

Who

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon explores the nature of supreme authority, emphasizing God's sovereignty and the balance between authority and freedom in human life.

Duration: 43:49

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Matthew 7:21-27, Luke 13:3, John 3:3, Acts 3:22-23, Hebrews 1:1-2

Topics: "Sovereignty Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of freedom and how it is not truly attainable in society. He uses the analogy of two buns on a park bench to illustrate that even in a seemingly free situation, there are limitations and compromises. The preacher emphasizes that while we may live in politically free countries, there are still restrictions and consequences for our actions. He concludes by highlighting Jesus Christ as the ultimate authority in religion and the need for individuals to come to Him for true freedom and salvation.

Transcript

We know what we've been talking about. We've been talking about supreme authority and where it's found. Who holds supreme religious authority today? And I have said that supreme authority resides in God, and there are philosophical grounds for this belief.

Anybody who is a theist, or even a deist, would admit that supreme authority resides in God. But we have a more sure word of Scripture, and I could spend the rest of my preaching time just reading Scripture telling you this. But let me read just two passages.

1 Chronicles 29, 11 and following. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. For all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine.

Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come to thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might. In Daniel 4.3 and other parts of the Book of Daniel 4, chapter 4, God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of man, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. All inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and they doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the

inhabitants of the earth, that nobody can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? These are just two passages that tell us of the sovereignty of God. So tonight, I want to talk a little bit to you about sovereignty and authority and what it all means, because this is definitely a part of our Christian beliefs and teachings, and we must know this if we're going to be well-informed, instructed Christians.

Now, the concept of authority involves the concept of dominion. That is, there must be a right to rule. You know, down the years there has been authority that has not been a proper authority.

There have been dictators, men who ruled but had no remote right to rule whatsoever. But the concept of a religious authority, or authority within the field of religion, or within the field of some philosophy apart from religion for that matter, it involves the right to rule, and then it involves the right to give commands in order to rule, and it involves the right to give commandments in order to command. Now, I will stop and break that down a little bit.

If we talk about authority and supreme authority, then immediately there comes the idea of dominion. Somebody must have dominion, and dominion means the right to rule and the right to command in order to rule, and the right to give commandments in order to command. I hope that isn't as badly mixed up as it might sound, but you'll find that I am accurate in this.

But also, the concept of authority involves also the idea of a sphere of dominion, a sphere where that authority operates, over which the authority extends. And that sphere is not simply geography. I wouldn't give fifty cents an acre, or I wouldn't give fifty cents of ten thousand acres for prairie dog holes and ice.

If God were to make me king over the North Pole, I wouldn't take it as a very great compliment indeed. And if he were to make me mayor of a little America, you know where that is down at the South Pole. There's nothing down there but penguins.

They try to look like people, but they're not. And these penguins stand up there and look dignified as if they're about to make speech at a formal dinner, but they're just birds. So, it isn't geography that matters, brothers and sisters, it's people that matters.

And so, the idea of dominion means the idea of authority over a company of beings who submit to that authority. Now, that company of beings must have intelligence in order to enable them to understand, and they must have freedom of choice to enable them to choose to obey. Now, God Almighty is sovereign, and he has his way in the whirlwind and the storm, and no man can hold him back nor say, What are you doing? No man.

He ruleth in the affairs of men, and he gives the kingdom to whom he pleases. That is true of God, but yet God, when it comes to intelligent beings, does not assume authority over them by coercion, except when the time comes that he must. But in the meantime, the Lord is wanting a people who have freedom of choice to enable him to choose to obey, and moral ability to enable them to obey.

Now, that's good sound theology, and that's a whole lot better that you get a hold of this, and get it in your mind and in your heart, than if I were to entertain you with pleasant or humorous stories. God, in his supreme dominion, must have a company of beings who are intelligent. It's no great problem to rule over unintelligent beings.

