

# The Council of the Lord - That Shall Stand

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer's sermon emphasizes the critical battle between the counsel of the ungodly and the counsel of the Lord, urging believers to choose wisely for their minds and souls.*

**Duration:** 38:20

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of seeking wisdom and understanding in life. He emphasizes that many people are lost and unaware of their purpose, but the counsel of wisdom can provide answers to their philosophical questions. The preacher also criticizes the mindset of those who only focus on the earthly world and neglect the existence of a higher realm. He highlights that the Bible provides guidance on where we come from and why we are here, and emphasizes the need for people to seek understanding and purpose in order to avoid breakdowns and live fulfilling lives.

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## Transcript

To the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Now here are two counsels, c-o-n-s-e-l, meaning advice, injunction, instruction. They are two counsels set in opposition, in sharp hostile opposition to each other.

The counsel of the ungodly and the counsel of the Lord. And these two counsels are fighting each other for the control of the human mind. Now, it's boresome, but it's necessary to do a little defining, because if when I say something I mean one thing and you understand me to mean another, I might as well stood and bet.

So, I want to define as I go along, so we'll communicate as they say. I can get through to you, and you'll understand what I mean, because words have so many different meanings. By the human mind, I mean the whole intelligent moral personality.

Reason and moral perception and thought and imagination, and all the mental and moral responses. And I say that there are two counsels abroad, seeking to get control of man's whole intelligent moral personality. And this mind, as we call it, this mind of man, has the most fearful power, the most awesome and portentous power of anything short of the Holy Ghost that there is under the sun.

Now, this is an instrument of awful portent, I say, and it is so because it determines three things. It determines conduct and character and finally destiny, or maybe I should say, to be correct, character, conduct, and finally destiny, of individuals and of nations, and finally of the human race, the whole race of mankind. Now, the mind is controlled by counsel.

I'll get around to my sermon after I've defined a while. But the mind is controlled by counsel. For all of its mighty power, such power that it is the most godlike thing there is in the earth, without any doubt, in spite of all of its power, it's yet a helpless thing by itself.

It may be deluded, it may be blinded, it may be victimized or led astray, or it may be raised to heights which puts it next to or above the angels. And all depends upon what kind of counsel it gets. The human mind is like a mighty, powerful car waiting for a driver.

It has its potentialities there, the deep, low curves there under the hood, and the mighty power lies hidden there ready to leap off and race up to mighty speed. But it's just waiting for a man to get to the wheel. And if that man should turn out to be a good printer on his way to counsel, everything's all right.

But if it should turn out to be a drunken fool, then that can become as lethal a weapon as a submachine gun. Now, the human mind is exactly like that. Lying there, I don't know where.

Don't ask me to locate it. I can't locate anything anymore. But I don't know where the human mind's located.

I only know that it's raised in imagination, that it's thought and perception and mental response. I know what I mean. If I don't know where it is, it's probably in our head and in our chest.

But wherever it is, it's waiting, just like the gray car there, all shined up and tuned up and ready to go. But everything depends upon what kind of counsel gets behind the wheel. If it's the counsel of the ungodly, then you have destruction ahead.

And if it is the counsel of God, then you have glory and the will of God and fruitfulness and beauty and all that the Bible tells us about. Changing the figure of speech, the human mind is like a musical instrument upon which can be played a dance of death or the songs of David, all depending upon a sit-down to the console. Or changing the figure again, it's like a fertile field where on the in there may be grown briars and thorns and every poisonous and noxious weed or sweet fruit and grain and vegetables blessed by the rising sun.

Now, it depends upon who gets hold of the human mind. There is a battle going on, a war to enslave the human mind because both God who made it and the devil who wants it know what a powerful thing it is and what a godlike thing it is and what terrific potentialities lie there. And so there is a fight on, a battle, a war to enslave and control this mighty godlike instrument.

