

The Plague of the Heart

by A.W. Tozer

The plague of the heart refers to the bent to love and choose evil, which is a condition of the soul that requires individual repentance and seeking forgiveness from God.

Duration: 42:14

Scripture: 1 Kings 8:37-39, Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 28:13, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Sinful Nature"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of sin and its stealthy nature. He highlights the fact that many people refuse to acknowledge the presence of sin in their hearts. The preacher shares a story of a fifteen-year-old boy who committed a cold-blooded murder, illustrating that sin can reside in anyone, regardless of their appearance or status. He concludes by stating that Christianity has focused too much on the joy and blessings of Jesus, neglecting the fact that Jesus came to save people from the plague of sin in their hearts.

Transcript

In the Book of 1 Kings, Solomon is dedicating his temple, or the Temple of the Lord, and he prays, Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven, and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven above or on the earth beneath, who keepeth covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts. Then he prays on and finally comes to these words, in 37 and on, If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, milding, locusts, or if there be caterpillar, if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities, whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be, what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house, then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways whose heart thou knowest, for thou even thou knowest the hearts of all the children of men, that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. Now in verse 38 there is a phrase there that I want to single out and pinpoint, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart.

And I want to talk about the plague of his own heart. We have the word here, the word plague occurring, and it is one of the great terror words of the language. Since the dawn of history, this terror word, plague, has stopped a frightened and horrified race.

In its less horrible form, it has struck nature, we'll refine a few words here, like metal and blasting. That is the plague as it occurs in nature. When I was a boy a few years back in the hills of Pennsylvania, we had then a beautiful tree called the chestnut.

It was tall and lovely, and every fall we kids would go out and knock down the chestnut boughs, poke them up, and take home a sack full of the most wonderful nut, the chestnut. But now you can travel almost wherever you will up and down this state and you'll not find a chestnut tree. They stood like daisies when I was a boy.

Today there's scarcely one. The reason a plague, a chestnut blight, started about 30 or 40 years ago and swept them away. And that's what a plague does when it hits nature.

Out in the Middle West where I now live, in the city of Chicago and all that area around about, because our Swedish friends live in Rockford about 70 miles west, so it's all in that area, we have a tree, a pretty well-known tree, the English Elm. It's a great old fan-shaped lovely tree that has nothing to be said against it and everything to be said in its favor. And they plant them down the streets and they're neat at the top and they arch like a cathedral.

And in some of the better areas of cities out in the Middle West you will find Elm and meeting each other and forming a little arch like a cathedral, a beautiful green arch all the summer long. But now the Elm blight has begun. And the scientists are busy trying to discover a cure, but up to now they have not discovered one.

And unless they come up with something within the next four or five years, those wondrous Elm trees, the beauty of all the Middle West, will go the way of the chestnuts of a half-generation ago. That's what the plague does when it gets into nature. But in its full horror, the chilling, blasting terror of the world is when it strikes human beings.

The Black Plague of the 14th century that we read about in the history books, that mysterious, strange thing that dropped on healthy men out of the darkness and struck them down as if hit by a poleaxe. And they died between their work and their doom, unable to move, and half of the population, I think, of the city of London alone died. So many were dead at once that they lay like stillwood in all directions, the living unable to bury the dead.

That's the Black Death, the Plague of London. And we have today the Bubonic Plague, now very much controlled, but even a few years back, the word Bubonic Plague was a terror word wherever it was heard, because it is spread by a vermin, a louse, that is of all things, that of all things eats on the bodies of rats. And rats would come from some countries of the world where the Bubonic Plague was, and then run all over the ropes of the ships to the wharf and start plagues.

The Bubonic Plague, still a terrible word to be reckoned with in medical circles. But now in the Bible, the plague was a kind of curse that struck men. It might be a sore or a spark of a fatal disease.

