

(John - Part 48): A Proper Concept of God

by A.W. Tozer

The concept of God is the most vital thing that can be known about any church or nation, and a higher concept of God leads to a higher religion.

Duration: 54:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 1:1, John 8:11, Acts 17:23, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 4:15

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of leisure and how it affects our ability to learn and grow spiritually. He acknowledges that Americans have more leisure time than anyone else in the world due to the convenience of modern gadgets. However, he emphasizes that even with this leisure, Americans still do not have enough time to truly engage in deep learning. The preacher suggests that God knew this and therefore brought salvation down to a level that is accessible to all, regardless of their level of education or leisure. He uses examples from nature and personal experiences to illustrate the idea that God's message is not limited to the learned, but is available to all who are willing to trust in Him.

Transcript

If ye have known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you? And yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

How saith thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, for else believe me for the very works sake. Now we'll stop with verse 11 for tonight.

Let us pray again. Now, Lord, we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus for help tonight. Lord, we know that the world, the flesh, and the devil conspire to grab away every seed that is sown, every holy impulse, every high intention, every holy vow.

O Lord, we pray, undo the work of the devil, and work thou savingly in the hearts of the people, cleansing, and purifying, and sanctifying, and delivering, and setting free. Great God, we need help out of heaven tonight. Human brains can't do it.

Human personality can't do it. Human training can't do it. Human learning can't do it.

Even if we had any of these things, they cannot do it. O Lord, it is thee, and thee alone, that can break the power of canceled sin and set the prisoner free. Only thou can open blind eyes.

Only thou can move the will to obedience. O Lord, help us tonight. By the Holy Ghost, help us tonight.

Help us not because we're good, but because thou art God. Help us not because we amount to anything, but because thou dost love us. Help us out of grace tonight and out of mercy.

Graciously be with us, and let thy light shine over us, as it shone over Israel in ancient days. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, let me begin by saying that no nation has ever risen above its religion.

I don't think it would be very difficult to prove this statement, that no nation has ever risen above its religion. Whether that nation is pure or impure, high or low, depends upon what kind of religion it has. That is, in the qualities that belong to our humanity, our best humanity.

A nation might, like Hitler's Germany, for a few hectic, brief, unnatural years, have a degraded pagan religion, and yet ride high in things commercial and industrial and military. But you see how it was top-heavy and tumbled over of its own weight? It had to do it. Russia today apparently is greater than its religion because it has no religion, or at least the official Russian line is that it has no religion.

So that for a time, a nation can seem to be greater than its religion. It can have a low religion and yet rise to high peaks, seeming to be so. But in the qualities that belong to our best humanity, no nation ever yet rose above its religion.

And no nation today is above its religion, and I think it is safe to predict that no nation can ever rise above its religion. I might say that that ought to be a matter of grave concern for the United States of America. If our religion rots, our nation will rot.

And there is no law that can be passed, no political party that can come to power, nothing that men can do by way of assuring itself the nation for the future that can save us. The nation will only be as great as its religion, no greater. Now a nation can go below its religion.

It can nominally have a high religion and yet sink below it, just as a man can live at the foot of a mountain and never rise higher than the top of the mountain, but can all his lifetime live below the top of that mountain. Yet if he should climb the mountain, he can't get above the top of it. So that no nation ever got above its religion, but a nation can live below its religion.

And then the second thing is that no religion ever rose any higher than its concept of God. No religion ever rose any higher than its concept of God. That is the most vital thing that can be known about any church or any man or any nation.

And every religion, whether it is high or low, whether it is pure or impure, noble or base, depends altogether upon what it thinks of God. Now there have been pagan religions in the past that while they were pagan and they weren't saved and they weren't Christian and they weren't redeemed, yet they managed to have a stable society and have some kind of stable pagan worship because they had a lofty concept of God, the Greeks for instance. But no religion can ever go higher than its concept of God.

If they have a base God, they'll have a base religion. If they have a higher God, they'll have a higher religion. Now I'm talking about the religions out of Christ and the religions that are not Christian.

And there have been some great religions, but they have been all dependent upon their concept of God. But a higher concept of God means that men will strive to higher things and do the best they can even though they're out of Christ and even though they're not born new, even though they're not redeemed, they will attempt something better if their concept of God is higher. Now those are philosophical considerations which I lay down for you and say simply this, that the most vital fact about any nation is what it thinks of God.

