

# He Must Increase

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of promoting Christ, not self, and the need for honesty and transparency in the church.*

**Duration:** 45:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Matthew 25:1-13, John 3:22-24, John 3:26-30

**Topics:** "Christ Is All"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher receives feedback from a farmer who commends the sermon but questions the preacher's personal experience of the deeper life. Instead of becoming defensive, the preacher listens and allows the farmer to share his thoughts. The preacher emphasizes the importance of promoting Christ rather than promoting oneself, highlighting that sacrifice and giving up can be done for personal ambition as well. The sermon also includes a story about a man named Coward who experienced a spiritual breakthrough after persistent prayer.

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## Transcript

In the book of John, that is, Gospel according to Saint John, third chapter, beginning with verse 22, after these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea. That's verse 22 of chapter 3 of John. And there he's buried with them and baptized.

And over across the page it tells us, across the page in my Bible, it tells us though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples. He was heading it, but they were doing the actual baptizing. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there.

And they came and were baptized, for John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purity. And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath to brag is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. Now, generally supposed those are the last words of John.

That is the last from here. And then the other John, John the Beloved, who wrote this book and was quoting John the Baptist, now carries it on. He that cometh from above is above all.

He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard that he testifies, and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

Now, verse 30 is the one that I have in mind tonight. He, Jesus, must increase, and I, John, must decrease. Now, both Jesus and John were baptizing.

John was baptizing in person, and Jesus was baptizing through his disciples who did, as I've said, the actual baptism. And in their journey, these two popular preachers, in their journey they came near to each other. Moving across the country with disciples, they came near to each other.

Now, John was bringing his colorful ministry to a close, for he was a colorful character, this John the Baptist. But it wasn't going to last much longer now, and Jesus was getting his ministry well underway, and each one was fulfilling his divine mission. John the Baptist was doing what God had sent him to do, and our Lord Jesus Christ was doing what his Father had sent him to do.

And there wasn't any rivalry between the two men. There was only rivalry, as somebody said, in the minds of their disciples. Jealousy arose among the followers of each.

Neither Jesus nor John was jealous of the other, but the disciples, their followers, were jealous. Now, I might turn aside here long enough to say that the most, one of the most wicked things in the world is religious jealousy, because it is sin going into the holy place. Sin that sins outside is bad enough, but sin that enters the holy sanctuary and is jealous of what the Holy Ghost is doing is exceedingly wicked.

It's like fighting over the crown that belongs to our Lord. The unanswerable question, or questions, questions that cannot and have never been satisfactorily answered, are these. If God is doing a work, why should I be jealous? And if God is not doing a work, why should I be jealous? Mr. X is preaching, and apparently a work is being done.

Now, if God is doing that work, why should I be jealous of Mr. X? God's doing the work. And if God isn't doing the work, then why should I be jealous of Mr. X? For he's just waiting for wood, hay, and stubble to the fire to burn up his work. Now, there isn't any excuse for religious jealousy among God's people, but this was here all right, and they disputed over baptism, over cleansing, and it appeared to be a sincere question, but it was inspired by other hidden motives.

Rivalry, bad feeling, they were disguised as a doctrinal problem. Out of many years of experience, I can say this, that it is very rarely that two God-hungry Christians disagree. They disagree in those areas of their minds where they're not God-hungry.

Two God-hungry men are very likely to agree, and what passes for zeal very often, zeal for the Lord, is only zeal for personal opinion. I wish that I could take back now all that I had said defending my personal opinion. One of my boys said about me, he's a good friend, and he'd say it to my face, but he said to a friend of mine, an elder in our church, well, he said dad is all right, but he'd be a lot greater if he could ever

see any opinion except his own.

And I believe, I agree with him, I agree with him, but I don't want to divide the brethren over my personal opinion. Religious disputes over titles rarely have an honest origin. We are disputing over something else instead of over what matters, and so he brought this to John, and they said, John, that man that you talked about is baptizing over there, and many people are going to him.

What about it? And there was trouble disputed over, over baptism. But John, wise old John, lifted their question to its proper level. Our Lord himself had a marvelous way of taking a question that had been asked, and not answering it at all, but beginning a little talk that by the time it was finished, they wished they hadn't asked it.

And John here lifted their question to its proper level. He saw through their pettiness. He saw how little they were, and he gently, that it was gently for John, because he wasn't known for his gentleness, John gently reproved them.

