

The Coming of the Holy Spirit (Flame of the Spi)

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer's life and the need for living a holy and righteous life.

Duration: 45:17

Scripture: Acts 2:3-4, Acts 2:38, Acts 4:31, Acts 9:17-18, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 19:6

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having God in one's life. He contrasts the value of having God with the emptiness of having everything else without Him. The preacher describes the scene of the Holy Spirit descending upon the believers, symbolized by flames of fire resting on their heads. He highlights the wonder and privilege of human nature being able to receive and embrace this divine presence. The preacher also discusses the role of emotions in the Christian faith, emphasizing that they are a gift from God and should be redeemed and used for His glory.

Transcript

Now, in the Book of Acts, again, I don't know why I'm still in the Book of Acts. I hadn't intended anything like this, but in the Book of Acts, second chapter, third verse, only third verse, that's all. "...there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Now, there's an unfortunate occurrence here, and it is that a figure's speech to describe a little jet of fire is confused with the speaking in languages that follow it.

Now, you'll go home and strike a match. You, being a Christian, wouldn't have any matches with you. But, go home and strike a match, or do anything, get a fire, any little fire, and see how it does.

It always takes the shape of a little tongue. And, of course, it would do that anywhere. It would do that rush as well as Jerusalem, because that's the way nature made fire.

But, just like a little flame, a little tongue. "...and there appeared unto them these little cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. Apparently, on that great day, there was first a great body of fire, and then it divided into these little jets, and a flame sat upon each head." That's one translation.

A flame sat upon each head. A little quivering flame sat here. Now, the important thing there wasn't fire.

The important thing wasn't the shape it took. The important thing was deity presence, for this was deity presence as fire. Now, let me say what I have said so many times, so many places, that in the scriptures, God is said to be inscrutable.

That's a long word the theologians have invented, so you won't go any further, you know. Theologians are like doctors. They write in Latin so as to impress you.

Doctors do. You, being a lion, of course, wouldn't have any reason to know anything about doctors. But, God is inscrutable, and the theologians have made that word so that you would really be impressed with their learning.

All that means is that God can't be searched into or found out by searching, and God, then, can't tell us what he is. He can only tell us what he's like. There are no definitions of God in the Bible.

There are only similitudes trying to tell us what God is like. I saw the likeness of the throne, and on the throne there was the likeness of this and that, and here was a like fire. God's trying to tell us what he's like by use of similitudes and figures of speech, and these alike ideas.

The favorite one that God has is fire. You remember that he appeared to Moses in the bush out of a flame of fire, and he spake and said, Take off thy shoes from off thy feet. That was fire.

Later, when Moses had come down and delivered the children of Israel under God out of Egypt, the fire went before them by night and a cloud by day. Now, the reason it was a cloud by day and a fire by night wasn't that it changed, for it didn't. But being a deep, glowing fire couldn't be seen in the daytime.

It looked like a cloud, but at night the fire within showed against the dark background. So, they had fire there by day and night. And then you'll remember that when the Israelites got their temple together, they had the sanctum sanctorum, the holy of holies, and in between the wings of the cherubim there was a fire called the shekinah, now the present.

God is said to be a devouring fire and a consuming fire. So, what we have here is the presence of deity. What we lost when we sinned was the presence of deity.

What we gain when we are redeemed is the presence of deity. This may sound very old-fashioned and hard to get hold of, and more or less boring. But let me tell you, my friends, that when it's all over, all you have is God.

That's all you have. And you'd better get acquainted with God now, and learn to love God now, and learn that you don't have to have God plus something else, but God and not plus anything, because that's about all you're going to have in Heaven. A lot of carnal-minded believers are hoping to be able to wear a crown as big around as a hula hoop, and they hope to rule over several cities, and all sorts of ideas they've got.

I've given all that up, and I was scoping the Bible that day, and was preaching my sermons out of each note. In my early ministry, I used to talk about the crowns of the believers. But I know theoretically now that I don't expect any crowns, because I'll thank God with all my heart that I ever get in there at all, and look at the saints.

God just let me look at David, saying his heart will be a thousand years in Heaven. And I'm not expecting any crowns, I'm expecting God. God's given himself to me, that's it.