Now I'm not a historian, neither by profession or by any great amount of study of history, average I would say, but I do believe this, that I could predict the future of any nation if I could discover exactly what that nation's concept of God is. Now if I could learn exactly what America thinks of God, if I could discover exactly what the rank and file, the masses, and the lower echelon leadership in America thinks about God, if I could send out a questionnaire, God forbid that I should do it, too much of it's been done, but if I could send out a questionnaire and ask the question, what do you think of God? When you think of God, what do you think of? How does it strike you? What concept enters your mind when you think about God? And if I could find a pattern that would tell me what the majority of the people thought about God, I could predict the future of the nation, barring of course the possibility of a revival that would change all that. But even a revival cannot come where a concept of God is low.

A missionary cannot go to a heathen land and preach the gospel, and one of the first things they've got to do is to talk about the high God and purge the mind of the people from low and unworthy and ignoble and base concepts of God. We cannot rise higher than our concept of God. Your faith cannot rise higher than your concept of God.

And that is why I, for one, am indignantly crusading against this concept of God as the man upstairs, the nice, lovely, palatable God that you can slap on the back and laugh and tell him a joke, the God that'll condescend to anything and pal along with anybody. That kind of God is not the God of the Bible, either Old Testament or New. It's not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not the God that gave the law to Moses, not the God that led the children of Israel out of Egypt, not the God of Isaiah nor David, not the God of John or Paul, not the God of Luther nor the God of Wesley, not the God of the church.

It is another kind of God, a pally, soft God that will condescend to anything and overlook anything with no spine and no character. That God is the divine teddy bear, the huge panda that everybody can cuddle to and coo about, but they have no respect for him because they have no concept of him. I say I'm crusading against that.

I'll probably talk myself hoarse and go to an old folks' home, and they'll go right on doing it till the judgment day. But as long as I'm alive and able to talk, I'm going to keep talking about it occasionally at least. I don't want to be a bore and I don't want to get off on one string, but if I get on one string, I'm going to make it a good string.

And I say that not only a nation, but a church. You say, oh, well, every church has the same concept of God, every church knows about God, they read their Bible, it's the Christian concept of God. No, not by a long shot.

God has been watered down and modified and edited and qualified and changed until the lot of churches, many churches have no high concept of God at all. I'm not in any wise inclined to think that the rank and file of this church really believes in God as God is or thinks about God as God is. I don't think that.

I know you're lovely people and I don't want you to get mad at me, but if you do, you'll only have to pray and repent and get right with God about it. Anyhow, so don't do it. But even though you're nice people, I don't think for a minute that all of you have a high biblical concept of God.

We have our concept of God, if it could be thought of as a river, we have received tributaries from everywhere. Tributaries from books and fiction and religious literature of various kinds until even a church like this, that ought to be a sound biblical church, our concept of God is likely to be down, so that instead of thinking of God as he is, high and lofty, inhabiting eternity, whose train fills the temple and who walks on the wings of the wind and makes the clouds his chariot, instead of our thinking about that high God, the God we know about or think about and conceive as a smaller God, very much smaller God, I've been accused of being against evangelism. I'm not against evangelism.

I'm for God's evangelism and Holy Ghost evangelism. I've been evangelist for two weeks now over at Beulah Beach. I believe in evangelism.

But I have listened to evangelistic sermons that set forth a God that I couldn't respect and wouldn't want to go to heaven and have to live with for another few million eternities. I wouldn't want to, brother Kim. I don't want to live with a God like that.

The kind of God that I've heard set forth in pitiful, nose-ringing, eye-drenching stories. There's no God we're like, one of us. A poor little, undersized, small-minded brother gets up and begins to chatter about the God that he's made in his own image and then I'm supposed to want to go to heaven and sit beside the throne of a God I couldn't respect on earth.

No. I want the God of the Old Testament and the God and Father of the New. Or else I can't, I don't want to go to heaven.

I'd rather go somewhere in some neutral place. I have courage enough to say I'd rather go to hell. But at least I hope there's a limbo in between where I can stay as far as possible from these teddy bear gods that are being preached now and again.

Our people have a lot against old John Calvin. I know I don't go along with everything John Calvin believed but one thing he did believe I'd go along with he had a high concept of God. He believed in God's sovereignty, God's high and lifted up and so do I. So did John Wesley for that matter.