It seemed to be sudden and mysterious, and it was a terrifying thing to discover it. The beloved Moses had a very careful scheme for dealing with the plague. If a man came with a spot, they shut him up and watched him carefully.

How terrible it must have been to be the father, say, of a family, a happy, jolly, rollicking family where there was peace, where the father worked and kept it together and everyone was happy. And then one day he

discovers a little spot, thinks nothing of it, thinks it's a mosquito bite, perhaps, or an insect bite. And then in a matter of days, notice it's growing, then goes to the priest, has the examination made, and is told that he has the plague.

And he has to kiss or say goodbye without touching, rather, his family and go out of a marked man with the mark of the plague upon him to die among the caves and the rocks. What a terrible thing the plague is. Now, I am not to speak about the plague in nature, only to lay a background by way of illustration.

Nor am I even to talk about the plague of the human body, such as leprosy. But I want to talk about the plague of the heart. And I am not thinking in mass, of the masses.

One of the neatest ways to get out from under conviction is to think in mass about things. If every man's a sinner, then nobody's a sinner. If it's true of a whole congregation, then everybody can rest.

But it's when the Holy Ghost focuses the light on you alone, or me alone, and the sharp finger of the Holy Ghost points to our heart and says, Thou art the man. Then we can begin to get somewhere from there on. And the scripture says every man should know the plague of his own heart.

Now, the plague of the human heart is the most important thing to be dealt with today or any day since Adam's seed. Because Satan would be perfectly helpless if it were not that there was a plague in the human heart. When Jesus was talking to his disciples, he said that the devil would come back around again.

But when he came, he would find nothing in Jesus. The devil can never hurt anybody unless part of the devil's possessions are in the heart of the man. Jesus had nothing in him that belonged to the devil, therefore the devil stood outside like a hound dog in bed, but he couldn't get in.

Jesus was perfectly safe as long as nothing that belonged to the devil was inside of his heart. The devil said, Jesus, when he comes, won't find any of his possessions in me. Now, it is this that makes the devil the frightful, destructive enemy that he is.

People do have that which belongs to the devil inside of their hearts. It's the plague. The plague of their own heart.

And if it were not so, there could be ten thousand devils multiplied by ten thousand more devils, and you and I would be perfectly safe in the midst of it. But it's because the human heart has something that Satan can claim, and he stalks boldly, cynically in, and lays claim to his own possession. Now, I want to get it very straight tonight, and remind you, I don't want you to begin to cry on your own neck and pity yourself.

Because we have been taught that sin is a disease, and because sin is a disease, we are poor to be pitied people, not to be blamed, but to be pitied. Now, while the Bible uses the word plague as a kind of a figure of speech to deal with sin, and while I shall follow the Bible in doing it tonight, I want to make it perfectly clear that like alcoholism, the plague of sin is not accidental. The plague of sin is not something of which I am an innocent victim.

It is a bent to love and choose evil, and I am responsible to God for the plague of my own heart. For remember now, when you come to sin, we talked about the plague in nature, and that is a figure by which we may reason from the known to the unknown, from the tangible to the intangible. So we reason across, by way of an analogy, an illustration, from a plague that is a disease to a condition of the soul which is not

a disease, but which is a bent to choose and to love sin.

God wouldn't send a man to hell for having cancer. Neither would God send a man to hell for being born in sin. But God sends men to hell because they love sin and choose it and practice it.

If we do not get this basically straight, then we paralyze the moral will, make it impossible for people to repent. My friend, you will not go to hell because Adam sinned. You will go to hell because you sinned, and because you chose it and love it, and knowing the judgment of God against such things, yet practice those things knowingly and willingly.

Now this plague of the heart, this bent within us to do evil, this promise to wander, this is of all enemies the most fatal and the most deadly. It's more to be dreaded than any disease. Cancer can kill your body, but it can't touch your soul.

But the plague of sin gets into your soul. It's more dreaded and more terrible than war or the atom bomb. The plague of the heart can destroy the whole man.

