

# (Hebrews - Part 49): Workings of the God of Peace

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer emphasizes the unchanging nature of Christ and the importance of living a life of goodwill and seeking perfection in faith.*

**Duration:** 26:04

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 13:8-10, Hebrews 13:13-14, Hebrews 13:20-21

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having goodwill and love towards others. He explains that if we have positive feelings towards people, almost anything is acceptable, but if we don't, almost nothing is. The preacher also discusses the concept of heaven and hell, stating that heaven should be filled with goodwill and love, while hell is for evil individuals. He encourages the audience to pray and give generously, as well as to avoid being swayed by strange doctrines and constantly changing beliefs. The sermon references verses from the Bible, including Hebrews 13:17 and Hebrews 13:9.

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## Transcript

Now, for the time left, I am to talk about the book of Hebrews and to bring my long series of sermons on that to a close. Look at the 13th chapter of the book of Hebrews, beginning with verse 8. The old man of God that I still think is Paul, although I admit and I defer to scholarship that it might not have been Paul, it doesn't make any difference who wrote it, but it's the Holy Spirit who inspired it. He says in verse 8, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

We want you to understand that and know it. The Missionary Society of which you are a member, we are members here at this Church, literally had this as one of its great pillars in the early days, that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, today and forever. The whole Church, not only the little groups that formed the alliance, but the whole Church was startled to hear this again and hear it emphasized and it blessed the Church all over the continent.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Then in verse 9, he says, that we are not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. I don't like to see people carried about by the exuberance of some preacher that's in for the time.

The Russians say, Have you heard so-and-so? I don't like people that are converted too often. I grant a man to be converted from sin to the Lord, or to religion, and then if he finds that he hasn't found the truth quite, then I allow him to be converted once more to the truth. But after that, I'm afraid of men who get converted too often.

I find people who are swung about with every wind of doctrine. All somebody has to do is preach a sermon on the radio, and they write in a letter immediately all trembling because they've heard something. Well, don't worry, my brother.

The Word of God stands here, and verse 9 says, that we are not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it's a good thing that the heart be established with grace and not with meekness, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. I think I told you about a man who wrote in and said, I see in the alliance witness that you spoke about Adam.

He said, Which Adam? There are three Adams. I wrote him back and told him that Paul didn't know that, and I quoted Paul. He wrote back and said, I'm not responsible for Paul's ignorance.

Well, he knew there were three Adams. I could have been all startled and upset by that, but I didn't lose any sleep, because I've got the Word of God here, too, and I didn't need him, really. Then there was verse 10.

It says, We have an author that they have no right to eat of, who served the tabernacle. He says that the bodies of the beasts were taken outside and burned outside the camp, and to fulfill this, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate. He taught us, therefore, separation and says in verse 13, Let us go forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach.

In verse 14, notice how filled it is here. It would take weeks yet if I preached and treated every verse as a text. He says, We have no continuing city here, no permanent city, but we are seeking one to come.

Always remember that you are a pilgrim. You are not a settler. You are a pilgrim.

You are not settled down here, you are traveling, you are hunting something. You are seeking a city that is to come. But he says, and has proved it all through his book, even though there are no sacrifices made any more, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, ended all blood sacrifice.

Yet, he says, we do have an offering to make to God, and it's a threefold offering. It's a sacrifice of praise to God continually. He that glorified God offers praise, glorified God.

So we offer praise to God as a sacrifice and give thanks to his name, and then we do good, and that's a sacrifice, and we give of our money, that's a sacrifice. So we give these three sacrifices, but we don't offer lambs any more. That's all been taken care of.

Then in verse 17, he says, and here is a hint that church authority, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. He asks that we might pray, that they might pray. Translating this into modern terms, we are to pray.

We should pray more than we give, and we should give all we can. We should pray more than we do good works, and we should do good works all we can. But money that isn't supported by prayer will not support the work of God, really.

And good works that are not done out of prayer will not really do the Kingdom of God very much good. Then for the close, we come to this wonderful passage of scripture, used so often as a benediction. Verses 20 and 21.

I know few verses in the entire Bible that affect me so deeply as this passage. It has about it what they call a numinous quality, that is, a mysterious divine unction is on this passage. And when I repeat it over to myself as a traveler, when I wake up at night, when I hear it repeated as a benediction in the church, it warms my heart and does something to it.

