

(John - Part 26): Jesus Walking on Water

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the necessity of solitude for spiritual renewal and the importance of breaking the influence of a lost society.

Duration: 56:22

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 4:8, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that according to the Bible, human society is lost and under divine sentence. He highlights the powerful influence and magnetic attraction that society has over individuals. The preacher also mentions the need for believers to frequently retire from society in order to break its hold on their lives and to come back as masters, not slaves. The sermon emphasizes the importance of conversion and being born again in Christ Jesus to overcome the corrupting power of society.

Transcript

Last Sunday night I talked to you about Jesus and the great multitude that surrounded him, and I tried to tell you why he was among them. Tonight I have another text from the same chapter altogether that follows hard on his miracle of the loaves and the fishes, and this one is altogether different. This one says, when Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Himself alone. In verse 15. In verse 1, or rather 2, a great multitude did follow him.

Now, himself alone. I want to talk to you tonight about Jesus, about why Jesus went into a mountain. Now, in the first place, Jesus did depart into this mountain himself alone.

It is easy to establish from the New Testament that this was a practice of our Lord, and not an unusual occurrence at all. His first 40 days, you'll remember, that when he went into the wilderness there that time, for 40 long days, he was alone in the wilderness. Himself alone.

In Luke 6.12 it tells us that he went up into a mountain and continued all night in prayer to God. Matthew 14.23 says, he sent the multitude away and departed and went up into a mountain apart. And then that famous passage in Matthew 26.39 where it says that he told his disciples to come near and stay with him.

Then he said, now you stay here and pray. And he went a little further. Now, those verses I have given you establish the truth, if it needed to be established.

And our Lord had the habit of every once in a while departing from the multitude and going somewhere by himself into a desert, up into a mountain, or up under the trees in the olive yard, anywhere where he could be by himself. This was not only true of our Lord Jesus Christ, but true also of the worthy saints. I was thinking as I rode along on the train about this, and I was thinking about that man Enoch.

Now, no doubt Enoch was a married man. He was a married man, a man of family. He left at least one son behind him.

He no doubt had to make a living of some sort. He didn't live merely on spirituality. He had to eat and play to keep his family.

And yet we don't learn very much about his family at all. When he took a walk, it was with God. Enoch walked with God.

You get a sense of loneliness there, a sense of being himself alone with God. And then there was Noah. Now, of course, the earth was full of people in that day, and Noah had his wife and his sons and the rest of them there.

But when you read about Noah, you have a sense that you're reading about one man alone. His walk with God separated him so that he was more or less alone. And there was Abraham.

It came to pass that God said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country and out from thy kindred and unto a land that I will show thee. Abraham must have been by himself at that time. I surely think he was.

I doubt whether God had touched Abraham on the shoulder during a card party or even a coffee clutch. I think that Abraham was by himself, and unquestionably he was by himself cultivating his soul. Then there was Jacob.

Twice Jacob had experiences. There was that first wonderful experience there in the backside of the desert, in the waste-howling wilderness, when God appeared to the man. There was that second experience by the riverside when God appeared to him again.

And both of those times, he was all together by himself. And I have read tonight in your hearing the story of Moses on the mount, one time that he was on the mount. Before that, Moses had knelt in rapture beside the burning bush, alone himself.

Take this man Job. You read the book of Job and you will learn from it that Job had a habit of being with God alone. Elijah came down from the hillsides and mountains of Tishbi and stood before the king.

He said, I stand before God. Those were the only credentials he carried, that he stood before Jehovah. And it was in loneliness that Elijah learned his great lesson.

And the prophets, you will read about them and how they were alone with God. David's psalms are psalms of loneliness. They're also psalms of fine, sweet, social joy.

But those times of social joys were interspersed by times of loneliness when he and God were alone. Now let us inquire why our Lord Jesus Christ departed into a mountain himself alone, and why he was not

singular in this, but it was the practice of all the Bible worthies. Let us inquire why.

Why did these persons withdraw themselves from human society for periods of time ranging anywhere from a few hours to many days, and there wait alone in the presence of God? Now to get at that and get an answer to it, we're going to have to go into the very root and rationality of salvation. You follow along and bear with me while I try to tell you why Jesus went by himself alone. It dates back and goes back to the whole philosophy of God and man and human society.

