathers, about what the inspired Scriptures taught. And here's what this sole gentleman said. He said, all wisdom coming from the Lord, and is with Him forever. Who can number the sands of the sea and the drops of rain and the days of eternity? Who can find out the height of heaven and the breadth of the earth and the deep of wisdom? Wisdom hath been created before all things. And if you wonder about that word, created before all things, you'll find it again in Colossians 1:15, where it says, who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. And some have tried to make out that that meant that Jesus was a creature. It means nothing of the sort. That idea of first born, it's first born from the dead. And Jesus Christ is the first born, in that He, out of the dead, He's the firstborn of the creation, because, what He is, the creation sometime will be. And what He is, you and I are going to be. And what He is, He's going to make this world over in His image.

Now, I scorned to spend any time on the Sputnik. I don't want to bother with that hunk of hardware, because I don't think it's worthy of my attention as a preacher of the Word. But the reason I'm not disturbed about satellites and all that is, that all this is temporary anyhow, for the heavens shall be dissolved with a great noise and shall melt with fervent heat. And we look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. And when God's busy melting down the universe, He won't need to mind melting down an extra hunk of Russian hardware. It will be easy to do, and if by that time, brother John Foster Dulles has got one up, why, He'll melt that one down too. We won't have to worry about it.

And that's why I don't get excited and stampede and start preaching sermons about it. I can't because I see that all wisdom cometh from the Lord and is with Him forever. And who can number the sands of the sea and the drops of rain and the days of eternity? Who can find out the height of Heaven and the breadth of the earth and the deep and wisdom? Wisdom hath been created before all things and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. The Word Most High is the Fountain of Wisdom, the Word of God Most High, and Her ways of everlasting commandments. To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? There is One, wise and gravely to be feared, Jehovah sitting upon His throne. He created her and saw her and numbered her and poured her out upon all His works.

You know, there's a Christian answer for almost everything. And while I don't go into it, I think that we Christians have some answers. We wonder how the wild bird finds its way north in the spring and south in the fall? We wonder how the The Orchard Oriole and the Baltimore Oriole managed to build their beautiful swinging nest. We wonder how the bee finds its way across the meadows to its hive. We will wonder about what men call instinct. I believe, and there are some verses I'll quote maybe later on in my series where that it says that God poured wisdom out upon His creation. And I believe that what the bee has is a touch from the Hand that made the bee.

Now don't look down your nose and say, what does God care about a bee? God made that bee didn't He? And also, God made the birds. And He even says in one place why you're dumber than the ox that knows his master's crib and the bird that knows her nest. And my people do not know, neither do they consider, they, made in the image of God, had lost the wisdom, but the very lower creation has that wisdom. That's why I don't worry about the universe. It'll run all right. God has poured out that wisdom upon all His creation. So everything works alright and everything does all right because God made it that way.

Now, this is the doctrine. This is the doctrine of the Eternal Wisdom, which was incarnated in Jesus Christ. And that's why He's so hard to understand. A man named Bruce Barton one time, wrote a book called, A Man Nobody Knows. I read that book and came to the conclusion that there was at least one man that didn't know Him, and that is Bruce Barton. Because he was writing about somebody. Somebody sent the book to me, an editor and said, Will you review, will you review this book? Well, I wrote back and said, Bruce Barton, writing about Jesus Christ would be exactly the same as Esau writing about Jacob. They just couldn't make it. There was something that he didn't understand.

This fellow Jacob, he wasn't a nice chap, and he certainly wasn't a straight fellow at first. God had to straighten him out. He's name was, supplanter. He was crooked. But, he was touched with divine wisdom. The great God Almighty had reached down with His wand and touched his shoulder and said, rise, Jacob, and Jacob, got up Israel. He had a wisdom given to him. And Esau, a far nicer chap than he was; and was more socially acceptable than he was, nicer to live around, if you could stand the smell. He smelled of the field you remember, which the Lord has blessed and it's all right in the field, but it's not so good in the house and he came in with that smell on him.

And the fellow, Esau, a nice chap, lived in the flesh and died in the flesh. And Jacob, who wasn't as nice a fellow had seen light and he had been illuminated and the Divine Wisdom had touched him. And Jacob came out all right, and became a prince with God. And men and women today name their babies Jacob, but they never name their babies Esau, because Esau, the name Esau is of the flesh and belongs in the flesh. And yet he was a nice chap.

