

Why Does the Holy Spirit Not Fill the Church

by A.W. Tozer

The Holy Spirit cannot fill the Church because the world, including Christians, is under the judgment of God and is corrupt and violent.

Duration: 39:09

Scripture: Genesis 6:5, Genesis 6:11, Matthew 5:28, Matthew 7:21, Acts 2:17, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, 1 Peter 4:17

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of judgment and the need for it in order to save humanity. He explains that God saw the moral corruption that had spread throughout mankind and decided to send a judgment in the form of a flood to destroy the corruption and save a few righteous individuals. The preacher emphasizes the importance of taking judgment seriously, as everyone will eventually face judgment for their actions. He concludes by sharing a story about a physician who sometimes has to amputate a limb in order to save the patient's life, highlighting the necessity of removing that which could be deadly.

Transcript

Genesis. It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is slave.

Yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air. And it repented me that I have made them. And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood, a room which thou shalt make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without which pitch.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the sixth month, second month, in the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up. And the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man.

And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle and the creeping things and the fowl of the heavens. And they were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the cattle that was with him in the ark.

And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged. And the fountains all closed a deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters returned from off the earth continually.

And after the end of a hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. It came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, and he sent forth a raven which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground.

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand and took her and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet seven other days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.

And the dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off, so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more. The verse I have particularly in mind is a part of verse 9 of chapter 8. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot.

I say this is an illustration rather than a type, but I believe the Holy Spirit put it here. And I don't wish to enter this strange, beautiful region of the Genesis world, for the landscape is as mysterious as it is lovely, but its scenes are sketchy and fragmentary. And I'll leave close exegesis for somebody else tonight, and I want to illustrate why the Holy Spirit does not fill his Church.

First we notice the world as God saw and judged it before the flood. God searched into the hearts of men, it says here, and he saw that mankind was corrupt and wicked, filled with evil thoughts and imaginations continually. Now, the Holy Spirit says this, that man is corrupt, wicked, evil of thought and of imagination.

And God saw the ways of men, that they were corrupt, violent, and engrossed with transitory interests, even amid their corruption and violence. The result of what God saw among men was grief to God's own heart. It grieved him at his heart.

And as I said on another occasion, only love can grieve. You cannot grieve unless you love. And God loved the man whom he had made, and the degenerate and corrupt race that had descended from him, and God's love caused him to grieve.

And it killed him with anxious terror. The result was a sentence. You see, the kind of thing a physician or surgeon can do sometimes is to take off the leg.

The kind of thing he can do is to remove that which otherwise would kill the patient, however shocking it may be, and however terrible the news might be to the patient. The best news for him is amputation. Otherwise it would be best.

So the dear God who loved mankind looked upon man and saw that moral corruption had gotten such a hold on men, it had gone out into all the bloodstream and was in all the tissues and cells, and he knew that the patient would die unless he sent a kindly judgment to destroy it and saved a few to start over so that the race might not perish, borne down by the spongy, corrupt weight of its own sin. So God sent a judgment on the earth and the waters covered the earth as they had formerly covered the sea. And after the passing of a great many days, great numbers of days, 150 days, the ark of God still floated there with eight persons aboard and with the animals and birds and all the creatures that would drown and did not die, didn't take fish or the aquatic animals because they could live in the water, but all that which would die by the waters of the flood there where they were in the ark.

And of course after the passing of so many days, it had long passed the flood stage where people and things were simply dead. Corruption had already started to set in. And Noah opened the ark which had settled upon Ararat.

He opened the ark and turned the bird out to see. The windows of the ark were upward toward heaven and there were apparently no portals out so that no one could look down. So Noah decided to find out from the birds whether there was dry ground below, whether the waters of judgment had assuaged, as it's called here.

And he opened the window and pushed the raven out. And there we have a sight the like of which it is probably very hard to visualize or understand, but there it is, that sight of a dark bird sailing across the desolation. Now what was that desolation? What did it amount to? What did it add up to? It added up to the judgment of God because the angry displacer of God was on the world and the waters of the judgment, the boiling filth and the floating corpses and all dead things and bits of flotsam and geptam that were there over the waters, they were a mark of the judgment of God upon the world.

And the dark bird sailed across the desolation and his dark heart felt at home there, for he was a carrion eater and he felt at home among the carrion. And as that raven sailed away from the warm lighted ark and from the presence of Noah, he croaked with delight because out there now swollen with internal gases until their heads were topped as a drum and then wetted with the waters of the flood, these floating things, cattle and all creatures and corpses, human corpses floating there in the waters. To everything and everybody else it would have been a repulsive and horrible sight, but the raven was built for it.