I'm going to talk quite a little tonight about retiring from human society, and in the doing of it, I want you to know what I mean by society. In the newspapers, society means people with mink coats and whose names are in the social register. It is commonly called high society.

A society matron did so and so. They often die as society matron did it. That means high society.

But I am not talking about high society. I'm talking about human society. And human society is a name given to the circle of people that we touch, whether they be our own within our family, a man and his wife, and child forming a little circle of society.

And then all her relatives and all his relatives, a bigger circle of society. And then the friends of themselves and all the relatives and the friends of the relatives, they form a bigger circle. And then there are lodges where men touch each other and in baseball games and hunting parties and golf tournaments and even where we work and even when we're shopping.

We're facing human society. Wherever we go, wherever people are, that's society. A group of human beings living together forms a society, whether it's a man and wife and his band or baby, or whether it be a great crowd, a multitude as said here of Jesus.

Now that's what I mean by society. And the whole philosophy of society, God and man and society, is wrapped up in this thing that Jesus did. When Jesus came and went by himself alone, the whole thing rooted back down into the fact that human society is what it is, and God is what he is, and man is what he is.

Now let's look at this about human society. And I say this knowing that you are evangelical Christians, but some places I would have to make a case for this and argue it, and then I would be argued down. Human society is loss.

Now I hold in my hand a bible composed of 66 inspired books, and the burden of that whole bible is that human society is loss. And by loss I mean that its legal position is to be under divine sentence. Human society is under divine sentence.

I just read an article while I had a sandwich after I came back from a discipline where I preached, where I came up here tonight, and I read there an article about the church, all the churches of the United States getting together, all Protestantism uniting. And they were talking about what it could be that could get us together, how we could get together in the long discussion. But they gave a little illustration that I thought was well worthy of repeating.

It said some church somewhere, some group of people somewhere, that a motion was placed before the house that the church members in that denomination do not drink, and that they would not receive anybody or allow anybody in the church to drink hard liquor. And one pastor whispers, if this motion

carries, I won't have a man on my board. Not a man on his board.

He'd better have had no board. But anyway, human society, my friends, is a group of people, and that they are lost, that they are under divine sentence. Now, the churches don't believe that now.

It is mostly they don't believe it now, but that is what the Bible teaches. And churches where all the board members drink, naturally don't accept anything like this. But it is true that the Bible does teach that human society is under divine sentence, and that its moral condition is described as walking according to the print of the power of the air, and hating and being hated, and deceiving and being deceived, full of sin all the time.

That's the moral condition of society. And the spiritual condition of society is cut off from the life of God. Now, let's get that first of all.

I've preached too many times tonight to have a good baritone voice, Brother Sheldon, but I'll do my best with what I've got, about what you do bureaucracy. Now, let's get this straight, that human society, according to the Bible, is lost. It is under judicial sentence from God, and it is cut off from the life of God, and it is morally corrupt.

Now, that's human society. Not one segment of human society, but human society. And the next thing is that that society exercises over each of its members a strange and terrible fascination.

That it exercises a powerful molding influence, and a magnetic attraction, and an irresistible compulsion by its power of suggestion and example. Now, society, organized society, exercises over the individual this magnetic attraction. It's a strange thing, and it's a beautiful thing in some ways, how the individual is influenced by his circle, and by the people that he knows, and the people that touch him, and the people he reads about, even in history.

Human society exercises, I repeat, a magnetic attraction over each individual member. Do we still have water, Brother? If you give me a glass of water, I believe I'll make it. God put the water in the hills, and some good brother piped it into a building that might just as well use it.

Now, how is God going to save a man, the individual man? How can he save the individual man when society is lost, and society exercises over that individual man an influence so powerful that it molds him from the time he's born until he dies, that it attracts him, that it overwhelms him? It has a magnetic attraction upon him. It hypnotizes him. It holds him in thrall.

How is God going to save a man from a ship that's going down? How is he going to rescue the individual when the individual is a part of a larger whole, and that larger whole controls the individual, and that larger whole is lost, perishing, under sentence, cut off from the life of God, full of iniquity, destined for final condemnation? And yet, in that mass, God has a few men. In society, God has a few individuals. And he wants to save those individuals.