And if you have God, you have everything else. If you have everything else and don't have God, you're a pauper, sitting with a little of your hat in less pencil than your hat big. You're a pauper, but if you have God, you have everything.

And here God was giving himself to the people there at Pentecost. When the Spirit came down, this fire inside of each of them, it was God saying, I am inscrutable, I can't tell you what I am, but here's what I'm like, and you have me. So, the flame of fire sat on their heads, and the glory and the wonder of human nature is that it can entertain this fire.

That's the glory of it. That isn't true of your fine, well, highly-bred, intelligent dog. That isn't true of the finest, sleekest horse.

That isn't true of any animal anywhere, any place. That is only true of persons made in the image of God. God made us in his image, and he gave us a place for the fire.

We sinned and lost it, and in redemption God gives the fire back. And there's nothing incongruous about it, because we were originally created with capacity to receive the heavenly fire, the presence of God, spelled in capital letters. You can experience the incomprehensible and know what can't be known, and feel and taste and touch that which is beyond all our senses.

That's one of the wonderful mysteries of the Christian life. Well, it was deity giving itself to men, I say. It was God resting upon them and filling their natures, filling their natures.

Now, the flame sat on their forehead, but it entered their breasts as well. That flame on their forehead was secondary, and it was for external identification. But internally was where the work took place.

I'm an internalist, ladies and gentlemen. I believe in the internality of the Christian faith, and I think that one of the great woes of the evangelical world today is we've gone from the center to the periphery. We live on the outside, on the external.

Christianity is the religion of the internal. He that worships God must worship him in spirit and in truth. We must come out from the far edges of things and get to the heart of things, get inside.

The kingdom of God is within you, Christ in you, the hope of glory. Those are Bible expressions. So, the holy flame entered their heart.

Paul developed it fully later on in his great Pauline theology. Now, they upon whose head the flame sat. They were quite different from the converts of the present day.

Now, I'm for every good thing that's being done in the name of the Lord. Because I'm pleading and urging and exhorting for something better, people get the impression I'm against what's going on. No, I'm not against being in the 5th grade.

I'm just urging the kid not to roost there, not to spend the next five years there. Go on to the 6th and 7th and 8th and 10th, and go on to get your Ph.D. So, I say that I'm for improved, increased, reformed, purified type of Christianity. But I'm not against what you have now, if what you have now is God's own truth.

If you have a lot of trucks, I'd like to see you get rid of that. A lot of it could stand to good hauling out and cleaning up, and a truck or two could back up and take a lot of the religious trash we've gathered, and we'd be well rid of it. But if it's really of God, stick to it, and don't let anybody preach you out of anything

you have.

But I'm only saying we ought not to stop there. Now, the people upon whose head the fire sat, they were sealed as God's particular people, and from henceforth they would be known as sons and daughters of the fire. The fire sat upon them, and it didn't affect their minds in any way.

There was cool and calm as could be. The amazing thing about Christians down the years is how hot their hearts can be, and how cool their heads may be. And though I believe I'm not furnished in a cool chimney, but the trouble with a lot of people is the chimney gets on fire, and the fire goes out in the basement.

But if you keep the chimney cool, you'll never set the building on fire. But you keep everybody warm. Well, the fanatics get the flue on fire, and when the thing starts to burn, they stand around and shout.

They think something's happening, but all they've got left is ashes shortly afterward. Now, by this fire they suffered, they endured, and in 100 years they evangelized the world. Most people don't know that, but they did.

And this flame, I repeat, was the in-living presence. It was God in them, and this is the ultimate. This is the ultimate.

What they call the vision deactivated is when we look upon the face of God with our naked eyes. We can't do that now. No man can see God in this, but when the day comes that we can, with our naked vision, gaze upon God, and God will mark his name on our forehead, so through all the countless chains of millennia to come, every being in heaven, earth, and hell will know we belong to God, and that we have the nature of God, for the mark is on our forehead.

Well, that's what Christianity is about, my brother. Not to say that you can cigarette, though that's a good thing, too. Cigarettes taste good, like, and then the devil should.

