

The Way to Paradise

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the significance of human nature being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and the importance of obeying Jesus to share in that reconciliation.

Duration: 39:50

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:1, Isaiah 53:1, Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 13:7, Mark 4:24, John 15:14-15, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Paradise"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of believing in the word of God and accepting Jesus as one's advocate. He encourages the listeners to come out on God's side and align themselves with Him in all aspects of life. The preacher highlights the miraculous work of Jesus, from His sacrifice on the cross to His resurrection and ascension. He urges the audience to be careful with the message of salvation and emphasizes the need to obey and follow Jesus. The sermon also mentions the powerful witness of believers and the impact it has on others, particularly young people. The preacher reminds the listeners of the eternal life that awaits believers and the expendability of earthly life in comparison. The sermon concludes with the assurance that preparations are being made in heaven for the future life.

Transcript

Here are my witnesses, saith the Lord, fifty-third chapter, who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed. Now, there is here mentioned prophetically, then prophetically, now fully fulfilled, a divine testimonial, a witness to be given. And I want to inquire tonight what this report is.

What is this which is called our report, which God calls attention to by saying, Hear, O ye heavens and earth, for the mouth of the Lord is spoken? What is this that God is saying to listening men, which is the official heavenly declaration written in the Holy Scriptures, and is therefore the message of Christianity? What is it? Now, if you will bear with me, I will for a little while tonight try to break down, as we say, this which God is saying to mankind, and which he is saying to us, and saying to Toronto, and which Toronto is hearing, mainly, chiefly, not hearing, but it's the divine testimonial, it is that which God is testifying to from his heaven above. Let me show what it means. What God is saying to mankind is that God values and loves our human nature.

That God loves and values our human nature. God so loved the world. God so loved humanity.

God so loved the human nature, and he so loved it because of its likeness to himself, which was in the creation. This second person of the Trinity, God is saying, furthermore, I want you to hear this. God is saying to mankind, and who is believing our report, that the second person of the divine Trinity, called the Word or the Eternal Son, assumed this human nature unto himself, fully and completely, and wholly and perpetually.

The Lord Jesus, when he came to the world, that is, God, when he came to the world in Jesus Christ, assumed human nature to himself, and thus became man. He wasn't down in the world slumming, as some Christian might go down into the slums of the city and give out bread and help a little around some poor person's house and then go back, but he stayed in human nature. I say he took it to himself, completely and wholly, and he took it perpetually.

There is no way in which the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, could dehumanize himself or seek to be a member of the human race. And he took our nature into the Godhead. He took that nature of man which he loved, and he took it up into the Godhead in the mystery of loving condescension.

For it was a condescension, I don't have to tell you that, that it was and is a loving condescension on God's part, so wonderful, so amazing, that as I think about it I'm stunned. I shake my head and say, are you an orthodox here? Is this right? Is this the way it is? Yes. This is what the Bible says about it, and this is what the church fathers taught, and this is what the great creeds of the church declare, and this is what God has blessed every reformer and every great evangelist and every great scholar and every great hymnist and every great devotional writer down the years with him.

And the church of Christ has taught this, that God loved our human nature because he made it in his own image, and though fallen, he loved it still, and that he sent the second person of the Trinity to assume that nature to himself forever, and to take it up into the Godhead so that it might share in the awesome, wonderful, awful glory of the divine Trinity. And then, after he had died and risen again, that he took that human nature into heaven with him so that there is now in the presence of God human nature received there and honored there, and not only all that, but listen, enthroned there as well. In the person of the second one of the Trinity, the second person of the Trinity, human nature is there, received and embraced and welcomed and enthroned at the right hand of the Father.

Now, the human nature that went there and is received there is the human nature as it exists in Jesus Christ our Lord. He took that human nature unto him by the virgin birth. The reason he took it by the virgin birth was that he could assume to himself human nature without assuming any of the tinged human feelings.