He wants to save them. How is he going to get them off of that sinking ship? How is he going to disengage them from the attraction of society? How is he going to deliver them from the thrall of society? How is he going to break the stranglehold of society upon them? No, he's going to deliver them from society. And what do I mean by saved from society? I'll explain what I do not mean personally.

By saved from society, I don't mean saved from the society of mankind. Some have so interpreted this. They have properly and rightly seen that God must save men from fallen society to save them at all.

And they've interpreted it to mean that we are to withdraw from society altogether. So we have hermits, and the poets have talked about the Eremites. And Eremite is just another name for a hermit.

Very beautiful poetic name. And they have gone off by themselves and lived alone and gotten old and gray and moldy and usually bitter, in the woods somewhere, withdrawing from human society altogether. Now that's exactly what I don't mean.

And that's exactly what the Bible does not mean. For the Bible is a wonderfully social book. If you read your Bible, you will find it's a social book.

You will find that people lived together in that Bible. They touched each other in that Bible. They loved each other.

They were together there in that Bible. And in the Old Testament, they worshiped God together, and they lived together, and they loved together, and they died together. And in the New Testament, they were together when the Holy Ghost came.

The Bible is a social book. And old Saint Bernard, or Bernard or Clooney it was, who wrote this celestial city, when he said of Jerusalem the golden, I know not why, know not what social joys are there, but radiancy of glory, what joy is beyond compare, he was recognizing the fact that we are made for each other, and that we are not right when we are alone, that we are incomplete when we are alone, that God made us for each other. And a lone man is not quite normal.

A man who is by himself or all the time alone is not quite normal. He needs society, and society needs the individual. And the Bible is a social book.

It is a book of fellowship. And the very word fellowship means the condition of being fellows, equals with people. So the Bible is not the book of the hermit.

It is not the book of the monk who begs from door to door with his little rice bowl in his hand and his shoes off his feet. No, the Bible is a social book. It's a book of living together.

But the trick is now, as I repeat, if society is lost under the judicial sentence of God, without life and without hope in the world, and God wants to save members of society for himself, how is he going to save a man from society and break the stranglehold of society upon him? I say, it is not by having that man desert human society and become a monk. How then is he going to do it? He's going to do it by taking them not from society, but taking, breaking the power of society upon them. Now, the attraction of society has to be neutralized on the individual.

That magnetism has to be broken. He's going to have to somehow break the power of gravity that holds the man's heart to the mass. He's going somehow to need to break the invisible cords that binds that man.

He's going to have to take away from the neck of that man the fingers that are strangling him and shake him loose from society so that his power over him is broken. It is not by retreat from human society, but victory in human society that the Bible teaches for its Christians. The influence must be counteracted and the power must be destroyed.

How is that accomplished? Now we get back around to the text again. We read that Jesus went up into a mountain himself alone. He sent the multitude away and went up into a mountain himself alone.

My brethren, we get it now and begin to see the light. That God saved men from society by breaking the power of society upon them. Fallen society, lost society, society under divine sentence.

Sinful society, break its attractiveness, lose its stranglehold, turn the individual man free. How can he do that and keep doing that? How can a man maintain that kind of an attitude in a world like this? How can he walk in the world and not be of the world? How can he mingle with society and not be attracted by and strangled by society? How can he be a free man and a saved man in a society that's going down? The answer is simply by retiring frequently from society. Not by retreating from human society, but breaking the power of society over the man by retiring frequently from society.

Why does a man retire from society? Why does the Bible teach all the way through? And why does the echo sound all down the corridors of the centuries? The saints always had their lonely times. The great Christians always had their times when it could be said of them, himself alone. The answer is, they were obeying God.

And they were alone not to retreat from reality, but to retire from society and commune with God. I hold in my hand an imaginary little affair, maybe it's the shape of a cross. And it's entirely dead.

There's nothing to it, it's just there. And I can see it because it's in my hand there, as long as that lead pencil has got a cross on it. I see it, it's got a little mark, we can hang it up, a little affair, we can hang it up.

And it has no life in it, it's just a dead thing. I hold it in my hand. Now the night is coming on.

And I know the night will come on before many hours. And yet I want that thing to be separated from the night. I want it to break the spell of the darkness that will soon engulf it.