But you ought to get rid of that, of course, but that's not what Christ died for. He didn't die to keep you from drinking beer, though if you stop drinking beer you'll be healthier, you won't get fat, and you'll save money, and you won't go around burping so much and sounding like an idiot. But he didn't die that you might stop betting on the horses.

But you know, if you're betting on the horses, God help you, man, you'll lose your shirt, so quit it. The thing is, Christians ought to live right, as I shall show later on, so I don't drink, nor smoke, nor bet on the horses, never did for that matter, so the Lord didn't save me from that. If getting converted meant getting saved from cheating, and from smoking, and drinking, and betting on the horses, I wouldn't be saved yet, because I never did any of those things.

God had to do something extra for me, because I wasn't doing any of those things. I was meaner than the devil, you know, meaner than the devil. With an English father and a German mother, what can you expect? And I was like that, meaner than the devil.

I'd have turned any place in heaven into a hell in 15 minutes. My wife couldn't have lived with me longer than one week if God hadn't converted me before I was married, that's true. But that isn't why the Lord saved me.

He did something extra. He came into my heart. It's the in-living presence that matters.

Then these other things just fall away. They just fall away. You don't quit playing marbles, so you'll grow up.

You grow up, and then you quit playing marbles, you see. You don't play marbles anymore. You don't do it.

You feel silly down on your hunkers playing marbles. That's for kids, not for adult men. Adult men look at television.

So, you see, there's a difference. There's a difference, you know. And play cards, you see.

We change toys. But the point is, the point is, you don't stop fooling because you, so that you can grow up, you stop fooling because you've grown up. So, you don't quit smoking, so you're a Christian, you quit because you're a Christian.

Oh, well, I didn't intend to say that, but it got in here somehow. Let's trust God it didn't hurt the sermon any. Well, anyhow, now, what about this? This fire? What is it? What is it? What's trying to analyze? I'm a great analyst.

When I was younger and didn't know any better, I believed in phrenology. Do you know what phrenology is? Phrenology is the science, the pseudoscience, of course, that they can tell your character by the bumps on your head. And I went to one one time, that is, I didn't actually make an appointment, but he was there, he was a lecturer on phrenology, and he looked the part, you know, looked at William Jennings Bryant.

And we sat around, and he told me, he looked at my head and felt it, and told me, he said, you'd make a fine analytical chemist if you weren't a preacher. Of course, I've been proud of that ever since. But I like to analyze.

I always like to analyze. I believe that God put this little bump up here and put something in it in order that I might use it. I don't think God gave me my head to apologize for for the rest of my life.

He gave it to me to do, and analysis is one of the things I like to do, analyzing. So, I want to analyze. It seems terrible to analyze the fire of God's indwelling presence, but I want to try to do it.

And say, first of all, that this fire that sat on the forehead of the early Church and gave character to the Church for all time was a moral flame. Let's talk about that a minute. At the base of all true Christian experience, there is a sane morality.

Now, no joy is valid unless it is undergirded by sound morality. We have just come out of the deep freeze in Christian circles. I've called it the deep freeze, you know, dispensational fundamentalism, where they were so afraid of reflecting on the grace of God that they paralyzed work so that we weren't supposed to be good people or live right.

They said that was taking away from the glory of God. We were just saved by grace, that's all, and what you did didn't matter. Now, they never actually came out and said it, but they laid the emphasis so people got that general idea.

But I believe that salvation makes a man right. It makes him right, and if it doesn't make him right, it's not converted, not saved. We try to preach the deeper life, and all the deeper life I hear these days is just

converted, just good converted.

Anything we get now with two or three works of grace, they used to get the first time they heard the gospel. You know, clean up right now, get this devil and devilish sin over with, live right. But we let them come in, you know, leak in through the roof, and get in through the windows, and get any old way into the kingdom, and afterward we try to impose a deeper life on them.

We ought to get them in there so clean in the first place that the devil would be ashamed to look at them because of how holy and right living they were. For the Holy Ghost is a moral thing, and remember, nobody can be filled with the Holy Ghost if he isn't willing to live right. Now, can I say this is not the preaching of sinless perfection, but it is the preaching of the in-living spirit that keeps the heart pure.

