

# (John - Part 27): The Material Kingdom and the Spiritual Kingdom

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual experience and the coexistence of the material and spiritual worlds, urging listeners to break free from materialism and seek the kingdom of God.*

**Duration:** 48:04

**Scripture:** Exodus 16:15, John 5:24, John 6:27, John 6:31-32, James 2:19, 1 John 5:10

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the similarities between the physical world we live in and the spiritual world of God's presence. He uses the example of the four living creatures described in Ezekiel's vision to illustrate this point. The preacher emphasizes how our language and thinking are influenced by the physical world around us, but reminds us that there is another world beyond the material realm. He warns against adopting a philosophy that focuses solely on physical needs and urges listeners to seek the presence of God in their lives.

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## Transcript

It isn't what a church believes that matters so much, it is what that church believes enough to emphasize. It isn't what a preacher will admit theologically when you pin him down somewhere and make him talk. It is what he believes with sufficient urgency to make that a living, constant part of his message.

So, the fault that we find, with much that passes for orthodoxy in this day, is not what they believe or even what they do not believe, but it is what they do not believe enough to emphasize. I don't suppose that there is any church, any gospel church, in the whole city of Chicago. But what would say tonight if they were to hear what I'm going to say after it's over, they would say, we believe that and we hold that as a part of our creed too.

That is all well and good. But now, do they believe it enough to lay the emphasis there, to strike it and detonate it and set it off until it explodes into Christian faith and Christian living? That's what matters. There are many churches in this town that haven't had a conversion since the first Roosevelt was in office.

And yet if you were to go to the pastor or a deacon or somebody and say to him, now listen, do you believe in the virgin birth? Yeah, sure we do. Do you believe in the fall of man? Yes, sir. Do you believe it's

necessary to be born again before we see the kingdom of God? We certainly do.

Do you believe it is necessary to be justified by faith and to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus? We certainly do. Here it is. And they'd turn over a book and say, there it is.

That's what we subscribe to. We believe it. But nobody has believed it strong enough to emphasize it.

And the result has been nobody has entered into it and lived through it. My friends, it is not what I hold as a creed that matters so much. Although if my creed is wrong, my experience is bound to be wrong too.

But it is not what I hold as a creed that matters so much as it is what that part of my creed that I have lived through experientially. Now, some of you may want to know why I don't say experimentally. I don't say experimentally because experimentally means in the nature of an experiment, and experientially means in the nature of an experience.

I am not an experimentalist in that I do not believe that God wants us to experiment with truth. But I am an experientialist in that I believe that everything I hold as true should be mine in living, vibrant experience, so that only that is really mine which I have experienced. Not that which I have believed strongly enough to write into a book of creed, but that which I have believed strongly enough to enter into and experience.

Well, now what is that that is taught here and is taught out throughout the entire Bible? And is believed by almost all Christians, and yet is taught so little in our day that it is ceased practically to have any meaning at all to the average rank and file of Bible Christian. It is simply this, that there are two worlds that coexist for you and me. That God has put us in the middle of two worlds, not the middle of one world, as Wendell Wilkie said long ago, and as the materialists believe today, but in the middle of two worlds, that as Bacon said, God has made us like the animals in our bodies, but he has made us like the angels in our souls, and he has put the two together.

And because there has been a fall and sin has come, man finds that that part of him which is the body, and that part of him which is the soul, do not always coincide. So our Lord could say the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, so that Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans could give us the sad picture of the tortured man who wants to go in the right direction, but whose physical body will not permit him. There are two worlds, my listeners.

There is the physical material world, and we have the wind and we have the sun and we have the stars at night, and we have the solid earth that we can jump up and down on and put sidewalks on and build buildings on. We have a material, physical world all around about us, and that physical world has gotten into our souls, it's eaten its way in, it's conditioned our language, it has given to our language its metaphors and its similes and its analogies to a point where our language is a physical thing. We say that man is upright, and we think about a tree.

We say that it'll take a long time, and we think about a journey. And we say that man is low down, and we think in physical terms. And we say that high society, and we think in terms of elevation.