I want it to shine, I want it to stand out clear in the night. How do I do it? I take it for an hour and put it on the windowsill where the sun can hit it. The sun shines on it for an hour.

It is treated with some kind of chemical. Then the sun, after shining a while on that, you take that thing and put it, hang it on the wall there, and then let the night come. Let the shadows deepen and the darkness descend.

Walk into the room and there shines your little cross, bright and clear and cheerful on the wall, though it before was but a dead thing. An hour in the sunlight prepared it for a long night of shining. You've seen those little crosses, you can buy them at each company or anywhere where they sell such things.

What do they have on them, brother? Radium, some sort of thinned-down radium, I suppose. There they give off some kind of light. After it has first absorbed it, it gives it off.

It slowly wears out, and by the time the morning light has come around again, the poor little old cross is pretty thin out. He doesn't have much left, but he's got enough, had enough to shine through the night. That's exactly, at least it's some kind of an illustration.

Here we are in the midst of the world and the darkness is round about us. How can we break the power of the darkness? The answer is expose yourself sometimes to God. Retire sometimes from human society and expose the Godward side of your soul to the sunlight.

And the light of God will shine down on you, and you will absorb God's ways, God's thoughts, God's emotions, God's personality, the ways of God. And then when you're thrust back into the darkness of society again to make your living, you will shine with the reflected light of borrowed glow. There's the reason Jesus went into the mountains.

They surrounded him all day long. They took a world of life and energy out of the man, Christ Jesus. Their bickering and their jealousy and their evil talk and their just sheer worldliness took a lot out of him.

He became tired. What is he going to do? Surrender to it all? No. He sent the multitudes away and it came to pass that he went up into a mountain himself alone.

He turned the Godward side of his soul up toward heaven, and for a long time exposed his soul to the face of God. And when that sweet and precious hour was over, he came down the mountain again to still the waves and to bless mankind and to help the multitude. But he couldn't help the multitude.

He had to help the multitude by retiring and getting power, so that when he came among them he had what they needed. Why do we retire frequently from society? I have said to commune with God, and I say also to bathe our soul in silence. I've said it before, all together to noise your world.

People are children. They love noise. A little girl came home, they tell me, from a party, and her mother said, Honey, did you have a good time? She said, Mother, did we? She said, We got to laughing and then we got to screaming.

And she said, We just, all twelve of us, screamed and screamed and screamed. She said, I've never had such a good time. And they don't when they're five or six.

Get out on the highway and see these boys with the hot rods. They go roaring away, I said to the driver. That fellow's under thirty.

He's under thirty. If he's over thirty, he'd never have opened that thing like that. He's under thirty.

There's something about childhood and immaturity that likes noise. But maturity wants less of it. And old age doesn't want none.

It don't like it. And so in our moral life, in our religious life, in our philosophical life, in our social life, the more immature we are, the more we've got to cheer ourselves by just screaming and screaming what a time we have. And you know we've got that kind of religion in the world today.

A lot of the so-called evangelicalism is simply the religion of the little girls who scream. The louder we yell, the more noise we make, the more we advertise, the more bells we jingle, and the more songs we play, and the more talk we do, the happier we are because there's immaturity. But the mature saint finds that sometimes he has to recharge his batteries in the silence.

Old Moses, he was learned in all of the learning of the Egyptians, but when God wanted to use him to deliver the children of Israel, he had to give him another degree. And it took him forty years to get it. In the backside of the desert, in the silence, oftentimes for a long period, the only sound you would hear would be the muffled munching of the sheep as they munched their cudgels, lying there in the darkness under the stars.

God put Moses to school to this silence. He said, Moses, you've been at court where everybody talks. You've got to learn the therapeutic value of silence.

You've got to get alone. And so Moses learned it, and learned it well in the silence. And when our Lord came, when it would get too much for his human heart to endure any longer, he said, all right, you go your way.

And he disappeared. They looked everywhere for him, couldn't find him. Didn't know which rock to look behind.

Didn't know which tree he might be kneeling beside. He was bathing his heart in the silence. Hear that? It's that that's astounding the human race.

It's that that's sending men to premature graves with nerve breaks and heart failures. It's noise and tension and pressure and squeeze. You can't escape it.

How can you escape it? We're living in the middle of it. You can't all go to Arizona. If we all did, Arizona would be as noisy as Chicago.

