

Those Sanctifying Effects of Suffering

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon critiques the idea of 'instant Christianity' and emphasizes the need for spiritual growth, development, and the sanctifying effects of suffering.

Scripture: Philippians 3:7

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Suffering and Sanctification"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes that the concept of 'Instant Christianity' undermines the dynamic nature of the Christian faith, which requires ongoing growth and development akin to a living organism. He argues that true faith involves a continuous relationship with God, necessitating spiritual nourishment, exercise, and the acceptance of suffering as a means of sanctification. Tozer critiques the tendency to reduce salvation to a single experience, warning that this leads to spiritual stagnation and disappointment. He highlights the importance of forming right habits, engaging in spiritual training, and actively resisting worldly temptations. Ultimately, Tozer questions whether modern interpretations of faith align with the deeper, sacrificial commitment exemplified by the Apostle Paul.

Transcript

Instant Christianity tends to make the faith act terminal and so smothers the desire for spiritual advance. It fails to understand the true nature of the Christian life, which is not static but dynamic and expanding. It overlooks the fact that a new Christian is a living organism as certainly as a new baby is, and must have nourishment and exercise to assure normal growth. It does not consider that the act of faith in Christ sets up a personal relationship between two intelligent moral beings, God and the reconciled man, and no single encounter between God and a creature made in His image could ever be sufficient to establish an intimate friendship between them.

By trying to pack all of salvation into one experience, or two, the advocates of instant Christianity flaunt the law of development which runs through all nature. They ignore the sanctifying effects of suffering, cross carrying and practical obedience. They pass by the need for spiritual training, the necessity of forming right religious habits, and the need to wrestle against the world, the devil and the flesh. Undue preoccupation with the initial act of believing has created in some a psychology of contentment, or at least of non-expectation.

To many it has imparted a mood of disappointment with the Christian faith. God seems too far away, the world is too near, and the flesh too powerful to resist. Others are glad to accept the assurance of

automatic blessedness. It relieves them of the need to watch and fight and pray, and sets them free to enjoy this world while waiting for the next. Instant Christianity is twentieth century orthodoxy. I wonder whether the man who wrote Philippians 3:7-16 would recognize it as the faith for which he finally died. I am afraid he would not.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/those-sanctifying-effects-of-suffering/>

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