He said, your problem is not baptism. Your problem is not practice. It is not modes of baptism, or much water to use, or under what circumstance it should be used.

You're jealous. He said, your problem is your far-off relation to God. That's your problem.

Don't you know, he said, that no man can receive anything except it be given him from heaven? And if God is in this, why should you be jealous of me? Because God is doing this, and if God isn't doing it, it'll all go down the drain at last. And I told you, he said, that I'm not the Christ. I told you that I don't claim to be.

I'm a servant. I am, he said, but the friend of the bridegroom. That is the best man, we would say now.

You're jealous of me as though I were the bridegroom. He said, I never claimed to be. I am but one of the bridal party, one of the party.

I'll stand up with the bridegroom. Then he said these words. He, meaning Jesus, must increase, but I must decrease.

Now, this was John Glass' public utterance, and I believe it is the secret of the life of the man John. Jesus must increase, and I must decrease. And here he condensed into one sentence the secret of his own greatness, and the secret of the greatness of all the greats that have ever lived in the world.

Unwittingly, for I don't know John knew he was saying this, that it was so important and so vast and all-encompassing, he simply was telling the disciples how things stood but this became, and stands today, the declaration of the secret of the greatness of the man John, and the greatness of every great prophet that has ever lived, and the greatness of every saint that has ever lived, and every revivalist and mystic and reformer and prayer lawyer down years. This is it. Jesus must increase, and I, his servant, must decrease.

Now, this is the secret voice. John uttered these words, and then very shortly after that he was beheaded. But this voice sounds here now, and it sounds over this modern Christianity that we are a part of, this evangelicalism, this full gospelism, this biblism that we're a part of, it sounds.

I hear that voice, and I'm concerned with that voice. When I say I hear a voice, please don't misunderstand me. I don't hear voices.

If I don't, I don't need the man with the white jacket yet. I don't mean that, but I mean that out of the word of God, and by the Holy Ghost, and deep in my conscience, I hear the voice of God, and I hear this voice of John. This secret voice sounding over this modern vanity fair, this modern vanity fair.

Some of you may be disappointed in me already. You'll say, why can't that man open his mouth without binding forth with modern, the modern church and religious people? I can't, for the reason that the modern church ought to straighten out, and get right with God, and repent, and clean up, and when they do that, then I'll stop my talk. Spurgeon preached ten times on repentance, they tell me, and when somebody came about the third or fourth time and said, Miss Spurgeon, why don't you preach on something else? He said, when you repent, I'll change my topic.

And I would say to you that when the church of Christ gets right, then I'll be the first one to go along and clap my little patties and say, thank God we're a wonderful bunch. But as it stands now, I see too much wrong with the church. I see too much wrong with her leaders.

I see too much wrong with the popular figures that move up and down the world, determining what kind of Christians we're going to be over the next 50 years. It's a Lord's theory. Well, in this modern religious vanity fair, where men promote themselves without shame, they promote themselves and have no fear at all.

Somebody told me years ago, Mr. Chalmers, why don't you buy a red tie and get a, get a, what do they call, publicity man? You'd make it. Well, I would wear a red tie if I got it, probably, and as for making it, I'm not concerned with making it. And for needing a publicity man, I don't.

The Holy Ghost will go before me. He said he wouldn't make my enemies turn their back on me, and I've seen the backs of a great many mechs in my day. And I have, I've never thought to have offered once or twice, and I was sorry when I did.

But in this modern vanity fair, men promote themselves, and John said I'd be cruel, but they say I am the great one. And in this modern vanity fair, language is used of men yesterday unknown. Language so extravagant, so exorbitant, so exaggerated as to be preposterous and funny, if it is not downright irony.

And the awful part about that is not that somebody creeps in unawares and does that, but we have woven it into the pattern of our religious life, so expect it. A fellow who won't know it doesn't get very far. And we hear a voice, a voice saying, Jesus must increase, and I, his servant, must decrease.

