

Men Do Not Believe the Truth

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of believing the truth about ourselves, and the dangers of resisting the truth about our relationship with God.

Duration: 37:11

Scripture: Matthew 7:21, John 3:16, John 8:45, John 14:6, Romans 3:23, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Truth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the truth based on the Word of God. He criticizes the idea of false consolation and highlights the need for self-appraisal and acknowledgment of our true nature. The preacher also discusses the division between justification and regeneration and the importance of understanding that simply believing in the book or the words of the preacher is not enough for salvation. He calls for a return to conviction and a rejection of popularized religion that is treated as entertainment.

Transcript

I want to choose one verse from that long and full-weight chapter of John. It is verse 45. Because I tell you the truth, you believe me.

Now that's all there is to the verse. Because I tell you the truth, you believe me. Now there is a strange verse, and I am not going to let it get by without examining it.

I believe that the Church is a philosopher. That is, I think that we ought to know not only what God said and what he meant. And I think that we should tie up what he said and what he meant, so that everything falls into a pattern.

I declare, whereas I am not supposed to do, whereby this is true, that I think the Bible repeated. It was constructed out by quoting a verse that says something, and then quoting another verse that says the same thing, and then two others that say the same thing, and then two others that say the same thing has gone by. And all you've discovered is that God said something.

Now, what I was going to know is what he meant. And I recommend that manner of Bible study. I think that we ought to go into the Bible and find out what it means.

For the generation that only knows what God said will be followed by a generation that doesn't believe what God said. For the generation of Christians that knows not only what God said, but what he meant when he said it, and how it ties in with everything, with the whole pattern of life, would be a Christian philosopher. I suppose somebody would say to me now, Mr. Koger, you're about to come out in favor of Christian philosophy.

Well, by that I mean that the children of God should have a hold of God. Paul spoke against science, falsely so called, and he spoke against philosophy as the vain philosophy, and yet Paul has been reckoned by men, who are supposed to know as one of the six greatest thinkers of all time. One of the six greatest thinkers of all time.

Except Paul was among them. So that Paul would have cancelled, in fact, denied the place of deep thought, and of penetration and an understanding. So I want to inquire what Jesus meant by this.

Now the first impulse of any fairly intelligent person, because I've told you the truth, you believe me not, the first impulse is to reject it as unsound. Christians wouldn't reject it because of who said it. The truth said it, and therefore if you didn't understand it, you'd still accept it.

Not only do we accept it because he said it, but we accept it because while on first impression it looks to be further meditation concerns the soundness of this passage. Now why is it a hard verse, and why does it seem to be upside down in contrary case? For the reason that normally it could get, it is reversed in every other department of life. Everywhere else in the world where humans contact the problems of creation, exactly the opposite is true.

And it can be said, you believe anything, you believe it. But here alone it is said, you do not believe it because it is true. Now that's a strange when you don't believe it, and the reason for not believing it is that it is true.

Now that verse is true in spiritual context, and it isn't true any place else. Because that is always in secret truth, and in all things earthly they value the truth, and they trust the truth. So what is the fact, and then they conform to the fact, or they change the fact, or that's the further they're in.

For instance a scientist. The true scientist is busy discovering facts. That's his job.

The true scientist hasn't any opinions, he just has facts. He doesn't advance any opinions, as soon as he advances an opinion, and it's any more of a philosopher. And he ought to keep his mouth shut, or else not, or else he's just that.

That's all science can do, knowledge and classify it. And another man can take it, for instance, and do something with it. For instance, the scientist learns who he is.

But it takes somebody else besides a scientist to determine that by thinking he had him was enough noise and boom, was it? So it was not the scientist that determined that the atom bomb should be a part of warfare, it was somebody else that determined it only deals with facts. But they always want the facts. You have the electric light, because men were not satisfied with truth when it came down to electricity.

And so is every other thing we have in the realm of science. So wait a minute. I call upon your brain a little bit.

Sorry, and I apologize. But shake your head real hard and stir up some of those cells that have lain there until they're in danger of atrophy. And let me point out to you, my friends, here, that Jesus said, you believe me not, because I tell you the truth, the truth.

In human nature, a great moral derangement. A great derangement exists in human nature. Not that derangement that deals with scientific facts or business facts or, you know, a doctor must know, but in the realm of morals and spiritual things, there exists a great moral derangement.

And it is caused by the basic disorder of all disorders that we call sin. Didn't you notice these are the great words of the Bible are short words? All the great words are short words. When God would tell us about what is wrong with us, he said it's the sin in our ears.

