

Gods Peculiar People

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon emphasizes the value of being redeemed by Christ and living as a peculiar people in anticipation of His return.

Duration: 28:55

Scripture: John 3:16, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 1:7, Philippians 3:20, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, 2 Timothy 1:10, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "Holiness", "Value of Redemption", "Anticipation of Christ's Return"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the significance of being God's peculiar people, highlighting that our value is determined by the price Christ paid for us--His own life. He explains that true Christianity holds validity in the face of death, and that believers are called to live with zeal for good works while eagerly anticipating Christ's return. Tozer clarifies that being a 'peculiar people' means being a treasured possession of God, set apart for His purposes, and encourages Christians to focus on living righteously rather than getting caught up in theological disputes. He reassures that those who die in Christ will not miss the glory of His return, as they will be raised first. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a life of active faith, remembering Christ's sacrifice while looking forward to His second coming.

Transcript

I want to point out to you something that someone said to me, or that I read or heard some years ago. I can't identify the source, but it's appropriate here to quote it. Someone said that only that doctrine is worthwhile, which has validity in the face of imminent death.

Only that doctrine is worthwhile, which has validity in the face of imminent death. And you can only die well if you've lived well. And this doctrine that I'm giving you now has full validity in the face of any contingency that may face us.

Now it says, our Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us. And we can learn the value of any object by the price people are willing to pay for it. Or maybe I'd better explain that a little more.

Not necessarily the value of it, but the value that the purchaser and seller place upon it. Now it happens to be my private opinion that, say, a diamond or any other jewelry has no intrinsic value at all. You remember the story of the rooster that was scratching around in the barnyard looking for grains of corn.

And when he'd see a grain of corn, he'd dive and swallow it. And he happened to, as he dug over, turn a pearl of fabulous price. He looked at it and scratched to his side, went on looking for corn.

It had no value for him, though it had great value for those who set a price upon it and held it to have value. So that when I say that we can tell the value of an object by the price, we only mean that we can tell the value that an object has for the person who's buying it. It may be valueless, but the person that's buying it will place great value on it.

So we see here and we can learn how dear we are to Christ by what he was willing to give for us. Now if you're ever tempted to think little of yourself, all right, I wouldn't prevent you from that, or try to. Think as little of yourself as you want to.

But always remember that our Lord Jesus Christ thought very highly of you. And if the devil comes to you and tells you you are no good, don't argue with him. Admit it.

But say, I can't help how the Lord feels about me. The Lord feels about me that I am so valuable that he would give himself. So the price, I say, the value is set by the price paid.

And the price paid was himself, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, that is, from the consequences and power of iniquity. Charles Wesley called it the double cure. He said, be of sin the double cure.

I'm quite certain that most people sing that song when a few times they do sing it and don't know what he means by the double cure. In fact, I think some versions have taken, some in books have taken the expression the double cure out altogether. Be of sin the double cure.

Save me from its wrath and power. It is the wrath of sin, the wrath of God against sin, and the power of sin over us. And they both have to be cured.

So when he gave himself for us to redeem us, he redeemed us with a double cure that redeemed us from the consequences of our sin and then redeemed us from the power of our sin. And the redemptive price was himself. Now it says that he purified unto himself.

That is, he purified. The one deep disease of the world is impurity. And it breaks out in dozens of symptoms.

Sexual misconduct, contentiousness, and hatreds and feuds and gluttony and slothfulness and self-indulgence and pride and egotism and self-pity and resentfulness and churlishness. All of these are but the outward symptoms of the deep, deep-lying disease. And the work of Christ is to purify people by blood and fire and rid them of this impurity, this deep-lying disease.

He is called the Great Physician, and he is the Great Physician because he heals us of this deep-lying disease, not only redeeming us from all the consequences of our sins, but purifying us from the presence of our sins. Now, either this is true or Christianity is the chief fraud of the day. Either this is true or you're silly for giving a dime to support a church that says it's true.

Either it's true or the Bible should be folded up along with Shakespeare and Homer and the rest of them and put down as classics that have no particular validity in the face of death. But it is true. He did give himself to redeem us from all iniquity, and he does purify unto himself.

Then it says, a peculiar people. Now, this word has been used to cloak conduct that is strange and irrational. And I have heard people say and do rather weird things and then grin, a self-conscious grin, and say, We're a peculiar people.

But they don't know their Greek nor their English on that one because the word peculiar here, when applied as an adjective, describing the redeemed people, has no connotation of queerness nor ridiculousness nor foolishness. It was first used of Israel in Exodus 19, 5, where it says that Israel thou shalt be unto me a peculiar treasure above all people. That's what he means.

So that peculiar means a treasure above all other treasures. Etymologically, it means shut up to me as my special jewel. Every mother knows what that means.

There's a baby down every street. Baby down every street. Look out in the backyard Monday morning of a summer day and you'll see baby clothes hanging all down the street.