And we say, is this Christianity, or is that other thing? Which is Christianity? Which is it here? Is it this modern slap-happy, jingle-bell Christianity, where popular fellows promote themselves? Or is it this strange man saying, I must get littler and littler, while Jesus gets bigger and bigger? Which is Christianity? Which is it? Which is the faith of our fathers? We get up Sunday morning and sing, faith of our fathers living still. Which is the faith of our fathers? This thing that we see about us that doesn't hesitate to lie, and boast, and exaggerate? Where publicity is worshipped like a god, and where success is coveted and courted like a soiled courtesan? Is this the Christianity of our fathers, or is it something else? I think it's something else. And the secret dreams of youth in our day.

You know, I believe in having examples and following them. The Bible tells us we're to do that, but we ought to take for an example the prophet that preached in the name of the Lord. And Paul said, follow me as I follow the Lord, and he said certain churches followed certain other churches and imitated them.

You can't help it, we're human, we're down here, and we naturally follow examples and models. Now, brethren, here's what worries me, that the models for the average young Christian today are not the saints. They're not the saints of old, they're likely to be some popular figure.

The average young girl would like to get into pictures if she could. If she can't, she'll settle for just being a good, humble Christian. But if she could get into pictures, she'd throw the cloth down and run.

99% of them would do it, I think. I'm quite sure. And you know, I'd just like to stretch my height-bound muscles a little bit here, and say that I've had one little bellyful of this business that I'm hearing up and down the people who give up so much to serve the Lord.

I've never met anybody yet that gave anything up to serve the Lord. The average preacher thinks he has, but the average preacher, if he wasn't preaching, he'd starve from the death, you know. He couldn't do anything else, he couldn't.

We used to have a girl, I hope she never hears this tape, but we used to have a girl in our church years ago who used to get up and testify before she sang that she gave up opera to follow the Lord. Gave up opera to follow the Lord, they wouldn't have used her to sweep off the stage. But she absolutely went along believing, and I didn't even have the courage to go up to her and knuckle her the way she should have been knuckled.

So I let her leave the church and move away from the city, and now I've lost track of her, and she thinks she gave up the opera to sing for the Lord. Firstly, she couldn't sing. I knew a man who gave up a chain of 12 grocery stores to preach, and some friends that knew the whole circumstance told me privately that he'd been bankrupt in every one of the 12.

So he gave up an awful lot to serve the Lord, didn't he? Dear God help us. You know what God's looking for? He's looking for some people that are dead downright honest, just candid to the point of being tough, you know, just as frank and plain and transparent as can be. The Lord loves that kind of people.

If he can get transparent people, people that won't kid themselves, and fool themselves, and pretend, and live behind a screen all the time, that won't raise their feathers to make them look bigger than they are, that won't do anything to seem to be what they're not. You know, Lord Francis Bacon wrote an essay on simulation and dissimulation. It sounds terribly formidable, but he explained that simulation was pretending to be what you were not, and dissimulation was pretending not to be what you were.

So there's simulation and dissimulation, and I find it everywhere up and down the country, simulating and dissimulating, pretending to be what I'm not, and pretending not to be what I am, and then carry a big scope and a Bible under one arm, and days of heaven upon earth in the other, and have the lion's witness in the middle, and here we go down the sidewalk. We're saints, we're saints, saints, my eyes. We're not saints, my brethren, because we're not honest.

Well, here's this voice, I'm hearing it, I'm hearing a voice saying, Jesus must increase and I must decrease. Now, that voice sounds very strange, incredibly strange in this day in which we live. It sounds like a voice from the past, or like a voice from the future, or like a voice out of eternity without any past or future.

It sounds like a voice from God, sounds like a voice out of eternity, a disembodied voice haunting incarnation, wanting to find somebody into which it can get. I decrease, he increases, I get less and less,

he gets more and more, I'm smaller and smaller, and he's larger and larger. Let us watch out that we don't build the sepulchres of our fathers and prove that we are the sons of those that flew the prophets.

Let's watch out that we don't make so much over A. B. Simpson that we forget that A. B. Simpson got where he was by virtue of saying, Jesus increases and I decrease. He gets larger and I get smaller. We write his life, we sing his hymns, but we forget what it cost him.

We're trying to be like him without paying the price he paid. But here's the voice searching through the world for some people that'll come out from the crowd and say, all right, this is, this is, I'm going this way. Whatever others say, and whatever my friends say, whatever my classmates and bible colleagues say, whatever my church back home says, I take this path.