You don't have to be a Calvinist to believe in a high and holy God. But in these days it helps. Now, incidentally, don't get me wrong praying for me now with groanings that can't be uttered.

Just save your wind, brother, because I know what I am. Now, I say this, that if we could find out exactly what this church thinks about God, we'd know our future. We'd know where we're going to the next year.

If we could find out exactly what all of us think about God. When you think about God, what do you think about? When God comes into your mind, what's your concept of God? What do you picture? What is God like? If you can discover that in the church, the average and the level of the church, all of us together, if we give a concept of what God is like, I can tell you where we're going for the days to come. Same with a

man, an individual Christian.

Christians go to revival meetings and they get on their knees and beat the bench and pray and imagine they can at an altar get an experience that will guarantee them for all the time to come and give them a kind of spiritual security. All will be well, thank you, for this world and the world to come. No, my brother.

A man can have an emotional experience at an altar and yet never have any satisfying knowledge of God at all. Never any high concept of God. Brethren, Jesus Christ, our Lord, taught us who God was.

Now, this longing after God that Philip revealed here, this longing after God, Philip said, Show us the Father. Show us the Father! And I'm sure he wasn't a heckler. I'm sure this was not a critic.

I'm sure this honest Philip, he must have been a good, honest man, I believe. At that stage in the game, he was even a converted man. And Philip was a good, honest-hearted man and he honestly wanted to see the Father.

The invisibility of the Father had been one of the heavy things, the heavy things that he couldn't understand. Oh, God, show us the Father, he said. The old rabbi back in the ancient days, I told you about it here a few weeks ago, he was a great old man and a fine old believer, religious man.

He was taken in before a king. And the king said to him, Now, you've been talking all around over my kingdom about your God, Jehovah, your God, Jehovah. Now, he said, I want to have a showdown here with you.

Either you'll produce him or shut up. You'll let me look at him and see him. Then if you can produce your God, I'll let you preach.

But if you can't produce him, you'll have to keep quiet and never mention him again in pain of death. The old rabbi said, Sire, let us walk in the garden. They walked into the garden.

It was blazing noonday. And the sun was hanging there, hot and bright and heavy. And he said, Sire, behold the sun.

And the old king looked at the sun and then jerked and sneezed a couple of times. And he said, Sire, look at the sun. And he looked again, but did the same thing and finally unable to see, he said, Rabbi, I can't look at the sun.

He said, You just sat in here to produce God and let me look at him and you can preach. And you can't even look at one of the smallest lights that he created. How then can you look at God? The old king said, You and walk back into the palace, a wiser man.

Let us see the Father. The invisibility of God has been the string upon which has harped the atheists. We don't have any professional atheists preaching nowadays.

We used to have them a few years back. Such men as Ingersoll would go up and down the country preaching. And one of his favorite tricks was to say that nobody could see God and they couldn't produce God and that God was all just an idea in people's minds.

Clarence Darrow was the last nationally known man that argued that way. Show us the Father, they said. And I don't think that this man, Philip, when he said that, was in any wise a critic.

I don't think that this was petulant speech at all. I think that Philip, when he said, Show us the Father, was giving vent to a yearning in his heart. He wanted to get through to God, the invisibility of God, the fact that God can't be seen.

You close your eyes and pray a while and open them and see the wall. Where God isn't there visible. Well, the effort to know God and find him and reach him has been one of the nobler activities of the human race.

It has given to the world many great religions. Now, when I say many great religions, don't any of you good, solid, fellow fundamentalists sit there and sweat because I'm not saying that religions are all alike and that we're all bound to that same heavenly mansion. I know better than that.

I know that no man cometh unto the Father but by our Lord Jesus. I know that there is no forgiveness of sin except through the blood of Jesus. I also know that men unaided by inspiration and unassisted by the light of God have strained and reached out their hand, as Paul said, seeking if perhaps they might find God.

And I have never been able to find it in my heart to sneer at the honest pagan who raised fetches his hungry hands toward God and prays to a God he doesn't know. And when Paul came to the streets of Athens and found an altar to the unknown God, Paul did not sneer, neither did he deliver them a schooling lecture. He said, The God you're reaching after and can't find is the God I preached.

And he began there and took it as the point of departure. And there have been many of the religions. I heard a young Hindu once tell how he was converted by reading John 1.1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And that very language was cast, or the very thoughts were cast in the language with which he was familiar. And pretty soon the Lord led him through those verses on to believe in Christ as his Savior. There have been great religions, I say.

