

# What Does It Mean to Accept Christ - Part 2

by A.W. Tozer

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*To accept Christ is to accept his friends as your friends, his enemies as your enemies, his ways as your ways, his cross as your cross, his life as your life, and his glorious future as your glorious future.*

**Duration:** 20:22

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:26, Mark 16:15, John 3:3, Acts 4:12, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 John 5:12

**Topics:** "Sinners Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a lawyer who was led to Jesus Christ. The lawyer credits his salvation not to the preacher's sermon, but to a conversation he had with an 'odd fellow' who asked him if he wanted to go to heaven. Initially, the lawyer was angry and walked out of the church, but as he walked down the street, he couldn't shake the thought of heaven or hell. This realization led him to seek salvation and he eventually reached out to the preacher for guidance. The preacher emphasizes the importance of accepting Jesus Christ as a revolutionary act that transforms a person from the inside out, and urges young people to not be deceived by false teachings that trivialize the acceptance of Christ.

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## Transcript

And denies me, I'll deny him before my Father which art in heaven, and let him take up his cross, and follow me. And where I am there my servant will be, and my Father will love him, said Jesus. Well, now, to accept Christ, then, is to accept his friends as your friends.

And when I come to that part, I get happy about it, because the friends of Jesus Christ are the loveliest people in all the wide world. I am not ashamed of the friends of my Savior. Now, I know that there are some Christians who are a little, tiny, wee, bit cracked on top.

I know that. I know they're oddballs, some of them, and I know they do odd things. I know some of them put badges on, you know, as big as a milk cup.

Jesus only, on their lapels, and go down the street, and they do odd things. But dear, bless them, they're mean all right. And sometimes they'll win people to the Lord when some of us dignified people can't win them.

You've heard of that fellow. He was a great preacher, and a liar friend of his. He tried to get him to church often, but he wouldn't come.

And one day, one time, he did come. Now, there was in that same church a man who hadn't too much up here, but he had an awful lot down here. And when he saw this lawyer, this great lawyer, saw him come in, this preacher was worried to death, because this poor fellow, with a whole lot in his heart and not too much in his head, he was in the habit of going around and asking people if they were saved.

So he just prayed silently that the Lord would help him to preach a great sermon, and he would keep that fellow away from that lawyer, because he knew the lawyer was a cultured, dignified gentleman who would probably walk out in a huff if anybody approached him. So when he gave the invitation after the sermon, this, sure enough to his horror and dismay, this poor half-witted fellow went around to the lawyer, took ahold of his lapel, and the lawyer went out. Well, he said, I knew it would happen.

So about midnight that night, the phone rang, and the lawyer was on the other end of the phone, and he said, Reverend, come over here, I want to see you. Oh, he said, I want to apologize to you. He said, I feel so bad about that.

He said, about what? He said, about that poor fellow that went and bothered you there in the service. No, he said, come over, please. He said, I want to see you.

So he went over, and he said, I am in distress. He said, my soul is ready to perish. He said, I've got to be saved.

Tell me how to be saved. It didn't take very long for the preacher to lead the lawyer to Jesus Christ. So when he had come into the light of the new birth and was forgiven and regenerated, the preacher ventured to ask him, now just what was it in my sermon tonight that led you to the Lord? Oh, he said, Reverend, nothing in your sermon.

He said, you remember that odd fellow that came around and buttonholed me? He said, yes, I want to apologize. Don't apologize. He said, that's why I got saved.

He said, you know what he said to me? He said, do you want to go to heaven? And I said, no. He said, well, go to hell, then, and walked away. And he said, I was mad, and I walked out of the church.

But he said, as I went down the street, it came to me, heaven or hell, heaven or hell, heaven or hell. And he said, if it isn't heaven, it's hell. And he said, that's why I sent for it.

So I tell you, brethren, I love God's people. And I accept his friends as my friends. And I don't care what color they are.

If they're holy people and his friends, they're my friends. And I'm not ashamed of them. And I'm not ashamed of my camp meeting friends.

I preach in colleges and seminaries and among the big shots. And I preach to bishops and all the rest. But I love God's simple, plain people, people without much education.

And maybe they don't have all the culture. And they think Beethoven played right guard for Yale and all that kind of thing. But they, they are God's sheep.

And if they're God's sheep, they're mine. And if they're the Lord's children, they're my brethren. Accept his friends as my friends.

Then to believe on Jesus Christ, savingly, is to accept his enemies as my enemies. Now, that's another thing. The enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ will never get an apology from me, brother.

I have prayed, O Lord, don't let anybody love me that doesn't love thee. Don't let me be popular at your expense. Don't let churches that wouldn't have you invite me.

Don't let people come to me that wouldn't come to thee. I want thine enemies to be my enemies, and thy friends to be my friends. I love the friends, and I am not afraid of the enemies.

What was it, Phyllis, that Dogridge wrote? Hast thou a lamb, hast thou a foe before whose face I fear thy cause to plead? Hast thou a lamb in all thy flock I would disdain to feed? And the answer's no. Not an enemy before whose face I wouldn't plead the cause of Christ. Not a lamb that I wouldn't feed, no matter how poor he might be.