Jesus increases and I decrease. From here on tonight, he gets bigger and bigger, and I get smaller and smaller. Where's the rare soul that can hear it? The rare soul that I tell you that your spiritual life, the depth of it, the intensity of it, the quality of it, the everlastingness of it, will depend upon where you stand on this.

Depend upon whom you're promoting. Promoting self or promoting Christ. But somebody says, but Mr. Chordier, I promote Christ, and I am sacrificing and giving up, and all that.

Do you know that men can sacrifice and give up to promote themselves? Do you know that? Many a young fellow who is determined to be a great engineer, or a great physicist, or a great politician, right tonight, right tonight, is living on crumbs, and laying up his money, and wearing the old suit, and sacrificing like a saint in order that he might fulfill his heart's ambition to be a great physicist, or a great engineer, or a great politician. The fact that you're sacrificing doesn't mean a thing in all the world. Some of you young preachers, you say, well Brother Chord, you can't say that I'm not little.

Nobody ever heard of me, and I'm in a little place where I'm living on practically nothing. But if you could get a bigger place, you'd take it, and you're hoping that by that serving that apprenticeship to poverty, finally you'll bounce up into the limelight, and everybody will say, behold he cometh, and you'll be big. Now, let's watch that, because it's perfectly possible to put a whole lot of sacrifice, wear ourselves out, and injure our health with nothing higher before our vision than the promotion of our own interest.

But John said, I get smaller and smaller. He had no interest to promote, but I tell you that the depth of your spiritual life will depend upon how you take this tonight, and the depth and intensity of your spiritual life, and the quality of it. You say, aren't all Christians alike? Now, you know better than to ask that question.

You didn't ask it, but I assumed you did. No, certainly not all Christians are alike. Not a star.

Stars differ from star in glory, and so shall it be at the resurrection of Christ, and that of the dead, when Christ raises the dead. Why will star differ from star, man differ from man, woman from woman, in size and intensity and magnitude at the resurrection? Because they differed down here. They will at the resurrection, because they did while they walked on the earth.

And who are the ones of such magnitude, the ones that said, he increases and I decrease? And who are they that say, why am I so small and forgotten? Because while you live, they lived on earth, they said, I increase but he decreased. The fruit of your Christian life, you know, fruit. Fruit grows on trees, and fruit grows on Christians, and there's good fruit and poor fruit, and mixed up wormy fruit and spotty fruit, and the best fruit grows on the tree that is most committed to God, and it'll depend upon whether you can say this or not.

He decreases, he increases, and I decrease. And the result of your labors in your conscience? Union with Christ. Now, there's a there's a union with Christ that is judicial.

That's a judicial union, and you have that union when you're born anew. You receive the nature of God into your life, and the root of the matter is in you. There's a deposit made, and you're united with Christ judicially, but it's possible to be united with Christ judicially, and not be united with him experientially.

And it's the experiential union that has made the great saints that have moved the world, that have written our great hymns and open mission fields, and have done the great work, and have stood as examples and models for Christians for all centuries. They've always been those who would not stop with judicial Christianity. Our Bible teachers give us judicial Christianity.

They say, why, judicially, legally, in the mind of God, you're one with Jesus. Sure, that is true. Thank God by infinite grace, but it's the will of God that I should press on to be united with him in warmth of personal knowledge, of communion, a union that leads to communion, a sweet fellowship, and a harmony with God that is wonderful, that makes this earth a heaven, and that brings the heaven yonder a lot closer.

It's God's will, but I'm telling you the secret tonight. He must increase, and I must decrease. Many centuries ago, some century or two before Martin Luther, there lived a man in Germany.

He was a great preacher there by the name of Johannes Thaler. Occasionally we get some of his stuff into the Alliance of Witnesses. I don't know whether you ever read it or not, but it's there for you if you want to.

We'll take off a small piece and put it in, because he was richer in the funding of the Holy Ghost, almost, than any man whose writings you'd want to read. Well, how did he get that way? Well, it was like this. This is the story.

I'll make it brief. He was a preacher in, oh I've forgotten the name of the city now, I'm sorry, but a German city, and he was a preacher in the great cathedral there. He had a great church and was widely known as one of the great eloquent preachers in Germany.

I say again several hundred years, two hundred years, I think, before Luther. And one day a man came down from a country, a man by the name of Nicholas. He was a farmer.

