

God's Peculiar People

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of good works, zeal, and joyful anticipation of the Lord's coming, and highlights the comfort of the believer in the face of death.

Duration: 24:20

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:14, 1 Timothy 6:16, 2 Timothy 1:10, 2 Timothy 2:13, 2 Timothy 4:1, Titus 2:13-14

Topics: "Peculiar People"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being zealous for good works as children of God. He highlights that God does not approve of armchair Christianity or ivory tower Christianity, where believers simply have theoretical knowledge but lack action. The preacher encourages everyone, even those who may not be theologians, to actively engage in understanding and applying the teachings of the Bible. He also mentions the blessed hope of the appearing of Jesus Christ and the role of grace in teaching believers to be zealous for good works. The sermon references various Bible verses, including Titus 2:14 and 2 Timothy 1:10.

Transcript

I want to point out to you something 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 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 live well, and this doctrine that I'm giving you now has full validity in the face of any contingency that may face us. 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 opinion that, say, a diamond or any other jewelry has no intrinsic value at all.

Pray of the rooster that was scratching around in the barnyard looking for grains of corn. See a grain of corn, he'd dive and swallow it, and he happened to, as he dug over, turn a pearl of fat rice. He looked at it and scratched to the side, went on looking for corn.

It had no value for him, value for those who set a price upon it, and held it to have value. 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. May be valueless, but the person that's buying it will place great value on it.

So we see here, and we can learn, here 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 all that our Lord Jesus Christ thought very highly of you. And if the devil comes to you and tells no good, don't argue with him, admit it. But say, I can't help how the Lord feels about me, that I am so valuable that he would give himself.

I say the value is set by the price paid. And the price paid was himself, that he must, from all iniquity, that is from the consequences and power of iniquity, the church only called it the double cure. He said, be of sin the double cure.

I'm quite certain that most people sing that, and they do sing it, and don't know what he means by the double cure. In fact, I think some versions have taken, some hymn books have taken the expression all together. Be of sin the double cure.

Save me from its wrath and power, the wrath of sin over us. And they both have to be cured, himself for us, to redeem us. He redeemed us with a double cure that redeemed us from the consequences of our sin, 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 impurity.

And it breaks out in dozens of symptoms, sexual misconduct, contentious, and hatreds, and feuds, and gluttony, and slothfulness, and self-indulgence, and pride, and self-pity, and resentfulness, and churlishness. All of these are but the outwards of the deep, deep-lying disease. And the work of Christ is to purify people by blood, and rid them of this impurity, this deep-lying disease.

He is the great physician because he heals us of this deep-lying disease, not only from all the consequences of our sins, but purifying us from the presence of our sins. This is true where Christianity is the chief fraud of the day. Either this is true, or we're giving a dime to support a church that says it's true.

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

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

But they don't know their Greek nor their English on that one. Because the word peculiar here, as an adjective describing the redeemed people, has no connotation of queerness, nor ridiculous foolishness. It was first used in Israel in Exodus 19.5, where it says that Israel thou shalt be unto me peculiar treasure above all people.

That's what he means. So that peculiar means treasure above all other treasures. Etymologically, it means shut up to me as my special Jew.

Every mother knows what that means. There's a baby down every street, baby down every street. Look out in the backyard Monday morning, you'll see baby clothes hanging all down the street.

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

I remember I made my wife cry when our little boy was born. She wanted beautiful and honest in candor for bad my lying to her. So I said, well, he's sweet, he's our little boy.

And she broke down and cried that he was the Mona Lisa of the Toter Household. But I couldn't say it to him. Oh, he just wasn't that pretty.

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

One of them is they're zealous of good works, of a bunch 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 say what Eisenhower should have done and Montgomery should have done. And they're winning the war in their armchairs.

Then get up and go out of the building angry because the general didn't do it the way they thought it should be done. Now there, God knows nothing about this kind of armchair Christianity. And he knows nothing of this ivory tower Christianity.

That's fine and beautiful thoughts. It says that the children of the king redeemed by the girl made unto him a marked out Jew set of jewelry, a peculiar people. One thing that characterizes them is their zeal for good works.

Grace teaches, he says, that these peculiar people should be zealous of good works. Then he says that we should live looking, you notice in that, live looking. Now the Christian lives in joyous anticipation of the blessed hope 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 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, about, say, the fourth dimension.

I've read about the fourth dimension. I've read about it. It's a big shame, 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. But don't be so humble. You say, oh, I don't know a thing about theology.

I don't know a thing. Well, you must, because theology is a study of God, and everybody here must know something of God, and you must study it in your textbook. Sixty-six textbooks rolled into one.

We call it the Bible. Now, what I started to say was about any theological point, any doctrinal point, the more vital it is, the more the devil fights it, and the more arguing the deity of Jesus is an example. More

people fight over that.