And in all our language, we are tied to the earth. We have made our language to fit the crude earth as a glove, an old glove fits the hands. And for that reason, it takes a little effort of the mind to break out of this physical world in which we live and believe in the coexistence of a spiritual world.

I believe that there is not only a material world, but that there is, coexisting with it and impinging upon it, a spiritual world, a world that is eternal. For always remember, that which is material is temporal, and that which is spiritual is eternal. The New Testament, I repeat, emphasizes the duality of the worlds in which we live, that there are two of them, that there is a material world.

The first man is of the earth, there is your material world. The second man is the Lord from heaven, there is your spiritual world. Except a man be born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And what does that mean? It means that he is in the kingdom of the flesh. And to be, get into the kingdom of God, he must be born into the kingdom of God. And yet these two worlds dovetail and coexist, and one is but the shadow of the other.

I believe that the material world that you and I know, the universe as we call it, is but a shadow thrown down from the throne of God. That there is a spiritual world there, and you will find even in your Bible, that whenever the scriptures describe heaven or the things of God, it describes them in terms of things of the earth. Even that mystic Ezekiel, who sat by the river Kibar and dangled his toes in the muddy waters of that foreign river, and suddenly he saw visions of God, and heaven was opened unto him, and the word of God came unto him, and the hand of God was upon him.

And then he saw visions, indeed, of fire coming out of the north, chains of fire unfolding itself. And then out of the fire he saw four living creatures come. And to show that the two worlds, that world of the fire of God's presence, and this world in which we live, were very much alike, he began to describe the living creatures.

And he showed that they were very much like the creatures down here. They were spiritual and eternal and did not partake of a material body, but they had four faces, and they had hands, and they had wings, and they traveled on their feet, and they were describable in material and earthly terms. So that is why I am not a lonely man, and that is why I do not believe that this Church is any holier than some other place down here on the sidewalk two blocks or somewhere else.

I believe that the kingdom of God coexists with the kingdom of man, and the two are together. But one is inward and the other outward. One is internal, the other external.

One is of the spirit, the other is of the flesh. One is a created thing, well, the other is a created thing too, but it is created for eternity. One will pass away with a great noise and the other can never pass away.

One is of the earth earthly and one is of God heavenly. That is what you do not hear very much about. We think about God as being far removed, infinitely removed on the outer edges of far space, and we think of our Lord Jesus Christ as having fled through the corridors of space far yonder.

Ten days it took him to go, and he is now seated at the right hand of God. And all that is true. Certainly he is seated at the right hand of God, our Advocate forever, our Savior by the throne of grace.

But also remember, brethren, that in the mystery of God Almighty's creation and presence, that the persons of the Godhead are also with us, and that the kingdom of God is close to us. And that it is not a matter of shouting across the spaces to a far removed God, but you can whisper in your spirit to a God that indwells you if you're a Christian. It is not sending a telegraphic message across the years and spaces to a God far removed, but God can read your heartbeats.

And as it were, your very mind is braille to God, and he touches it and knows what you're thinking and saying. And this is what you don't hear much about in our day, the coexistence of the two worlds. Our Lord thought nothing of talking about the children and their guardian angels, that every hour saw the face of our Father which art in heaven.

And when he was weeping in, or rather praying and sweating in the garden, I don't know whether he wept, but he sweat blood there in the garden, he could have had angels, they did come to comfort him. The angels' ministry in love, as the hymn says. Nothing mysterious about that, nothing strange or strained about that, but in the day in which we live, even we fundamentalists are such wretched materialists.

And we live for this world so much, and the average Christian knows more about the horsepower of his car and the batting average of Resty's Minoso than he knows about the four-faced creatures that came out of the fire in Ezekiel's vision. We're materialists in spite of the fact that we claim to be spiritual, and I suppose we are spiritual in a way. But we certainly think in material terms, and the whole texture of our brain, and physical and external and outward and created and belongs to the world that perishes.

And it is the work of God by the Holy Ghost and prayer and the scriptures. It is the work of God to change all the flavor of our beings. It is the work of God to let his water of life flow through and through and through the pores of our spirits until he's washed away all this silt and mud and clay and dirt of the ugly brackish waters where we were waterlogged so long in the kingdom of sin, and cleanse us and purge us and purify us and elevate us and ennoble us until we're nearer to heaven than we are.