But in the house where you live there's one little fellow and he's a peculiar treasure unto you above all others. That's what peculiar means. It doesn't mean necessarily that he is prettier.

I remember I made my wife cry when our little boy was born. She wanted to know if I didn't think he was beautiful. And honesty and candor forbade my lying to her.

So I said, well, he's sweet. He's our little boy. And she broke down and cried.

She wanted me to say that he was the Mona Lisa of the Tozer household. But I couldn't say it, you know. He just wasn't that pretty.

But he was a peculiar treasure unto us. So he has redeemed unto us a peculiar people that are his treasure shut up unto him. And then it says one thing that characterizes us, for the children of God are characterized by certain features.

One of them is they're zealous of good works. Now the Bible knows nothing of armchair Christians. You know during the war and after the war how old fellows will sit around, beat their canes on the floor and win the war and say what Eisenhower should have done and Montgomery should have done.

And they're winning the war in their armchairs. And then get up and go bent and stiff out of the building, angry because the general didn't do it the way they thought it should be done. Now God knows nothing about this kind of abstract armchair Christianity.

And he knows nothing of this ivory tower Christianity that's composed simply of fine and beautiful thoughts. It says that the children of the king, redeemed by the giving of himself, made unto him a marked out set of jewelry, a peculiar people, that one thing that characterizes them is their zeal for good works. Grace teaches, he says, that these people, these peculiar people, should be zealous of good works.

Then he says that we should live looking, you notice in the text. We should live looking. Now the Christian lives in joyous anticipation of the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

I want to throw in a thought here for you theologians. And if you aren't theologians, you ought to be. Everybody ought to be.

Even if you don't know Greek and Hebrew, there's no reason why you should sit modestly back and say, I don't know a thing about it, the way I do about, say, the fourth dimension. I've read about the fourth dimension. I've read the big shots, you know, on the thing.

And yet I don't know what the fourth dimension is. I know in a vague sort of way. But I'm not going to worry my head about it, because I'm having time enough for occupying three dimensions.

But don't be so humble. You say, oh, I don't know a thing about theology. I don't know a thing.

Well, I'm telling you that you must, because theology is the study of God. And everybody here must know something of God, and you must study about God. And here's your textbook.

Sixty-six textbooks rolled into one. We call it the Bible. Now, what I started to say was, I note this about any theological point, any doctrinal point.

The more vital it is, the more the devil fights it, and the more arguing there is about it. The deity of Jesus as an example. More people fight over that.

That's because it's vital, you see. It's absolutely vital. The devil won't attack you on a non-vital doctrine.

The preacher that gets up, smilingly, scared stiff of his congregation and his job, and preaches for a half hour, and the sum of what he says is, be good and you'll feel better. Well, now, nobody will attack that, you see. The devil won't attack that.

He doesn't care. You can be as good as you want to and go to hell. So he knows that he has you, and he won't bother you.

No devil would waste his time attacking such a eunuch of the pulpit as that. But the Christian lives a joyful anticipation of Christ's return, and that is important, and so the devil attacks us on that. And he has people arguing about it instead of waiting for it.

As though a man had been away overseas for a year and hadn't seen his family, and he was coming home, and the news had come, the cable had come, and then the telegram from New York or somewhere had come saying, I just arrived, I'll be there, and he should arrive and find his family fighting over whether he said he'd be there six or six-ten, whether he was going to fly or take a train or a bus, or whether he was going to rent a car and come. Instead of eagerly pressing their little noses against the glass, waiting for Daddy, they are fighting with each other and glaring at each other over how he's coming and when he's coming and what verse so-and-so means about the fall of Rome and so on. That's the devil's work, my brethren.

It is the devil's work to get us arguing about the details of his coming, forgetting that what matters is that he's purified unto himself a peculiar people and that we should live soberly and righteously and godly, looking for the glorious appearing of that great God and our Savior. That's the epiphany that the Church talks about, the shining forth, the appearing, and it's used of his manifestation in the world. Notice it's used in two senses, in 2 Timothy and 1 Timothy.

First, 2 Timothy 1, it says, There is the first appearing, the first shining forth, was when he came to the world to abolish death by his resurrection, death and resurrection, and bring life and immortality to light through the gospel. Then the old man of God, in one of these wonderful doxologies of his, he says, That's

right up the page, if your Bible's like mine, in 1 Timothy 13. There's the other appearing.

There's the second. The first one's down the page. The salvation he promised was made manifest at his first appearing.

But verse 14 of 6 of 1 Timothy is the next appearing. King of kings and Lord of lords, who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

This man Paul was like a bird. He'd write an epistle. Birds don't do that, but what he did do then was in the middle of the epistle somewhere he'd mount a branch and sing like a skylark or like a meadowlark.

And that was one of them. Now it says that he is appearing and he's going to show after all who is the king of kings and the Lord of lords. But even if a man die before that awaited shining forth, listen to this just in case.

You're worried for fear you'll die. You know the Thessalonians were worried because they were worried for two things. They were worried because they thought the day of the Lord had already come and they'd been missed.