He came in from the hinterland, and he went to hear the great preacher. Everybody did. That went by, and he hadn't preached, and after the service he went down front, and he said, Doctor, Meister, he said, you, that was good preaching.

He said, you know, I'm going to be staying in your city for a little while, and I'd like to have you preach a sermon on the deeper life, on how I can get rid of the old flesh, and become united in the Holy Ghost with Jesus, and have what speaks, talk about, know what Augustine in the 16th had talked about. He said, I'd like to have you preach a sermon on the crucified life, the deeper life. Well, he said, I'll do that.

All right. In fact, I'll do it next Sunday. So he got himself a sermon, and it had 24 points.

I've read it, and it's a good sermon, and if somebody had sent me that, I'd put it in the weekly listener. And it was a good sermon, and there's a lot of good truth in it. And after the sermon had been preached, the farmer, a persistent fellow, went down to the front again, and he said, my fear is that that was a good sermon.

Thank you. He said, there are good points there. Thank you.

He said, would you mind if I said something to you about it? No. He said, go ahead. He said, bluntly, it's this.

You preach the deeper life, but you don't harm it. I could tell by your preaching that you were only preaching. You've never experienced it.

Well, Howard, of course, could have done what most of us would have done. He could have leaned back on his ministerial dignity, and coughed a few times, and said, I have an engagement. But, instead of that, here's what he did.

He said, well, Brother Nicholas, if you have anything that I don't have, I want. He said, would you teach me? Oh, the farmer said, keep you, my sir. Why, he said, you the great doctor, and me a farmer from up in the hills.

Why, he said, I wouldn't think of it. He said, but if I wanted to. Well, but he said, Master, all I know is what the Holy Ghost has taught me.

And he said, I couldn't teach a man of your learning. He said, yes, you could. He said, what you have is what I want.

Now, he said, I'll pay your expenses and keep you here, and you come and talk with me, and tell me how I can enter in where you are. Well, he said, you don't have to pay my expenses. I am all right that way.

He said, but I'll stay. So, he, they began having daily talks and daily prayers, and Nicholas went to work on the great orator, who knew that he, for a lifetime, could write articles on him, edit magazines, probably too. He went to work on him, and he chopped him down, chopped him down, and he'd leave him for a day or two for the wounds to heal, and come back the next day and chop him down some more.

And he chopped him down, till finally the man got to a place where he said, Brother Nicholas, he said, I'm not fit to preach. He said, I didn't know it. He said, I'm a carnal man.

He said, I've been proud of my preaching, proud of my great faith, proud of my education. He said, this is awful. He said, I'm not fit to preach.

Well, Nicholas said, don't. He said, stick around, let somebody else preach, and you just listen to me. So, they had had it out, and it went a long time.

Now, news got out that Master Fowler had lost his mind, had gone crazy over religion, but they didn't pay much attention to that, and they went on praying, and Fowler went on dying. Finally, one day, Fowler came to Master Nicholas and said, Brother Nicholas, I think God met me. He said, I think he's met me.

He said, I believe now I can preach again. So, they announced that Fowler would preach, and he spoke it again, and, of course, the place was packed to the gills, and crammed around the windows to hear this man that had been such a great preacher, but had suddenly quit because he'd gotten fanatical on religion. He wanted to hear what he'd say.

Well, he got up, and he read his text, and then he started to talk, and broke down, and cried. He couldn't talk, and clearly so. He shook his head, and got control of himself, and said, beloved children, and then

Baltimore.

And, then he shook his head, and said, my beloved friends, and then cried some more. Pretty soon, he gave up some despair, and left the pulpit, and he went backstage, and met Nicholas there, good old Nicholas. God bless the man who has a Nicholas, if he's in line.

He met Nicholas, and then he said, oh, I just graced myself, Nicholas. No, Nicholas said, there was just one little nerve that wasn't cut in your pride, and he said, now God makes you publicly cut it today. He said, you've made a goose of yourself publicly now.

He said, it took time. He said, you wanted to die the nice way, behind the scenes, but he said, God wanted you to die in public. So, he said, I think it's okay now from here on.

So, the next Sunday, they announced the young student from the seminary, and he got up and preached, and preached sermon, you know like they do. And, when he was finished, he made an announcement. He said, I am asked to announce that pastor of this church, Dr. Towler, will preach here next Sunday.

