

(John - Part 30): From That Time on Many of His Disciples Went Back - Part 2

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer explores the challenges of discipleship, the allure of returning to old ways, and the necessity of a committed relationship with Jesus.

Duration: 51:28

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 11:27-29, Matthew 16:16, John 3:16, John 6:66-69

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the presence of religion in Washington and society as a whole. He emphasizes the simplicity and directness of their approach to preaching and living a Christian life. The preacher acknowledges that some people may be disappointed by the lack of drama or ornateness in their religious practices. He then references a passage from the Gospel of John where many disciples turned away from Jesus, but Peter affirms his belief in Jesus as the Son of God. The preacher concludes by highlighting the importance of a simple fellowship of believers centered around Jesus.

Transcript

Hurricane Influenza that laid me low last week has roughened up my vocal cords a little, and I probably will have a bit of difficulty. But with the patience of my ears and the goodness of God, maybe we'll get some truth out of the word tonight, in spite of everything. In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 66 to and including 69, from that time, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Now it tells us here in plain words that many went back and walked no more with Jesus.

At first this whole thing had been romantic and charming, something to excite the interest and draw it. A kind of liberace had come to the shores of Galilee, a religious man with a lot of romantic charm. I don't mean it in the wrong sense, I mean it in the religious sense.

A remarkable young man had come, and he was gathering unto him many thousands to hear him, many hundreds to claim to follow him, and it all looked like something to do. It had become quite the vogue to

talk about the strange, wonderful young man from Nazareth. Now time had gone along and they were becoming disillusioned.

I can see them standing with their little beards bobbing while they talked with their faces up close, agreeing that the charm, the luster was wearing off of this man, that he was too mystical after all, and too radical, and to follow him would require too much sacrifice. And it might even be dangerous, in addition to being very strict. And they said, now things look good at first.

And the impulse of religion ran throughout all the land, and they gathered unto him, and he said and did wonderful things, and it looked very good at first. But have you noticed lately that he's becoming less and less practical and more and more mystical? Have you noticed it? And it's even getting dangerous to follow him, and he's now talking about his own flesh and blood. Something's wrong here.

So they went back. And it tells us that in so many words, many went back. Now if the truth were known, some, maybe even in this small audience tonight, who began with our Lord in innocence and a certain degree of ignorance, because everybody begins to follow the Lord, I suppose, with a certain degree of ignorance.

If you don't like the word ignorance, then we'll say, an at least imperfect state of imperfect knowledge. Many have been wooed into this, and pressed into it, and frightened into it, and excited into it. You know, religion is like almost anything else that appeals to the emotional life.

Some of these singers come up every once in a while, and whole groups will faint in the audience when a young fellow just gets up and passes a little wind over his vocal cords. And they actually faint. And there's such a thing, you know, as the psychology of the mob.

I don't mean to speak about it in a wrong way, but there is such a thing. And while our Lord was never appealed to this, he was such an unusual person that he drew many who had no idea what it was all about. And lots of people have become followers of the Lord, or at least church attendants and even church members, who have been more or less wooed into it, or excited into it, or have come into it on a kind of wave, by suggestion, without too much knowledge of what the Lord meant when he called them to him.

But now the glamour is wearing thin, and the luster is wearing off, and a lot of people, if the truth were known, are secretly thinking of going back, because they have found that the religion of Christ was not all glamour, and there were too many demands, and the fight was too hard, and the cross was too heavy, and the weariness was too much. And they went back then, and some are maybe thinking of going back now. I wonder if I am talking to a Christian, one Christian, that never had any wrestlings with his own soul, whether it was a profitable thing to go on the unpopular side of things, always to be in the minority, always to be on, apparently, the wrong side.

I wonder if any of you Christians, if there is one, even a lonely one here, that hasn't at some time talked to your own heart about whether it paid or not, and whether it really was worthwhile, the fight, the struggle, the labor, the things you can't do that you used to do, and wonder whether you were wise in quitting them. I wonder if there is one that hasn't felt that someplace in his life, that the demands were too heavy, that the weariness was too great, and so you've decided to relax and take it easy. Now, a lot of people have just done that, who still keep up their church membership, and pay their dues, and even give commissions.

But they have nevertheless allowed themselves to get into a state where actually, and truly, they are not following the Lord anymore. They have gone back in their heart, though they have not yet gone to the place where they have gone back with their feet. Now, they went back, it says here.

You know, those are terrible words. It says, many went back. Many went back.