It's too bad we have to get old and gray before we begin to see this, and yet it's not always so. I was talking with a friend the other day--I've forgotten who--about those men who were spiritual when they were young. Look at that man, David Brainerd, who died when he was twenty-eight.

Look at that Christmas Evans who died when he was a relatively young man. And look at many of the others who came and blazed and died. Not long ago, I stood by the grave and bowed my head reverently of the black boy, Sammy Morris, who came blazing out of the deep heart of Africa, crew boy, without education, without knowing much English, knowing only one thing, that God had saved him.

He came to the United States and went to Taylor University, and there lived only a little while, but he lived there long enough in that brief span to emblazon himself upon the life of that university that they've never gotten over. You don't have to be old to be spiritual, and you don't have to live through the decades in order to find this out. But it's too bad that it's so, that for most people that's the way it works out.

I wonder if it isn't because we have assumed that our young people are all about half-cracked, and that in religious things they have to be told to and clowned to and played down to and talked down to and teased along and amused and entertained. And the result is that for the first years of their lives, until gray hairs begin to appear here and there upon them, we entertain them and tease them along and amuse them. And then when they get so they don't care for that amusement and entertainment anymore, then we say, well, now they'll become saints.

I think it's a wretched way to treat young men and women. I do not believe that the calendar means anything or that it means anything, how old a man or woman is. It's not a question of the passing of years, it's a question of spiritual experience.

And young David, who was so young he wouldn't have needed to shave, ruddy-faced he was and clean, and he walked out that spiritual boy. And he put to shame his older brothers and put to shame that old king, put to shame the old greybeards in Israel who were a trait. And David went out a lad, but a spiritual lad, and all through his life he was a spiritual man.

And young Samuel, who when he was so young that he still had to have a light burning in the room, I'm afraid, Eli, he'd say, Eli'd say, all right, and he'd grumble a bit under his breath, good naturedly, and get up and light a candle. When he was so young that they put a light beside him so he wouldn't be afraid, God Almighty visited him and gave him a vision and prophetic insight and showed him how the whole house of Eli was to be upset and God would raise a new line for the priesthood. And he was only a lad.

And Jonathan Edwards it was who said, I was converted when I was five years old and never bachelors. Jonathan Edwards became the greatest religious thinker ever to touch the American floor. Some years ago when a vote was taken among certain groups of men who were supposed to know about that thing, the question was, who was the most successful American? And though there were not Christians, they finally settled on Jonathan Edwards.

They said, we believe that he was the most successful Christian because he got done what he set out to do and because his religion perfectly satisfied him. And so they voted him the most successful American. And he was converted when he was five.

Our Lord Jesus Christ could thus show the relation between the two worlds and could talk about the meat that perishes and the bread of life, the true bread which perishes not. Now Christ fed the multitude. And there were two reasons for his feeding the multitude.

One reason was the plain practical downright reason that they were hungry. And he'd made them so they needed food. And I repeat, God isn't angry with us when we eat.

There are some people ascetic, ascetic enough, that they like to feel that they've got to apologize to God every time they eat. And I think when they return thanks, it's a half apology to the Heavenly Father for doing such an earthly thing as eating. I never felt that way about it.

Personally, I don't much enjoy eating, never did. And I've never been able to understand anybody that could work up enthusiasm about food. Food to me is something that you take in just as you pull up to a station and say, put in five gallons, please, and change the oil.

You've got to have it. If you don't get it, you'll die. So eating to me is filling up the tank for another trip.

But I've never been able to act poetic about it, never. And my spirit would never rise and soar when it came down to a pork chop or a steak. I just couldn't do it.

But I still have never felt that the Lord was angry with me when I ate. These people were hungry, the Lord made them that way, and they were hungry, and the Lord fed them. That was the first reason.

And you'll always find a good, salty practicality about everything that God does. He's practical and downright and salty and common sense and down to earth, and always you'll find that first. That which is of earth is earthly, and you'll find good earthly reasons for everything.

And when I said that there are two worlds, the material and the spiritual, I do not mean to rule out the material world. God made it also, but he did not make it to last. He only made it temporarily as they put up a scaffolding when they're building a cathedral.