But, if next last Sunday's performance is any promise of what next Sunday's will be, I promise you nothing. I've been asked to make the announcement, and he stopped his feet off of the platform, and Dr. Towler got ready, and that next Sunday, he got up and preached. I've read that sermon, and brother, it's like drinking nectar from the bees of idler.

It's from the text, behold the bridegroom cometh go ye forth to meet him. Thank God he never heard of eschatology. If he'd have heard of eschatology, you know, it would have gotten mixed up in the social bible margin.

He never would have preached that sermon. He didn't know about all that you and I know about the bridegroom, and the bride, and the lamp, and the oil, and the five virgins, and the other five virgins. He didn't know enough of the Bible.

He just loved God with heart, and so he took this, that Jesus Christ is coming out toward my heart, run out to meet him. And he preached the sermon, for such a sermon it was sweeter than honey. And while he was preaching, somebody fainted away dead in the aisle.

Imagine that, fainted away dead in the aisle, and somebody shouted, keep, keep preaching, or, or these people will go to heaven. He said, well it's all right. He said, God, the bridegroom wants to take them to heaven ahead of time.

It's all right with me, but nevertheless I'd be sick. So he stopped preaching, and dismissed, and went back to take whatever they call that, you know, in the ritualistic churches. Somebody came back, all gray-faced, you know, and said, oh pastor, pastor, you've dismissed the forty people, fifty's going there where they can't sit.

Don't let that worry, I'll handle them. So he went down, led them to the Lord, one after the other, and he went out from there to be one of Germany's greatest gospel preachers, and laid the groundwork and foundations for Luther and the rest that were to follow. He isn't usually heard of.

Luther is the man that got in the public eye, but Haller was the man, historically, that helped prepare the soil for the seed of Luther. But now you see, don't you, what I mean? He must increase, but I decrease.

There aren't very many people that are willing to hear that voice.

Most of us would have quit about the third week, and we'd have paid Nicholas's fare back home, and would have taken it by faith, and would have said, I take it by faith, and got up and brushed off the sawdust off our knees, and would have gone out smiling a smile that never belonged there at all, but was put on, and yes, the Lord had met me, and we'd have gone right back to the same old death that we came out of. But Haller had sense enough to keep on till he was dead, altogether dead. My friend Booth and I were talking about a certain preacher that preaches everybody dead and leaves them there.

Now, I don't like to preach them dead and leave them there, and the difference between Dr. Simpson and a lot of these death preachers was that he preached them out of the grave again, into the glory, and you died with Christ, but you rose with him, and it was the rising with him, the living with him, and the living in him, and the victory that he talks about all the time. So, I like to talk about the victory that comes, too. But remember, there isn't any Easter until there's been a good Friday.

Remember that. Nobody rises till he dies, but we want to jump the gun and rise right now. But we won't go down the way Haller went, and the way Simpson went, and the way the rest of the saints went.

We want the victory, but we won't take the dying. Well, if I were to ask tonight, how many of you want to come down here and receive something? I'm sure that there would be a great number. Come, because God's children are always picking up whatever they can, you know.

Go to one camp meeting and another, and getting blessed here, and getting blessed there, and picking up something here. Always getting something, but never getting rid of anything. Our difficulty's right there.

We want to receive before we have emptied ourselves. You can't fill a full vessel. You have to empty it first.

So, if I were to say, how many want to come and get? You'd come and get, but tonight I want to say, how many want to come and empty yourself? I wonder how many it'll be. Usually it's not very many, but if we tonight set our faith and keep on saying, my motto is decrease, decrease, decrease. At the same time, my motto for him is increase, increase, increase.

Oh, friends, you'll never know the Lord very well until you have died to your property, and yourself, and your future, and all the little things we hold dear. In our home, we had a sick son, 12 years, and then time went on, and we figured that we'd settle for those six boys. We wanted a girl, but with so much youth.

So, after nine years had gone by, and the youngest nine years old, along came a girl, our only girl. She was 20 next week, and, oh brother, was she sweet and dear to me. I was 42 years old, and I needed a little girl terribly bad for those roughhouse gorillas, you know, that ran the place ragged.