My sister dreamed that too and then got up and got on her knees and got converted. She thought the Lord had come and left her. She got on her knees and got converted and she'd been converted ever since.

That was 40 years ago or so. And these Thessalonians were afraid of that. They were afraid the Lord had already come and they'd missed it.

And then they were afraid they'd die before he came and if they died before he came they'd miss it. So Paul wrote his two Thessalonian epistles and he straightened them out on it. And he said, now for you they're afraid that you'll die and miss the glory of the shining forth of the coming of Jesus.

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. That is if you die you sleep and if you sleep God will bring you along with Jesus. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not run ahead of them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

You see Paul's inspired explanation shows that those who die before the coming of Jesus will not have a disadvantage but they'll have a little bit of an advantage because before the Lord bothers to glorify the saints that are walking around on their feet or kneeling on their knees he will raise and glorify the sleeping saints that have been moldering in the dust. Now that's what he says here. And isn't it a strange thing that the pulpits are silent about this glorious truth in the very hour when the danger of suddenly being swept off the face of the earth is greater than it's ever been before.

The two great nuclear powers Russia and the United States talk about their power to destroy and they use a phrase, a terrible phrase that never was invented before in the history of the English language. They had

to compound a word. They had to make one.

They had an idea that had never entered anybody's head since Adam and Eve. And in order to express that idea they had to create a word. And so they created the compound word overkill.

You've heard it, you've read it. Heard it on the news and read it in the papers. They talk about their overkill.

They say that the United States alone now has overkill power. Sufficient in their nuclear stockpiles to kill every man, woman, and child in the world not once, but twenty times. That's overkill.

Now, isn't it strange that Satan has managed to get us arguing about post-tribulation rapture and pre-tribulation rapture and millennialism and amillennialism and pre-millennialism and has right in the hour when overkill hangs over us like a black threatening cloud when the Lord's people should be so alert to the hope of His coming that they should get up like a child Christmas morning eager that we should be today. Instead of that we're arguing and getting nowhere or else ignoring the whole thing altogether. A book like the Revelation is utterly ignored.

Nobody preaches on the book of Revelation anymore much not even among the evangelicals and fundamentalists and all the rest. We've been intimidated by it. And so it's a strange thing.

There's so many anomalies in the world today. Somebody ought to write a book about it or an article or something. The anomaly of everybody traveling and meeting everybody and get acquainted with everybody so that if the people were telling the truth about it then we ought to all love each other like one family.

Instead of that we hate each other like the devil so that all over the world the nations are hating each other. So that's a contradiction and an anomaly. Another contradiction and anomaly is they told us that all we had to do was teach sex in the schools and all our sex problems would be over.

Isn't it strange that the generation that's teaching more about sex than any 25 generations ever did all put together before is the one that's the rottenest sexually? And isn't it strange too that the generation that might be expected suddenly to be atomized by overkill is the very generation that's afraid to talk about the coming of the Lord and the deliverance from it all. What a bunch of weirdies we are and how strange we are and how inconsistent we are that we should allow the devil and our carnality to mix us up like that. Well he's coming and it says here that he's our Lord Jesus Christ and so we look for him.

The great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. That Christ is God is denied by some but beautifully, wonderfully believed by others and you and I among them who gave himself for us that he might redeem us. So we live between two mighty events.

We live between the great event of his incarnation and death and resurrection. We think of them all more or less together. And the second event his appearing and the glorification of those he died to save.

So we are in interim but not vacuum. God's people are not dwelling in a vacuum. You know they accuse those who believe in the coming of Jesus they accuse us of sitting around twiddling our thumbs and looking at the sky hoping for the best.

There couldn't be anything further from the truth than that. Who are the Christians that are working the hardest to win others to Christ in Toronto? People who believe he's coming. Who are the Christians who are giving the most to mission? Those who believe he's coming.

Who are the Christians that are sending out more missionaries and preachers from their churches? People that believe he's coming. Who are the missionaries that penetrate most deeply into the jungles and vastnesses of the world hunting tribes that are forgotten? The people that believe he's coming. So those who say that the belief in the coming of Christ makes you useless they're talking out of their ear.

They don't know what they're talking about. It's just the opposite. We dwell in an interim but we do not dwell in a vacuum.

We dwell between his first coming and his second coming looking sometimes back to that first one but looking more forward to the second one. In the meantime we're zealous of good works living soberly, righteously, godly in this present world looking up to him. So as Paul said elsewhere ye do show forth the Lord's death till he comes and the communion service is always the service of remembrance and expectation.

It's not all remembrance and it's not all expectation. In the midst of life and between the two great mountain peaks of God's acts in the world his first coming and his second we look back and remember we look forward and hope and in the meantime we break the bread and drink the wine and sing the songs and utter our prayers remembering and expecting. That's so beautiful that it's more beautiful than a sunset or a painting.

Looking back, looking forward, in the meantime actively working and joyously hoping till he comes.

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