

'The Power of the Word'

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the transformative power of God's Word and the necessity of faith and obedience in experiencing true freedom.

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:128, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 4:4, John 1:1, John 8:32, Romans 10:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "The Power of God's Word"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the transformative power of God's Word, asserting that true faith in its truth is essential for experiencing its life-giving energy. He argues that the Word is not merely a collection of stories but a divine truth that reveals the nature of humanity and leads to spiritual freedom. Tozer encourages believers to meditate on the Word, make a conscious choice to follow it, and to understand that true liberty comes from adhering to God's precepts rather than indulging in sin. He concludes with a call for individuals to return to God, highlighting the invitation of the Word to bring healing and salvation to those who seek it.

Transcript

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Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

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I spoke last Sunday night, on the 119th Psalm as the Word; the Word and the Word, the written word, the speaking word, the Living word, the Incarnate Word. And I want to talk tonight a little again from that same Psalm using some of the verses as I come to them. And I want to talk about the power of the Word and say to you that if we're going to have the power of the Word released to us, that we're going to have to be convinced beyond argument that it is true. For a great many years, probably millions of years in the creation and certainly at least 6,000 in the history of mankind, the little invisible atom was all about us. And then, when men learned to break down the atom and get at it and release its energy, we had the terrifying atom bomb.

Now, the word of the Lord God is not destructive primarily, though it can be that. It is primarily created. For it is written that He by the Word created things. And it is written that He by the word begets us and brings

us into the new birth. And we've got to be concerned or convinced above all things that this word is God's Word and that this Word is true.

Now, in verse 128, the writer; I'll probably say, David as I go along, but really, I don't know whether David wrote this or not. He probably didn't. But a Psalmist wrote it. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Now, that's nailing it down there where there isn't any equivocating. There isn't any, this saying, well now, you don't quite understand me, and as I see it, it is thus and thus. But the man of God said, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way.

Now, let me say to you my friend, that to come to the Word of God, testing and tasting and tempting and experimenting, is to assure yourself that you will not see anything or learn anything or feel anything. And in this skeptical age, many people come to the Word of God as they came to Jesus, the Living Word, the Incarnate Word, when He walked among men to catch something out of His mouth or sneaking in a back way through the alley by night to ask Him questions. Now, you may be sure of one thing, that nobody that comes thus, unconvinced, will ever receive anything from the Lord. There is an act of pure faith necessary, that reason hasn't anything to do with; an act of pure faith, an act of faith as simple, as real, as true, as the faith that the Catholic Church requires of the dogmas of the church.

Now, I believe in the faith that asks no questions and takes what it's told and accepts it. It so happens that I don't believe in faith in dogmas. If we were required to have faith in whatever some church leader told us, then we'd be required to go crazy in 24 hours if we tried also to have faith in the Word. You've got to take one or the other. But the Living Word is settled in heaven forever. And in all things, it is right and it is good the Psalmist says in other verses, good and true and righteous and very pure, good and very pure.

I read this insufferable bit of hogwash in the press the other day that somebody said that the Bible should not be taught to children; that it's filled full of questionable stories and embarrassing things and that it's not good at all; that it's on borderline, its stories are borderline.

Well now, the difference between the Bible and any other book is this, that the Bible tells the truth about people, and naturally it involves sex and murder and lying and robbery and all those things, and it tells the truth about people. But in telling the truth about people, it tells it in a way that makes everybody hate the thing it's talking about. But the worldly press tell their stories, and they tell them in a less serious and drooling way that tempts everybody to go out and do likewise.

And you will not find one lone instance anywhere in the world where the Bible ever lead anybody into sin. You'll find the devil did, and you'll find instances where the devil quoted a verse of Scripture somewhere in order to ruin somebody. But the Bible itself is very pure, and it's righteous and true and good. And he says elsewhere, that it is like silver purified in a furnace seven times. So don't be afraid to let your tiniest child read the Word. It won't hurt the child. As soon as he's old enough to know what it means it will begin to purify him.