Well, there we have it, my brethren. It's the root of it and the base of it. It's the old Hebrew doctrine that God is wisdom. And we sing it in our song, God is wisdom, God is love. And you will find it all through your Bible; run the references as we say. Go to your concordance, and you will be enlightened and illuminated and delighted. Perhaps even ravished as you see how back before Mary ever had her baby, back before ever the little baby Jesus wailed his tiny protest to the world in Bethlehem's manger, way back before that in what the theologians called pre-incarnation times. Jesus Christ was, and He was the Wisdom of the Father. He was of one substance with the Father, equal with the Father, as ancient as the Father, eternal with the Father, having all the attributes of the Father, He was the Father's outgoing, He was the Father's expression. And that's what the book of John says, in the beginning was the Word and everybody knows the Greek students have an awful time. What a deal of throwing around of brains takes place when some

fellow starts to translate John, because John went so far up and so far in, that it takes a lot of sanctified imagination to understand John. Most people don't have sanctified imaginations. They'll just settle for a footnote. And that's about as far as we go.

Well, now what do we learn from all of this? What is this? Is this Christianity? Of course, this is Christianity. In our day, we've degraded Christianity to be a kind of Salk vaccine shot against hell and sin. We round them all up and stick a needle in them and say, if you'll just accept Jesus, you won't go to hell and you'll go to heaven when you die. Keep living as long as you can, but when you die, you'll go to heaven. And we preach a kind of a lifeboat salvation. We even sing about it, about the lifeboat. I suppose it's permissible, maybe, I don't condemn it, but it certainly is an inadequate concept of Christianity, Brethren.

The purpose of God in redeeming men was not to save them from hell only. The purpose of God in redeeming man was to save them on to worship, and to let them be born through, into that Eternal Wisdom which was with the Father, which is synonymous with that Eternal Life, which was with the Father and which was revealed unto men, in which John said, our eyes have looked upon and our ears have heard and our hands have handled of that Word of Life. For you'll find in the Gospel of John that the Holy Ghost through the mouth of the man John, mixed up in an holy and happy confusion, light and life, Light and Life and the Word, the Spoken Word was life and life and light, and the light was the light of men, and In Him was life.

Well, it's all one because it is Jesus Christ our Lord, this Eternal Life. And doesn't it touch you my friend? Doesn't it touch you, or have you been brainwashed by footnotes to a point where you can't think this way? Doesn't it touch you that the Greeks sought after this and couldn't find it? Doesn't it touch you? It did Paul. In the 17th of Acts, Paul preached on the hill in Athens, and he said, I see that everywhere you're very religious, not superstitious, you're very religious, for you have an altar to the unknown God. You've put up an altar to every god you know by name, and then for fear you will slight some god, you put up an altar to an unknown God. And then, happy, smart Paul said, He whom thou dost worship in ignorance, I now preach unto you. Well, Paul understood and he said, in Him we live and move and have our being, and that we stretch out after Him, they did, stretch out after Him, if per chance they might find Him.

And I don't think there's anything more unbecoming, than for an evangelical preacher to get nasty and tough and say a lot of harsh things about the Greek philosophers and the ancient religions. Brethren, they did what they could with the light they had. I wonder if we can say the same about ourselves. Old Heraclitus who lived 600 years that I say before Christ, perhaps he had never heard of Solomon's proverbs. Maybe the Book of Job was unknown to him. And maybe he had never read a Psalm in his life. But somehow in his dreaming and crying after the Most High God, he thought his way through to the idea that the eternal life, and that that word out of that word, everything came and he gave the Greeks the doctrine of the word which Plato and others brought to perfection.

Some years ago, I preached of all places at the noonday meeting down with the Christian business men. And I preached from the text, Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And I said that the Jews sought after righteousness. And Jesus Christ came, and was that righteousness; that the Greeks sought after wisdom, and Jesus Christ came and was that wisdom. And the religionist sought after redemption and sanctification, and Jesus Christ came and was that redemption and sanctification. And I gave an altar call. I got a letter from a professor at Wheaton College and he said, Brother, I have believed this all my adult life, but I never hoped to hear it turned into an evangelistic sermon. I didn't know it either. But I did my best on it.