Disease can only destroy the human body, but the plague of his own heart can destroy the man for this world and the world to come. And the man can't get at it to fight it. That is, it isn't something he can pull out.

If we could reduce sin to a thing and incarnate it and materialize it and then could operate on it, everybody would be waiting in line outside the office of the surgeon that could operate and take out sin. Sin, my brother, though we're using a figure that might teach that sin was a thing, sin is not a thing at all. Sin is an attitude and a bent and a will and a choice and an affinity.

Sin is all that. And you can't get at that with a surgeon's knife. Neither could anybody else get at that for you.

I'd do anything for this fellow here, this Swede. I'd do anything for him, but I can't get at his heart. I could cut his hair and pull his teeth and shave him and bathe him, but I can't get at his heart.

If he's got a plague in his own heart, God and he have to handle that. Not all the schools in the world, old Wheaton of which he came out of, they couldn't touch that. Nyack can't do it.

There's no preacher, no evangelist, no singer, no missionary, nobody can get to the plague of your heart because you sit lord of your own heart, lord of your own heart and master of your own faith. And God will not allow anybody to get to your heart. Nobody can do anything.

Psychiatrists can't do anything. These big, wimpy bags that spare the charge terrible, exorbitant prices for telling people what any old grandmother could tell them if she had brains and nuts to fill a salt shaker. And these psychiatrists, God help them, they can't get at your heart, brother.

They don't know the plague of a man's heart. It's a strange thing, this about the plague of our heart. Its strength is in its stealth.

Its power lies in the fact that people don't know it's there. And suddenly it spreads and overflows into the whole nature and ruins the conduct and the habits and finally the life. Now, it's a strange accompaniment of this plague of the heart we call sin that hardly anyone will admit its presence except en masse.

We can get a whole congregation to stand and say, I believe that all men have sinned. And then get them to sit down and then say, now, is there anybody here that has a plague spot in your own heart? Will you stand? Hardly anybody will stand. We can hardly get a deacon to stand.

We can shout till we're welcome rings and re-echoes and still they won't stand on that because that thing points it. That takes away. You see, if I'm with a thousand people as we are here tonight with twelve hundred way we got, and everybody stands together, we all save face in the process.

And everybody shrugs and says, well, I'm no worse than Brother Bill on my right and Sister Emily on my left and the deacon just ahead of me and the deaconess behind me and probably no worse than the pastor. So, it's all right. We're in good company.

And it's a smooth way to handle. It's a sneaky way of getting out of something. But hardly anybody will admit they did it, that they've got the plague in their own heart because it carries a shame with it and a fear.

No one likes to hear about it. I preached one time down in the South to a convention or a council of the Christian Missionary Alliance and I preached on sin, just old-fashioned sin spelled with a capital S. And then I turned it over to another man to sort of give an altar call and he whispered to me, I don't think anybody will move. He said anybody that will come to the front on a sermon like this convicts himself of being a sinner.

Well, my God, man, that's what I was trying to do. That was the purpose of my sermon. But in spite of his pessimism, a lot did come.

Now, it says, that when we shall know the plague of his own heart. And when he knows that, in the text, there then was a turning, a stretching forward, a confessing, a turning to the altar of God and an acknowledging of the plague of our own heart. And it was only then that God could stay the plague.

Now, if you're not a blood-washed, fire-burned Christian tonight, you've got a serpent coiled in your heart. Now, listen, sister, you can be as pretty and as shapely as Lana Turner, but now don't laugh, I'm a clown, keep still. Listen, sister, you can be as shapely and as beautiful as a movie actress and have a serpent coiled in your heart.

Listen, man, you can be the vice president of Pittsburgh's biggest concern, whatever it is, and you can have a serpent coiled in your heart. Listen, mama, you can be a nice little grain-stooping grandmother with a fixed face like a picture by an artist, patting the birth of your little grandchild and holding him to your chest and still have a serpent coiled in your heart, and you don't know the plague of your own heart. Everybody's talking about what's the matter with Christianity? I'll tell you one thing that's the matter with Christianity.