So, when you hear anybody questioning the virgin birth and saying that it doesn't make any difference who his father was, it doesn't make any difference how he was born, if only God was in Christ. That sounds very orthodox, but it is highly unorthodox, because if Jesus was called Mary and some man, then this nature Jesus took would bear the taint and stigmata of human sin. But in order that he might take human nature without human sin, it was said to the virgin Mary, that holy thing which is conceived of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Now, that's what our testimony is, and that's what the Lord is saying to the world. That he is holy and harmless and undefiled, higher than the highest heavens and separated from sinners, and yet that he is as human as anybody in this building tonight, as human as Adam, as human as any living person, forever to be so, and never to be anything else but so, though he also is, as I've tried to say over and over, he is God

the second person. Now, human nature, I say, has been reconciled to God.

Human nature that was driven out from the presence of God and a flaming sword placed there, that human nature has been now reconciled to God and received by God and approved by God and honored by God in the person of the Son of his love. So that in Christ, that human nature is honored by incarnation, and by Christ, that human nature is honored in the propitiation. I wonder if we know what propitiation means.

I know we use words, as I said this morning, that are not defined, and we're accused of using words that people don't understand. You know what incarnation means. It is the coming of God into human flesh.

You know what propitiation means. It is that sacrifice by which he removed everything that God was displeased with, so that now human nature can turn to God and find nothing in the way. There was once a flaming sword in the way, but there's nothing in the way now.

God has removed it by propitiation in Christ's blood, and all this, the resurrection of Christ, was to seal and confirm it. Now, how does the individual human sinner, if you're following me and if you're thinking along with me, why, you will be saying, all right, my brother told you that's all very nice about human nature being reconciled and human nature being enthroned and human nature being assumed into the Godhead. But how about the individual human sinner? I can't run about in a vague cloud called human nature.

I am me. I am I. I am a person. And how can the individual human sinner share in the reconciliation of human nature? How can the individual human sinner share in the reinstatement into God's favor? How can the individual human sinner have the right to enter into paradise where human nature has gone? I say, I mean, how can the individual human sinner, where human nature has already gone in Christ, Christ has already taken your human nature to the right hand of the Father, how can I as a human being, individual human being, how can I as a human being share in the reinstatement into God's favor? How can I have the right to enter in there? How can I have the right to enter into paradise where Paul once went and came back with his hand over his mouth and said, I saw things that are not lawful to be uttered? Now, I want to give you the answer to that question.

How can the individual human sinner share in the reconciliation of human nature in Jesus Christ? How can the individual human sinner share in the reinstatement into God's favor? How can the individual human sinner dare to hope to enter into that paradise? How can the individual human sinner dare to enter into that place where human nature has already gone? It is by union with Christ's nature in the new birth. By union with the nature of Christ in the new birth. Now, again we come to a phrase.

You hear, born again, Christians, born again. Down in the American South, they get up and testify, I was born again. Twenty-nine years ago come Christians, I was born again.

Well, they know what they mean. But what is it to be born again? What is it, then, to be born again? Well, the new birth is to be regenerated. And what is regenerated? We have to define our destination.

G. Campbell Morgan, the great English Bible scholar, said that the human history can be divided, can be summed up under three heads. Generation, degeneration, regeneration. When God created the heaven and the earth, he created man in his image.

That was generation. He generated man. He blew in his mouth the breath of life and man's living soul.

That was generation. And then man saw the tree that it was good, and he took of the fruit and he fell and he died, and that was degeneration. And then we come to the third word, regeneration.

And that's what we mean by new birth. It was God getting people born over again. It means God getting individuals generated over again.

It means God doing up on a higher level what he did on a lower level when he generated man. Created man, normally we say. Now, how do we go about this new birth, this regeneration? Sometimes it simply says saved.

We say, my brother was saved. Numbers of people now around the church here, young people, are being saved. Not at the altar here, but they get saved in their home or at somebody's house or somewhere.