How are you going to do it? The answer is you can't retreat from it, but you can retire from it. You can get alone and break, break the pressure and squeeze and push human society and wait on God. Oh, I don't know whether I'm wasting this.

I don't suppose I am. I know some of you are hearing me. My friends, you'll learn more in the silence than you will listening to me preach.

You'll learn more in retirement with your God than you'll ever learn in all the Bible schools on the continent. You'll learn more as you bathe your soul in silence and turn your faith up to the light of God in retirement. And this may sound very strange to you, because this is usually preached in fundamental circles too much.

There is such a thing as holding familiar fellowship with the powers of the world to come. I don't know that I know what that means. I'm preaching about something that I can't define.

I often do. And I don't know whether I can define the powers of the world to come or not. But it has been the belief of all religious people and all Bible people that there is another world just above the world where we live.

If not above geographically or astronomically, then above in quality of life, that kingdom of God. And all through the Old Testament there walked wonderful creatures. The angel came to Abraham, three of them, and strange beings came to get him when he was threshing and to Samson's mother when she was in the field.

And she dashed home to tell her husband, come back and see this wonderful man. They made a sacrifice. He leaped into the middle of the fire and disappeared into the fire.

Were they crazy? Were they insane people? Were they fanatic? No. They were normal sane people and their future and subsequent living proved that they were. They had gotten in touch with another.

They'd heard another voice and seen another vision and communed with the powers of the world to come. I've never had a vision in my life and I've never dreamed a dream that I ever amounted to anything. I've dreamed some weird ones in my day and I have dreamed some beautiful and some terrible ones too.

But I never believed any of them amounted to anything. I'm not a visionary nor a dreamer. Maybe not enough so.

But I believe that we are not alone in this world. And I believe that God has not deserted the earth. And I believe that his messengers, flaming spirits, are in this earth.

For he tells us the little child has its guardian angel. Jesus said God would have sent twelve legions of angels. An angel did come to comfort him while he prayed.

The angel came to Peter and tapped him on the shoulder and said get up. And let him out and turned him loose. Come into the book of Revelation and you'll walk into a wonderful wonder world of living creatures.

Throw back the blinds and look into heaven and you see beasts and living creatures and elders and angels flying in the midst of heaven. Now is that all nonsense? Are we all to shrug that off and smile a superior, supercilious smile and say that belongs to the childhood of the race? No, we dare not. Jesus our Lord was announced by an angel.

The angel of the annunciation he is so magnificently called in history. The angel of the annunciation. When he had died and was in the tomb, the angels were there to say he's not here, he's risen.

Now if you're getting frightened I'll tell you I never saw an angel either. I don't believe in seeing angels, that is I couldn't see an angel in these old 2020s. I can't possibly and there are 2020s through the spectrum.

I couldn't see an angel that way and I wouldn't think I'd quite care to hear an angel either. But you can't sell short the universal testimony of the holiest saints of the age. And you can't, you dare not deny the teachings of the Bible that there's another world impending upon this world and the doors swing open both ways.

Jacob saw them go up and come down and go up and come down. Somebody called attention they went up before they came down. Strangely they must have been down there with Jacob all the time and he didn't know it.

They were ascending and descending. They didn't come down and go up, they went up and came down. They'd been down.

Now why do we retire from society sometimes into the secret silence to wait on God and turn our hearts up to his sunshine? I've told you two things, I tell you now this third one, that we might commune with or at least know the powers of the world to come. I have knelt in my study and in the various little places where they put me when I preach in these conventions here and there, in hotel rooms, I have knelt with my Bible open and shut out every noise, locked my door and waited. And soon you begin to have a feeling, a sense, not a feeling, not an emotion at all, you're as calm as a new day in June.

There is a sense of absolute well-being, a sense of complete harmony with the universe, a sense of being where God is, a refreshing, healing, delightful sense that can only come. Of being in tune with God and retiring from the crèche of society to let God speak to your heart. Isn't anything God says, I couldn't quote

what God said, isn't anything you see because you couldn't paint what you see, it's beyond that.

It's deep, deep in the heart. So Jesus escaped the toils and magnetic strangling influence of society by retiring from it sometimes, calming himself and collecting himself, and warming his fire at the heat of it, and calming himself in the stillness. And you and I must do the same thing.