Here it is. Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Now there is the text, and I want to break it down a little here, just briefly as I close. Notice that the God of peace here, this God of peace, he is a God of several kinds of peace. I believe that he is a God of the peace among nations, and I believe the day will be when there will be peace among nations.

It will not be the peace of an uneasy compromise or the peace of a balance of terror. It will be the peace of a reigning King. When Jesus Christ reigns from the river to the ends of the earth and Israel is back in the land and the Church has been glorified, and the nations of the earth come and bring their honor and their glory into her.

He is that kind of a God of peace. But you know what we are trying to do in the world is to get peace among nations before we have had peace in the heart. You can't have peace among nations until you have peace in the heart.

But this God of ours, this is the God we adore. He is the God of eternal goodwill, and he has goodwill in his heart. Do you know how to turn hell into heaven? If I had the power to do it, I have the knowledge how to do it.

I don't have the power to do it, but I have the knowledge. And I could turn the hell where Judas is and Hitler and all the rest, and everyone who denies the Lord and refuses to obey him, I could turn that hell into heaven overnight if I had the power because I have the knowledge. And here is how we do it.

We fill hell with goodwill and love and pity and peace. And there is no hell that would be hell long if we filled it full of goodwill. For it is the lack of goodwill between nations that brings trouble, and it is the lack of goodwill in any place, the lack of love and pity and peace and charity, it's the lack of this that makes hells, if you are able to do it.

I know marriage counselors have their place, and they are probably better than nothing, but they do very little after all. Rarely they help, but sometimes. But when they come to you, a married couple who are having trouble, come to a man for help.

They sit down and each tells his story, and you sit and try to be neutral and listen and try to unscramble their poor, tangled lives. But there is something gone from that home that you can't restore. It's goodwill, it's love, it's gone and you can't restore it.

If there is love and goodwill, you can put up with every kind of twisted circumstance. But if there is no love or goodwill, you can't put up with anything. So that if we could take any home that's about on the rocks and suddenly fill it with goodwill, it would all be over.

And if we could fill all the homes on this continent with goodwill, all the divorce lawyers would be out of business and they'd have to go to work at something else, preferably, I say, driving trucks. But they ought to do something, because they would have no job if we could put goodwill in the home. And I say that if you can get goodwill in your heart, everything is all right.

I sat down in a plane, I always travel what they call economy in the TCA, for tourists down in the States, and because others pay my bills, I go as cheaply as I can. So I always travel tourist or economy, and you know, the seats aren't very wide. I don't know how some people would ever make it, but I managed to squeeze in.

And I was so tired, I've been so desperately tired recently, I've got a week now in which I hope to rest a little bit. But I sat down tired and I wanted to write, I had to keep up my writing as I went along, so I got out my book and a great big fellow came around and looked me over, and then he sat down beside me, and he was just exactly twice as big as I was, just twice as big. Great big head, big neck, great shoulders and chest, and probably 27 years old, 26.

And then he not only sat down and bowed over on me, but in order to see, he leaned over on me. Well, I didn't feel good about it at all, and I kind of pushed back, but it didn't do much good because he had me two to one, and I admit that I was feeling just a little bit sorry for myself. And then goodwill entered, and I thought to myself, well, God bless the big fellow, he doesn't notice what he's doing, and I turned and talked about the snow down there.

We got into a conversation. By the time we arrived here at Malton, I felt good all over. We were friends, and he was telling me all about himself.

He said he wasn't a football player, he was an engineer. But if he ever wants to change, I know that the Rams or one of the other teams, the Argonauts were taking, and he was laying that over on me. Well, the question of goodwill, you know.

If you have goodwill, you can put up with anything. He could have laughed all over me after we'd gotten into conversation, because I liked him. He was a nice fellow, gracious and kindly and friendly, and he was an engineer, and he explained a few things that I didn't know about on the plane, and we soon were friends.

Now, there's a difference of goodwill. I could have talked all the way up, if I hadn't had goodwill. But goodwill came along, and I decided to forgive him, and it wasn't very long until we were friends.

Now, that's a simply a little silly illustration, but it's true and it's practical and it's down where we live. If you feel good toward people, almost anything is all right, and if you don't, almost nothing is. So if you want to turn heaven into hell, fill it with goodwill and love.