They get saved and they come to me and say, I was saved. Well, now, I was regenerated. I was born again.

I was converted. All those are common words that we use, but it means the same thing. It means that we are born into the family of God and that we are joined to the nature of Christ.

So that that human nature, which was exalted to the right hand of God, now becomes our nature, regenerated and up on a new and higher level. And we share the nature of Christ by regeneration as he once shared our nature in the incarnation. So Jesus Christ is the only humanity God receives up there.

Keep that in mind. God does not receive just anybody, just any human being anywhere. He does not receive them.

No man comes unto the Father but by Christ. Why? Because he was the only person of the Godhead who became man and dwelt among us. So God receives the individual sinner in Jesus Christ up into the Godhead, and ultimately so, so that it's written in 2 Peter 1 that it is by the divine promises of God that we are made partakers of the divine nature.

Now, my talk tonight is Way to Paradise, and I want to point out now again that human nature being regenerated and has sharing in Jesus, and Jesus' nature was a pure and holy nature, unseen but seen and unseen did. By sin, Jesus Christ takes us to himself, and when he does, that nature no longer belongs in hell. Now, I said before that everything goes where it belongs.

This is a wonderful God. You know right now the great trouble with the world is things are out of place. Good men are out of place and badly.

And the Jews are out of the land and they belong back in the land. And the devil is out of the lake of fire and he belongs in the lake of fire. And Jesus is up in heaven and he belongs on earth.

And the saints of God are on earth and they belong in heaven. Things are out of place so that when God is finished, everything will go to where it belongs. You won't go to hell because God's faith gets angry blacks and he determines that he's going to have vengeance on you.

No, you'll go to hell if you go because it's where you belong. And if you go to heaven, you won't go there because the Lord searches for you with an angel and hunts you up. You'll go to heaven because you belong there.

And the man who is regenerated and has the nature of the holy Jesus in him, the human nature, the new nature, the nature of God in his own new nature, he doesn't belong in hell, he belongs in paradise. And he goes there by natural right and he can't be kept out of there. He can't keep anybody out of there.

When I cross over the invisible border and go down into the states, I like to say, you can't keep me out of there. I never broke any laws, except maybe some traffic law, but I never was in jail, I never was charged with a crime, I never violated my citizenship, I belong down there. All the polaris and missiles and wherever they are were fired at me, they couldn't keep me out of there.

I belong there. And so you can't keep me out of heaven either, because I belong there. And the man who is regenerated belongs in heaven.

And if all of the principalities and town angels and demons and devils in the universe were to try to keep this dying sinner out of heaven, they'd fail, because the dying redeemed sinner, he belongs in heaven, he's regenerated, he has the nature that belongs there. All this we learn on Easter Day. I understand that for a mile and a half in New York City, they paraded today.

The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady, they will march together, all showing off their hats and their new duds. All right, that's some people's idea of Easter, but it's not the Bible's idea, it's not what Paul had in mind, it's not what God meant when he said, Hear, O heavens, and O earth, for God has spoken. Hear my witnesses, says the Lord, who has believed our report.

He had no hat in mind. I like nice hats, I do. I may be blamed for this by some people, but I like nice women's hats.

I like nice clothing, I like to see a nicely dressed woman, a nicely dressed child. Men are like this, but I like to see nice clothes. But that isn't what God meant at all, that wasn't what he was talking about.

He was talking about what I am talking about now, and what fills the Bible with the glory of it. All this being true, all this declares authoritatively a number of things. One of them is that there is life after death.

There is life after death, but death doesn't end it. This is what God is saying from his heaven above, and he's crying, Hear, O heavens, and O earth, for God has spoken. So there's life after death.

Don't you for one moment imagine that when you lie down for your last week, that that's the end of it all. Men say that because they want it to be that way. They don't want to think there is any future, but those who are ready for that future delight to know there is.