Now, there are a lot of people who come to the Word of God testing and tasting and experimenting, and that just builds the ego up. That puts not only, saves face, that puts four faces on the impenitent ego because always you will find the impenitent man or woman, particularly young men or women, that doesn't tend to give up his iniquity. He just doesn't intend to give up his iniquity. You will find him saying, I am searching, I am searching. Pardon me for not being sympathetic with these solemn owls who look at you and say, I am searching.

Well, now I'd like to believe that is true. But Jesus Christ said one time that he that is willing to do My will, he shall know the doctrine. And all we need to do is stop sinning, and our search will be over. It's not searching, it's sinning that people are doing. And so, we build up our ego. Let me remind you, my brethren that the Word of God is not on trial before men, but men are on trial before the Word of God. And this patronizing attitude that we are searching, I am reading Buddhism, and I'm reading what Swami so and so said, and I am searching. What unconscionable hypocrisy. They are sinning somewhere, and they don't want to give up their sin. And buried somewhere, in some closet, you will find a skeleton that will roll out when the door is open. Hidden somewhere, you will find some festering sore of iniquity.

And so, they cover the whole thing up by saying in a very learned way, I am searching. My brethren, the Word of God stands very pure, and all its precepts concerning all things are right. And there is no more trying or testing; here it stands the Book of God. And remember this, that God has given assurance to all men, in that, He has raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and has made Him to be the judge of the living and the dead. And the Scripture and Jesus Himself said, in the Scripture, that the words that I speak unto you, the same shall judge you in the last day.

Now what's our part? Well, in going through this variously now and I don't always tell you where it's found. I don't think I'm trying to slip modernism over on you. I just don't want to talk about numbers all the time. It wasn't numbered in the beginning, some people who get number crazy. And if you can't give the verse and chapter, they think you don't know it. But remember, the verses and chapters are put in there by men for convenience. They weren't inspired of the Holy Ghost. But meditate, that's one thing. I will meditate on thy precepts he said,

Now, what is it to meditate? Well, like the brother that defined unctio, talking one time to a brother preacher he said, what's unctio. He said, unctio is that which you don't have, and meditate is that which nobody does anymore, or at least very, very little meditation. For meditation means to muse. It means to reflect and ponder.

Now my brethren, the heart is like a photographic plate and the Word is light. And when the light of the Word hits the photographic plate of your heart, it makes its image there. And remember this, that what is in the Word comes to the heart by meditation, for God never take snapshots. Some people try to give God His minute. I saw a book somewhere, "God Minute." What an insult to Almighty God. We have 24 hours a day and live 70 years and give God a minute of the day. God never takes snapshots. God always takes time exposures.

And so, when the Word of God is there as light and you come and expose your heart to the Word of God by long meditation, you will find that what's in the Book will come to your heart. And there will be help to your heart if you muse and reflect and ponder. But you say, that was written for a slower day. We're a faster moving people. We're going to hell faster than they went to hell that sure enough. But don't boast about doing anything fast. We boast about breaking through the sound barrier. Well, what have we gotten by breaking through it?

These serious old men of God meditated. They weren't so nervous and scared that they wanted to get someplace else. They meditated. They had time to meditate. And he says, my eyes prevent the night watching and I prevented the dawning of the morning by waiting on the Word of God. So many of us cheat ourselves by not giving the Word of God time to get to our hearts. Well, he said, not only do I meditate, but he said, I choose. I have chosen the way of truth.

Now, the heart must make its choice. There's no way God can help us until we do. The Lord can't help an experimenter. The Lord can't help one of these searchers. The Lord can't help somebody that is tasting and testing. The Lord can only help a man who's convinced that this is the book and he needs look nowhere else, and then choose. When a man's heart, when that in a man we call volition, the will, bites and snaps shut like a bear trap and it's all over. He's not testing now and choosing and looking around and acting wise. But he's decided this is the book and Christ is the Son of God, and God is the one who speaks and the living and written and speaking Word come to my heart. And the heart closes down with a snap on it and says, this is it, this is it.