But I suppose that none of them, thank you, sir, I suppose that not one of them ever stopped to ask, what am I going back to? But you know what they went back to, those who had lived with him, and had come to feel the warmth like the sun in the springtime. Those who had looked into those hazel eyes, and had felt something going into their hearts when they did. Those who had heard that voice, that simple, quiet voice that was never raised to a scream or a shout, but was not heard raised in the streets, but quietly, like the man who would not quench the burning wick, nor break the wounded stock, our Lord quietly and sweetly preached to them.

And now they were going back, these friends, who had walked with him and stood beside him, and called him by his first name, or maybe respectfully they called him master, the name given to a teacher, as we say doctor or pastor. They called him maybe by his religious name or title. But now they were going back.

And what were they going back to? Well, I'm going to name a few things that they went back to. First thing, they went back to their sins. They did go back to their sins when they became afraid of the cost of following him the rest of the way.

Then they became afraid and were filled with that thing that sends men to hell, for the fearful shall have their part in the lake of fire. And so they went back to their sins. As a dog might go back to its vomit, or a pig might go back to his wallowing in the mire after he'd been carefully brushed and trimmed for the fair that he might be presented at the stock show.

After that was all over, then he goes back where he was before. Just a hog after all. So they went back to their sins, these people did.

And they went back to their loneliness. After you have once walked with Jesus, even a block, you can never be anything but lonely if you go back. And so if you've been thinking of going back, remember what these friends went back to.

They went back to their loneliness, that ancient cosmic loneliness. They went back to it. And remember, they went back to their unsatisfied hunger.

He had said that if you eat of the bread I give you, you shall never be hungry again. But now is this new hunger. And they went back to that old hunger, that unsatisfied hunger.

And they went back to their fears. For they had come to him that their fears might be removed. And now they went back to those fears again.

And they went back to despair and remorse. And they went back to the grave and back to judgment. That's all.

There was nothing else to go back to. And yet it says here plainly, many went back. Before we go back, we'd better question what we go back to.

Before you decide to throw up the whole profession of following Christ, you'd better find out what you're going back to. And I tell you this night, that there is not one desirable thing that you can go back to. Not one lonely thing that you can go back to.

And then, will ye also go away, said Jesus. Will ye go away. Now here was Jesus' heartbreak, my brethren.

Here was his heartbreak. For he was wounded here before they nailed him on the cross. It was his cross before the cross that they were going back.

And he said, are you going to go away? I suppose that the human Jesus, in one panicky awful moment there, wondered if the last disciple would leave him. And he would stand alone of failure. As he says in the 49th chapter of Isaiah, you will find it there, where he questions if the children of Israel shall ever return.

He says, and even if they do not yet, will I be honorable in the eyes of my God. And here in a terrible moment, he wondered if his last few disciples were going away. This was the cross before the cross.

And all that have gone back and walked no more with him in this age constitute his cross after the cross. For he had a cross before the cross and he has a cross after the cross. And the cross before the cross was when Peter denied his Lord and Judas sold his Lord.

And the disciples forsook him and fled. And the multitudes went back and walked no more. And his popularity melted away around his feet.

And our Lord hung alone even before he hung on that cross. And now the cross after the cross is to crucify the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame. It is to go back and bear his cross no more.

And then Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You could always count on Peter to have an answer whether it had any sense in it or not. Peter had the answer and Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? Now I wonder if that was an impulse of blind loyalty. No, I don't think so.

I thought about this very reverently and I crossed in a prayerful mood. And I do not believe that this was an impulse of blind loyalty. I do not believe that this was like the loyal fan of some politician who knows that his boss is losing, but still keeps feeding optimism and good hope into him down to the last ballots counted.

I don't think so. I don't believe this was loyal Peter saying, Lord, to whom shall we go to try to solve the wounds of Jesus and to take some of the nails out of his heart before they go them in on Calvary. I doubt that very much.

I think I read deeper than that. And I read that Peter had also been tempted that when they went away, it was the culmination of long days of discussion over what he had said and what kind of life he'd been living and what kind of demands he'd been making upon them. And Peter being human, of course, heard the gossip.

And being the kind of fellow he was, no doubt took part in it and was talking with them and listening to them. And Peter, too, was probably tempted here. And he had given some consideration to whether he had been right when he left his nets and his father's boats and started following this wonderful, strange, romantic figure that walked up and down the hills and plains of Galilee and Judea.

And he had searched his own soul. But thank God, he had decided there was no place to go and no one to whom he could go. For you notice that he did not use the impersonal neuter.