No joy is a valid joy unless it is accompanied by righteousness. No delight is a valid delight. Nobody can hide wrongdoing under the guise of being led of the Lord.

Women sometimes say, I have led of the Lord to lead my husband. No, you weren't, sister. You were using that as an excuse to get away from the old boy.

You wanted to get away from him years ago, and you got lady leading from the Lord, you said. No, that wasn't your Lord, nor my Lord. That was another fellow that led you.

We hide behind wrong, we hide behind the leading of the Holy Ghost to do evil. Never, never, never. The Spirit of God never led anybody to do evil since the world began, and he never leads anybody that's doing evil.

You can be sure of that. We might just as well take off our gloves now and get down to brass tacks to conclude my metaphors and tell you that you've got to be right. You've got to be willing to be right.

You've got to be willing to quit the things that God hates and begin to do the things that he loves, and he'll give you grace and power to do it. And if you fail to do it and tell him so, he'll quickly forgive you and send you. But the point is, you must be willing to put away evil things.

Those evils quench the inward fire. Secret pride, for instance. I find among God's people an awful lot of pride.

It's the same egotism that the world has, only it's been refined a little bit. Instead of getting rid of it, we refine it. A lot of Christian virtue is only refined right, and nothing more.

We just refine it and give it a nice name and get it baptized, and then we say it's virtue. It's not virtue, it's vice that has been refined a little bit. And then there's self-seeking.

The men who used to go out and seek self in the world get converted and immediately begin to seek self. But it's the same old self, only they piously put their head over on one side and smile benignly like a statue of St. Francis and say, it is for Jesus' sake. No, it's not for Jesus' sake.

That's an excuse. The self-seeker, the boy that's out to be ambitious and to be known in the gates, he's a self-seeker and he's doing it for himself in the name of the Lord, which is a compounding iniquity. The Holy Ghost won't have anything to do with that man.

And then there's intolerance, and there's self-righteousness. Most holy people are self-righteous, that is, most holiness people, most like us. They're self-righteous people.

And you take the average Christian woman like that as a round convention like this, and she is so self-righteous, bless her, dear sanctified soul. She looks down her nose at all the poor women, overpainted and overdressed, with a cigarette in their fingers. If you love them as much as you should, sister, you never feel superior to them.

You'd say, there go lives for the grace of God, and you'd try to win them. This passing him by on the other side, sneering at him, a woman that hasn't got what she got. She hasn't got God, what she got.

She has to smear something on or suck something in order to be happy. Just like a little boy or girl in a crib without a toy, they have to suck their thumb. They have something to keep them occupied, and so the world has to play cards and gamble and drink and race horses and sing like Elvis Presley.

They have to do that. They've got to do something. They've got the energy there, and if there's nothing real to do, they suck their thumb.

And we make out that that thumb-sucking is a terrible thing, when actually it's just their act natural. But when they get converted, then they have God, and then they quit all that. Then we say, oh, how narrow they are.

Nom, nom, nom. We had a young, well, we had six of them, you know, boys, and three of them sucked their thumbs, and one of them is now, he's built down in Florida. He goes out and builds these big places, and he plays now with compasses and planes and saws and hammers.

He doesn't suck his thumb anymore. He's 30 years old, and you quit that, you know, when you get around that age, if you haven't quit sooner. And so the children of God, they don't do these things, but they don't sneer at people that do.

They pity them, because that's all they've got. That's just moral thumb-sucking, is all. Well, these things quench the inner life, though, I tell you.

Every act of wrongdoing, every secret sin, every covert transgression, you may be sure the Spirit won't be with you. He won't manifest himself to you. You can't get on with him because you're doing that which he hates, you're indulging in that which grieves him, and you're quenching the Spirit, and that's a grave sin.

Then the Holy Spirit is a spiritual flame. That is, he gives transforming vision of the Trinity. He gives an insight into the Trinity.

Now, I'm a Trinitarian. I couldn't be a Unitarian. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, begotten of Him before all ages.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who is the Father and Son that worships and glorifies. That's part of the old 19th Creed. Some of you ex-Lutherans remember that.