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead proves that men rise from the dead, and it declares authoritatively that that life which follows death is all-important, because it's permanent and it's endless. This is a trenchant life that we live now. We get old, we die.

In fact, we die before we're old. Death stalks everywhere, leaping out of the dark upon the sons and daughters of men. The life up there is a permanent and endless life, and death is banished eternally, thank God.

And this life here now that we live now, as compared with that life up there, is like comparing iron with gold, like comparing cheap glass with precious diamonds. For the life up there is gold and silver and precious, paired with the good hay and stubble down here. And the life down here is expendable because

of the life up there.

The life down here is expendable. Fear not, said Jesus, fear not him that is able to kill the body and thus bring a life to an end. But if you fear, I tell you who to fear.

Fear him that is able to cast both body and soul into hell. Think of the future life. In the light of the future life, this life is expendable.

All preparations are being made above. All preparations are being made. Am I mad at myself, or can I give you scripture for it? I go to prepare a place for you.

All preparations are being made. And for whom are they being made? They are being made for the bread of the virgin son, the brethren of the prince of light, the virgin son. The prince is now rejected by the world.

Oh, admire him and quote him. He's allowed in no place in the world's councils, and he's only a symbol of the world. But he has his loyal friends and brethren.

He has them. He has his loyal friends. Believe in him completely.

Do you believe in him completely? And they have felt his power working in them, and they have come over on his side on every question. You're my witnesses. They've come over on his side on every question.

My little friend, I talk about him here. I love the little fellow. He's a little small in body, but he's 24 years old.

A Greek friend about him here, Chris. He gets around after me, and I love him. When I first met him, he came and told me, sadly we've lost faith, that I have no faith in God anymore since I went to college, that there's a vacant emptiness there where God used to be.

So I got after him. We got to talking, and he prayed. He's a psychologist attached to a hospital north of here.

He can't get down here too often, but he was here this morning. So I introduced him to a young man who had only converted just this week. I said, Chris, I want you to meet Jerry.

And I said to Jerry, Chris here is my friend, but he's having a little trouble with his faith. He said, just a minute, not anymore. He said, no, not anymore.

He said, well, here's what I was trying to do. I was trying to find God without obeying him. But I find that I obey, I thank God.

I said, you've got it, Chris, you've got it. He said, I can't stay tonight, but do you think the happy boy this morning, he found that he wasn't having that difficulty anymore. I knew he wouldn't.

I kept saying to him over the weeks that he'd talk with me, I'd say, Chris, I think you're near the kingdom, I'm praying for you. He said, are you sure to pray for me? I said, yes. He said, now remember, I don't believe in God.

It's settled now, he does, thank God. And the Lord has found his brilliant young son of the Greek Isles. Chris is somebody with a long name I can't hope to pronounce.

And Chris wouldn't mind, he wouldn't mind at all. He knew I was telling you this, so I take the liberty to do it, even though he's not here. Well, they have found the power working in them, and they're on his side on all questions.

He sees it now. Do you see that to find this Christ and to join with him and have his nature and have gates of paradise open to you, it means that you have to obey him, that you have to be on his side on everything. And these friends of the prince, these friends, they've given and are giving bold witness to the world.

Bold witness to the world. People are getting saved here now in our fellowship, one after the other, young people, serious-minded young people are getting saved. And you know it is because of the witness being given by other young people.

And these witnesses are testifying. This is the testimony, and they're giving it. And God has made this man judge of all men.

Have you ever noticed this passage? I quoted this one time, and a man was very much disturbed about it, but it was in the scriptures. Have you noticed this passage here in the book of John? It says, "...for the Father judges no man." Do you notice we think, and generally take it for granted, that the Father is to be the judge of the world? But the scripture distinctly says the Father is not to be the judge of the world. "...for the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." I never heard anybody say that in my long ministry.