The scaffolding is torn down after a while, and the cathedral stands for ten centuries. So God has given us the physical, and we're here, and he's not angry with it, and we don't have to apologize when we touch the physical. But the woe of the present day is that the physical has swallowed us up, and we forget there is another world.

Well, Jesus fed the multitude, and it provided a starting point from which he could elevate their thoughts to consideration of eternal things and could lead them and us to the feast of life. Now, they learn very slow. I sometimes wonder if I don't forget more than I learn.

I think I learn 100 things and forget 95 of them and have to learn them over again. But thank God for a five percent batting average. Anyhow, it's better than nothing.

But they learned very slowly, and our Lord said to them, ye seek me. When they did seek him finally, he said, ye seek me, not because you saw the miracles, not because you understood spiritual things, but because you ate and were filled. And I think I detect a note of sadness there.

He said, labor not for the meat that perishes. He said, in other words, you're accepting a deadly philosophy, that there is but one world and that the only thing inside of you that matters is your stomach, that if you can keep your stomach comfortably filled, you're well off and you're fulfilling the purpose for which God created you. But he said, in effect, my friends, this is a deadly philosophy, for you're looking, overlooking the presence of that other world.

You have forgotten that there is a spiritual world that flows all around about you as water, flows all around the rocks at the beds of the sea. And they had forgotten that. Their philosophy was a narrow, earthbound thing.

And he rebuked them for it and said, ye seek me because you're like to have me stand by as a permanent source of food for your body. Labor not, he said, for the meat that perishes, but labor for that which endures unto everlasting life. And still they couldn't see beyond bread and fish.

And they said, well, now that you're talking about food, I remember one thing, that our fathers ate manna in the wilderness. And it's written, he gave them bread from heaven. And they quoted the verse of scripture.

And then our Lord flatly contradicted. He said, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. Now, I want to ask you, how could he say that? When it's written in the scriptures, he gave them bread from heaven, do we? How could our Lord turn around and say, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven? In the light of the Hebrew experience, how could he say it? For any one of his hearers could have flipped over if they'd had a scroll of the scriptures.

They could have gone back to the story of Israel in the wilderness and how hungry they were and cried to God. And God gave them manna. And it settled upon them like the dew at night.

And it was a small, strange thing, the size of a coriander seed. And it fell like snow upon them. And they gathered it up.

And it was a sort of meal. And they could cook it in a half a dozen or a dozen different ways. Bake it and ice-cold roll it.

And it came to them out of heaven. And they said, this is manna. What is it? What is it? Manna.

And they didn't know what it was. And nobody knows what it is. And some unbelieving historians have tried to pin it down and say it was the seed of this or that plant.

How did it come to come down just when they needed it and then not come any other time? How was it that it came down six days a week and didn't come down the seventh day? No, no, it was a miracle. God was giving them bread. They needed bread and he was giving them bread.

And because it came down, they assumed that it came out of the kingdom of love, that it was a spiritual thing. But our Lord said flatly, No, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. Why was he talking like this to them? My friends, he was urging upon them the inadequacy of everything temporal and material.

And if I could say this tonight and get you to feel it and go away impressed by it, it would have been a wonderfully successful meeting. If I could urge upon you what he was urging upon them by seeming flatly to throw their own scriptures back in their faces, though actually it wasn't, but it seemed like it to them and for the moment to us, if I could make you see the inadequacy of material things, that however good they are, they're not enough. That even though God sends them still, they are not enough.

Moses gave you not the true bread from heaven. So many years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. And today I can stand to thank God that I am an American.

I don't believe that I am quite the 109% red, white, and blue American of the Chicago Tribune, but I am an American. I don't know of a better nation in all the wide world. And I thank my heavenly father that he tells of my unworthy love to be born where the star spangled banner floats in the blue sky above.

I'm glad I'm an American, but Washington gave us not that manner. I'm glad I live in an age when I don't have to carry a candle around with me and stumble up a pair of stairs to bed carrying a candle. I'm glad you can touch a switch and the electric lights come on.