Now, there are two kinds of slavery, ladies and gentlemen. There is the slavery of the body, that is, the control of the conduct by physical force. That's usually political slavery.

And the victim knows he's a slave and longs for freedom and obeys under salty, silent protest, but obeys nevertheless because he's physically forced to do it. Then there is the slavery of the mind, which is control of the conduct by means of ideas supplied to it, like the man at the wheel. And obedience in this case is not rendered unwillingly, but obediently and willingly, because the victim doesn't know that he's been

victimized.

He's doing what he's doing willingly because he doesn't know that he has been fed the wrong counsel. He doesn't know the wrong man is at the wheel. And so he roars forward over the ground, occurs, and does what the man at the wheel tells him to do, not knowing that he's a slave, a victim of a power that controls him.

Now, that's everybody. You say, that doesn't mean me. Brother, I mean you.

And sister, I mean you. But if some of you have been exposed to a mobsome of education, you'll probably bristle up a bit now and your hackles will rise. And you'll say, that little old fella doesn't need to tell me that I am controlled by the counsel that's fed into my mind.

I believe in a free mind. You know why you believe in a free mind, Junior? It's because somebody fed the idea of a free mind into your mind. And you're merely responding to what you've had fed into the hopper of your mentality.

If you believe in democracy and individualism and the right to do what you bloody please, that doesn't prove you're free. It just proves you've been got to by the right counsel, or the wrong ones, that's all. And it simply points up the case.

It doesn't prove it's not true. Now, there's a battle, I say, for the control of the mind. And this counsel that I've talked about, this counsel, of course, in contrast to the counsel wherein we're met, unfortunately it had to come up tonight, but anyhow.

Here's what it is. Now, here's another definition. And if you don't get the definition, then you will not get the sermon.

By counsel of the ungodly, or the counsel of the Lord, I mean moral and intellectual pressure sufficient to determine which way the life shall go. That's what I mean. I'll say that over again.

I mean moral and intellectual pressure sufficient to determine which way the life shall go. And that counsel of the ungodly is waging its war by every technique to get a hold of the minds of our youth, and the minds of the older people too, but particularly the minds of our young people. And I may get into a peck of trouble tonight, but I thrive in trouble as an oak tree thrives in a storm.

But I will say, my brethren, that the counsel of the ungodly, which undoubtedly is the devil on his back of, that counsel uses every technique known, the press and the schools and the radio and advertising and all the rest, every method of communication is used. Every technique to get through to the human mind is being used these days to make all of us think alike on certain things and think ungodly thoughts about them. Certain things such as life, the ungodly want us to think a certain way about life.

They want us to think a certain way about morals. They want us to think a certain way, a uniform way, about love and God and religion and wealth and work and marriage and the future and death and eternity. And so the counsel of the ungodly is busy feeding into the hoppers of our minds their godless ideas on love and life and morals and God and religion and wealth and work and eternity and death and the future and marriage and divorce and everything else that falls within the precincts of human interest.

We are being brainwashed, ladies and gentlemen, brainwashed. And it's a slick thing. It's costing millions of dollars to put it across.

It is using the finest talents that the sons of Adam can produce, the finest voices, the greatest talents and the finest mechanical minds and the finest voices. It's using every gift that Adam has that grows on the tree of the human race to brainwash the public, particularly our youth, and get them to think uniformly and wrongly on every vital subject that falls within the precincts of human thought, I repeat. Now, the counsel of the ungodly, what is it? The counsel of the ungodly, I can't hope to ever tell you all about it tonight, but I can only tell you about four or five things that you might want to remember.

That the counsel of the ungodly is the counsel of the natural man. It doesn't include God on God's terms. There never was a day, at least in my years, I'm 59 now, by the grace of God and the patience of the people.

But in my years, I don't recall that there ever was a time when more people talked more about God than they do now. But nevertheless, my brethren, except when it comes from some anointed list of some child of God, usually what is meant when we hear them quackering about God is not God and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not the God of our father, the man of old, but some other God, the God of the natural man. And the world doesn't receive God on his terms.