The disorder of all disorders. And it makes us unwilling to hear it speaking straight. Men are willing, kind of nature, scientific tools, tools that have to do with engineering and doctors and all the rest, but they're not engineers, spiritual tools.

And let me break it down for you. The spiritual tools that Jesus gave and that men did not believe have been personed by nature. Nobody wants to know what kind of person he is by nature.

We always want to think well. Back in the old times, men went to a phrenologist. A phrenologist would always feel your head.

I don't know if it was that far back, but I remember when phrenology was just going out with a kind of a little sister because, of course, they had no real relation to each other. But it was on its way out when I was growing up, and I studied it. And some people, it's not as difficult as with others.

But anyway, I can read you what the phrenologists say about this stuff. High forward, cogitation. High up here, sublimity.

Forward, over the head. And that means you've got a room for sublimity in there. And thick through here, bad sense.

Well, that's phrenology. And we like to go to a phrenologist to see an old boy who used to shake out his long beard. And back in the day, in the past, little phrenologist.

His wife would kick him around until he began to feel inferior, and he went to a phrenologist. The phrenologist said, you should have been a phrenologist. He'd elbowed people off the sidewalk.

I went to a lecture one time. He lectured on phrenology, a young fellow. And he looked me over and he said, you should have been either a chemist or a corporation lawyer.

He said, you've got an analytical mind. I had a hard time getting over that fact, you know. It made me proud.

And I felt good to believe that I had an analytical mind. But I felt good to think at least I had one. Now, we're right when we are.

But the truth tells us what we are. And that's why we resist the truth. Nobody wants to die as God says he is.

And Jesus told Peter he'd deny him before morning. Peter said, I'll not deny him. No man believes that he's as bad as God says he is.

And the prophet, the man in the faith, he said, you'll murder him. He said, his life's proven to a dog. But he would do such a thing.

And he went straight home and put a pillow on his master's face. He didn't know how bad he was. And he wouldn't believe what the prophet of God told him.

Peter wouldn't believe that he was as bad as Jesus. That's why we resist truth. We don't resist scientific truth.

Go to a shoe shop, the man made it. You don't resist that because you want a comfortable shoe. But that doesn't take away from your self-love.

You can have a big foot and you'll still love yourself with big feet. But when you go to the Lord Jesus Christ and look at him and say, you're bad. And you say, well, maybe.

But not bad as that. Jesus said, I tell you the truth and that's why you will not believe something in you that resists knowing the truth about yourself. When? When we resist the truth ignoring what kind of people have been in our past practice.

Nobody wants to believe that he is said to be, nor that he has done as bad as they said he did. No brother, if you did it, you can excuse it. But if that same thing occurs in somebody else, it's amazing how you can condemn it.

But if you condemn in another, you permit in yourself. Because there's a arrangement there that we call sin, a disorder perception that permits us to excuse in ourselves that which we would condemn in another. There are people walking around that are guilty now of crimes and sins, that if somebody else was guilty of the same thing, they'd put them in jail.

But if you turned on them, and said you ought to go to jail, they'd turn white and knock you down. They don't believe it about themselves, nobody else. That's why what Jesus means when he said, I tell you the truth and you'll believe me not.

I tell you your pulse, and you'll accept that. I tell you your temperature, and you'll accept that. I tell you the size of your shoe, and you'll accept that.

And by one measure, the length of the river, or the width of the river, and then you'll build a bridge that long. All of you conform to truth except one of the spiritual, and there you resist, because there is where the moral disorder lies. And nobody wants to believe the status before God.

That's why we have so many crackpots and old maid mercifiers and sob sister religions, and behold the companions that have come. And here they are, swarming about, telling us how good we are, and everything. And they are liars, and when they tell us we're all right, they're liars like unto him who is the father of lies.

And I don't want anybody messing around with me telling me how good I am, because if he tells me I'm a good man, he'll jeopardize my soul. I want to know the truth. But in order to do that, I have to reverse her and trust God to help me and give the Holy Ghost a chance, because it isn't so by nature.

Everybody's mad when he's told that he believes, and his status before God is not as safe as good status. But before God, he's not on good writing. I have a weakness for buying books of religious poetry.

I don't know why as much as I pay against religious poetry. So thanks to them up there. And most of them are simply awful, that's all.

I wonder why they ever got written. And having got written, they got free. But there they are.