But Edison gave us not that true bread which is from heaven. I'm glad I live in a day when we're vitamin conscious and a man can live 10 years or 20 years longer than he used to be able to do. I just heard a broadcast today this afternoon in which a man said that there was good news for children.

Some scientist has proved that spinach does not contain anything that's good for children. That it contains an acid that makes it impossible for the body to absorb calcium. And children need calcium for growing bones and growing teeth.

But, said the newscast, the scientist has also discovered that spinach is good for grown-ups. And that when you get so old you don't need calcium any longer and gives you arthritis. Then if you eat lots of spinach, that same acid will prevent it from bothering you.

Wonderfully worked, wonderfully and strangely made, aren't they? I'm glad that they have discovered how to keep babies from dying when they're little. I had a funeral of an eight weeks old baby last Friday, a very touching and tender funeral. A little tiny doll lay there asleep, little short trousers and a little sweater on

these little boots.

A little doll of a fella who had come and stayed eight weeks and gone away again. You don't have many funerals. I haven't had a baby's funeral, oh, it's been several years.

They don't let them die. A mother used to have nine and boast that she knew how to raise children because she had raised five of them. The other four died.

Thought nothing of in those days. Scientists have helped us and I'm glad for it. And I wouldn't bite the hand that feeds me.

I'm probably alive today because some scientists knew something. Two years ago I had developed anemia. They took my blood count and couldn't find any red corpuscles.

And they told me that if I didn't do something about that quick I would have leukemia. That is, my white corpuscles would run riot and I'd die of an infection of the blood. So I got some funny-looking little bullets and I took nine of them a day.

Boy, nine of them a day. And I went back and had another test and was up. And I took nine of them a day.

Boy, nine of them a day. Back before they discovered all that way to build your blood up, they died. I know a man over in Toledo, Ohio, a young fellow by the name of George Baumberger, Baumgartner.

Well, George died, not George, but his brother whose name I forgot. He is the brother. Died and George was a big fat fellow and had no trouble, but his poor brother, he got, uh, he got anemia.

And the result was he died. And if science had been advanced to a point where they knew how to cure it in that day as it was a little later, when I got in trouble with my bloodstream, he'd have been alive today, no doubt. I'm glad for that.

And I'm not going to bite the hand that feeds me. And I'm not going to refuse to thank God for every good thing that has come my way. But science giveth you not that bread from heaven.

Edison giveth you not that bread from heaven. Washington giveth you not that bread from heaven. Eisenhower giveth you not that bread from heaven.

You'll get into an automobile tonight and you'll ride a long distance to your home, so far that if you had to walk, it would take you to tomorrow sometime. Thank God for transportation. It's better than the ox cart, better than walking.

But Henry Ford gave you not that bread from heaven. These things are not to be overlooked. They are benefits, which in the will of God we today enjoy.

But the woe of the world is they've accepted those things as final. They have said, here I am and this electric light which I have invented. Here I am and this automobile which I have built.

Here I am in this new diet which I have invented. Here I am with these new highways and this new plastic and all these new things. Here we are and there is no other.

My brother, that's the tragedy of the modern world. That's the tragedy of civilization, that we're a materialistic civilization. And we say why God gave Henry Ford the ability to make an automobile.

Brethren, I'd say that's an open question, but we'll leave that untouched for the moment. And God gave Edison the ability to put a hairpin in a bottle and shoot the charge of electricity through it and light the world. And God gave to the scientist the ability to tell what a baby ought to eat so it won't die when it's a week old.

Here I am and all I have built and there is the curse of modern civilization. Jesus said, oh no, no, no. This is not your bread from heaven.

This is not that eternal life. This that Moses gave you, this temporary food, you eat it and have to have another helping of it tomorrow morning and another one tomorrow night. This is not enough.

Some of you are very well fed and you're slick and you've got good jobs and your bank account's big and your home is something to look at. And if your great-grandfather could see it, he wouldn't know where it is. And if your great-grandmother could walk into some of your fine, lovely, well-appointed, tastefully decorated homes, she'd go off in the corner and long for the old-fashioned home she knew.

All that slick, well-fed, like Ephraim would wax fat and kick. But that's not the bread which is from heaven, my friend. Well, somebody said, not only we're not talking about science and modern civilization, we're talking about religious things.