He used the personal and said, to whom shall we go? Peter's heart had walked with Jesus until a whom had formed in his mind. Not a what, not a religion, not a creed, not a what. He did not say to what shall we go, but to whom shall we go.

For a personality had begun to move up into his life with eyes and ears and a mouth and a personality. It had moved up into Peter's life and he was deeply affected, deeply affected by his few months or maybe years of walking with this strange, wonderful, magnetic personality. So he said, to whom shall we go? The others had gone back to a what, but he said, to whom shall we go? Now briefly I want to talk a little bit about that.

Where shall we go and to whom shall we go if we don't take Jesus? I want to ask maybe if some might say, well I will go back to some more ornate religion. Now I know that that is the case, I know it, that the Quaker-like simplicity of Jesus was a stumbling block for their religion had been dramatized when the men with the long beards and the long robes and the phylactery stood on the street corners and made long prayers. That was dramatic, there was something dramatic about that.

And when they mounted up the steps of the temple singing the songs of degrees as they marched in, that was dramatic. And when the priest offered the sacrifice, that was dramatic. There was something about it all that appealed to the flesh in a measure.

Now comes this quiet man saying, they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. And all your external religion is like a tomb filled with dead men's bones. And unless you eat the flesh of the Son of God and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Out of the heart of the man comes his evil and good, that was a strange sound. And they were disappointed and they wanted to go back maybe to some ornate religion. And I wonder if you might have felt that or some that you know, oh he was too direct and too simple.

And you know my people that if you want an ornate religion, if you insist upon doing it up dramatically and with a flourish, I'd never waste my time coming down here. I just never waste my time. Because we just don't do it that way here.

We never crack the whip in this place. We try simply to preach a simple, direct message and live a simple, direct life. And have a simple fellowship of believers that gather around the person of the Savior and glorify him.

Now that's all we have to offer. And I remember what Dr. Simpson said after he had launched his great international missionary movement. And somebody said to him, Dr. Simpson, what is the hardest thing that you've had to put up with in your long ministry? Well he said, I think the thing that has hurt me the most is to have men come up to me and embrace my movement and my teaching and follow me for a while and then quietly turn away and follow me no more.

The brethren who wanted what he had but didn't want to pay the price to get it, they were the brethren that had bothered Jesus. The nibblers who come, they want the product but they won't pay the price. And before they've settled what the price is, they look like real followers of the Lord.

But when they find the price is too high, they go back and follow no more. Now that has always hurt the people of God. Always has hurt the leaders in the kingdom.

Always that's hurt the Wesley's and the Luther's all down the years and the Paul's and even our Savior here was hurt by it. Now there is such a thing as an ornate religion. If you insist upon having everything done up in fashion, you don't have to go far to find a church that'll just satisfy you perfectly.

All the appointments are religious and everybody has some extra gigon that's religious and the pastor has. And the whole thing is thought out and worked out and I think there's been collaboration between Emily Post and the rest of them just to how it should be. It all looks so ornate and so wonderful.

A man looks so heavenly when he approaches with a robe on. Strip the robe off. What do you got? Just an animated clothespin.

That's all. That's all you've got under the robe, ladies and gentlemen. But it looks so religious when the man marches in.

What's he got? Nothing anybody else couldn't have. Well, if you want ornate religions, the world is full of them, full of them. And, but I want to ask you a question, my friend.

There'll be a day, there'll be a day when you'll lie quietly asleep and they could fire off a cannon and it wouldn't wake you. And the great booming organ could play the classic and it wouldn't wake you. And the preacher could intone and it wouldn't wake you.

And the rogue choir could sing and it wouldn't wake you. And the new windows might shine in the sun with pictures of a shepherd and a sheep and a cook and a staff. It wouldn't wake you.

What good will an ornate religion do you in the day when you sleep your last sleep? What good will it do you if the preacher that preaches your funeral sermon has a black robe on when he intones your corpse? Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. Never taking into account that you didn't walk with him while you lived. And why then should he quote that passage over you when you're dead? Oh, my friend, I appeal to your heart tonight and say that Jesus alone has the words of eternal life.

And you can ornament religion if you will. You can spend thousands of dollars putting on extra flourishes. And when it's all over, it can't wake one slumbering man from his grave.

It can't cleanse from his heart one lonely sin. It can't take away one bit of remorse, nor remove the shadow of death from his mind. It can't purify his soul or cleanse his spirit.