We have made Jesus Christ into a joy-bringer and a back-scratcher, and we have forgotten that he came into the world to save men from the plague of their own heart. And he saves each man individually from the plague of his own heart. You can't go to God in squadrons or in regiments.

Each man goes by himself. And if a hundred people were to go to the altar tonight, to seek a clean heart, each one would have to go in utter bleak loneliness of spirit and go to God as completely alone as if he was in the midst of the desert or somewhere in a cave, all by himself. Now, there are two phrases that I want to speak of tonight, just briefly.

I borrowed both of these from some of the old writers. Sometimes they said it so much better than we can. One of them is the cleansing of the forgiving love of God.

I like that. The cleansing of the forgiving love of God. The forgiving love of God that sweeps in like a detergent and takes out all the sticky grease of iniquity.

And the other one is restoration of moral innocence, a sense of complete innocence, even though you know you've sinned. Now you know that by the mystery and miracle of the blood of the Lamb, you've had moral innocence restored to you again. A Christian like that is not likely to be laying emphasis upon what he was saved from.

He's more than likely to lay emphasis upon what he was saved to. But we'll skip that for the time. Now, there's a danger that we don't know.

The man of God here said, and it's in the context here all right, that it was possible that some wouldn't know, but he said, which shall know every man, the plague of his own heart. Now look what this plague has done for people, because, or done to people, because they didn't know it or wouldn't believe it. There was Cain.

We put a black mark on Cain and we have made Cain to be a pariah, a leper, a man that none of us would admit into our homes. If he were to turn up in Pittsburgh they'd have him in jail within an hour's time. Cain the cursed one.

But do you think Cain was so terribly bad? I don't think so. I think that Cain was a spinner all right and he had a plague in his heart. But don't you suppose when Cain and Abel were growing up together, that Cain and Abel used to play together and that Cain used to take his little brother up sometimes in his arms and carry him over the rough spots? Don't you suppose that Cain would sometimes pick little Abel up and pat his head and be a big brother to him? I think so.

And don't you think that Cain often kissed his mother and greeted his father? Don't you think Cain was just a pretty average man that had a plague spot in his own heart that he didn't admit? And then one day he was religious, you know, and he went out to offer an offering to the Lord. And his younger brother went along to offer an offering to the Lord. And the fire came down and consumed Abel's and the younger brother's offering.

But it didn't consume Cain's. And then that which had been lying dormant suddenly leaped up like a fire. And Cain became jealous and angry and filled with hate.

And he turned on that brother with whom he had slept and with whom he had eaten and with whom he had many times played on the green grass. He turned on that brother and beat his brains out and buried him in the leaves. Now that's what happened to Cain.

And we try to picture Cain as being a great, black, hairy looking fellow. It couldn't possibly be so, my brother. The only reason two brothers in a family look different from each other is that they have a long ancestral line and they inherit from grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, way back down the genetic line.

But Cain and Abel didn't have any line to inherit from. You wouldn't have been able to tell them apart. The artist painting one as black and the other one as white is all poppycock.

They looked so much alike. They only had a father and a mother to inherit from and they were a nice blend between the two. It wasn't their outside, it was their inside that made the difference.

And Cain had a plague spot in his heart and he didn't know it. And he never went to God about it. He skipped the blood and went to the flowers.

And he offered flowers instead of blood. And flowers can't cure the plague spot of a heart. Only the blood can do that.

And then there was Achan. You remember him? When they destroyed Jericho and the walls came tumbling down and Israel was all walking on air filled with happiness over that mighty defeat that had come to Jericho at the cry and shout of the people of God, they went over to Ai and they fled from before the people of Ai and 36 of their soldiers died. And Joshua fell face down and said, Oh God, what's happened that Israel turns her back before her enemies? And God said, I'll tell you what's happened.