It's a good one, though, and it's true, so don't throw the baby out with the bath and give that up. Recite it to yourself occasionally while you're going to sleep and when you get up in the morning. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

It'll do you good, a lot better than listening to Paul Harvey on the radio, find out about the news the first thing in the morning, so you can be worried all day. Well, it's the spiritual flame, and it gives us a vision of the Trinity. You can only know as much about Jesus as the Holy Ghost makes manifest to you.

He's dead and gone, we say. He's left our vision. We can't touch him now, as John said he did.

Only as the Spirit of God reveals him do we know Jesus Christ our Lord. That flame on the forehead is a spiritual flame, and we know Jesus Christ and what he is and who he is by the inward illumination of the Holy Ghost. And you need not that any man teach you, for that same anointing teaches you all things.

I believe in the intuitions of the gospel, the inner light, the inner knowledge, the inner flame. The Quakers had something when they talked about the inner light, and we fundamentalists who laugh at them now had better get back to the inner light, brother, because until we do, all your Ph.D.s won't mean a thing in all the world. You can't think your way through to God.

You'll have to be illuminated and enlightened to get through to God. It's the work of the Holy Ghost in the inner man, illumining and enlightening. And this the Spirit of God does.

But the sadness of many lives and many churches is we do not have the inward illumination. We have only excited religious activity. We've got more religious activity right now than we've ever had since the beginning of the world.

And every preacher that gets up tells the people they ought to get busy. Get busy? God's people are so busy now they haven't time to sleep. Chasing each other around, we've eaten more hogs, we fundamentalists.

We've eaten more hogs and hamburgers and sweet potatoes in our gatherings. More things were born while men picked their teeth than ever were while they were on their knees. In the last 50 years, we are now the Howard Johnson Christians.

We meet and have a banquet and think out these things. In New Testament times, they got on their knees and worshiped God, and the Holy Ghost said, do so and so. Nowadays, we figure it out.

Four or five fellows come rushing all excited. They don't know their own souls. They haven't been quiet long enough.

They haven't been at home to their own spirit for two weeks. And yet they come rushing in to tell us how to do God's work. Oh, can't be done that way.

The Spirit of God reveals to the human heart what he wants us to do. Then I'll say this to you, and this may get me in the doghouse, but I've looked out of more doghouses in my day than there are in the city of Pittsburgh, and I always got out all right. I'll say this to you, that too much democracy slows the work of God down.

Here's your man. If the oil comes on him and the illumination comes on him, he'll lead. You follow him if the oil is on his forehead.

Old MacArthur used to say, I'll follow the man with the oil on his forehead, and I'll say, I'll follow the man with the flame on his forehead. But we say, we won't do a thing except we vote. And then we vote, and ninety-nine percent of the voters were thinking about something else, you know.

I heard a fellow say, he admitted it, he said, I was sitting down at the preacher's right, and suddenly he said, I was sitting there trying to figure out how I'd build my chicken coop come Monday morning. He said, I was laying it out, I was doing a blueprint about my new chicken coop. And he said, suddenly the pastor said, Brother, so and so, lead in prayer.

And he said, I stood, gripped the seat, and all I could see was my chicken coop. See, he wasn't in the spirit, he couldn't pray in the spirit, and we put things up to our people to vote, and they vote, and they don't know what they're voting about. We need illumination, we need anointed leadership, we need men and women, particularly men who have met God and who are anointed with the ability to see.

Wesley wrote a little line, changed it from Watts, and made it read like this, The Lord pours eyesight on the blind. I love that line. The Lord pours eyesight on the blind.

That's a Watts line with a Wesley overtone. And that's Calvinist and Arminian working together on that line. So just straighten up there, any of you who think you've got it all.

Some other folks have something, too. But the pouring of eyesight on the blind, that's what we need, my brethren. We need to have eyesight poured on our hearts.

The Holy Ghost does that, he's a spiritual flame. Then he's an intellectual flame. Now, some of you wish I'd go home now, but I won't, because the pastor invited me to stay till Saturday.