It's no great problem for a farmer to have cattle in his barn. They're unintelligent, they can't make any choices, but God's dominion extends over those who have freedom of choice, and who have intelligence

to understand, so that they can look the thing in the face and say, yes, I choose God's way. Then, of course, there must be moral ability there to enable them to obey.

And then the concept of authority also involves a restraint of freedom. I say that the whole thing involves freedom of choice, but it also involves restraint of freedom. There is no such thing as unrestrained freedom anywhere in the world.

Anywhere in the universe, in fact, there isn't any such a thing as unrestrained freedom. Only God is free. Keep that in mind.

Only God. Nobody else is free. Now, I suppose I read an article the other day in one of the local newspapers or magazines that go with the newspaper of a man, and the title of the article was, I'm Glad I'm a Bum.

Did you read that thing? A fella, a good-looking chap, and he looked to be perfectly healthy. I'd assume he was 38 years old, maybe, and seemed to be well fed and intelligent, and yet he spends his lifetime going from Vancouver to the farthest east cities of this country, and just making his living by bumming, by asking people for money. Well, now, he says that the reason he does that is he wants to be free.

He doesn't want to be in bondage, you businessmen. Now, think of it. Tomorrow morning you're going to get up when the alarm clock goes off, and you don't want to get up, but you're going to get up.

I can prophesy that you'll get up all right, and you will go to work, though you don't particularly want to go to work, but you will go to work, and you younger people will get up also, and you will go to school. We all go to get up and go somewhere, and yet nobody wants to do it. It's a funny thing, isn't it? Nobody wants to go to bed, nobody wants to get up.

We're a funny crowd. Nobody wants to go to bed, and nobody wants to get up again. Well, you're going to do both because there's no freedom in the world.

You're in a free country. This is a free country. Canada's free, politically free, and yet there isn't a great deal of freedom in it, and there isn't a great deal of freedom in the world because while there is freedom from dictation by any self-appointed tyrant, there isn't freedom to live the way you'd just like to do it if you consulted the part of your nature.

You take two bums and put them on a park bench. They're not wholly free because both of them will want to stretch out, and it isn't quite long enough for the two, so one of them will have to hunker his knees a little bit in order to make room for the other. There's no such thing as freedom.

Take two tramps and put them in anywhere, and they're not free. There's no freedom in society any place. You say, I live in a free country, and I'm a free man.

That's what you think. Try parking by a water plug, brother, and see how free you are. Try going through a red light 40 miles an hour, or 20 for that matter, and see where you are.

No, we're not free. In fact, when it comes right down to it, if we were totally free, we'd be absolutely miserable. So there's a certain restraint of freedom also which is inherent in this whole concept of dominion.

You know there's no freedom even up in the planets above us, up in the stars. When the brethren went around the world there, those gentlemen going around the earth, a little touch of claustrophobia would have driven those men crazy. I couldn't have gone and get in a place like that.

I'd like to die out in the open. I don't want to die all crumped in some place, and you can't get out. Well that's where they were, and a little touch of claustrophobia would have ruined them because they were all tied in a little thing called a capsule.

I don't want to be in a capsule at all, not until they put me in that black one after I haven't anything to say about it. But there they were floating around the earth, and they I suppose thought they were free. They weren't free at all, absolutely not.

There were the laws of aerodynamics there, there was the gravitational pull of the earth and other planets, there was the centrifugal force throwing them outward, and there was the beating of their heart, and there was everything. They were not slaves, but they weren't free. Nowhere is anything perfectly free.

There's no perfect freedom in nature, and there's no perfect freedom in society. And if there were perfect freedom in society, I'd want to get out of society and get to God as fast as I could. Because if there were perfect freedom for everybody to do as he pleased, your property wouldn't amount to a thing.

You work and get yourself a house where you can live, and rear your family, and have to come back to, and where your children can come to, and your wife can look after your home, and it's yours, and it says it's yours down at city hall, it's registered there. You've got the deed, it's yours. And if there was a society suddenly were perfectly free, it wouldn't be yours at all.