Never heard anybody say that myself. It's here, verse 22 of chapter 5. If that isn't enough, then go to chapter 6, verse 27. "...for as the Father hath life in himself, so has he given for the Son to have life in himself, and hath given the Son authority to execute judgment." The Son is made the judge of mankind.

Why? Listen, it explains it. Because he is a son of man. It would not have been right for God to have sent an archangel to judge mankind, for man might properly turn to that archangel and say, What do you know of human suffering? What do you know of human temptation? What do you know of human sin? What do you know of human weakness, you archangel? Why are you judging me? Who are you to judge me? The burning seraph from the throne of God were to come to the world to judge men.

We might say you fiery burners by the sea of glass. What do you know about our temptations and griefs and sorrows and heartaches and pains? He could not send an archangel or a seraph. He has given Jesus Christ authority to execute judgment upon all men, because he is the Son of Man.

And when the Son of Man, who is himself man, and who knew all our tears and all our temptations and all our griefs and all our sorrows, who wept at the grave of a loved one who had died, he can judge because he is the Son of Man. And God the Father is not even the judge. So the Father might say, and rightly say, I never knew the temptations, but the man Christ Jesus knew our temptations, and so he is to be our judge.

And that is the testimony of the church to the world. It is for everyone must encounter the Prince. Every Son of Man must encounter the Son of Man.

Every Son of Man will be confronted by the Son of Man, either now as Lord and Savior or then as Prince and Judge. It all depends upon what we do about it. I, for my part, want to get on the soft side of the Son of Man, and I want my judgment to be behind me.

He that believeth the words, heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me, he shall pass out of judgment and shall not come into judgment, but pass out of death into life and shall not come into judgment, because we do not meet Jesus as Judge, we meet him as Savior now. You met him as Savior now. You've met him as Lord and Savior, and you will not meet him as Judge.

Oh, there will be a judgment for the works of God's feet, and that we understand. But that's another matter. The result of the judgment which we'll face as Christians will not be heaven or hell, it'll merely be reward.

But it'll not be heaven or hell. I'm sorry for those who say, you can't know you're a Christian until you die. What a terrible gamble, 50-50.

Maybe you're a Christian, maybe you're a sinner, maybe you're saved, maybe you're lost, and God lets you die not knowing. Wouldn't that be a terrible thing to do? No. You can know now.

You can know whether you have met him as Lord and Savior, and if you have, you will meet him as Lord and Judge. He has the authority to judge all men. Oh, that Judge, that Judge with the fiery eyes, that Judge with the brazen feet, that Judge with a face like the shining sun, that Judge with hair as white as wool, that Judge girded about the breast with a golden girdle, that Judge who shall call the nations to him for judgment, and prime ministers and premiers and presidents and senators and kings and queens and princes shall come from all parts of the earth and crawl out of the sleeping dust and rise and stand before that Judge.

But that Judge can be your loving Savior, isn't he? That's what it's all about. That's the testimonium, that is the word God gives. Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Have you believed it? Do you believe it? Will you believe it now? Are you ready to accept it now and come out on his side and take his side on everything? If you are, and if you do, he becomes your advocate, not your judge.

He is then before the presence of God not as your judge, but as your advocate, pleading your cause there before the bar of eternal justice. I think Christianity is wonderful, don't you? I think the truth of God is absolutely delightful. I don't know why people don't follow the Lord more.

I don't. Well, we're going to sing now a closing song. And if there are some of you who during this last week have given yourselves to the Lord, I think it would be a wonderful thing if you would come out boldly tonight, walk down here to the front and let everybody know where you stand.

You've been converted recently, haven't let church know about it. I think it would be wonderful if you walked down here, and if you're not Christian, not saved, then I think it would be wonderful if you would decide this night that you're going to take what steps you know to take in the direction of the Son of Man, Son of God, your Lord and Savior. We're going to sing now.