Get up off your knees. There's a time to pray and then there's a time to do something. And the time has come to do something.

You've got a plague spot in the camp. You've got a plague here and that plague will go on to kill you unless you get rid of it. So they found out who it was.

It was Achan. Now Achan was a family man. He had a wife and he had daughters.

He had children. Don't let's think of Achan as being a rascally delinquent that should have been in jail. Achan was just like all the rest.

They had to pull some kind of a divine scheme to find out who Achan was. If he'd been a delinquent in a jailbird, they'd have hunted up Achan right away. But they didn't know who he was.

Achan was just one of them. But he was a family man. Don't you suppose he kissed his wife? Don't you suppose he patted his babies on the head? Don't you suppose he cuddled down at night with his arm around the neck of a little sleeping baby and felt the warmth of a father near to his family? Don't you think so? I think so.

And I think I'm right. Brethren, Achan was a man who was pretty good in every way, but he had a plague spot in his heart. He was a greedy fellow.

He loved his money. And when the opportunity offered itself, he stole a goodly Babylonish garment. It wasn't a theft.

It was a disobedience. He didn't steal it. It didn't belong to anybody.

It was just God had said, don't touch anything, and he touched it, that's all. And he took the wedge and the silver and the goodly garment home and buried it, in his tent. Joshua said, in effect, if I let you get away with this, Achan, this black plague will spread to all Israel.

You've got to die. Not only you've got to die, but your whole family has to die. Achan didn't know when he ignored the plague spot in his own heart, he didn't know that it would be the death of 36 soldiers, himself, his wife, and all of his sweet little children.

He didn't know it. You think he knew it? No. If he'd known it, he'd have fled in horror, but he didn't know it.

It sprang out on him. He didn't know it. Fifteen-year-old boy in the city of Chicago, not very far from where I live in the same high school where my daughter Becky goes.

The other day, he took a revolver and went into a store and asked for a cup of coffee. They gave him a cup of coffee, and he said, Now I want a Coke. I don't know what that had to do with, but that's the story.

And when it was all over, he said, I want another cup of coffee. And the gruff old keeper of the little restaurant said, Oh, get out, kid. Get out.

He wanted rid of him. And the kid pulled this gun from his pocket and shot the man down in cold blood. And now they've got a 15-year-old boy that was 16 yesterday, or the day before Sunday, 16 last Sunday, and spent his 16th birthday with the blood of his fellow man on his hands.

And you know his only reply to the police? I guess I lost my head. I guess I lost my head. Satan came and found something in him, and Satan laid claim to it at an inopportune moment, and one man died and another boy will go to prison for life.

That's what this cursed serpent does to people. But nowadays we say, Come and have your nerves relaxed. Come and have peace.

Come and have happiness. Come and be sure you'll go to heaven when you die. My God, what heretics we are.

Jesus Christ died that we might be delivered from the plague of our hearts. That's what he died for. And these other things are byproducts of that one central thing.

And then there was Ananias. Look at Ananias. Do you think that he was totally bad? Why, no.

Ananias was a decent fellow. I suppose we'd have received him into any church in the Alliance, anywhere, probably even elected him to the board. But Ananias was tempted in a moment.

If Ananias hadn't been caught in the moment when he needed the money, chances are he wouldn't have lied to the Holy Ghost. But he was caught needing the money. That's always the trouble, you know, brother.

You can live along with that plague for half a lifetime and it'll not really embarrass you. And then one day he'll catch you when you're not ready and it'll destroy your life. And that's what happened to Ananias.

He wasn't too bad a fellow. But he tried to get out of a tight spot by telling God he got less for his back lot than he said he got. And thus he lied to God.

Now, he must have had some good in him or he wouldn't have been around there with the rest of those Christians. It was something to get into a church in those days, brother. Al Capone, if he was alive, could join some churches today.