It would be anybody's that was bigger than you, anybody that wanted to come out and take it away. So remember that freedom, perfect and total freedom, would be not an advantage at all, it would be something else. There are men tramping around this town who would like to have everything you have, including your automobile, and your pocketbook, and your wife for that matter, and just everything you have.

But they're not going to get it. The reason they're not is because they're not free. So that there must be a restraint, and authority means that there is a restraint on freedom.

Well, God created man, and when he created man, he created him within the context, as the preachers say. He created him within the context of authority, and dominion, and limited freedom. And now he put man under God's gentle dominion.

The dominion of God is very gentle, brothers and sisters, and when God made Adam and Eve, and put them in the garden, and said they were to dress it and keep it, you notice? Dress it and keep it. The very fact they had to look after the garden was a restraint on their freedom. Adam couldn't simply say to his wife, Eve, I'm going to fish today, and then get up the next day and say, I'm going to fish tomorrow.

He couldn't do it, because God had said, dress the garden and keep it. So keep it and dress it he did. He didn't work hard, God's dominion was gentle, and God's commands were very, very kind.

And God's ways are very easy in his yoke of delight. But he did tell them that there were certain things they couldn't do, and certain things they were to do. He said you're to increase and multiply, and fill the earth with others like yourself, and look after the garden.

It was very easy. But they chose to revolt against God, and so that limited authority which God had given them in the garden, that limited authority, they chose to extend that authority over themselves and over everything, and yet God in his kindness spared the rebels. I'm awfully glad that God didn't put this thing in my hands.

When I think of what Adam and Eve did, and what a calamity they brought down upon the world, I would be a little indignant at that pair. What is it that Milton says that how our grand parents, blessed by all besides, for one little restraint broke the will and word of God. Remember it starts out in Paradise Lost, and he can't understand why, and he calls upon the Spirit to help him to tell the world how our first parents broke the law of God and revolted against the kindly dominion of Almighty God.

And all they deserved was to be annihilated. All they deserved was what the fallen angels got, to be hurled down to Tartarus, there to be held in chains against the day of judgment. But the kindly God spared the rebels, and he went and found them naked, symbolic of their moral and spiritual shame, and he gave them garments.

Somebody wrote in or called up or something and asked me about Adam and Eve. One of these days I'm going to answer the question of whether they were saved or not. As far as I know it, I'm going to try to answer it some night here, in a few minutes.

But here they were, Adam and Eve, and they had these garments on that God made for themselves, first of all, a poor, pitiful effort that they made. And then God came and killed the beast and put the skin on them to tell them that there must be blood shed and there must be a robe that isn't of your handiwork, a robe of my making to hide your shame. And so they went out and populated the world, and God organized society, and God conferred limited authority on rulers.

Now remember that. If we didn't have rulers, we'd have anarchy, just the same as if we didn't have order in nature, we'd have chaos. So if we didn't have order in society, we'd have anarchy.

Everybody would do as he pleased, and there would be no living in the world at all. But God conferred limited authority on certain men and called them rulers. They've been called everything down the years.

They've been called Caesar, and then from that you get Kaiser, and you go to the German, and you get to the Anglo-Saxon, you get King, and you get Emperor, and then in the democracies you get Presidents and Prime Ministers. They're men elected by the people to rule over them. And I'm for that, my brother, and I'm for that.

I believe in that. I believe in organized society. I believe, if you were to ask me my political views on this subject, I'd tell you that I believe in organization, and I believe in law, and I believe in government.

But I believe the fewer laws the better, and the less government the better. You know what that marks me. You who study politics, that marks me as a Republican down on the other side of the border.

And I still believe it. I like the Democrats if they're nice, but I'd rather be a Republican because a Republican says, give us as few laws as possible. That's what I like.