But that's the fact my friends, that the quest of the human race; the Jews sought after righteousness; the Greeks sought after wisdom; and the religionists sought after redemption. And when Paul was preaching Jesus, He said to these people, I've got news for you, I preach unto you, Jesus, who is the incarnation of all the Jews sought, and the incarnation of all the Greeks sought, and the incarnation of all that the religionists sought; wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. And the Greek scholars tell us that when he said, He's made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that we don't get quite the right meaning in the King James. They said, what Paul actually said was, Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and that wisdom is our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. They say that's what he actually said. He said, this wisdom, this that we call Ancient Wisdom, which the Greeks and the Hebrews before them talked about as a Uncreated, and yet somehow created strangely. But, is it any stranger than that passage that says, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God? Now, which was He? With God? Or was it God? Well, He was both.

And so, we say that that same truth applies to the ancient idea that there is a Fountain of Wisdom, the Womb out of which was born all things that be. I can live in this world believing that and not worry about it and not get into too many jams intellectually, because this world is beautifully put together, Brother, beautifully put together. Talk about a watch. I have a watch here given me by the church for 25 years and I carry around it. It's a Lord Elgin, a good watch. It's magnificently made. I haven't looked at the jewels. You never look a gift horse in the mouth. I don't know how many jewels it has you know, whether it's 17 or 21, or how many. I've never tried to find out. But I know it's expensive and I know that it is beautifully made. And it's a tribute to the genius and skill and patience and perseverance of men who can sit down and screw a telescope in their eye and go to work, and do work so fine. But it'll last 100 years, and if this isn't dropped and smashed and thrown around, my grandchildren or great grandchildren can be carrying it.

Wisdom, where did they get it? There was a man named Bezaleel at one time. Bezaleel, if you like. Bezaleel I like to call him. It is easier. He was a Jew. And God said, we're going to build a temple here and a tabernacle. And we're going to have a veil, a veil, and that veil is to be thick, and it's to be embroidered, embroidered so beautifully. And you would have thought, now the way we'd have done it when we were making that veil, we'd have run to the women and we'd have said, Mrs. Henderson, you make your children's clothes and you're good with the needle, could you give us a half a day to work on the veil? But the great God Almighty wasn't going to allow anybody to simply turn loose his human skills or hers. So, we picked a man by the name of Bezaleel and He filled him with the Holy Ghost and wisdom. What for? In order that he might ply his needle to make beautiful embroidery work on the veil.

So, the very veil of the temple was wrought by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost. So that all that you see. This is a great time for this series, because this is the time when we are materializing everything. We're materializing everything. I lay for an hour last night and listened to a one hour, eight to nine, summation of where we stand. Did you hear that, put on by the Columbia Broadcasting Company? Everybody was quoted and spoke on tape and told us where we were. Everybody's scared until he's shivering. Generals and admirals and all the rest are just shaking. Because you see, they're conquering outer space.

And I even heard in the radio the news just recently, well, in fact it was released only today, this afternoon. I heard this broadcast that the President of the United States, one General Dwight Eisenhower, has written Bulganin. He's premier something or other. He may be running a filling station in Siberia one of these days, you know. But he's got a job over there, and he wrote a letter tonight. And Ike wrote a letter back. And Ike actually said and suggested in his letter that we and Russia get together on what we're going to do about outer space. We can't even run Washington, and we're working on outer space. And the first

fellow that puts a flag up there on the moon just as sure as you live, now watch it. We can do it they tell us. We actually have what Truman used to call the know-how, a terrible Missouri word, but we've got the ability to do it, and the rocketry and the rest. That little word rocketry, that's a new one. And we've got the rocketry to send a, something to the moon. Well now, if they will listen to me, which they won't, here's what they will do. They will put a copy of the Constitution of the United States and a silk American flag in that little hunk of hardware. And when they showed it to the moon, it's ours. We stake out our claim and say, you lay off.

I don't know where I got there, but I'm just saying this is the time when space and moving bodies and matter and law is on everybody's mind. Well, back of all that, you see, God made all things, and all things came out of wisdom. Now, what does this teaches us? Well, I'll give you a sketch of what it teaches us and then that will be all for tonight.