Those smelly gym shoes, and all of this hanging around, you know. I needed, I needed something, and God sent her along, and then about that time I had to go through a spiritual experience, and that spiritual experience led me to have to surrender in a manner that I hadn't known before, and it came to Becky. Rebecca May, we called her, and we shortened it to Becky for this day, and she had brown curly hair, so curly you couldn't find a straight one, and she was as pretty as a picture, and in spite of that she looked, they said, like me, and, and she was gentle and feminine, and I'd go and see the little feminine things hanging up, you know, I could have jumped over the building, would be like just to see her little clothes hanging around, you know, little, little tiny baby girl clothes.

Well, I loved her more than I knew, and I had to go to God to die for that, and I did, and I gave her up. I gave Becky up, and I gave her up so completely that if the Lord had taken her home and she died, I wouldn't have complained. I wouldn't.

I testified to that one time, and of all people, a missionary came to me and said, Mr. Tozer, I'd be afraid to testify like that. Aren't you afraid? And I said, no sister, I'm not afraid for this reason. I have put Becky in the hands that have the nail prints in them.

I have put her in the hands that loved her enough to die, and love never does wrong to its object. She's safe now, and she never was safe before, as long as I held her so close that she was my darling and sweetheart, and a part of you. She wasn't safe, but when I died to her and turned her over to those nail-pierced hands, she's been safe ever since.

And if her plans were through, she'd be a missionary. Two years, and I had a couple more years to go, and then she hopes to go to the field. Brethren, I've just said it tonight, you've got to decrease, and decrease, and decrease, and he increases, and increases, and when he increases, he is like the sun that rises from the path of the dust that follows him, goes brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

Now, let's get straight about something. I am called an evangelist here for this year, because I speak in the evening, but I haven't seen any worry whatsoever about how many people come to the altar. I don't care if nobody comes from now on to the next Sunday night.

It doesn't make any difference to me. I have no reputation to make, and none to lose. So, I want to be perfectly candid, and I want us to be friends, and I want to talk for my Lord Jesus, and then I want you to respond as though you were hearing from him, and I'll stand by and watch and be glad, and if you don't respond, I'll be sorry, because he wants you to respond.

If you do respond, I'll be glad because he wants you to respond, but if you do, you're not coming for me, you're coming for him. Are you willing this evening to take your motto, I decrease these in treatment, and live it? Ask God to help you to get it inside of you, and live that motto. Are you willing? Would you like to have a little encounter with Jesus tonight? If you were here in person, and you could speak the faith that you're hearing now, what would you say to him? What would be the first thing you'd say? What would be the one thing come and say to him tonight? What would be that one thing if Jesus were to walk in here wearing the old garments, and you recognize him, you knew that in some serious way he'd come for a moment back to earth, and he was holding out, what would you say to him? Come and say that to him tonight.

He's just as much here, and certainly here, as if you saw him. You say to him tonight on your knees what you'd say, if you could look right into his face and say, will you? In the book of John, that is gospel according to Saint John, third chapter, beginning with verse 22, after these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea. That's verse 22 of chapter 3 of John, and there he's buried with them and baptized, and over across the page it tells us, across the page in my bible, it tells us though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples.

That is, he was heading it, but they were doing the actual baptizing. And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salem, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized, for John was not yet cast into prison.

Then there rose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying, and they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizes, and all men come to him. And John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

Now, generally supposed those are the last words of John. That is the last from here, and then the other John, John's beloved, who wrote this book and was quoting John the Baptist, now carries it on. He that cometh from above is above all.

He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard that he testifies, and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

Now, verse 30 is the one that I have in mind tonight. He, Jesus, must increase, and I, John, must decrease. Now, both Jesus and John were baptizing.

John was baptizing in person, and Jesus was baptizing through his disciples who did, as I've said, the actual baptizing. And in their journey, these two popular preachers, in their journey they came near to each other. Moving across the country with disciples, they came near to each other.

Now, John was bringing his colorful ministry to a close, for he was a colorful character, this John the Baptist. But it wasn't to last much longer now, and Jesus was getting his ministry well underway, and each one was fulfilling his divine commission. John the Baptist was doing what God had sent him to do, and our Lord Jesus Christ was doing what his Father had sent him to do.

And there wasn't any rivalry between the two men. There was only rivalry, as somebody said, in the minds of their disciples. Jealousy arose among the followers of each.

Neither Jesus nor John was jealous of the other, but the disciples, their followers, were jealous. Now, I might turn aside here long enough to say that the most, one of the most wicked things in the world, is religious jealousy.

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