You can live like the devil's grandmother and get into the average church. Because what we want now is size and crowds and we want to go somewhere. But in those days they were concerned with getting delivered from the plague of the heart and they wouldn't have a liar with them.

They knew that a lie was a plague spot and if it was allowed to live that it would contaminate the crowd. So they just carried Ananias out. Now, think of the murder and the raper.

They weren't that way to begin with. A little girl went to Covenant Baptist Church, not Covenant Baptist Church. Strat, you know where it is down on 63rd Street, but I'm not sure the name of it now.

The big Baptist church down there, she was 16 years old and she started home one night after a B.Y.P.U. meeting. If you know what that is, that's the equivalent of our A.Y.F. They had a meeting and she started off by herself. Now, we will not allow our daughter to go alone over the streets of Chicago.

She has to have somebody with her. I even meet her, if no other way. But they allowed this little girl to go home and walking under a railroad bridge a fellow stepped out with a butcher knife and killed the little girl there.

He was sentenced to die and the last I heard, that sentence had not been canceled or remitted. Apparently he is going to die for this. But do you know what the mother always says in a case like that? She screams, Oh, my God, my boy was a good boy.

He was a good boy, sure. He kissed his mother. He brought home his pay.

He was decent around the house. He helped with the dishes. They all say that and it's always so.

It's always so. The murderer, the rapist, the killer, they are always decent fellows around the house. You don't suspect it and so they don't suspect it.

But this serpent lies coiled and when a weak moment comes, it strikes. And it doesn't always mean a dramatic sin like the ones I have named. I have deliberately named these dramatic, colorful sins.

But you don't have to die of an atom bomb explosion to die, brother. You can die of cystitis or ingrown toenails. You can die in the most ignominious way possible, you know.

I often say that if I die, I suppose I'll be hit with an old rattle-trap Ford or something in a sort of undignified way. You can die without dying dramatically. You don't have to be colorful and romantic in order to die.

You can just die, just hankering to peter out. And that's the way most people die anyhow, but they die. And they're just as dead as if they had died and been gone down in history.

Well, you can go to hell without being an Ananias. You can ruin your Christian life without being an Achan. You don't have to be a Herod to be as lost as Herod was.

You don't have to shoot a man down to have a plague in your heart and die of it. My friend, I want you to hear me. Know the plague of your own heart and stretch out your hand to God.

Now, what do I mean by the plague of our own heart? I've given you some illustrations, but I want to give you some more. I want to talk about lust. These are the days of lust, the like of which nothing has ever been known, probably since the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, possibly sometime in French history that might have been.

But we have accepted a sexual standard in our day that is so substandard, so vicious, that God has destroyed cities because of it. Take homosexuality. You know, I have read books justifying it from

scientific viewpoint.

I've read books justifying it. They say if that's the way some people are built, why call them criminals? It's the way they're built. If that's what they like to do, it's just the same as you like music.

They do what they like to do. God Almighty burnt a city up on account of that. God Almighty destroyed all inhabitants of Canaan because of that.

And God Almighty turned the Nazi steamrollers over France because of that. Yet we're justifying it. And lust in our day is a play spot.

And pride. Some of you sisters who've lived so far away from lust and sexual assiduousness that you're embarrassed by my using the word even in public. But you're as proud as hell You've never been a temptation to anybody.

Maybe that's the reason you're so pure. But you're so proud of your purity that you're as bad as if you were a harlot. Because a harlot is impure in her body, but a proud man is impure in his heart.

And the impurity of the heart is just as bad as the impurity of the body. And the man who is a homosexual and guilty of impurity in his body is no worse in the sight of a holy God than the man who is proud of his purity and thus has a play spot in his heart. Then there's resentment.

I walk among people and I find a lot of people are resentful. They've got a chip on their shoulder. Their hackles are always up like a curled dog, always ready for a fight.

And then there are secret sins. There's the hidden grudge. Oh, if we only knew how many grudges there are here tonight.