This is 18th century preaching, worse than that 17th century preaching, better than that first century preaching, better than that. David's message, and Moses, and Abraham, and Job, and Jacob, and Enoch, and the rest of them, they all had to learn it better. And the reason we're such shallow Christians, and backslide so easily, and get discouraged so soon, we live on the surface and in the noise, meditation on the great solemn truths of God, feed the heart and strengthen it.

Usually it can't be done except himself alone. Now a word about the current usage, social ideas. The teaching now is almost everywhere, simply this, that each individual in the society must seek two things, get these two things, social integration and social adjustment.

Hear those two phrases. They sound so learned that they must be so, but they're not. Social integration.

Now what does that mean? You hear that every place. We should seek social integration. We should bring our children up so they're integrated socially.

Social integration simply means this. It means that we are submerged in society completely. Social integration.

You pour a cup of water into a tub of water, and there is achieved immediate integration. You go back and say, your mother says, honey go back and get that water. You go back, how are you going to find it? It's mixed now, it's gone with all the rest of the water.

It's integrated. Once was a lonely cup of water, now it's integrated in a larger society. So they're saying, social integration, get submerged, lost in society.

They want me to study, to submerge myself in a society that's already lost, to lose myself in a lost society. It's like telling me to chain myself to the deck of a sinking ship. Social integration.

Everybody's yelling about that now. And the other one is social adjustment. Teacher says, oh she's a well-adjusted child.

I don't think she's properly adjusted. What's the matter with you? Are you not adjusted? Somebody gets a heebie-jeebies a little, and they run off to a psychiatrist, and he says, why the trouble, you madam, is you're not adjusted now. We sit down and we talk.

You've got to get adjusted. Always tinkering with their infernal little screwdrivers, wanting to adjust us. Brethren, the Bible doesn't teach adjustment and integration.

It teaches detachment and repudiation. A nurse is sent to a leper colony, and the only way she can be any use to that leper colony is be completely detached from it. The moment she gets adjusted to leprosy, she's got leprosy.

And the moment she gets integrated in leprous society, she's got leprosy. Pretty soon she'll have no fingers either. She can only serve a leprous society by detachment from the leprous society.

So the Christian is one who has been saved from a lost society. And then somebody says, get integrated back into that society. And I answer, excuse me sir, but I shall not.

I had a tough enough time in repentance and tears and the seeking of the face of God. I had a tough enough time to get converted and saved and renewed, regenerated. And I have a tough enough time keeping that very society from sucking me down.

So instead of getting integrated into it, I want to retire frequently from it and be there with God alone. Then when I come back to it, I can bless it. Then when I come back to it, I have something for it.

Then I can help a poor lost society because I've come down from the high place and I've got something to tell society. But if I surrender to them and I let them beat me down and frighten me and intimidate me and absorb me, I have nothing for them at all. I come as bad as they are, leprous as they are.

How can I bind a leper's sores when I need somebody to bind my sores? How can I bring hope to hopeless men when I've got a hopeless heart beating in my bosom? How can I calm men when I'm all excited myself? Go into the silence. Retire into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray unto thy Father which seeth in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Then in calmness and assurance you come down from the high place and into the dark valley where men frightened and sick are everywhere trying to get integrated.

You say to them, boy you don't want to seek integration, you want to seek repudiation. Say no to this society instead of yes. Live in that everlasting no I won't.

And then turn to God and say an everlasting yes. In the same lips that utter an everlasting yes to God must I utter an everlasting no to society. So it's detachment and repudiation.

Detachment from the harmless parts of society and repudiation of the harmful ones. For there are some things that are not harmful in society. It's lost society, but there are some things that are not harmful.

We work, we buy, we sell, we marry, we give in marriage, we mingle with men, not harmful. We visit the beautiful spots and see the great scenery, that's not harmful. We read the great books, hear the great music, not harmful.

You don't have to give up Beethoven if you love great music. You don't have to give up Milton or Shakespeare or Dickens if you love great literature. You don't have to give up the great masters if you love great art.

There are some harmless things in society. You say how do you treat them? Detachment. Detachment.

Appreciate them but never let them get you. Never let them get you. They detach.

Love them, appreciate them, admire them, and then turn your back and raise your affections to the heaven above where Christ is at the right hand of God. Get all you can out of them for you, but never let them master you. Detachment is the word.