And they've all been the effort to discover God. And in addition to great religions, there have been great philosophies, and there are, and great systems of metaphysics. But God has never been discovered that way.

Because the highest religion there is outside of Christ is but a man's religion. And the highest philosophy, the highest any man ever climbed on the ladder of philosophy was a man-made ladder. And no man ever got above his own temple, above his own brains.

No man could ever rise above his own brains. But if God could be discovered that way, either by fastings or by visions or by journeys and pilgrimages to Mecca or to some river or to Palestine, if God could be gotten to that way, and that in us which corresponds to our eyes and our ears and our hands could get hold of God that way. And I want to point out something to you, brethren.

That only the finest minds could know God. If God could be known only by philosophy, then only the finest minds could know God. I wouldn't want to ask you.

You're an average, well-educated congregation here, even above the average. But I wouldn't want to ask you tonight to pass an examination on Plato's Republic. I don't know how many of you could pass an examination on Plato's Republic.

Plato's Republic is considered to be, I suppose, the Bible of philosophy. And yet there are not very many Christians, not even, I don't, now listen, don't be fooled, not very many liberals could either. They say we fundamentalists couldn't, and they say we're dumb.

They can't either. Only they just pretend they can. Their preacher can.

They think they can. They can't. They know lots more about the TV program than they do about Plato's Republic.

You couldn't tell me what Spinoza teaches. I'm quite sure you couldn't. And Pythagoras and Aristotle and what was the difference between Aristotle and Plato's concepts, the average person's too busy to find all that out.

And only the finest minds can take it in. And therefore, if God was discovered by the intellection, by the activities of the human brain, only the finest minds could know God, and the rest of us would have to be satisfied not to know God. When Lord Bacon wrote Nova Morganum, the new organ of learning, he sent a copy of it to King Henry VIII.

King Henry VIII tried to read it, sent it back, and said, this book is like the peace of God it passes all understanding. He said, here's your book. Now, if it required a mind that can understand Nova Morganum to get converted and to know God, then that would rule out probably about 75% of human beings.

A man would have to have a very fine mind. And not only that, he'd have to have great learning. That is, he would have had to use that mind properly.

In addition to that, he would have to have unlimited leisure before he could know God. It takes a lot of leisure to study and get learning. It takes a lot.

You've got to do a lot of thinking. Some of the old thinkers did very little else with that. The old Socrates did very little else only run around barefoot in the streets of Athens and talk and think.

If you're going to be learned, you've got to have a lot of time to put in on it, brother. And if you have to work for your living or raise babies, you might just as well say, well, I'll do the best I can, but goodbye learning. I never can be one of the superior half-dozen minds of the world.

I can't be. But you think that God the Eternal Father would give redemption to the world and then give it only to a few great minds? Do you think that he would send redemption to the world and make it available only to the great scholars? Do you think that he would send redemption to the world and let it be available only to those who had unlimited leisure? We American people have more leisure probably than anybody else in the world because we have so many gadgets to do our work for us. You women don't do very much because you have push-button.

Now, don't come around and sass me after church because that's true when you know it's true. Your mother did five times as much and your grandmother did four times as much as she did because we're now in the age when we have leisure. Leisure, always leisure.

Some of you dear sisters wouldn't know so much about the TV shows if you didn't have a lot of leisure. You have more time. If you had to work as your grandfather worked and as your father worked, you wouldn't have time to sit around and weep over synthetic paid trained seals who perform for your TV

screen.

If you had to have as many tears over the loss as you do over John's other wife, we'd have twice as big a church and you'd be twice as good a Christian. Amen? We have more leisure, I say, than anybody else in the world, but not even Americans have enough leisure to really be learning in that high lofty sense of the word. God knew better than that.

God was all wise and so he brought salvation down. And the message of Christ is not directed to the learned particularly. They can come in if they want to come in by the door.

The man with fifteen degrees can lay his degrees aside and get on his knees and come like the rest of us. The man of profound learning can come like the rest of us. The man of such leisure that he can travel in Europe and spend his winters in Florida and his summers in Canada fishing, he can come the humble way of the rest of us.

God sent his message down to the plain people. And that's why I love plain people. I'm at home among them, I am one, and I love to be among the plain people.