And I could give you a whole world of them all built on the same sheet. It is this. God the Father is so tender and broad-minded, and his love is so great and so deep, and he is so powerful that he sees not as he sees, and therefore he condemns a man, but he goes right into the kingdom of God, and he's all right.

He follows her to the jail and the murderer to the gallows, and he dies, and the Lord says, he's my poorest, spoiled boy. He dips him in the river, and he's all right. That's all poetic nonsense.

You remember, don't you, that old Abu Ben Adam once, and you know him, Abu Ben Adam, may his tribe increase and bless me, his truth. He's got a whole nation that's descended scattered throughout the world. Well, Abu woke one night from a deep dream of people standing in the room writing in there with a quill and a book of prose.

And much speech had made Abu Ben Adam what are you doing? He said, I'm writing in here the name of them that love the Lord. Abu was curious. He said, my, no.

He said, I'm sorry, you didn't hear. Well, Abu said, okay, and shrugged and said, write me down as one who loves the Lord. So the next night he even came back in the same angelic pose standing in the same room with the same book.

I didn't know that he was doing a litany tonight before, but there he was writing in the book. And lo, Abu's name led all the rest. He didn't love these fellow men and so he was in the book of life above all the rest.

But in crunching the book as an image it ought to be with a pair of hairy ears on top to identify it. Alejandro says, silly thing, why did Dwight ever let him write that? Silly thing. Yet we have a whole world of that, a world of it.

Will not believe in what God has said about their status, that they're lost and ruined and alienated and God's an unbridgeable gulf bigged only by the cross of Calvary. That's why people don't believe. I tell you the truth and that's why you don't believe it.

It's true and that's why you don't believe it. You're dedicated to the comfortable life. And there are churches dedicated to the comfortable life.

Nasty as it may sound, there are preachers dedicated to the comfortable life. Neither by a direct statement or a sort of indirection they leave the impression to the audience that they're a wonderful bunch of people and all the adjustments here and there and they go by with a screwdriver and give them an adjustment here and listen and say, I think it's a little tighter there, and over here there's just a little more there. But now you're in a is all right in your Father's house.

Dedicated to the comfortable life. Jesus said, I'm telling you the truth about this stuff. And you won't believe what I tell you because it is true and for the very reason.

You go to a shoemaker, he'll measure your foot and stretch your foot. You want truth in the church, you don't want truth when it comes to souls. Because the one's physical and the other's moral.

And the great human heart, the great cancerous disorder of the soul makes us unwilling to believe the truth about ourselves. And we don't want to believe the truth about the final disposition of sinning persons and we don't want to believe the truth about the way out of our troubles. And I point out to you tonight that unbelief is of two kinds.

Unbelief is a refusal to believe what God says about us. That's first, first part of unbelief. Jesus said, not all faith is the same faith.

And it divides up two, three, four, five, ten times. But there's only one saving faith. And to believe savingly on Jesus Christ with that divinely given saving faith, you must have previously what God said about Him.

Now, it is what God said about the sinner. The sinner who has hope of salvation. The sinner who has no hope of salvation.

The who has no hope of salvation. The sinner who has hope of salvation. The sinner who has no hope of salvation.

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The sinner who has no hope of of has no of salvation. The sinner who has no hope of salvation. The has no hope The Bocker Shelter ■■■ ■ 6 0 , 7 0 0 3 0 and nature.

You see, everybody goes where he belongs. Judas went to his own place. Judas went to his own place.

God tossed Judas into the vacuity and emptiness of space, and Judas gravitated along with instinct. He went right where he belonged. Everything goes where it belongs.

Judas went to hell because he belonged in hell. Judas couldn't go to hell because he belonged in heaven. The man who belongs in hell couldn't be, couldn't be in freedom in the kingdom of God.

The man who belongs in heaven couldn't be sent to hell, because everything goes where nature goes, where gravitational pull takes it. Not all the justifications God could ever give a man could admit him in hell. He must also be a renewal so that his nature belongs there.

With what he's reached and taught and how to act and all the rest, like a chimpanzee in a zoo, everybody belongs in heaven, if he belongs in heaven, he's going there. And if he's going there, it's because he belongs there. So don't be sick of this.

Some old fellow, long dead, put water on your sweet little head when you were too little to know anything about it. It didn't help you. Say, am I a Baptist? Well, I don't know, really.

Doesn't make any sense. But I only know this. You can plunge a man into seventy feet of water and hold him until he's in a bubble.