What about religion? Doesn't religion bring something to the world? Well, we're having an upsurge of religion in the day in which we live. And religion, religion everywhere. You can't turn the radio on, but somebody will be singing about his Ezekiel bone in the middle of a bone.

Or they'll be singing about, my, didn't it rain? I turn off all those blasphemies myself. I don't listen to them. You blunder into them, you know.

It's like you tramp on a dead cat when you're coming home at night, but you don't stay on it. Nitwits making laughter about a holy song or a holy thought in the Bible, I don't listen to it. I'd just as soon pick up a slimy, maggot-infested dead cat and take it home.

Anyhow, religion has given us some benefits. Morality, for instance. Everybody's saying that if there were more churches and more preachers and more religion, there would be fewer crimes and less juvenile delinquency.

It'd be safer on the streets. That's all true, and I believe that. And I believe that if we could step up percentage-wise, to use a phrase I don't like, if we could step up percentage-wise the number of Christians in Chicago, the danger on dark streets would go down correspondingly.

I believe if we could step up numerically the number of converted people in the city of Chicago, our jail cells would be vacant correspondingly. And as the number of good Christians went down numerically, the streets would become more dangerous and the jails fuller. I believe that with all my heart.

So I know that the morality that Christianity brings to the world is a good thing. But that is not that manna from heaven. That is not that manna which God sent unto the world.

That's a temporary thing, a local thing, a thing belonging to Adam's world and this world in which we live. And it won't do you a bit of good five minutes after you're dead. I know also the cultural value of religion.

I preached about it yesterday on the radio. I'm not ashamed of it. I believe in it.

You can't listen to the kind of singing this church did today and not be culturally better off for it. You can't sing wondrous things of the outspoken Zion city of our God, for break thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me or some of the great hymns of the church, without having come upon you a sense of appreciation of the sublime and the absolute and the noble. I know the cultural value of religion.

I know that you take the average rank-and-file church, whether it's a gospel church or not. And I know the people in it live better than the people who inhabit the saloon down here. Down here's a modernistic church, and I don't mean any one.

Here's a modernistic church where the pastor doesn't believe in very much except ethics and high living. And down here's a saloon. Nobody's got the hiccups down here in this modernistic church, but they got the hiccups down there.

They don't carry anybody out of that church down there, but they carry men out of there. Nobody goes home from that church to beat his wife and fight his kids, but down in that saloon they do. Any kind of a church, I suppose, is better than a saloon.

But the morality and ethics taught by that church is not that true bread from heaven. The benefits of religion that you and I love to talk about, the church bell that rings out and says, come, come, come, come, come to the church in the wildwood, all very beautiful, all very poetic, and it certainly has had an elevating and overling influence in American life. But that is not that true bread from heaven which my Father giveth unto you.

Those are God's gifts and God's benefits. And any kind of goodness is better than the best kind of badness. And any kind of moral standard that's a bit elevated is better than the standard that drags in the dirt.

The ethical society that meets down in the loop and teaches ethics is better off than the halfway house down here where half-naked women dance to sensuous music. Those are the benefits, the byproducts of religion. But they're not that manna, that true bread which God gives us.

And then, of course, there are the hospitals. They take care of the insane now instead of driving them out into the wilderness. They take care of the blind now instead of having to beg on the street corner.

And all that is a byproduct of Christianity. And all the good that is being done is a direct byproduct of Christianity. They take care of women now instead of making them the workhorses.

I have nine children and milked nine cows and take care of a farm and grow old when they're 35. Now they stay young till they're 50. And I mean that pretty literally.

I can take you to neglected, underprivileged sections of the United States and go up to a cabin door and knock. And a tired, hoarse, saggy woman comes to the door and you greet her. A dozen kids try sitting around, all ages, walkers, creepers, lap kids, crib kids, all sizes.

And a hound dog or two looking around and a goat tied over there and a swayback cow back to the house. And you go and say to your friend, I wonder how old she was. Oh, 55.

Poor diet, poor care, slavery. One child following the church and Christianity and the ennobling, purifying, sweetening effects of the gospel of Jesus Christ has given women a decent place. Too bad she's betrayed

us.