Some people don't like sudden conversions, and they don't like instantaneous conversions. But my brethren, when the heart of a man closes down tight on the Word of God, he says, I have chosen the way of truth. A heart has to make its choice you see, for if you don't make your choice, you will never get in. Some think they'll get in by osmosis, a kind of a leaking through the walls and the kingdom of God. And some think they'll get holy by brushing somebody. And so, they run around after preachers and praying men and good men, and they sit and talk with them and think it'll come off.

No, my friend, it won't come off that way. Your heart has to make a choice. This is the Book. God is the God. Christ is His Son. The gospel is the message, and my heart shuts on it like a bear trap. And He said I have chosen. Now, that man you see must aim itself and does aim himself. His heart aims itself like an arrow and sets its seal and burns its bridges so there's no retreat, and then you have the beginning of a Christian on your hand. Then I have a little word here that I kind of like in the 34th verse, the 31st Verse, it's as quaint as can be. He says, I have stuck unto thy testimony. Did you hear that, I have stuck unto thy testimonies. O Lord, put me not to shame.

Now, here's a young fellow in high school, and he's surrounded by quick-witted, quip artists who don't care whether it's true or not, and it's funny and cute. And he tries to be a Christian surrounded by a crowd like that, or he's in an office of grown-up people who also are trying to give Bob Hope a run for his money. And it's all got to be funny and cute, and maybe a little off center. And a certain psychological pressure comes on to ease up a bit; not be so religious, and they grab ahold of every excuse imaginable not to be quite the Christian they are. And so, they keep still about it.

Now, this man of God says, I have stuck unto thy testimonies. And I recommend tonight, that instead of you young people easing up on your Christian testimony, stick to thy testimonies. I have stuck on unto them he said. Because the determined soul always wins, remember that. Daniel set his face that he would not eat of the king's dainties. And Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem. And Paul said this one thing I do, and Luther said, Here I stand, I can do nothing else so help me God and the Reformation was born.

My brethren, there's got to be such a thing as sticking unto thy testimonies. And then what's the result? Well, the result he says, I will walk at liberty. Verse 45, I will walk at liberty, there's liberty. That's one thing that comes to the heart, and that's about all I'll talk about for the remaining times tonight. I will walk at liberty, verse 45, because I've kept thy precepts.

Now, one of the fallacies of the unbeliever is that the Christian must surrender his freedom to be a Christian. That's one of the greatest fallacies that I know and I think I know who invented it. Now, I'm not sure. But I think I know who invented it, brother. Just as when a good politician is smeared from one end of the country to the other, I'm pretty sure I know what he's been smeared with. I think it's old Bulganin's paint pot. And when the story gets out that a Christian is in shackles, that he's in chains, that he is bound up, a

little narrow-minded, fenced in and boxed up, and that he can't get away, I think I know who invented that. Can you tell me in three guesses? I think it's that old serpent, the devil and Satan.

Now, a sinner imagines he's free and he ponders and searches and says, now I'm going to search and I'm going to ponder this over. Do you think that I can give up my freedom to become a Christian? Do you think I can give up my liberty to become a Christian?

Well, let's look at the liberty of the Christian. He has liberty to do what? Does he have liberty to be free from his temper? I wonder how many sinners in Englewood are free from their tempers, free from blowing up like a fire cracker and ruining their home for a week? How many? Is that what they want freedom from, their temper? Do they, have it? No, they don't have it. How many of them are free from their cigarettes? I am not an anti-tobacco man exactly, but I have had just about enough of this business of the fool on one end of a little stick and a fire on the other and blowing the result of it in my face. I've had about enough of it. We spend millions of dollars on air conditioning and in three minutes, you can stink up and foul up the finest air-conditioned room in the world. And the expensive air conditioning labors and groans and blows and puffs but it can't beat the fool on the one end of the stick and the fire on the other.