You see, brethren, you either take God on his terms or you don't take God. And if you insist on rejecting God's terms, then you reject God no matter how cutely you prattle about God. Or how nice God is, or how God's the man upstairs, or the man that weeps and says, I forgive, or the man that lives where does God live? He lives in the mountain up so high and he lives in the desert so dry.

Well, that God isn't the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the God of the natural man. And the counsel of the natural man is busy trying to get you to receive God on other terms than God's terms, and second, trying to get us to receive Christ on other than Christ's own terms.

Brethren, we'll either take Jesus Christ on his terms or we won't take Jesus Christ. And the world is not taking Jesus Christ. I pray to God Almighty that you nice, lovely, soft, pleasant-faced, gracious people won't be so infinitely burned that you'll be taken in by all this soft, breezy platter that we hear these days about returning to religion.

Jesus Christ isn't any more popular now than he ever was. And as he came back to Omaha or Chicago or New York or San Francisco and lived the way he lived on earth and said what he said on earth and continued to say it, we'd execute him again as he did in the first century. Don't you think the world has been converted, ladies and gentlemen? It hasn't.

The counsel of the ungodly is the counsel of the natural man. And the counsel of the ungodly is the philosophy of Cain become propaganda. It sets up a moral pressure away from God and becomes custom and vogue and a way of life.

And pretty soon the thing that shocked you and horrified you, you get used to it and pretty soon you can sleep with it or at least in the same room with it. I remember the day when some preacher said to me, Mr. Tozer, Brother Tozer, I know the next thing you're going to see. You're going to see advertising pictures of a woman smoking a cigarette.

How naive can you get? Of course we say it. It horrified us once, but we grin at it now. And so we want to live up, modernly live it up, and of course we would use what we call filters.

Well, it becomes custom and vogue and a way of life after a while, and it's ubiquitous. It's like the smell of the stockyards in Chicago. When you come to anywhere near the stockyards in Chicago, I suppose Omaha, I never had the privilege of smelling in Omaha's stockyards, but when you get within five blocks of the Chicago stockyards, you smell it.

And then after you're there for a couple of hours, you don't smell it. The olfactory nerves get tired and lie down. And say, if that guy's going to hang around here, I might as well sleep.

And so you get used to it. They tell me so. People live down there and they have a restaurant down there in McAfee, God bless his memory.

He takes me down there once in a while to the stockyard inn and gets me a steak. I pay for it. But we get down there and after you're there 20 minutes, you don't smell the place anymore.

Now, that's the way of the counsel of the ungodly, philosophy of shame. When the Christian first hears it, he reacts terribly. But pretty soon his spiritual olfactory nerves lie down and say, what's this getting worked up over this? I might as well get used to it.

And so he accepts it. It's ubiquitous. It's all but omnipresent.

It's contortious. It's irresistible. It's all around about you like smoke.

And he gets his terrible power by brainwashing. He does that terrible psychological thing subtly without our knowing it, changing the texture of our minds, changing our whole psychology, changing the whole internal color and pattern of our thinking, breaking it down, making it uniform in our thinking on moral subjects and all these things that I have named, using millions of dollars to put itself across. It's canine propaganda.

And then it is the counsel of the young world. Now, I mean by that that it assumes the permanence of earthly things. Sometimes I think I ought to be led away, and then other times I think that possibly I'm right about this.

But have you, do you ever feel like this? What gets wrong with people anyhow that they'll act as if there was only one world and this was it? And whole crowds of them will get together and act as if there was only one world and this is it. And if there is any other world, it isn't worth talking about. Now, that's the counsel of one world.

And while people may talk about heaven as the great place where cowboys go when they die, at the same time, ladies and gentlemen, they don't live as if they intended to go there. And so I could assume, cynically enough, that they don't believe there is any such place. So it's the counsel of one world.