And he doesn't say, well, he's been renewed by the Holy Ghost. No form of baptism will save a man. Sprinkle him with immersion with all the things, unless he's been renewed by the Holy Ghost.

So when I say a man's saved, I mean that man's been renewed. The division of justification from regeneration has been a woeful thing in our day. And you tell people, now, you're king of your state, you belong in heaven, but you forget to tell them, if you haven't a corresponding change of nature that fits you for heaven, you're going to go to heaven.

God doesn't juggle the books to get a sinner into heaven. He doesn't juggle the books to get a sinner out of hell. You go to heaven not only because the book says you go to heaven, but you go there because you're in heaven.

What is that with the, when you sing a chorus or something, sing sometimes you're born down and you might be born up. You came to earth and you might go to heaven. That isn't exactly the way I said it, but it's true.

Now, I say that nobody can save ten years of peace about each other. That's why I can't go along with a lapel pattern. You're a piece of lapel.

A soft little pattern. You make everybody feel good. And people think of churches if they feel good.

Boy, I've been in churches where you couldn't feel good, feel anything wrong with you. Couldn't. I used to have a new boy Richard.

He was a self-educated man, but he was one of the most penetrating, terrible preachers I ever listened to in all his life. He was a great preacher. He had a great voice.

Remember, he always talked quietly. All he used to do was explain the mathematical problems on his talk to children. There was a quietness, but I sat there and all the text didn't.

Well, he talked to me about my eyes. Church is not a good place to go to feel good if you've got a good preacher and you want to know God. You can feel good afterwards, but at the time you may feel anything but good, all being to the man who specializes in making people feel good.

Yesterday over at WMDI, I talked a whole half hour on making people feel good. But I based it upon truth, upon what he had done and what he said and what he promised, and based the whole thing on scripture. And assuming that my heroes were born again for that kind of thing, I don't know what I'd go for.

But this false consolation makes me think I've only got a pimple when I get it, makes me think that I'm only going for a walk when I'm going out to die. Now, to think about ourselves, we've got to hear, what is it? It's not the appraisal of science. And when you read the Reader's Digest, you immediately attend to the I.T. section.

Find out how much you know. That's the appraisal of some kind of a science. Not the finding of the psychoanalyst.

Come on the couch, let him realize, I know what I'd do, I'd go down the street. But that's not the finding of the psychoanalyst. Not the appraisal of science.

Not the opinion of your acquaintances. Watch out for your acquaintances. Too many nice things about yourself.

They want to live with you. Maybe even they want to get something out of you. They'll never quite tell you the truth.

As I used to say, your best friend won't tell you. And that's the same thing about moral and spiritual questions. Don't you wait for your most prejudiced friend.

I couldn't pray to pray half of it. But Lord, deliver me from my friends, and I'll take care of my enemies myself. You can pray the first half, Lord, deliver me from my friends.

Because your friends will have you believe you're bigger than you are, better than you are, more useful than you are, holier than you are, pioneer than you are. So what you need to hear, not the opinion of your friends. When you get under conviction, don't run to some comforting friend that'll pat your back and say you're all right, you're just nervous.

I think upset is the term they use now. It's a general covering kind of a vulnerable carnality. A little blow, a cold talk, you know, feeling like Vesuvius that should not be heard outside a borough room, and then excused on the grounds that I was upset.

No, the opinion you must have here is not an opinion at all. It's God's judgment on your life. It's what God thinks about you.

Have you heard it? You know what it is. What God thinks about you. And understand, that doesn't say you're strange as you may be.

You can know what God thinks about flesh and plunge into hell in the end. You can know what God thought about him. Satan knows what God thinks about him.

Hitler knows what God thinks about him. You can know that isn't faith. That isn't the faith of faith.

Believe in what God thinks about you. But it is absolutely essential to the faith in what Christ said about him. Until I believe what God said about me, I never can believe what God said about his son.

And I am saved by believing in his faith. But I can't believe in his son until I have believed God's judgment about myself. I told you I'd work on your mind a little, and some things to think about.

But there is a philosophy of it. That's the reason for it. That's why I said it.

And that's why I felt in life. That's why it's only true in this. Nobody cares if a foot loose, or if a leech is 18 or 14 or three feet long.

Nobody cares about that. It doesn't mean anything. You don't lose faith.

Nobody cares whether it's over the 42 cross. It doesn't matter. Nobody cares if the sun is 793 million miles away and 330 miles an hour, sea level, the speed of light 286,000 miles per second.

Nobody cares. It doesn't mean anything. Nobody loses faith.