I like to be restrained so I'll behave myself, and so other people will let me alone and behave and won't bother me. But I don't want to break the law every time I turn over in bed, you know. I don't want every time I walk across a green piece of land, I don't want some cop running after me.

I want as few laws as possible, but I want laws. And I want as little government as possible, but I want government. That's organized society.

And God organized society and conferred a limited authority on these rulers, but it was always pro-tem, remember that. No matter who is, it's pro-tem. When that tart-tongued New Englander was president, what was his name? Cal Coolidge.

Somebody asked him how he liked his job. He said he didn't like it particularly because there was no room for advancement, and besides that, you couldn't keep the job. Hell no, there was just no such thing as either keeping the thing.

It's always pro-tem and there's no advancement. Well of course he meant it humorously, but I don't mean it humorously when I say that God gives men rule pro-tem. Remember that.

Just for a little time, for a little while. And in the meantime God has ordained the day when he shall judge men by that man whom he has appointed, Jesus Christ the Lord. So God is in his world and God is sovereign, but God gives a bit of authority to people and says to them here, you run this little country, and you run that little country, and you run this one.

Those, Paul says, are the powers that be. And how does God exercise his supreme authority? Well over the nations he exercises his authority by sovereign providences. If you get down some books, go to the library and get some of the books, or go down here to Young Street, what's the name of that bookstore, a Christian bookstore, and ask them for some old books of old sermons, well you'll find that one of the doctrines that some of the old preachers used to preach a lot about was providence.

Nobody talks about providence anymore. But providence, what did providence mean? It meant that God was above all presiding, and that he worked things around like chessmen on the board, and people didn't know he was doing it. You remember that Nebuchadnezzar, he didn't know that he had been appointed of God to bring in the times of the Gentiles and to continue it until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled.

He didn't know that. He had an itch to conquer other nations, and the great sovereign God Almighty with his plans for the world let Nebuchadnezzar carry on. Darius was another man.

He said, I have ordained you even though you don't know me, and the great God in his sovereign providences runs his world. That's why I don't think that we should be too much wrought up. I didn't lose one minute's sleep when they declared the blockade on Cuba, not because I didn't know about it, not because I'm not interested in world politics, because I am.

I read up on it and I listen all I can, every broadcast that I can get about it. But I just know that there's a sovereign God who's working providentially in his world. He's working.

One of these times, a nation that is now closed, God will open that nation, and another nation that has had the gospel, God will close it. God's working providentially. This is not the time to tell about it, that he is working providentially over his people, but I could give you one text.

All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, who are the called according to his purpose. So if you dared to believe that, it would take an awful lot of worry out of your heart. You wouldn't worry as much as you do if you knew that everything you did, if you were in the will of God and were not sinning but were prayerful about it, the Lord would work everything out for his own glory and for your good, if you love

him and he's called you according to his purpose.

That's God's sovereign providence. Now over his spiritual and eternal kingdom, he exercises his authority by the written word, and I mentioned that last week and shan't now again. All that are in his kingdom.

You see, there are two kingdoms coexisting. There's the kingdom of Adam, the kingdom of the flesh, which God is ruling over in his sovereign authority by his providences. And then there is the spiritual kingdom, which is a kingdom within a kingdom and a wheel within a wheel.

We of the church of Christ are a little spiritual kingdom within a much larger natural kingdom. Our Lord Jesus said, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. And then this beautiful and wonderful thing, he taught us that it's possible to be born out of the larger kingdom of the flesh into the smaller kingdom of the spirit.

It's possible to be born out of one kingdom into another. In one place he calls it being translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his love. Now this is remembrance day.

We haven't said very much about it because we're dedicated to the word of the Lord. But I tell you that I haven't forgotten that better men than I am died that I might have freedom. Don't forget that.

I haven't forgotten that. I haven't forgotten that the American boys and the Canadian boys went out together. Many little arguments they might have had were all forgotten when the big guns started to boom and the shrapnel started to fly, and they did no one from the other except for the marks under the buttons or on their shoulders, and they fought and bled and lay down and died together.