So I accept Christ's enemies as my enemies. And I accept his ways as my ways. I take his ways.

I don't come to him and get a badge or a ticket telling me that I'm saved and then go my way. I come to him and then I go his way. Follow me, he said.

That means you go his way. The way of obedience, the way of prayer, the way of service, the way of consecration, the way of love, the way of mercy, the way of holiness, that's his way. And then I accept his rejection as my rejection.

That is to accept Christ. If they reject him, they reject me. I've already covered that, I think, and that on the enemy, so I'll skip it and point out that I accept his cross as my cross, or at least I accept the across as my cross.

Jesus Christ says, take up your cross. What is the cross of Christ? Well, somebody gets a toothache and says, I'll bear my cross. No, you won't, brother.

That's just a toothache. The devil might get a toothache if he had teeth. I don't know what he does.

He has a tail, I suppose, but I don't think he has teeth. But those things that come to you, your baby dies, or your cow gets sick, or your corn crop doesn't work, it doesn't come up, or the drought hits your field, you say, that's my cross. No.

A cross is something you take up voluntarily, and you didn't take up that voluntarily. That's just one of those things that happens to the good and the bad like. If it gets to be 104 degrees as it did here this week, that isn't a cross.

Every sinner down the highway was rubbing his forehead along with you. So that is no cross. You're not going to get a reward for rubbing and wiping perspiration in 104 temperature.

That's no cross. That's simply, it happened that way. Every robber was grouping his wings here.

So a cross is something you take up deliberately. It is obedience to Christ. It is doing what the Lord commands you to do, and then taking the consequences.

And if the consequences mean a cross, then take the cross. Jesus Christ didn't choose the cross, that is, he didn't choose it in the sense that he wanted to die on a cross. But he wanted to save you, and he

wanted to obey God, and the cross was the only way out.

So he went to the cross because he was obedient to his Father and because he loved you. And so a cross is obedience to God and love for mankind. And when whatever results that's painful and harsh and hard and bitter, even death itself, that's the cross.

So I take the cross as he took his cross. And then I accept his life as my life. Oh, thank God for that.

You don't stay on a cross forever. He took six hours to die, but he's alive how long? Forevermore. He came back from the dead, and that was to the consternation of the devil and to the confusion of the Pharisees and to the distress of the Roman Empire.

He was dead, but he liveth again. And a Christian that's truly a Christian will die with him, but will come back from the dead also. I mean, die in this right now, in this life.

Die to your ambitions and die to your pride and die to all of those things that the world glories in. You die to them. The world glories and you die to them.

Brother Brown said the other night, no man has a right to claim anything until he dies to it. And he's perfectly right. I agree with him 100%.

And then it's to accept his future as your future. Oh, wonder of wonders. He came back from the dead.

He went to the right hand of the Father. One of these days he'll be crowned with all the crowns there are. The crown that God will put on his head, and then the crown that his own people will put on his head.

They'll come from the north and the south and the east and the west, and they'll cast their crowns before him. He is Lord of Lord and King of Kings, and they'll cry, O Christ of God, take unto thee thy power and reign. And you and I are a part of that if we're followers of Christ.

We can afford to put up with a little inconvenience now because all the glory lies ahead. Let me say to you that that man who tries to take the inconvenience out of your life and smooth over the cross and paint it up and make it acceptable socially, that man is your enemy. I don't care if he's a reverend or a DD, he's your enemy.

That teacher, whoever he is, that tells you that Christianity is a whooping good time and great fun, he's lying in your teeth, and you ought not to accept it. Christianity has its glory, joy unspeakable and full of glory, but it also has its cross. And Jesus Christ bore the cross for the joy that was set before him.

But we carnal children, we lamblings, we saintlets, we little pocket editions of a Christian, we don't want to bear any cross or have any inconvenience. We don't want to be kept home from the lake. I don't know what you do here, but my dear friends up in Canada, I've said nice things about them and I'll say this about them now.

If this gets up into Vancouver somewhere, amen. It's all right. I love Canadians, but I don't excuse the fact that when summertime comes, they leave and go to the lake and desert the churches.

I don't know whether you do it here, but any Christian, listen unto me, that habitually takes his family away from the Church of God over the weekend is no true Christian at all. He is a make-believe and he is a hypocrite, and I don't care if he's on your board and chairman of your board of elders and a deacon, he's

still not serving God and carrying a cross. Now, vacation is one thing, and I suppose everybody ought to have a vacation.

Sometimes I wonder what they take a vacation from. They loaf all the time. Anyhow, men take a vacation from it.

But you probably need some help. Some of you men love to go out and play golf or something. Do it.

It's all right. But as soon as golf becomes your lord and boss and you talk about it all the time, instead of talking about the Lord and the foreign missions, it's gotcha, brother, you're a golfaholic anonymous. I've never heard of that before, and I hope I never hear of it again.