No, no. And yet there are those who insist that it's got to be ornate, that the simplicity of the gospel church like this, the simplicity of Jesus and no one else, they just can't take it. Their hands and everything they do has to be done with drama and flourish.

Well, I'm not their preacher. I'm not their preacher. I'll never be able to help them, amen.

I can't do it. Now, then there's somebody else that says, I'm going to go to some church less exacting than this. I don't particularly care for ornamentation and display, but there are churches that strike a nice happy medium.

And they're less exacting, just as there are ornate religions if you want them. So there are churches that'll be easier on you than this one. And there are gospels that'll be simpler and sweeter than the gospel of Jesus.

And there are messiahs and religious leaders everywhere. But be careful to whom you go because they're in that church that's so much easier. There's no narrow road.

I still haven't forgotten the blow that came to my heart when a young man to this city, heard about this church, got acquainted with our people, and got into our young people's society, and then suddenly disappeared. And we lost sight of him. And I inquired around, what's the matter with so-and-so? He looks so good, I wonder where he is.

Well, I was told by those that knew him, he looked this over, but he decided we were too straight-laced. He believed that Christians could dance and would do them no harm. And so he has gone and joined a church on the South Side where they can dance.

Well, there are such churches, ladies and gentlemen. There are churches that will let you do anything but commit murder and still be a member in good standing. There are churches where you'll never be embarrassed.

The word will be taught so sweetly, and the preacher will purr over you like a tabby cat, and it'll all be so lovely and sweet. There are churches like that, and I recommend them. If you don't want to go to heaven or follow the Lamb with us wherever he goeth, if you don't want to bear the cross, why, I say, that's all right.

Go to that church. There are such churches. No narrow road, no reproach from Christ's enemies.

It's quite the popular thing to be religious now, you know, religious in the day in which we live. I just read the other day an article where a fellow pointed out, rather bluntly, he said the President of the United States had announced the day of fasting and prayer for America. It was to be the 4th of July.

He said, what did the President do on that day? He caught four fish in the morning, played 18 holes of golf in the afternoon, and played bridge all evening. Well, yet there's a lot of religion in Washington now, and a lot of religion every place. Why, they're even singing love songs called such as the Kingdom of Heaven.

And you can just turn any place on your dial you want to, and some calf will be bawling a religious song, a cowboy song, ghost riders in the sky, or something else. All right, there's plenty of religion, and it's now possible to be religious and never know the reproach of Christ's enemies. Never have anybody lie in wait for you.

Never have anybody sneer at you. Never have anybody call you old-fashioned. Never have anybody wonder why you like that.

It's now the popular thing, the vogue is, to be religious. When a religious man, and God bless him, he is, went to the White House and began to talk about religion, and the Vice President talked about religion, a few senators have a religious breakfast, a religious egg, and religious ham. Why, now it's popular.

Every place you can be religious, and the churches are capitalizing on it, don't think they're not. You can be a strict or at least a faithful church member now, and never know the cross, and never have an enemy,

and never have a narrow way, and never run a thorn in your foot, and never feel the cross in your heart, and never suffer, and never walk into danger, and never be afraid in the night, and never lose anything. Churches like that, and they'll take you in.

They'll never ask you if you've been converted. They'll never ask you whether you will live right. They'll never try to find out.

They'll be too glad to get you, and give you an envelope, and get your name on the list how much you'll give every quarter. They're anxious to get you, ladies and gentlemen, and don't fool yourself. There are churches like that.

If you want them, go to them. Don't bother coming around here. We'd like to have you come and at least listen.

But if you've decided that you don't want this rigorous kind of Christianity, there's lots of unrigorous Christianity. A lot of it, Brother McAfee. And let's not waste any time following a far-off Savior that we don't intend to follow the rest of the way.

Oh, brothers and sisters, there is such a thing as having church membership into a church, even into gospel churches, where no demands are ever made on your spiritual life or on your life at all. But remember, when you go there, you can bid goodbye to inward peace, and you can bid goodbye to life and immortality. Now, that's not saying that if you've been renewed by the Holy Ghost and born again, that if you should go to some church where you don't have the cross, I'm not trying to settle that ancient dispute.

I'm only saying that those who went back and did not follow him on to true salvation, had no hope and no immortality and no inward peace, neither will anybody else. Then there are those that say, I don't know, Mr. Tozer, something too direct and blunt and uncritical and lacking intellectuality and learning in the gospel evangelical churches. I want something that has more learning in it.

Well, there are such churches. There are churches where you almost have to have a college degree to even join. There are such churches.