And they're always inventing a new one. I see the newest one out now. I've heard it on the radio and it's got an anthem attached to it too. You know, they sing anthems now to sell cigarettes. They used to, just, a line or two but they've developed whole anthems now to sell that dirt.

Brethren, how many say, oh, I don't smoke. Well, I wish I didn't. You wish you didn't? Why do you brother, you're a sinner and you're a slave. All right. All right. You're free, free to leave that alone? When I am walking around there and I hear him riding along or he comes on the radio. This one won't hurt your throat as bad as the other one. I say to myself, none of them are going to hurt my throat if I can help it. I don't have to take my choice. I just don't want anything to do with any of them. And you can make them as long as you want to and make them emperor size and still, I don't want them.

All right Bud, you say you don't want to be a Christian because you don't want to give up your freedom. Are you free from alcohol? Are you free from blue, gloom and discouragement on Monday morning? Are you free from fiery, heartbreaking jealousies? Are you free from disappointed hopes? Are you free from the fear of death? Are you free from the fear of hell? Is that the freedom you have? No, you know you don't have it.

All right, what freedom do you have? You have freedom to sin. You have freedom to sin and pile up condemnation, mountain upon mountain, and hill upon the hill to the clouds. You have freedom to sin. You have freedom to get old, and you have freedom to get disillusioned, and you have freedom to die and you have freedom to go to judgment, and you have freedom to go to hell. Is that the freedom you have brother? That's the freedom the unsaved man has. And he looks at us happy Christians who are as free as birds, I will walk at liberty he says, walk at liberty. What did the rest of it go? Because I seek thy precepts. I'm looking after thy precepts, and walking and I'm meditating and choosing and sticking to thy precepts, and I walk at liberty. And the only free people in the world are the people that God has set free. Whom the Son has set free is free indeed.

So that, don't let any of you young people now, don't let anybody fool you. Don't you let anybody lead you aside and say, well, now, do you think you can give up your liberty? Liberty to sin? Liberty to get old and die and go to hell? If that's liberty, I don't want it. And yet, that's the liberty of the sinner.

Well, what's the Christian's liberty? I will walk at liberty. Well, he has freedom. He has freedom from his past, that's one thing. And I don't know about you, but I don't want anything to do with my past, up to here. I want the blood of Jesus Christ to flow like a river and like boundless salvation in the song, to roar like ocean billows over my past and put it where the devil can't get to it and where God won't look at. Now we have freedom from our past, and we have freedom from our sin, and we have freedom from the fear of judgment to come. And we have freedom from fear of death and hell, and we have freedom to do good. Now a sinner has freedom to do evil, but the Christian has freedom to do good. He has freedom to love and to serve and to worship, and he has freedom to develop and has freedom to gain immortality at last.

And then verse 47, he's got freedom to do the thing that delights him the most. Somebody came up to me recently and said, Mr. Tozer, was it Luther that said, love God and do as you please? Well, I think it was Augustine who originally said, love God and do as you please. I believe he's the man who said it. Luther could easily have quoted it because of course, he was a learned man who knew what all these old brethren had said. But that's shocked some people terribly. Love God and do as you please. But you know, if you love God enough, you'll only please to do what God wants you to do, and that's what that expression means; love God and do as you please. For if you love God, you will please to do the will of God.

So, this man, David, or whoever wrote it. It wasn't David. I've said forty times it was somebody many years after David. And he said he had freedom to do what delighted him. Now the man that is free from fear of death and free from fear of sin, and free from sin itself, and free to do anything he wants to do, and then is delighted with his freedom, do you pity that man, brother? Say, poor sinner, can it be that my heart should pity, the heart should pity me, or I should envy thee? Never, never, never, for the Christian is free. He walks at liberty, freedom to do what delights him.