Here we are and this is it. And it assumes the soundness of unremoved human nature. Could I lay a little pearl of wisdom in your lap tonight and say this to you and if you don't get anything else, get this.

That, my dear friends, whenever anything started, anything, any project, any propaganda, any slogan, anything commercial, any book written, anything you get off the ground and take to the air and underneath it lies the assumption that unremoved human nature is sound. Brother, you are on quicksand. Excuse the

figures you speak.

They're all jumbled up. But it's quicksand. You can only be right when you begin by assuming that human nature is bad, unfound, painted, rotten, irresponsible, uncultivated, and filled with iniquity.

If you don't start there, you start wrong. If you don't build your thinking there, you build your thinking on sand. Now, it's not only the council of the one world, but it's the council of tolerance.

It teaches brotherhood and pratters and blabbers about brotherhood and moral adjustments and understanding. You're busy trying to get it adjusted to the world when you're not supposed to get adjusted to the world. You poor people that have read just enough psychology to harm you, don't you know what you need is not adjustment? What you need is a violent brink of the world, not adjustment to it.

These fellows who run around with psychological screwdrivers going up and down your spine, adjusting you here and tightening you there and loosening you up there to put you in line, they're acting like Adam, thinking like Adam, and they'll die and perish like Adam. We don't want to get adjusted to the world, we want to forsake the world. Can you imagine a modern Freudian talking to Noah and said, Noah, the trouble with you is you need to be adjusted.

You're all excited about religion. You think it's going to rain and there hasn't been a cloud since last Michael Mass. And there'll never be any rain around here.

That's the big idea. Get adjusted. People think you're queer and you'll develop a complex neck.

You'll probably have a nervous breakdown. But what you need is to get socially adjusted. We wouldn't have any human race.

A whole caboodle would have died in the flood. But there was one man who had brains enough and courage enough and backbone enough to break loose from the world and boldly declare that he didn't want to get adjusted to a ship that was going down. So he got in the ark and thank God that he did, or I wouldn't have been here.

You wouldn't have been here. Now, the counsel of tolerance, I say. Brotherhood and adjustment and understanding.

Forgetting that the most intolerant book in the world is the Bible. Now, this can really get me in trouble. But I'm going to say it because it's true.

The most intolerant book in the world is the Bible. And the most intolerant man that ever lived was Jesus Christ. He would die for a man, but he wouldn't compromise with him.

He loved him till he leapt over him, but he wouldn't compromise with him. He said, You're either or. You're on my side or you're against me.

You believe I'm God or you'll die in your sin. You'll either be born again or you'll perish. You'll repent or you'll die.

You'll get right with God or you'll go to hell. And he never tried to strike a common ground of understanding with all brethren. He was an uncompromising intolerant man.

He loved him till he bled for him, but never did he compromise with him. And you know, I couldn't respect God almighty if he'd meant my turn. And I couldn't love him if he'd compromised with me.

I want God to be the kind of God he is. Don't you? I want God to continue to be the kind of God he is. I've got to live with him for millions of eternities.

And I don't want to live with a God that I'll have to remember a blemish on his character. He was compromising with iniquity. I want God to be as tough, just as tough as he has to be with sin.

But I know where there's a fountain filled with blood drawn from an animal's veins and sinners climbed beneath that flood. Meanwhile, they're guilty sins and so I know what to do with my sins. But I don't want God to overlook it.

I want God to wash it away. Well, it's the counsel of the uncrucified flesh. It coddles self and avoids the cross.

The cross is on the people now. But where are they who have the cross in their heart? That's the counsel of the ungodly. And set over against that in sharp hostile opposition.

There is the counsel of the Lord and what is it? Oh, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The counsel of the Lord is the counsel of wisdom.

There are five questions, four of them philosophical and one of them theological. And the counsel of the Lord answers those five questions. The philosophical questions are what am I? And who am I? And why am I here? And where do I go? Those are the four questions.