God, will my sensitive, sentient being, capable of feeling the most exquisite awe for anguish, and to go out from this world to be laid away in my physical body, but to go out from this world into darkness, to be denied entrance into the presence of God, to be sent out to spend a long eternity with the Judases and the Sauls and the Hitlers, and Jack the Rippers and the Bluebeards. You say, ah, but then I'm not that kind of man. No, but there's only one hell.

There's only one hell. Though you might have been as moral as could be, still if I die, if I do, we die without Christ. We die and take out our sensitive, conscious, intelligent being into the world beyond.

Thank God for the gospel. Thank God for the voice. Take heed how you hear.

There's a voice, a life-giving voice sounding in the gospel. Take heed how you hear it. Hear it right now.

Everything depends upon how you hear it, said Jesus our friend. Thank God, he said. Take heed how you hear it, because the voice has sounded.

It's sung. You're hearing it. God help us, what will we do? You that are not saved, you that are half-saved, you that are allowing the carriers of this light to go up like thorns around you, God help you.

Take heed how you hear. We're going to sing in a moment. We're going to sing.

We're going to sing. We're going to sing. We're going to sing.

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We're going to sing We're going to sing. We're going to sing. We're going to sing.

We're going to sing. We're name and have a name that we live but the dead. My God! It would be better that we should perish from the naked slopes of the Baleen Valley and from the rich precincts of Toronto.

Better that we should die pagans cutting off the necks of chickens, try to appease some bestial God, than to die Canadians and Americans and Englishmen and Scotsmen who heard from their childhood this wondrous message. Better let it go. O God, what do we say to thee in that time? What answer can we have from the Baleen, naked, savage men smeared with pig grease and clay, who stand up and say, We never heard it.

But who here can say, O God, we've heard it and we've heard it and we've heard it until we're bored with it? God, forgive us, give us a new something, a new baptism of interest, a new and new afflatus of fresh interest in the things of the gospel. O God, we pray that the whole health of friends here tonight, Lord, we pray for those who are well saved, that they might become so keenly concerned for others that aren't saved, that they would continue to work for their salvation hard and struggle and pray and labor until, one

by one, they're gathered in. Grant, we pray, our God, that there may be a harvest of souls at Avenue Road.

We're overdue, Lord, it's long overdue, but God, we're not giving up. We expect to see it, Father, we expect thee to give us a harvest. We expect to see young people brought in and old people.

We expect to see their new faces and hear new voices, and see the travail of thy soul, O Lord. We expect thee. For thou art God, and because Jesus Christ thy Son said, If we wanted anything, ask in his name and he'll give it to us.

Because that's why the gospel is being preached, that's why we're here, so expect to see it, God. We don't believe that thou dost speak to men vainly or say anything to anybody carelessly. We believe that when thou dost make a promise, that promise is as good as gold.

So we're expecting, Father, we're expecting thee to do it. Around the margins, our relatives, our friends, our neighbors, people all around here that are not here tonight, but they can be here and they can be brought in and they can be one. We pray to you, O God, fall on the churches, fall on this church, fall on our people.

We pray with a new affluence of love for men, that we may not depend on the word from the pulpit only, but that we might supplement that word with earnest soul-winning efforts. Now, come on us, Father, we're looking for help, O God. Once more we remind thee that we have for this church a vision of a strong bible-based, morally right, solid, vigorous, active, loving church that the people will feel when they come in here that surely the Lord's in this place of the truth.

The Lord may be slow, but we believe it'll come. Now, as I said, first the little sprout, and then the stalk, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. So put us through those stages fast, Lord, because we need the corn, and we need it fast.

We need it soon. We pray, O God, meet us for testing day. We pray thee for any tonight that are not committed, but the Holy Ghost has found them somewhere there among the rocks or on the wayside.

Or among the thorns. Dear, if God has found them, we pray thee that they might come out from there and be good ground, and receive the truth into our honest hearts, and bring forth truth with patience unto perfection. We ask this in Christ's name.

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