And so, in this Psalm, we have the mighty Word, the mighty Word. I said, it's all mixed up. When the Bible talks about the Word sometimes, we don't know whether it means the Person who is the Word whether it means the speaking Word or whether it means the written Word. So, we have the Word and that mighty Word that made the world, that made man. You know how you came into being? Not as the preacher said in that famous piece that I often quote, for it's delightful and wonderful, but it's materialistic of course. And it says, you know, that the Lord sat down on the bank of the river and took a piece of clay and rolled it in His hands until he made a man and into that man, he blew the breath of life and man became a living soul. Amen, amen. It's beautiful. But it's just a little too physical to be true. The fact is, God's spoke and it was done. And out of the creative, dynamic, living voice of God, creation came into being. And it was God's Word that created man. God said you were to be and that's why you were.

So that mighty Word that made the world and that made man, now speaks to us in an invitation. It speaks to us in an invitation, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden. The Spirit says come and let all that hear-say come, and the bride says come. And that mighty Word speaks in invitation. But you know, some people have not believed it to be valid. And some have not the courtesy even to reply. God sent His invitation with an RSVP and some people never even care enough to send God word they won't be there. They just do nothing about it at all.

Well, I want to read to you in closing the prodigal's prayer, the latter part, the latter section of the Psalm. And I recommend that if you're not right with God tonight, and there is grief in your heart, there is sin or sorrow or self-accusation or remorse, or fear, I recommend that you pray this prayer. Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord, and give me understanding according to Thy Word. Then he slips down a verse

and says, let my supplication come before me and deliver me according to thy word. Deliver me from what? Deliver me from the bondage of iniquity and deliver me from a record I don't dare face. Deliver me from judgment, which can only condemn me. And deliver me from the grave and from hell. Deliver me. My lips shall utter praise, and my tongue shall speak of thy word. Let thine hand help me for I have chosen thy precepts.

Would you have the heart to go to Jesus Christ tonight and pray that prayer, let thine hand help me? You remember that wonderful hand that healed so many people? That wonderful hand you remember it, let thine hand help me for I have chosen thy word. I have longed for thy salvation O Lord, and thy law is my delight. Do you long for the salvation of the Lord? Then make God's law your delight. God will hear you. And he says, verse 175, let my soul live and it shall praise thee. There's the quickening of the new birth, and let thy judgments help me.

And then this tender, lovely little verse at the close, I have gone astray like a lost sheep, poor lost sheep. I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant. He knew the servant really couldn't do much. It's seeking Him, we think we can, and the Lord lets us try. But the Lord has to seek thy servant, he said. And I wonder, I wonder if our Lord had this in mind when He gave us His great 10th chapter of John, when He told us that He was the shepherd, and the people were sheep, and they were lost, and they heard the voice of the shepherd and that if they'd been taught of the Father they'd come and come back home. And then he said, If you'll do this, O God, I'll never forget thy commandment. I do not forget thy commandments.

Why not this evening, before you go to bed tonight, before you let another day or even an hour pass, why not do something about this? Comeback, like a lost sheep. The mighty creative Word has now become the invitational word to call you back, two little written and living and speaking Words, Jesus Christ the Son of God. And He calls in and wants you to come.

Now, we're going to release you. We've discovered that pressure at altar services may result in occasionally somebody meeting God but more frequently results only in confusion, so we're not going to do it. We're only going to tell you, you won't be able to get away from it tonight, the laughter at the soda content, the noisy planes and their automobiles and stoplights and all the rest, nothing can take that out of your ear, the sound of invitation or voice. Come on back home boy, come on back home daughter. Come on, come on back home, the mighty, living Voice is calling you back. You have only to believe and say, I consider it to be true of God and right in every detail. And therefore, my heart will stick unto thy Word. If you do that, you will find your life will begin to marvelously change, wonderfully change. The things you hated before, you love; and the thing you loved before, you will now hate and you will become a new creature in Christ Jesus by trusting in His son.

Will you stand with me please? Brother Ray, lead us in old sweet wonder. Jesus the Son of God, how I love thee, how I adore thee, Jesus the Son of God.

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