You're trying to cover it up by being to the 64th Annual Missionary Convention Northside Pittsburgh. Amen. But you've still got your hidden grudge there.

You've learned to live with it. Just as a man can learn to sleep with a toad. You've learned to live with it.

And you're full of grudges. You've got a grudge against a pastor you had 33 years ago come next Michael Mass. And you've never got rid of it up to now.

Hidden grudges. We can shout all we want to. Hidden grudges are our place.

Self-love. Temper. Temper.

I have no confidence, no faith in the spirituality of any man who's got a bad temper. I don't believe he's a clean man. A temper is a disease of the soul, and the man is responsible for that disease.

He's not a victim of it. It's his fault. And envy and jealousy.

How many of you choir singers secretly eat with jealousy when somebody else is asked to sing? How many of you little pastors that don't get to big churches, and you gnaw at your own vitals and eat at your own liver because of it? And you're mad at the superintendent and say he doesn't treat you right. That's what I mean by the plague of his own heart. You can accept Jesus all you want to, but if you don't know the plague of your own heart, you'll never do anything about it.

Now, God heals the plague in three ways. Blood, fire, and suffering. Blood, fire, and suffering.

Not by signing cards. Not by making missionary pledges. Blood, fire, and suffering.

Some sins, the blood of Jesus Christ washes away. Other sins, the fire of the Holy Ghost burns away. And still other are so insidious and hard to locate that only deep suffering will expose them.

There's a word I'd like to restore again, and to all you ministers and missionaries and preachers, I'll give it to you. It's the word purgation. Purgation.

Now we've got a lot of words that are familiar. Believe on Christ. Accept Christ.

Follow the Lord. Those are words that have lost their meaning to millions of people. We need again to restore the word purgation.

A fiery purgation of blood and fire. Brother, the Holy Ghost can burn out the plague spot and wash it clean. But you've got to know the plague of your own heart.

And you've got to admit it. And you can't ride over top of it. And for Jesus' sake, and in the name of all its common decency and logic and righteousness, don't try to hide the plague of your heart behind a big successful missionary convention.

Get rid of it, man. But you say, I'm a deacon in the Church, it would be an awful shock to the Church if I went forward and sought to be delivered from an unclean heart. It'll be a bigger shock one of these days when you lose your temper and blow up like a small atom bomb and disgrace yourself in front of the Church.

I knew a man who said he was eradicated. And he was chairman of the board. And one night the board didn't go his way and he blew, he blew like old Vesuvius.

How could he preach anything after that? Theoretically he was eradicated, but actually he had a plague spot in his heart. That's the most important thing I can say to you, not your 56,000. I hope you get it.

We hope we'll get 45 this year. Get your 56, that's good. This you should do, but you should not leave the other undone.

Don't ride over a plague spot, no matter who you are, no matter how loud you shout, no matter if you sing in the choir or play a musical instrument. If you've got a plague spot, know it, find it out, then stretch your hands to the altar. Blood and fire still purchase, still cleanses.

What about it, man and woman? What about it, young people? This would be the night, I believe, for some of you. Brother Frazer, do we have a prayer room somewhere? All right. Now, I've prayed today.

Others have prayed, I suppose you've prayed too. And I wonder how many would say to me, Mr. Tozer, I don't want to do this, but common honesty tells me I should. And the cry of my own heart for inward cleansing compels it.

I want to be helped. I want God by blood and fire to purge my heart. That when Satan comes, he'll find nothing in me that belongs to him.

And shall know every man the plague of his own heart. But don't think about your wife. Don't think about your neighbor.

It's you, it's you, it's you. Personally, individually. You that was born all by yourself and you will die all by yourself.

And you'll be judged alone just as much as if there'd never been anybody else born. All by yourself. You're going to have to face the great monarch on his throne.

And give an account of the deeds done in the body. And the deeds undone. What about it tonight, men and women? Will you stand, everybody, with me now, please? Be patient for five minutes.

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