Then there are the harmful and evil parts of society. The drinking, the gambling, the rousing, carousing, repudiate that. And all that is dark and evil and low, repudiate it.

Say an everlasting no to it. And when you do and believe in Jesus Christ, conversion takes place. And your heart is converted and you're born again.

And you become a new creature in Christ Jesus. And old things pass away and all things become new. But still you have the magnetic power of society all around about you.

So while you live on the earth and follow your Savior, it'll be necessary. You can frequently retire from society in order that you might break its stranglehold on your life, in order that you might destroy its power over you. And when you come back to it, you come back as the master, not as the slave.

You come back as the physician to the leper colony, not as another leper in the colony. Now, let me make myself clear. I told you this morning, those of you who are here, that I thought of what I was going to say tonight.

I haven't a thing to say about the quality of the sermon. I've quit worrying about the kind of sermons I preach. Let young fellows worry about that.

But I just want to get it across to you. The point is, my Savior and yours, all the old Bible worthies, and the saints down the centuries, have all had that strange habit of suddenly saying goodbye to the most youths and getting along with God. Staying there long periods of time.

Why? The answer is, that they might break the stranglehold of a lost society over their individual being. You will have to do it if you make good as a Christian. You will have to do it.

All by yourself. Himself alone. Good text to remember.

Himself alone. And the next morning, or that same night, toward the morning, he was down with them, filling the way, blessing them. But he never would have had the calm, self-assurance that he had, if he had not been himself alone.

Now, I wish I had a pill here. I wish I had as many as we have congregation. Not very many out tonight.

But I wish I had little capsules here, and I'd say, now, dear friends, it gives me great pleasure. I've got a capsule here, and here I'll let you use my water. Get the stick to get it down.

Each one of you that'll take this marvelous capsule, you'll have no further trouble. You'll be spiritual, you'll be blessed, you'll be wonderful, and you'll be as happy as can be. I've all passed by, filing down this aisle, left the other.

I'd love to be able to do that, but I haven't any such capsule. Not only that, nobody else has. Not only that, they never have been invented.

God never sent any down. He says, repent, you individual, of your past sin. Believe on Jesus Christ, and then learn.

Get retired sometimes from all human society, including your family. Retire. Shut that door.

There alone with God, you'll grow in greatness. You'll get wiser than Solomon. You'll get as calm as a noon day, while the world screams and howls and rattles and blows its terrible whistles around about you.

And when you've had your soul blessed, you can come back down where the poor, tired, noisy world is, whistling past its graveyards, talk to them about something worthwhile. You see what I mean? You can't be spiritual by learning a certain rule, and you can't be spiritual by taking a certain pill. You can only be spiritual by cultivating spirituality and sleep to follow.

I think you will. I believe the Lord will make them sleepy long enough for you to get an hour with him. I don't know how, but I believe it can be done.

And I believe, I don't believe there's a man around here so busy, but what God will fix it so you can get some time by yourself, if you want to take it. Suppose, for instance, that you spent with God the time you now spend with newspapers and magazines. What do you suppose the result would be in your life shortly? I think it'd be a tremendous change for the better.

You do have time to read the newspapers. You do have time to listen to the radio, look at television. Do you have time for God? Well, suppose that we ask God to help us tonight.

I wonder how you feel about it. Have I preached all around Robin Hood's famous proverbial barn, or have I made myself clear? Are there those that say, this interests me? I see the real reason of this. I believe I've lost out in the past, because I want to rearrange my schedule so that I can retire sometime from the precious society for a little time with God.

Of cultivating spiritual things and calming my heart and listening to God speak in the silence. You'd like us to have prayer and closing, that the Lord will begin providentially to work things out for you, so you can get that time. I don't say how frequently, I don't say how long.

I just say something like this has to be done if you're going to make good, if you're going to break the magnetic attraction of society upon your poor heart. You say, pray for me. I'm interested, and I have some little measure of what you're talking about.

I know, but I don't know much, and I want to practice this seriously. You raise your hand, so I'll see you, and you're going to pray. You're going to say, oh, there's so many, I won't attend.

Count them. We're just going to pray. Oh God, oh God, now know it.

The world is full of tribulations.

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