They are the learned saints. And if you insist, all right. A man wrote me, wanted me to run some articles in the Alliance Weekly, religious articles.

They were to be about learned subjects. He's a good and godly man, however. But he's a learned man, and I wrote and said, brother, the Alliance Weekly is not a learned journal.

We still believe that people have hearts, and we edit it for the hearts of the people. We edit it for that pulsating, loving, breathing, full-bloomed thing within us that came from God and will go back to God, that cannot cease to be. After all, our brains have rotted away, and the worms have crawled in through our noses, in through our sinuses, and into our brain cavities, and have eaten out all the gray matter of which we are so proud.

That pulsating, throbbing, living, breathing thing will still be there, still be there, God-like, Christ-like, forever and forever, while the suns burn themselves out to cinders. And so we preach to that part of a man, and we labor to bless and save that part of a man, and we edit for that kind of and part of a man. So if we're just learning, we want, why, we can get it.

If you just can't bear to have simple language used, you can go and find where they have learned the gobbledygook of Washington down so perfectly. When I was a young fellow, occasionally I'd go to hear a preacher, and I never knew what one of them meant, never, because they didn't know. They never called a man's wife his wife, she was his compagnon.

And they never said, buy, they said, purchase. You know, you'll purchase something. Buy the truth and sell it not, said the Holy Ghost.

Purchase the truth, said the preacher. Always the big word, never a little one, the Sermon on the Mount written in little ones, but the learned come for eternity, insist upon using the big ones, and nobody knows what they're talking about. You can have that if you wanted, but I want to ask you, friend, what good will it do you in the day when the world's on fire? What good will it do you in the day when you sleep the last sleep? What good will it do you in the hour of your distress and your agony? What good will it do you, as the colored preacher had it, when you wrestle with death and come off second best? What good will it do you then? Oh, it can't help you then.

I know one fundamentalist preacher that has eight degrees. A number of them are good men, but he's not going to go to heaven on those degrees. You gotta have more than that to get you through, and yet there are those that won't go to the simple church, and they won't follow the simple Savior.

They insist upon having John 3.16 expanded in a book with a lot of Plato in it. No, my brother, it won't do. What good will it do you to be learned? That's all right to be learned, and I think we ought to be, but never confuse learning with salvation.

Never, never, never. Now I close, but in closing I want to read to you what the most learned and wisest man that ever lived in the world said. This wise, learned man, this man who is the summation of all the knowledge there is and all the wisdom, here's what he said.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father.

Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

And ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Now I haven't time to stand up before you here and give you a lesson, of course, but I can't find a word that's longer than two syllables. Come me, all ye that are, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. And ye shall find rest unto your souls. Two syllable words and one syllable words, and yet over this glorious, wonderful mosaic, this glorious, God-laid pavement they have marched, the wise and the prudent, and the simple and the unlearned, and those like Wesley with an Oxford degree, and those like Luther learned in his day, and those like Augustine, the greatest of the minds, the simple and the humble, and the lowly have come over this same wonderful pavement and have marched into the kingdom of God, leaving all their show of wisdom behind them.

As they came and heard him say, O Father, I thank thee, thou Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. This is what I'm for, friends. This is where I stand.

This is what I believe in. And there probably isn't anything that the average one of us couldn't learn, for I have found that one of the functions of a popular learning is to disguise ignorance under big words. And when you have run a man down and cornered him and made him talk, he doesn't know much.

I make it a business to find out how much people know. And I hear the learned, I get in on invitation to learning on the radio, and I get in on all the debates from the universities that I can possibly get in on while I'm trying to rest at home, and I hear them make mistakes in grammar, I hear them mispronounce words, and I hear them do things that even I wouldn't do here. And yet they're so learned, O my brother, there isn't any folly quite so sweet and delectable, nor there isn't any folly quite so damnable as the folly of the pride of intellect.

You want to go to a more learned church where the pastor can't talk in single-syllable words as Jesus did, but has to sound learned and intersperse every second sentence with something to the effect that a quotation from this or that great person. Now, thank God it isn't a choice between this church and all this other that I have talked about, because there are dozens of churches just as good as this or better. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about Jesus, not about this church. Christ our Lord. And I'm saying that you must humble yourself like a little child, unselfconsciously.

You must come just as you are, and without one plea, and hear him say, I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth. Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto these. And you know what the Lord Jesus Christ will do for you, sir.