But he's an intellectual flame. I repeat that I believe that the most beautiful thing in the world is spirituality. The second most beautiful thing in the world is intellectuality.

I believe in both. And the great souls have had both. Augustine had, Paul had, Christendom had, Luther had, Finney had, Simpson had, they all had great minds, great leaders.

But we have in our society, we've given the impression that ignorance, we've equated ignorance with spirituality. You can be awfully dumb and still be carnal, so don't get the idea that just because you're dumb you're sanctified. No, it doesn't work that way, brother.

You can be stupid as a mud turtle and still be as carnal as old Esau. There's just no relation between the two, you know. Now, if you're intellectually proud, if you're smart and know it, then it's too bad for you.

There's nothing quite so beautiful as just sheer spirituality. It's just to meet a nice old lady that's lived with God until she's forgot there is anything else, and she looks up at you in an absent-minded way with a smile that just won't come off. You've got a few of them around here, yes, a few of them left, and a few of them around over the world and all denominations.

And they're the cream of the earth, brothers and sisters, and there's nothing as sweet in all the world as to see the glow of the Shekinah on the countenance of a human being, once born in sin and conceived in iniquity. But the second after that is a beautiful intellect, that beautiful mind which has been given over to God, handed over to him to be purged and purified and indwelt. You've got something lovely, then.

It warms and sobers and quickens the mind. And the Spirit always works above the mind, but never contrary to it, if you keep that in mind. The Holy Spirit made the human mind, and when he cleanses and purges it and indwelts it, he works according to it.

That's why every good Christian is a good psychologist. He may not ever have read Freud or William James, but he's a good psychologist, because psychology is the science of how your mind works. And the trouble with secular psychology is that they study the carnal mind to learn how it works.

And that's what psychology is, it's the scientific study of the carnal mind. But when a Christian is a good psychologist, but he studies the sanctified mind, and has lots of trouble with the carnal minds in his congregation in the meantime, but he studies spiritual things. So he has a beautiful thing there, and we don't want to get rid of that, nor do we want to talk it down.

I asked God to come and fill your mind. Years ago, I prayed that God would sharpen my mind and enable me to receive everything you wanted to say to me. Then he would anoint me with the oil and the coffee so I could say it back to the people.

That's what I prayed, how far God answered my prayer, I'll leave it to him and to you. Well, then it's a volitional flame, and I'll skip that one because my time's running out, isn't it? It's a volitional flame, that is, it gets hold of the will. The old German theologians used to say, religion lies in the will.

I'd go further than that and say salvation lies in the will. If any man will, says Jesus, and if any man won't, that's will too. So the human will.

The Lord doesn't want to take your backbone out. People's idea of spirituality is a jellyfish in the general shape of a man, dressed in very plain clothing, and walking about rather quiet and meek. That's not Christianity necessarily.

That fellow may need help, he may need a psychiatrist. God wants you to have backbone. Look at the great Saints, they had backbone just as hard as a steel beam.

The only time it ever bent was when somebody was in need or when God was speaking. Abraham had a backbone, I don't think he didn't. But when the Lord spoke to him, he fell flat on his face.

And when people need help, then you bend, bow and bend as Jesus did. And don't think that Jesus was soft and easily pushed around. He stood there and said, which of you convinces me of sin? He was the strong man who could stand against the world.

He came to Athanasius and said, Athanasius, the world is against you. He said, well then, it's Athanasius against the world. A Christian is one who has the will to stand.

A purified will, fused with the will of God, is irresistible. Satan doesn't know what to do with it. But it's an emotional flame too.

You won't mind it here, but some places would get after me for this. But I still believe in emotional content in Christianity. You see, roughly speaking, you are divided into three parts.

Your intellect and your will and your feelings. That's the three parts of you. God's trinity, and he made man in his image as a trinity.

So man also has those three parts. And for a generation or two, they told us that your emotions were to strictly be neglected, to be forgotten, that they would lead you astray. And the result was that most people's emotions died.

And we passed a generation when all the Christian leaders had their pictures taken, they looked like an undertaker that had just buried his mother. You know, sober, cheap, fallen in, serious-minded fellow, and you knew you couldn't get near them. He said about one great fellow once, his wife said to him, John or Ed or whatever it was, I'm going to have a faith he should never talk to me about such matters.