And they did it that the Indian Jack may fly over City Hall and the stars and stripes over the White House. They did it in order that you and I have all the freedom that's good for us, all that's good for us, up and down from Mexico to the far north, all over this great and rich and beautiful continent. They paid the price.

They gave themselves. Well, I'm glad, and I want to mention this. I feel that I should, and I have seen the pictures of myself, my wife, and I have three boys that will never be all together, all they should be, because they were injured in that war, injured in order that they might preserve a people, a nation.

One of them is crippled and goes about with a cane and a crutch, and the other one has had inward bleeding, though it's all right, it's absorbed, and he's running a business, but he never knows when it'll hit him. And the other boy was injured. We know what it was to have five of them in uniform, and so when it comes to Remembrance Day, or whatever they call it, we know a little of it at first hand.

We know a little of it. I'm grateful and glad for that nation, these nations, but I'll tell you this. What God calls the nations of the world is the kingdom of darkness.

Isn't that an awful thing? Even the finest nations, the most cultured, he calls the kingdom of darkness, because he sees the devil and the dark spirits in high places, ruling and in the affairs of men. He sees it. He sees the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, and when we're born out of the flesh, out of the dark kingdom, into the kingdom of God, it's being translated out of darkness into light.

He sees that. And over, I say, over his spiritual kingdom, God rules. And that's what it means to be born again.

It means to be born out of the kingdom of the darkness into the kingdom of the sum of his love. It doesn't mean to join a church, though born again man will. It doesn't mean to be baptized, though born again man will be baptized.

It doesn't mean necessarily that a man goes to church every Sunday. That doesn't bring him out of the kingdom of darkness into the light. But the man who has come out of the darkness into the light will go to church because he will love the people of God.

He will go to his own company. He will seek the fellowship of light, this spiritual and eternal kingdom which God is forming. Now, I say that God exercises supreme authority through the written word, but he exercises his supreme authority through the living word.

Now, I must give you some scripture here. I have been giving you an outline of doctrine, but I want to give you some scripture. Notice what it says.

Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me. Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.

And he identified this prophet as being Jesus Christ the Lord. He said, I will send a man to the world. He's a man like Moses, but greater than Moses.

And as God made Israel listen to Moses, he says to the whole world, listen to this man. And whoever will not listen to this man, whoever will not listen will be cut off from among his people. I heard the second in a series of addresses given over the radio by a very learned Anglican.

Englishman, I would take it by his accent, but a very learned man and a very tolerant and very kindly man. But he's insisting that we ought to sit down with all the religions of the world and carry on a dialogue. That I ought to bring my Christian faith and put it up alongside of those of the Buddhists and those of the Islamic faith and those of all the faiths of the world.

They get something from me and I get something from them, and we shake hands and all go away. That doesn't sound like the word of God. Lo, I send a prophet unto you, and whoever shall not listen to that prophet shall be cut off from among his people.

Doesn't sound much like it, does it? And in the book of Colossians 1, the first chapter, it says, Who is the image of the invisible God? Jesus, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. Revelation, that first chapter.

I was in the Spirit and I heard a voice, and I turned to see the voice, and he spake to me, and it was Jesus talking. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like the Son of Man, it was Jesus standing, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girded about the breast with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wolves, white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like under the fine

brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters.

He had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. When I saw him, I felt that his feet as dead. He laid his right hand on me and said, Fear not, I am the first and the last.

I am he that liveth, I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of hell and death.

There are your keys, my brother, the keys of hell and death. That is why I would never lose one minute's sleep if some religious authority would condemn me. Who has any authority to condemn me? Who has any authority to say, You're shut out, go to hell? Nobody can say that to me.