And if you want to turn hell into heaven, reverse it. If you want to turn hell into heaven, fill it with goodwill, and if you want to turn heaven into hell, let evil men go there. That's why I believe that heaven must be a heaven, and there's no hell in heaven and can't be.

And that's the reason I believe there are some people you couldn't take there. They couldn't go to heaven without a terrible change, a wonderful change, because if they went to heaven, they would soon be infecting everybody in heaven with their vile and evil hard feelings and strife and ill will and antagonisms. One man said, Oh, that I had the wings of a dove and I'd fly away and be at rest.

I'd remain in the wilderness from the stormy wind and tempest. Even the wild wilderness is a good place if you can be by yourself and can be quiet and you love everybody and everybody loves you reasonably well and you're not mad at anybody and your heart feels good. Any place, a wilderness, is a nice place to be.

But I tell you, you know what the scripture says, as a steady dropping on a day of rain, so is a house where there is a contentious woman. You read about that, Sister? As a steady dropping on a day of rain. And the same thing with two men.

It isn't a question of the sex of either one. Steady dropping. They talk about the Chinese torture, dropping a drop of water on top of your head and let it go on for days and days and days, and pretty soon you go completely off your rocker and lose your mind.

It isn't hard, it isn't heavy, it isn't painful, but the steady dropping. The old man said, he must have had a wife like that. He said, a contentious woman just like a steady dropping.

And a man, the same, no difference. I've been around homes where my wife and I stayed in a home one time, and the woman was a Christian and the man wasn't. He was a grouchy old tramp.

And we sat at his table and ate, we had to, because I was preaching there, and that's where I was entertained. But he never smiled much. You couldn't get him to smile.

Then when we'd be eating, you know, we were young in those days, believe it or not, and we ate lots, I did anyhow. And the wife would say to him, would you have some more beans, Jake? He'd say, no, I know when I get enough. Then we had to sit there.

And of course, when he had enough, I had to have enough, because it didn't look right, it looked as if I didn't know when I had enough. When he was that kind of fellow, and how she lived with him, I don't know, but she did. So that kind of man.

Good will, good peace, the God of peace. God wants home to be peaceful and he wants the church to be peaceful. I've never had the experience in all my long ministry of ever being in a church where there was a lot of contention.

I don't know what I'd do. I think probably I wouldn't be able to take it. It would break me if there was a lot of contention.

There is no contention here. Oh, you know, somebody gets a grouch occasionally, but they get over it in 24 hours and nothing comes of it. It's like a pimple on your arm.

You look at it and say, am I getting leprosy? The next day it's gone. And the same with the church. If the church is basically a Bible church filled with good will, you know, little things come up.

Somebody calls you on the phone, wants to know what you meant or what you said. You laugh it off and in two weeks nobody remembers. That's good will.

Well, the God of peace, our God. He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. Here is the great final act of God in time by which he sealed his good will to men when he brought Jesus Christ from the dead.

That's the rock of our Christian hope, and I don't wait till Easter to preach on the resurrection of Jesus, and I don't want you to wait till Easter to sing about it. The resurrection of Jesus, the total resurrection of the man Jesus, not the poetic resurrection, not the spiritualized resurrection of Jesus, not the silver spirited Jesus slipping out of the grave like a ghost, no, no. The total resurrection of the whole man Jesus Christ from the dead.

He is now at the right hand of the Father, God's representative man at God's right hand. He raised him from the dead, he brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. I don't know why somebody didn't set this to music, maybe they didn't, I've missed it, but how beautiful it is.

The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep. He was that shepherd who died for his sheep. Jesus didn't hazard his life.

Paul wrote of one man who hazarded his life for the gospel. That's not enough. Jesus didn't hazard his life for his people, he gave his life for his people.

That's quite another thing. Every time a man goes out to work in the morning, he's hazarding his life for his family. Every time you go out on 401, you're not only hazarding it, you're saying, Come and get me out on 401.

So every time a man drives off and waves good-bye to you, sister, he's hazarding his life for you. But that's one thing, but it's another thing to give it. Jesus didn't stop with hazarding, he gave it.

Christ is the great shepherd of the sheep. The shepherd supplies all the lack for his weak and helpless and dull sheep. It's through the blood of the everlasting covenant, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, this was the cost to the shepherd.