From this, we learned a number of things. We learn that the universe is basically spiritual. Now, we learned that, basically spiritual. A few years ago, back in the time of Lucretius when he wrote his famous, what did he call it, The Nature of Things. He said that there were atoms, and he lived about, oh, a little before Christ's time. And he said that there were atoms and that they were a little hard, square balls, like dice. And they were little hard things. And a ball, not balls but were square blocks, blocks, that's the word, like dice. And he said that everything was made up of these little square blocks. And that was the first, so far as I know, the first, at least he popularized the idea of the atom. And then 3000 years nearly went by over 3000 years, I think went by before we discovered that Lucretius had an idea, but he was wrong. He said everything is made up of atoms. He was right about that. And when he said atoms were square blocks hard as diamonds, tiny beyond all belief. And everything was made out of those little square blocks, he was wrong. Because modern scientific technique has discovered that these tiny little blocks that Lucretius saw 3000 years ago, nearly, were not hard blocks at all, but disembodied bits of energy, and that you can keep breaking them down and breaking them down and breaking them down until you find exactly nothing at all. And I know they're right, they proved they're right by their ability to run a ship by atoms and put up and send an atom bomb on Hiroshima.

So, the modern idea of the atom coincides perfectly with the Old Testament idea of the creation, that all things are, come out of spirits. And that if you go back far enough, and back far enough and back far enough, you come to Spirit. Things are spiritual basically, that the earth is not a solid thing. And then there's Spirit that hovers over it. But that the earth is an emanation of Spirit, and that all things that are, came out of Spirit, even that Eternal Spirit which we call God, and Who was incarnated in the form of a man and lived among us. And was so wise that He astonished men though He'd never been to school.

The second thing we learn from this doctrine of the Eternal Wisdom as the source of all things is that man is a spirit and sheathed in a body, not a body having a spirit. How do you think of yourself? Do you think of yourself as this being you? Is this you? Some of the movie actors, they call them, the body. That's an awful thing to say for them, because if that's all she's got and usually it is, that's going to get old on her one of these days. She's going to get arthritis and gray hair and teeth will come out, and then she won't have anything. But is that the way you think of yourself? As a body with a spirit? No. That's not the Bible teaching. The Bible teaching is that we are a spirit, living in a body. And it's vastly different Brethren. If I was a body having a spirit, then I could worry about this body. But knowing that I am a spirit made in the image of God, and God is Spirit, and God made me and made me spirit, made you spirit, and said, now live for a while, in what William Jennings Bryan called, this tabernacle of clay.

So we're here. The greatest thing about you is not your body, not the house you live in, the car you drive. The most awesome and all inspiring thing about you is you are a spirit. You're a spirit. Bacon said, God made the angel spirit, and he made the beasts, flesh. But he made man greater than all compounded of spirit and flesh, so that man is a spirit which has a fleshly tabernacle to dwell in. You've got to remember that, that all things came out of spirit. And Jesus Christ was incarnated, and He was that Eternal Wisdom, and that man is a spirit ensheathed in a body. You see, that fixes your values for you. That decides what's valuable and what isn't.

The trouble with this is, we don't know what's valuable. Did you ever have this experience, and we've gotten all of two houses full of grandchildren. We've seen this happen. A couple of times happened this year. It happened a couple of years ago when everybody was hilariously happy around the Christmas tree unloading gifts and giving gifts and unwrapping gifts. Here would be a little 18-month-old baby sitting somewhere quietly playing with a box that the present came out of. Well, the little thing didn't care. I remember one sitting there chewing the little red box having a time of her life and everybody else was "ooh, just what I wanted. Ooh! How'd you know what I needed? Just the thing." And everybody was looking at what they got, and she a box, and was chewing on the box. It happened twice in our house right down where we live among our grandchildren. That is I mean happened among them.

And why, you see they don't know what's valuable. This watch I referred to, it came in a box. But I don't carry the box around with me, because the box is relatively unimportant. It's the watch that matters. A stale fish head is a precious treasure to a cat. Why? Because he is a cat. A bowl of the same red pottage was of great value to Esau. Why? Because he was Esau. And the everlasting covenant was a value to Jacob. Why? Because he was Jacob. He was touched with heavenly fire. And the man Paul found value only in Jesus Christ our Lord. Only in Jesus Christ. Why, I give up all things he said and count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him. If you understand this Eternal Truth you'll know why what is valuable and why it's valuable.

Now the truth, that the Word was made flesh, stands as a warning, lest we forget who we are. And it stands as a rebuke. It stands as a rebuke to us for living as animals, for living as people of one world when God made us for two. Living for time, when God made us for eternity. And back in the Book of Proverbs we find a beautiful woman. In the ninth chapter, she's said to be a woman, here she's not. She's just called wisdom. But in the ninth chapter she's called a woman. Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets. She crieth in the cheap places of concourse. What is this? Oh, it's nothing but the voice of Jesus, the voice of the Holy Ghost. In the opening of the gate, she crieth. In the city she uttereth her word, saying how long, how long, ye simple ones. Will you love simplicity. And the scorers delight in their scorning and fools hate knowledge, turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you. I will make known my words unto you. And those terrible words, because I have called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no man regarded. I will also laugh at your calamities; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation.