That's because it's vital, you see. The devil won't attack you on a non-vital doctrine. The preacher that gets up, he's scared stiff of his congregation and his job, and preaches for a half hour, and the sum of what he says is, be 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. He has you, and he won't bother you. No devil would waste his time attacking such a eunuch as that.

But the Christian lives a joyful anticipation of Christ's return, and so the devil attacks us on that. 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 had come saying, I just arrived, I'll be there. And he should arrive and find fighting over whether he said he'd be there at 6 or 6-10, whether he was going to fly or take a train or a bus, going to rent a car and come, instead of eagerly pressing their little noses against the glass waiting for Daddy, fighting with each other and glaring at each other over how he's coming and when he's coming, and what verse sums 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 himself is a peculiar people, and that we should live soberly and righteously and godly, looking for the glorious appearing of that great man. That's the epiphany that the Church talks about, the shining forth, the appearing.

And it's used of his manifestation in the world. It's used in two senses. In 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy 1, it says, God who has called us, saved us and called a calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us began but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished death and immortality to light through the gospel.

There is the first appearing, the first shining forth into 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 wonderful doxologies of his, he says, I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things and before Christ Jesus who before upon good confession that thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. There's the second, the first one down the page.

The salvation he promised was made manifest at his first. But verse 14 of 6 of 1 Timothy is the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ which in his time shall show who is the blessed and holy, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who only has immortality dwelling in the light which no man has seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. This man Paul, he writes an epistle, birds don't do that, but what he did do then was in the middle of them where 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, you're worried for fear you'll die. You know the Thessalonians were worried because they were worried for two things.

They were worried 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, and left her. She got on her knees and got

converted and she'd been converted ever since, and that was 40 years ago or so.

And these 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, they'd miss it. So Paul wrote to his two Thessalonian epistles and he straightened them out on them.

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 he rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. That is if you, 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 and remain under the coming of the Lord shall not run ahead of them which are asleep. For the Lord him descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in his first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. You see Paul's inspired explanation that those who die before the coming of Jesus will not have a disadvantage, but they'll live an advantage. Because before the Lord bothers to glorify the saints that are walking around on their knees, he will raise and glorify the sleeping saints that have been moldering in the dust.

Now isn't it a strange thing that the pulpits are silent about this glorious truth in the very hour when the death of suddenly being swept off the face of the earth is greater than it's ever been before. The two great powers Russia and the United States talk about their their power to destroy, and they use a terrible phrase that never was invented before in the history of the English language. They had two words, 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 compound word overkill. You've heard it, you've read it on the news and read it in the papers.

They talk about their own. They say that the United States alone now has overkilled sufficient in their nuclear stockpiles to kill every man woman and child not once but 20 times. That's overkill.

Now isn't it strange that Satan has managed to get us arguing about post-tribulation rapture and rapture and millennialism and amillennialism and pre-millennialism, and has right in the hour when the angel hangs over us like a black threatening cloud, when the Lord's people should be so alert it's coming that they should get up like a child Christmas morning, eager that they should be today. Instead of that we're in getting nowhere or else ignoring the whole thing all together. A book like the Revelation is utterly ignorant on the book of Revelation any more much, not even among the evangelicals and fundamentalists and all the rest.

We've been we've been we hated by by it and so it's a strange thing. There's so many anomalies in the world today. Somebody ought to write or an article or something.

The anomaly of everybody traveling and meeting everybody and get acquainted with it. 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 evil so that all over the world the nations are hating each other.

So that's a contradiction and an anomaly. Another contradiction is they told us that all we had to do was teach sex in the schools and all our sex problems would be over. Is 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? Isn't it strange too that the generation that might be expect suddenly to be atomized by 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 and how inconsistent we are that we should allow the devil and our carnality to mix us up like that. He's coming and it says here that he's our Lord Jesus Christ and so we look for him. The great Jesus Christ that Christ is God is denied by some but beautifully wonderfully believed by others and 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 are in interior but not vacuo. 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 and looking at the sky hoping for the best. There couldn't be anything further from the truth than who are the Christians that are working the hardest to win others to Christ in Toronto. People who are the Christians who are giving the most to mission.

Those who believe he's coming. Who are the Christians that are sending on preachers from their churches. People that believe his coming.

Who are the missionaries that penetrate most deeply into the vastnesses of the world hunting tribes that are forgotten. The people that believe his coming. So those who say that the belief in the coming of Jesus makes you useless.

They're talking out of their ear. They don't know what they're talking is the opposite. We dwell in an interior but we do not dwell in a vacuum.

We dwell between his second coming looking sometimes back to that first one but looking more forward to the second one. In the meantime we're living soberly righteously godly in this present world looking up to him. So elsewhere ye do show forth the lord's death till he come.

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 life and between the two mountain peaks of god's acts in the world his first coming we look back and remember.

We look forward and hope. And in the meantime and drink the wine and sing the songs and utter our prayers remembering and that's so beautiful that it's more beautiful than a sunset or a painting. Looking back looking forward actively working and joyously hoping till he comes.

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