Now God had to demonstrate himself some way. He had to satisfy that craving that made Thomas or Philip say, Show us the Father! And he had to demonstrate that himself to satisfy that cry that David gave, I shall be satisfied when I look upon him. I long to see him.

My heart and my flesh cried out after God. So what he did was that he walked down into man's level down on the earth. Listen.

If he had known me, he should have known my Father also. From henceforth you know him and have seen him. Philip says unto him, Lord, show us the Father.

And it suffices us. Jesus said, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father. How do you say, Show us the Father? Believe now, not that I am the Father and the Father in me.

The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father dwelling in me doeth the work. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me. Here was a man standing and saying, If you have got acquainted with me, you already know the Father, and you already know what the Father is like.

O brethren, this is the most wonderful thing of all wonders. This is one of the purposes of redemption. And I think the theologians, at least the preachers of theology, are not bearing down hard enough right here.

We ought to remember, brethren, that there is not one purpose in incarnation, not two purposes in incarnation, but multi-fold purposes in incarnation, a multi-fold purpose, many purposes. And one of the purposes in the incarnation was that the heart-hungry men and women of the world, the ones that are heart-hungry and want to know what God is like, could know what God is like without studying Plato. And they can know what God is like without getting degrees.

They can know what God is like and not have the leisure to read all the learned books of the world. They can know God because God demonstrated himself here. Christ is the manifestation of God to men.

Christ is God walking among men. Some of the borderline liberals say that God revealed himself in Christ. Let's correct their preposition.

He did not reveal himself in Christ. He revealed himself as Christ. There is a change of preposition on you there, sir.

Take that in out of there. He did not reveal himself in Christ. Oh, he did that too.

But we have not said enough when we say that God revealed himself in Christ. We must go on to say he revealed himself as Christ. So it can be said with certainty that who knows Christ knows God.

And whoever knows our Lord Jesus knows the Father. And whose eyes look upon Jesus look upon the Father. And it may be said that whoever knows God can know God through Christ and must know God through Christ.

And it can be said that God does always act like Christ and Christ always acts like God because Christ is God walking among men. It may also be said with certainty that increasing knowledge of Christ means increasing knowledge of God. If God will let me, and there are a lot of people throughout the country praying that he will, if God will let me, I am going to write at least one more book.

It is to be called The Knowledge of the Holy, and it will be on the attributes of God devotionally considered. I will consider the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in their biblical and lofty glory and show what it means when we say God is sovereign, what it means when we say he is immutable, what it means when we say he is omniscient, and so on, clear down the line till I have had twenty chapters and twenty attributes. Brethren, that will be a help to the heart perhaps and a help to the mind, and I trust that God will use it to help elevate the concept of the whole evangelical church from our present-day bearer God to the high and lofty God that inhabited eternity.

But I would say this, the simplest little old lady in her black bonnet and her wire-rimmed glasses and her big print Bible can know God and never know what an attribute is, brethren. She can know God and never have heard of the word. She can know God if she meets Christ.

For he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. I am the Father and the Father in me. How sayest thou? Tell us about God when God's been walking among you telling you about God.

Jesus is God and you don't have to be a theologian to know it, my brethren. You can know God through Christ if you will know Christ. How then can you know Christ? A little later I'll tell you.

Now, put this down in your Bible or down in your head and remember somewhere that Christ is God acting like himself. That's all. God never strains.

There's never any play acting with God. God never puts on a face, never comes out and takes a character. God always acts like himself.

The most relaxed man that ever walked the streets of any city was Jesus Christ, our Lord. Perfectly relaxed. He could turn calmly, look at a man, cut him to bits or draw him near and forgive his sins and heal his diseases depending upon the attitude he came in.

He was always relaxed. When they came to get him, there he was, they found him. But when it was too early yet and he didn't want to die yet for a few days, he passed quietly through their midst.

That doesn't say how he did it, but he did it. Perfectly relaxed. God is always relaxed.

Remember that. Some of you go to God praying as though God were as badly excited as you are. There are Christians that they mistake hysterics for spirituality.

There's a magazine that comes to my desk and it's a good magazine, all right, and I read it and I get some help out of it. But I only have one criticism of it and that is it's hysteric. It wants revival, it wants a blessing, and it wants God down, it wants the Holy Ghost down, but it wants it so bad that it never can use just ordinary English.

Everything is, what do you call it, souped up. Everything is souped up, you know, and a new punch put in everything and ethyl is put in all their gasoline and an extra kick in everything. It never can relax.