He has the keys of hell and of death, Jesus Christ the Lord, and if he takes me in, who can drive me out? I might not be the easiest fellow to live with, nor the most desirable nor lovable person to have around, but if the Lord God laid his hand on me before the world was, and chose me to be his child, and said to me, Here, you're no good, but I love you, and I have brought you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of my love, nobody can take me out again, regardless of who likes it or who doesn't. I suppose a good Christian is a thorn in the flesh of the devil, because he'd like to worry the Christians and make them think they're no good. And the Christian who knows his Bible will smile and agree with the devil on one point, I'm no good.

That's sure enough, I'm not, but God loved me. It's an idiosyncrasy, you see, of the great God Almighty. The only queer thing about God is that he loved people like us, and I'm glad God is idiosyncratic in that sense, and that's a big word nobody ever ought to pull on an audience.

But by meaning by that odd, by telling a fellow the other day that the shortest poem I ever heard was this one, How Odd of God to Choose the Jews. I think that's beautiful, I think that's beautiful, How Odd of God to Choose the Jews. And it was odd of God, and that's what I mean by idiosyncratic.

They'll sell you a twenty-five cent tie for forty cents, make you like it. They're not the most lovable people in the world, but God chose them, and we'd better love them, and we'd better pray for them, and we'd better believe in their future, because God does. But he says, How can you destroy Israel? The answer is, when you can tear the stars down and destroy the sun, then you can destroy my people, but not till that time.

So God is odd that way. He loves people that aren't worthy of it, but that's us. Well, this new human race.

Then there's Matthew 7.21, that terrible passage. I've read it here before. I won't read it all.

Some will say, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works. Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Whosoever hearth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the flood came, and beat upon that house, and it stood, for it was built on a rock. But the man who doesn't obey this prophet, and does not recognize the authority of Jesus Christ, the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house, and great was the fall of it. So God's authority is exercised through his Son.

Now, his words of supreme authority, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Some don't want to hear it, but God has said, I'm sending him to you, and you'd better listen to what he says, because I'll make you responsible for what my prophet says, my Jesus, my Son. Then except ye repent, and except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

When I think of the ways they've invented, I was looking over a little article in the Alliance Witness the other day. I read it sometimes, you know. I had passed it so long ago that I'd forgotten really about it, but I was looking about a converted priest who's testifying there about how he was once a priest, but now he's a born-again Christian, and he said that when he was in seminary, studying to be a priest, he learned that a Catholic pastor is irreplaceable.

That is, you can't replace him. He's there, and you're stuck with him. Whether you like him or not, you're stuck with him.

You don't like me, the board can vote me out. But if you don't like your priest, you just come anyhow, whether you like him or not. He's irreplaceable.

And this man said, I remember when I was in Catholic seminary studying to be a priest, that we used to debate 21 ways to replace an irreplaceable pastor. 21 different ways. Well, there are ways, you know, but except a man be born again.

Now, some people don't like that, and they have discovered 21 ways to get a man in. Jesus said, except he be born again, and they're finding 2,500 ways to get in. And the Lord says there's only one way.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me. Hear that? That doesn't sound like dialogue to me. That doesn't sound as if God had sent me to sit down with a yellow-robe Buddhist priest and have him give me his good points, and I give him my good points, and we shake hands and eat a bowl of rice and go our way, and say, well, now each has helped the other.

That doesn't sound like it to me. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. This is that authority speaking who holds supreme authority over all things, over the Church and over the Kingdom of God, given to him by the Father, Jesus Christ the Lord.

And he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Now, this makes some people absolutely furious. If you say to them, except he repent, he shall perish, except he be born again, he shall not enter God's Kingdom.

No man comes unto the Father except by the Lord Jesus. They get angry until they get white, and they say, you're narrow, you're bigoted, you're obscurantist, you're everything you oughtn't to be. What's the matter with you? There are a lot of ways to get to heaven.

Let's sit down and have a dialogue. But Jesus Christ has spoken, and God said, I'll send that prophet, and if you do not listen to him you shall perish from the way. And he said, nobody comes in except by me, and brethren, we'd better listen.