And everybody that's ever thought in thinks about that. What am I? Am I what the scientists say I am? An animated piece of earth crushed, shaped like a clothespin? And clothes on me to cover up the rather ungracious fact that I am shaped like a clothespin? And that I am here between two eternities to set my little hour upon the stage and then shuffle off this mortal coil and be no more? Is that what I'm here for? What am I anyhow? I don't know. And I don't know anybody that can tell whether I'm a fallen angel or a promoted water puppy.

Depends upon which approach you make to the whole question. But the counsel of the Lord is a counsel of wisdom. It tells us what other people only worry about.

It tells us where things may be in the image of God. And then where came you? They don't know where we came from. Nobody does.

But the Bible tells us where we came from and tells us why we're here. Most people don't know why they're here. They just don't know.

They're all dressed up and don't know what to do. Because they don't know why they're here. That's why we're having breakdowns and that's why five satellites are driving Cadillacs because people are intelligent and don't know why they're here.

And brother, when you all get all dressed up and get a tour or two and don't know where the job is and don't know anybody to ask, you're in a bad sit. You'll end up somewhere with a fellow with a white coat trying to get you because you don't know why you're here. If you didn't know why you came here tonight,

you'd be worried if somebody examined your head.

But the Bible tells us why we're here. The old Presbyterian creed had it, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. And I don't believe there ever was any wiser thing said.

It is a high crystallization for the teaching of the Bible on that subject, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and that's a full-time job. And wither go I. Those people don't know where they're going, but we do. And so I say those four philosophical questions are answered by the counsel of wisdom.

And then there's a theological question. What shall I do that I may have eternal life? Whatever crazy sorrow-staff no man would breathe his mortal death has ever really, death has ever really longed for death. His death means life, not death for which we cry, said Tennessee.

And nobody wants to die. They want to know how can I have eternal life? They came to Jesus so pensively, so pitifully, and He answered them, and they want to know it now. And so the counsel of wisdom tells us how we can know.

The counsel of purity. I tell you that if you listen to the counsel of the Lord, you will know the answer to the urgent problems of social corruption and crime and delinquency and divorce and need for personal purity. And it's the counsel of peace.

The world is full of distressed hearts and troubled consciences, and we're trying to cure it by pills, psychiatrists, and books on positive thinking. And not a one-of-a-kind work, I recommend a pill. First, the psychiatrist, second, and the positive thinking last, or not at all.

But it won't cure you, brother. All it'll do will be to deaden your pain for a while. But as soon as the anesthetic wears off, you still have the pain.

But the world is full of it, and it's only Jesus that gives peace. Only Jesus, He said, my peace I give unto you. And there are peaceful looking people in the world.

I accept in congregations and even in council and board meetings and what have you and look at the people curiously, you know. And what I see doesn't encourage me too much except for one thing. I see peace in faces.

You don't see it anywhere else. Go to the elevator, the subway, you don't see peace. You see peace in the church or you don't see peace at all.

Jesus gives us peace. It's the council of peace and the council of eternity. You know that the conflict lies between this fact that God has put eternity in our hearts and sin has put mortality in our hands.

And the conflict between eternity in our hearts and mortality in our hands takes us into a state of frustration and misery all the time. For something in my heart cries for eternity. I don't believe that I am a concatenation of arbitrary forces met by accident in the whirling atoms.

I believe that I am a child of the king and of God. And the prayer of Moses when he prayed and the works of our hands established out, O Lord establish out. He lived 120 years but he knew that if God didn't get into his work it would be the work of time.

Everything we do, this beautiful and unusual auditorium we're in tonight, the great new buildings in Chicago and New York and all over the world, the great bridges, the great highways, all these things have a cross from the hard words of mortality. They perish and pass away. But something in my heart cries that I may do at least one deed that has eternity in it.