But if your boat with the putt-putt on the back takes you away from the house of God on Sunday, it's a putt-putt on your way to loss and chagrin in the day of Christ. No, no, he calls you to take his hard way, that he may lay his crown gently upon your brow in the day of his triumph. Now, that's what it means to receive Christ, to accept Christ, to believe on Christ.

And it means all that, and it doesn't mean any less. And any fiddling around or any effort anybody makes to pat your back and smooth you down and get you in, it's just too bad. But Robinson told about seeing a nest of chickens, and he said he saw them pick their way out of the shell, and oh, what a terrible time they had.

They struggled and fell over and tumbled around, and he said he pitied them from the bottom of his heart. He said, the next hen nest that I see hatching, the next eggs that I see hatching, I'm going to help them out. So he said the next time he saw a hen hatching, he pushed her off and picked them all out of the shell and said they all died.

And that is what's matter with so great, so many of our Christians. We have picked them out of the shell. In order to get them at all, we have rushed ahead and picked them out of the shell.

The result is they die all around us, and we say they backslid. They never backslid because they never were regenerated to start with. To accept him is to accept him with a revolutionary acceptance.

It's to accept him completely, all of him to all of me. It's to accept him exclusively and not any other hope but him. He alone is my hope.

It's to accept his friends as my friends, his enemies as my enemies, his ways as my ways, his rejection as my rejection, the cross as my cross, his life as my life, and his glorious future as my glorious future. That's what it means to be a Christian. And my dear friends, it's worth everything.

And if we all had to believe on Christ tonight and die tomorrow, we'd spend one eternity thanking God with tender affection that he allowed it to happen. Yes, sir, you can't afford to be lost. You can't afford to take for granted you're saved when all's happened, somebody has picked you out of your shell and tried to make a Christian out of you, and you've never known what it is to be born again.

Moral sanity requires that I settle the matter of whether I am in rights-saving relation to Jesus Christ or not. I don't ask if you've signed a card. I don't ask if you've been baptized.

You can do both of those and be lost. You can be saved and do both of them too, but they don't save you. But moral sanity requires that I settle it.

Will you settle it? Now, don't take it for granted. Remember, you're not gambling. You're guaranteeing that you'll be lost.

To fail to come into right relation to Jesus Christ is to commit moral suicide. Young people particularly, in this terrible hour of putrefaction and corruption, in this frightful hour of shallowness and superficiality, when our youth are being led astray by people who ought to know better, and they're romping and kicking up their heels and playing their way into the kingdom and playing their way off to heaven, only to find they've played their way to hell. You dear young people, I could love you till I'd lie down, let you walk over the length of me from now till morning, if only I could save you from the false teaching that would make acceptance of Christ to be a lark.

Acceptance of Christ is a revolutionary act that changes you from the ground up. But you say that's true only for older people. That's true for every person.

I knew a boy, a Jewish mother and a Gentile father. I married them. Then that boy was born.

He grew to be about 18. He was in great danger of becoming a juvenile delinquent. One night I gave the altar call and he went into the prayer room, the inquiry room, where we used there in Chicago.

His name was Dave. And everybody knew what kind of a scoundrel Dave was. He went into that room.

I thought, well, there goes Dave. It probably won't much come of it. So God knows my faith didn't help much.

Pretty soon Dave came bounding out. He came out like a racehorse out of the whatever they are. And he hunted me up.

His face was aglow. He'd been converted. Well, I thought, very good.

But he's an emotional boy. Let's see how it works. Well, you know, it wasn't very long till he was one of the leaders in the church.

It wasn't very long after that till he came to me with a shining face and said, I'm going to Bible school. Off to Bible school he went. And when he got there, he just shook that school.

And he's been going right on ever since. That boy's name is Dave Shaper. My dear friends, he was only a kid too, just a kid.

Don't wait till there are gray in your temples. This message of acceptance, radical, revolutionary, exclusive, final acceptance of Christ with all that you have, that's for everybody. That's for the youngest person that can hear me tonight, as well as for the oldest person that hears me.

Let's pray a moment. Dear Lord Jesus, we're with thee in this. We're with thee in this.

We attach ourselves to thee now with deliberation. Thy word has been given by invitation and explanation of what it means. Now Lord, if they follow thee well and good, if they do not, then I don't know what I can do.

O Christ, this night we beseech thee, thou wilt help every one of these listening to reconsider and rethink and decide whether heaven is more desirable than hell, whether the inconvenience of cross-carrying and

the persecution and troubles that brings to follow the Lamb, whether these things are worthwhile in the light of eternity. We beseech thee, O Lord. We pray thou will save us from superficiality, save us, we pray thee, from this pseudo-Christianity that's going about, save us from fool's gold, save us, we pray thee, from alkali water that kills us, save us, we pray thee, O God, from all this watered-down stuff that leaves us where it finds us, only that we think we're right when we're not.

Have mercy upon us, O God, have mercy upon us. Bless these dear friends. And before they go to their place of rest this night, may they make sure that all these conditions have been met and that they can sing, I am my Lord's and he is mine.

It is done, the great transaction's done, I am my Lord's and he is mine. Underscore and emphasize every word, knowing it's true. Grant this, we beseech thee, O Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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