He didn't hazard his life only, but he shed his blood that there might be an everlasting covenant made. The covenant of Jesus was not written on parchment. The covenant Jesus made with his people and with his Father was not written even on stone, it was written on his heart by blood.

That covenant seals the sheep to the shepherd forever and ever and ever. That covenant outlasts nations and outlasts kingdoms and outlasts stars and suns and time itself. And you're his by a covenant.

You can remember that. Some of you have been taught or mistaught until you feel that you are saved by keeping your nose above water by dog-paddling. You're not learning how you stay afloat, so you just dog-paddle.

And you get up and pray and pray and pray and think that you'll keep saved by praying. No, you don't keep saved by praying, though if you keep saved you will be praying. But you keep saved by trusting in this everlasting covenant that's outlasting all the nations of the world and all the stars in the sky above.

And oh, the holy time itself is outlasted by this glorious, blessed covenant. When we have seen the heavens burn themselves out, and all that deserve hell have gone there, and all that have gotten heaven through the grace of God have gone there, and the nations of the earth have been purified, and this terrestrial sphere has been made clean and pure again. It's floating around the world as a legitimate planet

around the sun, not hardware thrown up by ambitious men, but a legitimate planet around the sun, inhabited by a redeemed race.

That covenant will still hold as it holds now. So that, he says, may that God of peace make you perfect. Some react from this.

They wince under the word perfect. They don't like to hear it. They've been brainwashed, and they've been taught that there's no such thing as perfection in all the world.

Well, there's some kinds of perfection I don't go along with, but how can we be Christians and not seek for perfection? How can you be a child of God and not want to be pure? How can any girl prepare herself for the wedding hour? How can she be careless about her person if the young lady she should be married that evening, and she's grooming herself with a half a dozen relatives and friends helping her, so that she will be the very best, and that dress, that expensive dress that she'll only wear once, that beautiful thing that somebody spent a lot of time making, that she shopped and found and loved, she wants that perfectly clean. She doesn't throw that into a corner and drag that out a half hour before the wedding. She doesn't do the dishes in it for three or four days before, maybe stay in the garden with it on.

She wants her garment to be spotless. And she herself wants to be groomed spotlessly. So when she comes down the aisle to the old familiar tomb and her starry-eyed bridegroom stands over here looking at her, he won't see a frump, but he'll see a bride worthy of the occasion and worthy of him.

And how can we, if we believe we're the bride of Jesus Christ, ever believe in anything but perfection? That is, we won't be totally perfect in this life, but anybody who fights against perfection is like the girl who fights to wear blue jeans to her own wedding. Why should we be satisfied to live spotted lives? Why should we be satisfied to live wrinkled lives? Wrinkled and spotted or any such thing, said the Holy Ghost. The Church is not to have wrinkles or spots, and so I say that even though we may not become angelic in the life that we now live, our hearts yearn to be pure and right and good and as near perfect as it's possible to be in this life.

And if you don't yearn to be holy and pure and clean and good, I'm afraid you've not met the bridegroom yet. One invariable mark of the true Christian is that he feels he wants to be free from the flesh and the world. Oh, the bitter disappointment and woe and sorrow! Some of us are getting older and not getting better.

Some of us are nearing the end of the road and were not any purer than we were 15 years ago. We've settled for something less than perfect. We've settled by turning or twisting some scripture or by accepting the situation.

We have learned to live with chronic impurities and chronic imperfections. God help us, the scripture says, make you perfect. Now, I know what the Greek students will say, it means mature.

But what kind of maturity? Moral maturity, of course. And moral maturity can be nothing else but purity of holiness. Then he says, lastly, working in you, working in you, if ye will work along with him, he will work in you.

Some weak and semi-backslidden and low-spirited Christians could know a sunburst of new life if they would realize that God is working in them. Somebody says, How would God act if he were down here in my place? Well, read the Gospels and you will know how God acted when he was down here in your

place. And God always acts like himself.

Therefore, whether God is in heaven or in a manger or on a cross, or in your heart, he always acts like God. And therefore, if he works in you, he works like himself. And if he works in me to will and to do of his own good pleasure, he works in moral conformity with his own nature, and it will be Christ in us, the hope of glory, and God will be working in and through us to do his own good pleasure.

And then he ends by saying, Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. And all of these peoples answered and said, Amen, Lord, Amen.

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