If God's people could only know who God is and then relax and believe Him, we'd get somewhere. But as it stands now, we either are lazy and don't care anything about God or we get hysterical. Christ never was hysterical, never.

The only time that he was ever for even one little moment out of control was that awful, unspeakable, holy moment in the Garden of Gethsemane when he said, Father, Father, take this cup away but yet not my will but Thine be done. That was as near as he ever came in the awful article and agony of his death. The only time that he was ever knocked for a moment that he wasn't in perfect control.

So don't mistake hysteria for spirituality, brother. The two ain't the same. You'll excuse my good German.

Now, Christ is God acting like himself. I just want you to get that idea and take it out with you. That when Jesus walked the earth, he was just God walking around acting like himself.

And when he went to the right hand of the Father, he was still God acting like himself. When he sent the Holy Ghost down, the Holy Ghost is God acting like God. Always God acts like himself.

Never can get God out of character. He always acts the same. He'll be the same, always the same, forever the same, because that's his immutability, you see.

That's what that word means, means he's unchanging. And he'll never be any different from what he is now. People change, but God never changes.

People's moods change. Some people cultivate it, because they read in a magazine one time about some movie actress that has moods. And so they go around moodiest can be.

God bless you, honey. Don't you wish you had some sense? Wouldn't it be nice if you'd wake up sometime and really rub your head until the circulation started? The day will come and you will be bald and have nine chins. God help you, young fella.

Think for tomorrow! Think for the future! Think about day after tomorrow and next year and next eternity. That's why I talk mean and rough to you because I love you and because I don't want to handle you soft. Jesus was God walking around showing his power and Jesus was God walking around showing his holiness.

The horrible travesty that we have in America today is Christianity without holiness. Christianity without holiness. Say, I accept Jesus and then go raise hell! I accept Jesus.

You don't accept Jesus at all, mister. You are a deceived man. You are no better off than if you had never heard of God.

Because the one of the very first qualities of Christianity is holiness. Purity, right living, right thinking, right longing. But we have a Christianity today that has no holiness in it.

The Son of God was a holy Son. The Holy Father is the Holy Father in heaven, not in Rome. And the Holy Ghost is the Holy Ghost and our Bible is the Holy Bible.

And the Church is called the Holy Church. Go out into all the world. And heaven is a holy heaven and the angels are holy.

And therefore we ought to take seriously the Biblical doctrine of spirituality and holiness. Evangelical Church has fallen so far into the gutter from the day in which we live that we preach salvation without holiness, which of course is a travesty on Christianity. Dr. Torrey would have said so.

James M. Gray would have said so. And Moody would have said so. But I don't know why we're not hearing it now.

When Christ was God walking around acting like Himself in love, Jesus loved everybody. He loved them in an easy, relaxed, wonderful way. He loved the people.

People came to Him and had made those mean old theological Pharisees mad as the devil. They said, Why don't they come to us? They didn't come to them because they found no warmth there. You know that a bird will always go to the warm side of the hill in the early spring.

The flocks or bevvies, I think they call them, of Bob White used to fly around out of home on the fireman when the snow was almost gone. The poet said the snow doth fare ill on the top of the bare hill. And it was faring so well that there was only a patch here and there but was still cold.

And the bevvies of Bob White would come to the sunny side of the hill and settle down there. You could walk around on the dark side of the hill where the snow was and you wouldn't find one. But go on over the hill and down where the this group of people because he was God walking around acting like God in love.

And the reason they didn't come to the Pharisees was the Pharisees had no love. There was a fire going out in the stove. Nobody ever wants to stand around the stove when the fire is going out.

Some of you city hicks don't know the joy that we farmers used to have. A little pot-bellied stove. And he was the thing you know that was shining like a cherry.

And you would come in half frozen and come and they had a I don't know why they put it there but they had a kind of a fender all the way around the pot-bellied part of the stove and lean back in a chair and put your feet up on that fender. It wasn't so hot it didn't burn your shoes, old brother. They've never had any modern conveniences that can beat that for sheer downright pleasure.

I look back on that as real pleasure. Nowadays they squirt your heat through little holes in the wall and do all sorts of things and it's more convenient I'll admit that. But it lacks character somehow.

You just can't fall in love with a grill. But I used to love the little old pot-bellied stove. I used to love it.