Nobody suffers knowing that. It doesn't mean anything. So when they tell me that it's 186,000 miles per second, I say, so what? I don't care.

It's all right with me. I see this sonic barrier at 730-some miles an hour up a little way. It's OK with me.

But when somebody says to you, Thou art the man, thou art a guy, the soul that's in a bag, you're bagged, you're covered up, you've learned to live with yourself. It's your bag. That bothers me.

Not by nature, but that's what we must give. And that's why there's so little conviction in the world, and that's because there's so little conviction in salvation. So through real conversion, from the day when men preached until hell and fire could be felt by the trembling sinner, conversions were dramatic and transforming.

Nowadays, these are the scriptures, led in the back way by a mark and a test. And I think a lot of people, because they never really believe, they can quote Biblically all the things that God says. Does that mean you, Junior? Yes.

Really you? Yes. Well, you think you ought to be in hell? Yes. And if you really mean that, you won't stand and look with a grin on your face.

That'll cut deep. As for my God, in times gone by, in penitence, so deep, so writhing, so rimming, but I think going to the electric chair at a gala wouldn't have been much worse. You've got to believe what God says about you before you can what God says about his Son.

But it's too easy to believe the truth concerning yourself, that you were born wrong, you're here wrong, you're going wrong. God is not your Father, there's no hope for you, and all of a sudden he won't cover your food essentially for you. It's easy to believe that about yourself.

It's easy to believe enough to tell God's prayer that's true about you. Then the world, wonderful, wonderful truth, you begin to see Jesus come to life before you. Oh, then Jesus, Christ in the manger, Christ in the door, Christ at the throne, and your faith will begin to mount and to strengthen itself, and you'll put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Far too few people are ever filled with the Holy Ghost, because Christians don't care about them either. They don't believe it. They think they can make it all right and excuse a bad temper on the grounds that they're an Irish grandfather.

They excuse tightness on the grounds of their frugality, lust on the grounds that they're a Red Rite, abnormalities and perversions on the grounds they studied in college, that that was natural. And Christians excuse things that they never can get filled with the Holy Ghost, never. Until a man believes what God says about his natural heart as a Christian, he'll be filled with the Holy Ghost.

He never can become a victorious Christian. Defend yourself, stagger along, get on the best you can, and you'll never be victorious. You'll have awful, terrible, dying hours.

You can do as bad as God says you are as a Christian. And if you need not only justification and the renewal of the Church, but if you need almighty purgation by the Holy Ghost, then that purgation will come. But it will never come until you reach that place.

Now, we're thrown back upon Jesus Christ, and that's what we've got to do. Throw us back on the cross. Will you? Do you? As you heard, do you hear God's judgment about you? And do you accept? Do you really believe it? Now, think a little bit.

Let it get hold of you. Here's this. Oh, what a lovely lady she is.

Married to the first and only fellow he ever went with. Three or four nice children. Great children.

Marvellous. But the Holy Ghost said, listen, little lady, you're a kid. Before the law started, before public opinion, you're a mother of the year.

Oh, you're wonderful. You're as bright as your husband is. But in the eyes of the Holy Ghost, you're a proud, self-righteous, evil woman.

Can't get people to accept that. But I tell you the truth, and they don't want to hear it. That's why we're where we are.

Oh, my friends, let's pray that God will bring conviction on us, to send conviction back. Religion becomes so popular now that it's shown in theatres, sung over radios and bar and dance. One more of their music, one more form of entertainment.

We're fundamentalists, evangelicals. We won't believe the truth about ourselves. We won't believe the kind of folks we are.

So we have a world of religion, but we have very little power, very little conviction, very little penitence, very little power. I jest to assume thee a Roman Catholic, doing penance by walking on uncooked beans, punishing the soles of my feet for the sins of mine. I jest to assume thee a Catholic, doing penance by walking on uncooked beans.

I'm an evangelical in name, but didn't believe half what God said about me. Oh, let's open wide our hearts and legs to comfort and consolation, the chief and child. Don't seek to be happy, seek to be whole.

Don't seek to feel good, seek to be good and let God take care of the feeling. Don't seek for comfort, seek for consolation and let God spin you and do what he wants to. I don't even repeat what Paul wrote in the great American Evangelist once said.

He talked something like this, never heard anything like that. He was always talking about how bad we are and on the way out, a young fellow took his hand and said, I'm a persecuting preacher and you've insulted me, and later replied, well, you got off easy, God has told that before, but it fits here. So let God speak.

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