My dear friends, you're not an animal. God made you a spirit and gave you a body to cart you around in, to live in, carts so that you could, that spirit could be carted around. And it's a rebuke that we live as if we were animals. We live as if we belong to this time. I've known old men. Old man, so old that they had all of the characteristics of old men. I have a few, but these men had them all. And yet, they were worried right down to the last about their property. Right down to the last, worrying about their property. Great God, how awful it is. To have been made in the image of God. To have had that eternal Ancient Wisdom which was with the Father, in which was God, come down and become one with us and be made flesh and die and

rise and live above, and stretch out His hands and say, come, come, come ye foolish. Come ye foolish for I have set my table. I have prepared my feast. Come. Why will you die? Come ye simple, foolish ones in your wisdom.

We walk about on the earth thinking about our car and how high the tailgate is. Tailgate is an old farmer word. These things are called fins I think now, fins. How many lights are on the fins? And some of you if you didn't have four lights on the fin, you couldn't sleep tonight because the fellow across the street has four lights on his fin. Some of you women with your clothes. Some of you women with your gifts and your property. Great God, that we should be like this, that we should be a dove, made to soar and sing, or soar and coo and be a dove and act like one. That we should find ourselves in the garbage heap digging like a buzzard. And yet that's what the world is doing. And they're doing it because Christianity hasn't told them what I am telling people tonight. Christianity has told them, come and accept Jesus and you won't go to hell. And they said, oh, hell, I don't care whether I go to hell or not. We've cut the ground out from under the Truth. We've cut the foundation out from under it with our materialistic theology and our carnal approach to things. When you walk out onto the sidewalk tonight, look up at God's stars and say, I'm part of the everlasting universe. And I will not, I will not respond to the Voice of Eternal Wisdom as if I were a man made for time, for God has put eternity in my heart; not as if I were a man made for this world because God made me for another. Not as if I were a man of flesh, because I'm a man of spirit. I will respond as a man made for eternity.

Dear friend, if you don't have it straightened out about eternity, the yellow curd that looks, that digs in the garbage can for food is better off than you are. Listen to me now. Don't get mad at this. It's terribly brutal, but it's true. If you, made in the image of God and destined to be conscious through eternity, an individual, a conscious entity through eternity, with God having given you birth out of the Ancient Womb of Eternal Wisdom, and then incarnated that Eternal Wisdom in the power of a Man and sent Him to die for us. And if you go on your way and live your lives as if you were a beast, and Esau, I say the yellow curd that digs tonight in the alley for a crust, is better off.

When John Bunyan was under the great conviction of the Holy Ghost for sin, they didn't get saved so easy in those days. And when they did get saved, it mounted to so much. We get saved so easy now. I told the Youth for Christ's outfit over here that I spoke to Wednesday. I nailed 13 Theses on the door and one of them was this, that we have no right to make Christianity ridiculously easy when Jesus Christ made it tremendously hard. But we've made Christianity so easy.

Well, John Bunyan lived in the days when Christianity wasn't easy. You carried a cross if you were going to go to heaven in those days. And he got under such blistering conviction that he was sure he was going to hell. And one day as he walked down the street, a man in despair, he saw a dog loping along. And he said, O God, I wish I were that dog, then I could die and be no more. But I've got to face Thee in judgment. Well, it didn't take God long to straighten him out and saved him and made the great John Bunyan out of him. But he had to come there first. I say that though you walk all up the Gold Coast and all out in Beverly Hills and everywhere you want to go and see them out with their Cadillacs on the highway, Brethren. If they don't know who they are, and if they don't know why they're here, and if they don't know out of what they were created and back to what they will go, they're as ignorant as Dani in the Baliem Valley. And all of their high fins won't do them any good. Better be a living dog than a dead lion, said Wisdom. Better be a humble Christian who knows God than a big shot who doesn't even know who he is himself, who doesn't know he was made in the image of God to go back to God again.

You oughtened to go out of here tonight a man. You ought to go out of here a man in God. You oughtened to go out of here tonight and an Esau looking for the same red pottage. You ought to go out of here tonight a Jacob, changed and transformed by the power of God. Let's pray.

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