Father would get up ahead of the rest of us and we slept in rooms upstairs that were completely cold. If it got down to zero the room got down to zero. We got into our clothes and got downstairs and came out of that awful rigid country up there and here was this nice cherry colored stove.

That was a wonderful thing. We brought our clothes down dressed around the stove. All I say is nobody ever comes around stoves when the fire's gone out anymore.

And Jesus had love in his heart and love is always warm. And love is always attractive. And the people come to the churches where it's warm.

They come to Christians that are warm. Old D.Y. Schultz wrote a great book on the Holy Ghost years ago. One of the sentences that jarred me was this.

He said the absence of inquirers among people claiming to be filled with the Holy Ghost is a serious question whether or not they are filled with the Holy Ghost. I don't think you got that so I'll repeat it round two the other way. The absence of inquirers.

A man says I'm filled with the Holy Ghost but he never draws anybody to him. Nobody ever comes and says will you help me? Will you pray for me? Will you tell me about the Lord? Will you lift my burden? Will you do something for me? He's filled with the Spirit but nobody comes to him. Wise old Dr. Schultz said the absence of inquirers among those claiming to be filled with the Holy Ghost raises a serious question whether or not they have been.

If there's fire in the stove you'll always find a wayfarer with chilled lame feet and frost on his whiskers coming up near the stove. And that's why they love Jesus Christ our Lord and that's why people love him today. They always find him sympathetic, understanding, and never sarcastic.

If God would just get sarcastic once I'd die of grief. And I'm sarcastic every once in a while. But God never gets sarcastic.

His prophets used to, but he was always tender. He could cut the head off of an old hypocrite, but he never turned on anybody that was poor and helpless and in need. Never turned on a woman taking an adultery.

He said, Well, I told you so. Remember when you were sixteen how you used to act? Never. He said, Nobody else be a good girl from now on.

Go on, forgive him. She went out tears streaming down her cheeks. Couldn't he have cut her to bits? And then go on to the next town and told it as an illustration.

That was love walking around. God's own love walking around acting like love acts. And those babies.

You see that little shaver we dedicated this morning? That long name of his, long Dutch name, God bless him. He took those little fellows up in his arms and held them and loved them, just acting like God. That's all.

That's what God thinks of babies. That's what God thinks of poor women. That's what God thinks of everybody.

Everybody but me, a fellow full of the devil. A fellow come around here full of the devil, everybody would say, Well, he's a queer one, isn't he? And we'd isolate him. He'd walk around all by himself.

But Jesus went and cast the devil out. Christ, I say, is God acting like God in loyalty. Think of the loyalty of Jesus.

If ever there would have been a time, if ever there would have been a time when justice would have allowed Jesus to turn his back on his disciples, it was at the cross. For they all forsook him and fled. And he could have said, Here I've spent three years.

Here I've spent three years teaching my disciples, healing the sick, raising the dead, stilling the waters, feeding the multitude, talking of the Father's house. Here I've spent three years, and I haven't one man that will stand with me. I scrape the dust off my shoes.

I turn away from him. He could have done it, but you know what he did? He was loyal to that bunch of renegades and cowards who forsook him and fled. Loyal to the people who hadn't the courage to come to his rescue.

Loyal to those who would not even come out and stand and be counted. Loyal to the end, and died loyally for those who had no loyalty for him. Why did he have that loyalty? Was that human loyalty? Yes, but it was more than human.

It was God's loyalty. God has been loyal to the human race, even though way back there, thousands of years ago, we turned our back on God in the person of Adam, and walked out, and in Adam's fall we sinned it all, and we all walked out on God. But God remembered us, all remembered us.

And all their smoke and the lamb bled, and God kept saying, down the years and down the years, here, here, we'll have a Redeemer. And then a mother groaned, and a babe cried, and the angels sang. And God had come to earth loyal to His renegade race.

And when they took Him out to crucify Him, loyal still. And He's loyal at the right hand of God tonight. And you'll go home from here and sit up till one o'clock in the morning watching half-dressed movie actors play on your TV screen.

And you claim to be converted, and God loves you, and will be loyal to you through faith, and confession, and humility. It's awfully hard to get people to repent, because that means humility. And we build up a saga about ourselves.

That's why it's dangerous to be a Christian leader. Dangerous to be a Christian leader. Brethren, it says James, and be careful, don't everybody want to be teachers? God's dangerous.