It can't perish. That the proof of time can't gnaw away. That the rust of the passing years can't remove.

It'll stand, it'll stand when the stars are burnt out and the suns are no more. And angels have gotten old as angels get old. And God has rolled up the heavens like a scroll and turned them over his shoulder and shaved them like his garments.

I want to know that I've done something that'll last. You'll never know it out of Christ, ladies and gentlemen. The counsel of the ungodly is a counsel of time.

He tells you be happy and live it up. You've only got a little while to live and you'll be a long time dead. But the child of God says, the counsel of the Lord that shall stand.

Now, a summary conclusion I'm free of things for tonight. Here it is, my friends. Today is a battle.

A battle on for the control of the mind of our youth. People have the idea that I'm not a youth man. Nobody loves young people more than I do.

Nobody loves to be with them more than I do. I don't usually run around with old people. I'm old, but I won't run around with old people.

I like to be with kids. I like to be around them. They're so unpredictable and happy and full of something.

And I like them. I like young people. And I love to preach to them.

I love to go to colleges and seminars and talk to those bright, keen, young faces that make you feel a hundred years old and challenge you. I love it. And I don't want the devil to get their minds because, remember this, whoever gets their minds will get their souls at last.

No man can give his soul to God and his mind to the devil. Some of you are trying it. You're giving your soul to God on Sunday, but you're giving your mind to the council of the devil during the week and it won't work.

Whoever gets their mind to the their soul to I don't want devil to his soul to the devil. I don't want the devil to to don't want the devil to his soul to the devil. I don't want the devil to his soul to the devil.

I don't want devil the devil. I don't the to his soul to the devil. I want the devil to on what they ought to hear.

And they'll listen, don't think they won't. You poor little hen-pecked servants, afraid of everybody and everything, afraid of your job, and afraid of your superintendent, and afraid of bylaws, and afraid of your next paycheck. God help you brothers and nephews.

Something slipped somewhere, but what's the matter with me now? You, minister, you, prophet, you of the followers of the Lamb, you of the Savior of the cross? No, no, no, no. You're a pinball in a bowling alley, and not a very good one. You, young fellow, why don't you get right with God about this, and stop being afraid, and dare to take your case out there, and say, as for me, I'm going to have a violent rough break

with the world, and I'm going to stop thinking like the world, and stop feeling like the world, and stop enjoying the world, stop accepting the world's vows, and the world's philosophies, and the world's opinions, and the world's school of values.

I'm going to stop, and I'm going to take God's counsel from here on, and then let come what will. A fellow stopped me out here a while ago and said he wanted me to write up a sermon I'd print one time on nothing can hurt a good man. And I said, did you know that the old-school philosophers believed that? Nothing could hurt a good man.

And they in their blindness believed it, and we in blazing light don't believe it. We think we have to be cautious and careful and pastoral and soft in order to get by. No, you don't, brother.

And now we've got to roll back the forces of the dark. And the jackals and the rodents of iniquity, they flee before the light. And the counsel of the ungodly is the only thing they can't stand.

What about it? I pray that at this council some of you half-saved people will get all the way saved, and you'll learn the cost of discipleship. You'll take a cross and put it over your shoulder and look up and say, Lord, lead the way. I'm not dictating direction, I'm only saying, here I am, Lord, send me.

And the Lord will send you. So we as a society and we as individuals have it upon us to meet darkness with light and to roll back the night with the word of God. Let me quote this, and I'm through.

The Spirit brings upon the word and brings the truth to sight. Precepts and promises afford a sanctifying light. A glory builds the sacred page, majestic like the sun.

It gives the light to every age, it gives but borrows none. The hand that gained its steel supplies, rich stores of light and heat, its tools upon the nations rise, they rise but never set. Let everlasting thanks be thine for such a bright display that makes the world of darkness shineless in the heavenly day.

The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. If you're trusting the counsel of the ungodly, you're fatally doomed to perish. For the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

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