Too bad. But anyway, we've given women her place in the world. It's not that manna which is from heaven.

And you can begin low down as possible and go to the heights and enumerate all the benefits of Christianity and all the advantages of the church. And when you've said it all, our Lord could say, no, no, that is not the true bread from heaven. You can have all that and perish and go to hell.

Then he said, verse 35, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger. And he that believeth on me says in that day, seven women shall take hold of the garments of the man.

And they will say to that man, we will furnish our own clothes. We will furnish our own food. We will support ourselves.

We won't cost you a dime. Only let us be named by thy name to take away our reproach. We don't want anything you have, except we want your name as a front to take away our reproach.

And in Christianity today, I don't know whether that's the fulfillment of that passage or not, but I know that it's an illustration of it. We have them everywhere who call themselves Christian churches, Christian this, Christian that. And they don't want a thing Jesus has, except they want his name.

The Christian this, the Christian that, but there's not one thing Jesus has they want, except the external benefits. They want the manna. They want the quail.

They want the water out of the rock. They want protection. They want the ethical and moral help he gives.

They want to be known as followers of his, because it's popular if you don't go too deep. But they don't want his clothes, and they don't want his food. The garments they wear will be strictly garments of their own needlework.

The food they eat will be strictly food of their own supply. Nor do they want to eat that food which God sent us down from above to give life unto the world, and reproach by the name of the man who's earned his right to be respected. I am the bread of life, he said, and he that eateth me shall not hunger.

He that cometh to me shall not hunger. He that believeth on me shall never thirst. Now what eating is to the body, believing is to the soul.

My brethren, I am so afraid that we'll think we're saved in our... I'm so afraid that somebody got you down someplace at an altar and rammed a Christian worker's New Testament up under your nose, and showed you by an underlying text that if you came you wouldn't be cast out, and logically forced you to say you were converted. I'm afraid of that kind of mechanical religion. Oh, there is such a thing as eating the bread of life and knowing you're eating it.

There is such a thing as looking in faith to that bread that cometh down from above, and getting it into you, and having an inward spiritual religion, and knowing for yourself that that which is divine has now come into you, and being assured in your own experience for yourself and not another. But you say, I'm saved because the Bible says I'm saved. The Bible doesn't say you're saved.

The Bible lays the condition down whereby you can be saved, but the Bible never tells any individual he's saved. That cannot be done. God would have to write another Bible to say, John Jones believeth on me and he is therefore saved.

God doesn't write the assurance of your salvation in this book. He tells you how to be saved, and then writes the assurance in your heart. And if we could get no more fundamental evangelical Christians to realize this, instead of mechanically saying, God says I'm saved and I believe it, we would say, God tells me how to get saved, and I've accepted it, and it's real in my life, and I know of a surety that I've passed from death unto life.

It would be the difference between the kind of religion we have now and revival. But we want to make mechanical. We want to push the button and make it mechanical.

Somebody quoted a text here in this wonderful chapter which I preached on some weeks ago, 524, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life. Do you believe that? Do you believe it? And shall not come into condemnation, but is passed out of death into life. Do you believe that? Now how do you know that's true of you? It's true of he that heareth and he that believeth.

But are you that person? How do you know that? He that believeth on the Son of God hath a witness in himself. And I wouldn't give a nickel or a cartload for the Christians that have no proof they're saved except they quote a text. The text will lead you to the fountain.

But if you plunge into the fountain and come up wet, I'll know you're a Christian. But if you stand on the edge of the water and quote the text, I'm not sure the devil can quote texts. And the devil isn't an unbeliever, don't you think he is? The devil believes all right, and the result of it is he trembles with fear.

But he's not saved and he never will be saved. And there are lots of people who believe texts, but the text never got inside them. Is the bread of life actually inside you? Have you been initiated into that other world, that spiritual world, the kingdom of God? Are you tonight in that kingdom? You can be.

Because what eating is to the body, believing is to the soul. And if you will fix your gaze on him who is the bread of life and keep saying and believing, Lord, I do believe, I trust thee, I am now trusting thee, that which is external will become internal. That which is in the text will get into your heart.

That that's in the Bible will get into your soul. And you can get up and say, I know, I know for myself, I know.

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