Dangerous to get a saga built up about yourself. Get a reputation for being godly. And then when the Holy Ghost comes and begins to lacerate your heart, you're ashamed to go to an altar.

Ashamed to confess because people think you're a hypocrite. Your old brother, Peter Robinson. Ah, Peter Robinson knew God.

Peter Robinson was a cook, a chef in one of the finest hotels in this country. And a little boy there, he was born crippled. Peter Robinson believed the Lord would heal him, but he didn't.

And one day he said to God, God, I'm not going to eat again until my boy's healed. Couldn't walk. He was 24 years old but couldn't walk.

And his wife said, do you think that's wise, Peter? He said, I believe that's a God in me, and that's all right. So he went down, and he said, the first day or so it wasn't so bad, but the second and third day it was getting terrible. And in this fine high-class restaurant he was dishing up food that was just utterly out of his world, you know, for these high-class patrons.

And he said he baked pancakes in the morning that would melt in your mouth. And he said, here I was, waiting on God between times and at night, and cooking pancakes that just made your mouth water, and I said to God, no, I'll not eat until the boy's healed. So the third or fourth day he came home, and they were talking it over, and he said, all right, he said to his wife, until he's healed, I'm fasting, I'm waiting on God.

He said he turned to one of his daughters in his bed, and he turned and said, what's the matter? She said, look, look! And the little guy was down and running around all over the floor. And from that time on he was all around all over the floor, perfectly delivered, perfectly delivered. Now, I don't say that for everybody, I wouldn't go that far.

I would only say God did that for a simple-hearted black man who knew enough to trust him. Now, I started to tell you about Peter. Peter was up in the balcony one time at a meeting way back, and somebody gave an altar call.

And Peter not only came to the altar, and he was a Christian worker well widely known. Not only came to the altar, but he ran, ran all the way down the attic, dropped to his knees to the altar, and somebody said to him, Peter, why did you run to the altar? Well, he said, when I heard the invitation given, I knew there was something wrong here, that I ought to go down there and get straightened out. And he said, I heard a voice say, Peter, go down to that altar.

And he said, another voice said, Peter, don't go. And he said, I recognized that second voice. He said, I knew it was the devil.

And he said, I not only wanted to go, but I ran to fight. He got down there in a hurry to show the devil I was going to go to that altar. Brethren, humility is a beautiful thing, but not very many people have it.

If I were to say, let all who want to know the Lord a little better come down to the altar, this altar would be filled, and the front row was filled. If I would say, all that are not perfect would like to have the Lord bless you a little, we would have it again filled up on the platform. But if I say, has God spoken to you, sir, alone, and is he calling you to confession and humility, humbleness, and admission of wrongdoings, you are hard to get along.

Because people don't want to humble themselves. They want to humble themselves if provided they can do it en masse, but they don't want to do it in the singular. This pluralizing our humility, brethren, won't work.

This pluralizing our confession, singular. If David had got on his knees and had prayed a long beautiful prayer for Israel, the 51st Psalm never would have been written, and David never would have gotten back to God. David said, I did it, God, I did it.

Have mercy on me, God, I did it. He singularized it. And if you will singularize your confession and say, God, it is I, it is I, Christ will reveal himself to you.

And as you know Christ, you will know God. And the longing to see the Father will be satisfied, and your heart will know what God is like, and you will have a lifetime and eternities to come to build up and increase the knowledge of the infinite, incomprehensible God. Oh, my friends, singularize this spiritual experience tonight.

Don't hide behind the plural. Let's say, I, I, Lord, I. Now, some of you can't testify, you just haven't the courage to testify, unless you're with a group that testifies, and then you're very vocal. But you're silent as a mouse when you're out with people you're afraid to testify.

Now, do you think that's good Christianity? I don't. Some of you don't tithe. You say you can't.

You're raising your family and you can't. You better have better success raising your family if you do. But you say you can't and you have not, so you've cheated God.

Some of you are just plain worthless. You're here tonight, and I'm glad you are, but you're worthless. And so you're far from God.

Some have been angry today, bitterly angry, about something. Maybe in the home, maybe somewhere. You spout it off, and then you've got calmed down and got your Bible and came to church.

You didn't fool God. I don't know it, but I'm guessing. Now, those things must be confessed out, and we must humble ourselves and get them out of our system.

And we must admit these things to God. And then as we do, oh, Christ manifests himself in light to our heart. And as we know him, we know God.

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