Oh, what a dignified man he was. He'd never speak to me of such matters. Now, he had no emotions, you see.

God help him. I don't know how he'll answer for that one. But I believe in redeemed emotions, ladies and gentlemen, and I believe that the emotions are the organ of your soul.

The emotions are the harp within you. God puts a harp in the window and the winds of heaven blow through it. He gives news.

If you ever stopped to think that if it wasn't for pleasure and joy, it wouldn't be worth living, what would you want to live for if you had to live 100% of the time on your nerves without one bit of joy in the world? Never. When the baby was born, you looked at the thing just as you would look at a calf. No love, no pride, no affection, nothing.

You'd look at it. You met your wife, you just looked at her. You'd look at a post.

And when you ate, you didn't taste it. And when you slept, you didn't enjoy it. And you had no enjoyment.

You dive on way. Now, on way is French, badly pronounced, for boredom. And you just dive boredom into each time.

So the Lord made everything pleasurable. The mother has her baby, and then she sees a little blob of humanity there, looking like every other little blob that looks, and even before her first son came, and yet the mother thinks there's nothing like it in all the wide world. And her face shines.

Who put that shine there? God put it there. He knew she'd have trouble enough bringing them up and keeping them from committing suicide before they were five years old. He knew it.

So he said, I'm going to put love in mother's heart. So when she looked at the little fellow, she felt good all over. And he had sixteen grandchildren.

And he had one there, a little blond with brown eyes and light skin, kind of patrician blond. Oh, brother, he's eating my favorite, I think. I don't want them to find it out.

My wife claims they already know. But he's six. And what a delight, what a delight.

Just looking at his picture, and I feel good, clear down to my flat feet. God made living to have a certain element of joy in it. And then they come and tell me, Now, when you're converted, brother, pay no attention to your emotions.

And they want me to get converted in my will and converted in my intellect and let my emotions lie in loss. I don't believe that's God's will at all. I think God wants to bless your emotions, too.

Joy unspeakable and full of glory. You'll win more people by expressing Christian happiness than you will by asserting Christian theology, though the Christian theology is necessary. Samuel Johnson, the great

lexicographer and literary critic, met Wesley and talked with him.

He was an Anglican and a very stoical sort of fellow. But Johnson said about Wesley this. He said, He represents the most perfect example of high moral happiness that I have ever seen.

Wesley was morally happy, and yet he had stopped enough age to fill all the baskets in Pittsburgh. He had been hounded and chased and dead cats thrown at him, but he had a moral happiness within him. Why did Methodism circle the globe and set it on fire? It was the emotional content of their religion.

And when you're really filled with the Holy Spirit, there should be some happiness there. We shouldn't seek happiness, we should seek God. But the flame of fire is an emotional flame.

It says here, he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit and with fire, that is, the spirit of fire. So I'm going to tell you, don't look back and don't judge by your past and don't judge by previous failures, but look peacefully and faithfully away to Jesus Christ your Lord. And he has lots for you.

For some of you, company is coming, royal company, royal company, coming to your heart if you'll only believe it and you'll only trust him. He'll fill you if you're preparing a habitation. You say, How can I prepare my habitation? Suppose up in Canada where I am now preaching among the lovely Canadian people, I'd like to say to you, my fellow Americans, don't be too proud of yourself.

The Canadians are the loveliest people in the world, absolutely the loveliest people in the world in every way, along with the Americans. But they are. Now suppose that they knew that what they called their gracious queen was coming to Toronto and was going to appear at a certain home, say, 5 Old Orchard Grove, that's where I live.

Don't you suppose that my wife would send out for a squad of cleaning women and painters? We'd fix that little six-room brick house up there. It couldn't be a palace, but boy, it could be the best we could do. We'd want the queen to see a folder newspaper lying carelessly on a couch.

We'd want everything thick and thin for the queen. Now, if we want God to fill us with himself, we must prepare ye the way of the Lord, that is, put away things that he doesn't like. Injustice and cruelty and dishonesty and deceit and falsehood and the little things that you hadn't noticed but that you know now he doesn't like.