I say it makes some people furious, but God is the supreme authority, and he is the sovereign ruler over his own spiritual kingdom, and he has a perfect right to say who comes in and who stays out. We're all out, and we're all ought to be out, and then some of us get in, and it's by his grace that we're in. It's by justice that we're out, and by grace that we are in.

If we all got justice, we'd all be out, and we'd all perish from the way. But by grace some of us get in. He's the sovereign ruler of his own kingdom, and he has a right to decide whom he'll invite.

He has absolute right to say who shall enter his heaven, through whom they shall enter, and he's chosen his son Jesus Christ the Lord. He said, here's your man. He's one of you.

He became flesh and blood among you, and I made him Lord in Christ, and I gave him supreme authority, my authority. I exercise it through him. Whoever comes by means of him is in, and whoever will not come by him is out, and stays out, and shall not enter the kingdom of God.

Now I say that makes some people mad, but I don't mind, because unless we get mad, we're not likely to get glad. We take things so kindly, and so gently, and everybody's pleasing everybody else, and winning friends, and influencing people, all sitting around like tabby cats purring together over our religion. I wouldn't give you a plug nickel for a boxcar load of that kind of religion.

It isn't worthy. Jesus Christ our Lord is the ultimate final authority in the realm of religion. He decides who's in, and he decides who's out, and he decides who gets in, and he decides who stays out.

O gentle Jesus, how much we owe him, and how beholden we are to him, and how desperately we need him. Though he be the sovereign of the world, he's the kindest, and lowliest, and loveliest, and most gracious of them all, waiting for people to come out of the kingdom of darkness to him, and enter by that cross-shaped door into the spiritual kingdom over which God exercises his authority by his word, and by the living word. I'm happy to be in, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm happy to be in. When I was 17, I entered into the fold by the good grace of God. Oh, I've had a long, hard way, and a tough way, and I've failed God in this grace.

My own testimony heaven knows, and things haven't been always the best, but I can say this to you. I wouldn't trade it for all the wide world. Beverly Shea used to sing, take the world, but give me Jesus.

What's his famous number? I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold. When the king and queen of England, that is, King Edward, was it, and his lovely wife, who's still the queen mother, came to the United States on a state visit, of course they were given the red carpet everywhere they went, and the president, then president, Roosevelt, wanted to treat them to everything, so they fed them hot dogs, and we might know what a hot dog was, an American hot dog, and they enjoyed themselves tremendously. Well, then one day they said, now we'd like to have you hear an American Indian sing.

Now, I knew that American Indian. I knew him well. He used to come to our house.

We knew him. He was a Christian, a marvelous Christian, and a marvelous singer. Had been an opera singer of some stature, but was converted, and of course never went back to the stage, and they had him in to sing before the king, and you know what he sang.

He sang, I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold, or to be the king of a vast domain. And this American Indian, in his regalia, went to the lovely queen mother and said, Madam, are you a Christian? And her face lighted up, and she said, yes, I'm a Christian. Said to the king, are you a Christian? He said, yes, I am a Christian.

Said to the president, are you a Christian? He froze up and said, I'm a vestryman in my church, but they were Christians. Brothers and sisters, I would rather be a Christian than to rule the universe. Wonderful to be in the kingdom of his love.

Are you in? If you're not, it's easy, for the door is a cross-shaped door. It invites you. Now, we're going to sing.

Brother McNally, would you lead us in singing? We pray thee this night that thou wilt help the young man who's seeking thy faith. Blessed Jesus. And then we pray for some who, for their own reasons, did not see fit to present themselves publicly, to pray for them, and ask that thou, Lord, will be with them, as thou certainly will be with them, right on, and keep them in life, until they've either said the last no, or have said a happy yes to thy invitation.

Pray now thy blessing upon us, and may mercy and grace attend us all the days of our lives. Dismiss us now with thy blessing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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