If you will let him and you will follow him, he will give you the tongue of the learned, and he will give you the ear of the learned, and he will pierce your inner ear, and he will teach you mysteries that are not written in books. He will make you wiser than the sages. But it's all an inward thing that goes along with self-crucifixion and modesty and meekness and quietness of heart, but it's that which will live when everything else goes to pieces.

If God is capable of irony, if God is capable of cosmic sarcasm, then it seems to me there's a providential irony in America today. Who are the greatest minds on the continent? I think we would all agree the greatest minds on the North American continent are the minds that have pierced through the mysterious barrier and have gone back to the mystic essence out of which all things are made, and have penetrated the labyrinthine depths of the atom, and have proved they weren't just using words, they've proved they did it by creating bonds out of those atoms that can blow cities into oblivion. They are the greatest minds, I say.

I say, is it not the providential, dramatic evidence of a divine irony that that which man values the most, his great mind, should be used in the latter days to destroy him, as though God in his heaven was laughing and saying, look at the little fools, the wise and the prudent and the debaters and the disputers and the lament. I've forced them to use their godless brains to destroy themselves. And if God is capable of irony, it's an ironic flourish in history.

Oh no, my brother, bow that head and bend those knees and humble that heart and hear him say, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am weak and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. A child can do that, a child.

Will you this night, this night while we're here, quietly bow your heads and as a child say, Jesus, Jesus, thou joy of loving heart, I take thee this evening into my heart to be my Lord and Savior, to be my hope, my immortality, my eternal life, my glory, my advocate with the Father, my master, my boss. I take thee, Lord Jesus, now this moment, putting my knowledge, putting my carnal love of drama and all the dramatics of religion, putting it all away. Oh Lord, I take thee now as mine.

That's how simple it is and that's why some go back. They say it's too simple, too mystical, too inward. No, not too, for Christ came to save you inwardly first and then of course it spills out and he saves you outwardly, but he saves you inwardly first and you that may have been tinkering with the idea that you just couldn't take the pressure anymore.

The cross is too heavy on your shoulders, too sore. The nights are too long and the day is unending. The sun is too hot and the road is too rough.

The hill is too steep. The demands of Christ are too exacting. The thorn's too sharp.

You want it easier and you want an easier church and an easier religion. I beg of you, if you go back, think what you're going back to. Back to sin, back to distress, back to heavy heartedness, back to darkness, back to the grave, back to judgment.

You can't afford it. Lift up the hands that hang down, strengthen the feeble knees. Pull the belt another notch up and say, Lord Jesus, you will help me.

I'll throw off this discouragement starting now, Lord. I'll take a new lease on life and a new hold on thee. I'll dare to believe and I'll shuck off this mantle of the night.

Thou will give me the garment of joy and the garment of heaviness. You'll do it all right, shall we pray? O thou Son of God, thou most holy Lamb, we are here, thy servants, this evening, and we thank thee, Lord, that we are not all there are. We thank thee, Father, that there are many others.

Thank thee this is not the only church. Thank thee, Lord, that it isn't a choice between the Alliance Church and hell, for there are thousands of churches on this continent where just as true and wonderful truth is preached, and many of them in this city. For this we thank thee this night and give thee praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for all the good churches and good preachers and good faithful men of God.

But, Father, there are churches that fatten and grow on those who won't take them our way. O great God, pity and spare this refuge for cowards, these great ornate edifices dedicated to the deserters, paid for for the cowards, kept up for the ignoble deserters from the army of God. Have mercy on such, O have mercy on such.

But bless every gospel church, Lord. Bless every gospel church in whatever denomination. Bless every man that stands to preach tonight.

And, Father, some of them will stand with robes on, but they will preach the word. And some choirs tonight, wearing robes, will sing the wonders of redemption. Blessed be thy name.

Now, Lord, we bless thee and worship thee tonight. We have found the way past the veil, through the blood, to the holy of holies with God. Blessed be thy name.

Now, Lord, we pray thee for any who may be discouraged, who may be having a hard time, who may have been secretly toying with throwing it all up and saying, What's the use? They have been tempted and they have even fallen. O great God, have mercy upon thy sheep tonight, thy poor brood-battered sheep. Satan and wolves and bears and lions, they have been after thy sheep.

Their jaws are slavering and their eyes are keen and sharp and penetrating, and their paws are soft as they pat around waiting. O Lord, save thy sheep from the maw of the dragon tonight. Bless this truth.

Show us plainly through it that there is nowhere to go, but show us also that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, that Christ who should come to turn our feet toward thee, as well as our hearts. Help us now as we wait upon thee, Father. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2117.mp3>

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