And he'll come, bring your empty earthen vessels, clean through Jesus' precious blood, come ye need him one and all. He'll fill us, he will. You don't have to beg him, get ready for him.

He's ready to come. A lot of people beg for weeks and months and years and don't have anything, and the reason is they didn't prepare themselves. You can cut down the overhead expense and the time and reduce your begging two minutes if you clean up your life and get right and yield and surrender and let God have you, he'll fill you.

I preached this in Moody Church one time, and I was afraid the walls would collapse, but they didn't. A pastor came around with a shining face and said that's what he believed. Well, I have not heard that this being filled with the Holy Ghost ever happened to anybody that he didn't know it.

He tried to tell us, I think I was fiddled, I think I was fiddled back there and didn't know it. No, you weren't, brother. You just might as well tell me you got married and didn't know it.

No, no. Anybody that was ever filled knew it. And not only that, anybody that was ever filled, usually other people find it out pretty soon.

If he doesn't tell them, people will begin to say, what happened to you? They notice a difference. Not only that, Bible and Christian biography and personal testimony teach me that nobody was ever filled gradually. That's one of the little gimmicks now that the teachers have so we won't get anything.

They say, you're filled gradually. Maybe so, but where is it found in the Old Testament? Maybe so, but where is it found in the New Testament? Maybe so, but where is it found in Christian biography? Maybe so, but where did you ever hear anybody testify to being filled gradually? Nobody ever got up and said, thank God I was filled gradually over the last nine years. Nobody ever said that.

But many a man rose and said, thank God he filled me with the Holy Ghost. My friend of mine, he was one of these hardshell dispensationalists. I won't tell you the denomination, it wouldn't be nice.

It isn't a denomination, they don't have pastors. He got to hearing me on the radio. He was Canadian incidentally.

He got to hearing me on the radio and he read *The Pursuit of God*. That knocked about all the head out of him. He came to me and said, you know, I want to be filled with the Spirit.

I said to him, well you can be. He lived down on the lakefront in Chicago in a beautiful home overlooking the lake. He kept coming out to the church telling me how he wanted to be filled.

He kept getting to be reduced more and more in his own sight. Finally he followed me up to Canada, to Glenholm, when the University had a convention up there. He called me into his room one day and he said, Brother Tozer, I want to tell you this.

I have reached a place in my life where I want to die if I can't be filled with the Spirit. I said, well, I'm sorry I can't help you, but that's all I can do is to point you to the Lamb of God and lead you to him. That's all I can do.

He came back to Chicago. I preached a series of sermons on four stages in the path toward spiritual fulness. He came to hear every one of them except two, and he heard the tapes on those.

He kept getting worse and worse all the time. Finally, about the tenth sermon, he came down after it and said, Brother Tozer, I am empty and dry and joyless and miserable and down and discouraged. He said, I've reached the bottom.

I said, now there's only one direction to go from here on, that's up. He said, you're okay. God emptied you now.

About two weeks more he came down, this time his face beamed like the sun. He said, it's happened this week, it's happened this week. I said, what happened? He said, I was filled with a wonderful sense of the presence of God and all that my heart has yearned for these years, and now I have.

What a change! What a change in the man! God had made the difference. Don't tell me that was gradual. The dying was gradual.

You know, you always die gradually, unless of course they shoot you. But otherwise you die gradually. A man can die very gradually, but there comes a time when the doctor says he's gone.

Some of you have been dying a long time, ever since the days of Daddy Whiteside, but you still can wiggle. If you will die and the Lord God will come and say, well, thank God he's gone. A fellow from Cleveland sent me a clipping from McDonald's and it said, if you won't die, you're dead already.

But if you'll die, you can live. So Christian, that's it. Do you want to be a flame Christian? A Christian characteristic will be a flame of fire on your forehead and in your heart.

Well, you must die to yourself, and out of the goodness of the Lord he will bestow upon you his own blessed Holy Spirit in a depth of fullness you never dreamed possible. We're not giving an invitation now, at least I'm not, but I'm just telling you this. Do what you can and will about it, as God may lead.

Amen.

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