Something in his dark heart loved it because he lived on it. So he immediately sailed down and lighted on a near and likely corpse and began to tear with his great claws and with his huge beak great hunks of half-rotten flesh he tore away and ate until he was low geese and sleepy with overeating and then fastened his claws down into the floating things and being happy and restful, he went to sleep croaking a good night word to the happiness that he found what his heart wanted, corruption and desolation and filth and flotsam and rotten flesh and dead things. For I say this fitted his disposition and his temperament.

So he said on the floating death and so my friends this is if not a type at least a brilliant illustration of how things are in the world today. When man sinned and God deserted him and he deserted God and he went out from the place that had been Eden, the garden eastward in Eden and began to propagates himself, man had the judgment of God upon him. The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The point is then the man wants to die and after that the judgment says God and God says that he's displeased with every man and that unless we repent we shall all perish and all the nations of the world shall be turned into hell. God is displeased with the nations of the world. He's displeased not only with the east, he's displeased with the west.

He sends his judgment not only upon the iron curtain country but he sends his judgment upon the so-called three nations of the world of which this is one so that the great judgment of God is upon mankind. All the stock of mankind, red and yellow, black and white, educated and uneducated, cultured and uncultured, cavemen and learned men around the world and yet you know that because man has in him that thing we call sin it doesn't seem to bother people. It doesn't bother them at all because just as the raven was at home in the desolation his dark heart had an affinity for the judgment and desolation so it is that men find themselves at a home in a world under the judgment of God.

The only one good man that ever came to the world could only manage to stay alive 33 years and then they took him out and nailed him on the cross and the better men are the worse they're despised by those who love the desolation and the darkness that is the sin of the world and just as the raven never came back to the ark but lived out there in the desolation so men have built their civilization upon floating death and you'll find it everywhere. We like to think otherwise we're proud of our culture and we're proud of our bridges and our roads and our foot mix and all the things that we can do but God looks on the heart and God says the world is filled with violence and it's filled with violence now and it's filled with corruption now and filled with iniquity now just as it was then but the woeful thing is that we accept it men accept it as such instead of being horrified by it they accept it and they accuse it and they write books to call it something else. I think for instance of sodomy of homosexuality that the plain name is sodomy that brought the fire of God down on Sodom and Gomorrah.

I have seen books and read books that have been written to excuse this and say that it's quite the proper thing and that if a man is born with a yin for another man instead of a woman he's natural and he ought not to be criticized he's living his own nature and they ought to call it not something bad but it's his way of living so we have books and learned professors rise and rattle their degrees and stand up and and argue in favor of sodomy and every other vice under the sun so the judgment of God is upon the world to this upon floating death everywhere well the judgment now God sends out the raven and the raven never comes back because the raven is pleased with what it sees but God sends out the dove Noah sends out the dove acting for God sends out the dove and you know have you ever

heard a dove or a pigeon a dove and how to where their wings have how they cling to your wrist and he put her up on his wrist and she took off and world banked and turned and banked and turned and pretty soon he heard the whir of the wings again he put out his wrist and she hopped on his wrist and he pulled her back in she had something in her that couldn't stand corruption she couldn't stand filth she couldn't stand bloated corpses she couldn't stand what the raven loved because she had in her not the dark heart of the raven but she had in her the heart of the dove it was not for nothing that when the holy ghost came down upon Jesus he came in the form of a dove the pink feet and the round bright eye of the dove yeah those pink feet will never land on anything dirty those pink feet will

never land on anything filthy and those round bright eyes will never look with allowance upon anything that is filthy the dove is the type and picture of the holy ghost harmless and pure and meek and sensitive and loving and so she came back she couldn't stand it the judgments of God were everywhere and the filth and the filth and the flops and were too much for her dove heart so she came back and asked to get in the best

she could fluttering against the edge of the window and he pulled her in and kept her there for a while now why did jesus say when he spoke of the holy spirit whom the world cannot receive whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not neither knoweth him there is one thing absolutely that christians ought to get in your mind it is that the world knows nothing

about the holy ghost the world knows nothing about the spirit the world knows about good men the world the world appreciates a good man if he gives to colleges and hospitals and goes over and runs the clinic to take care of her lepers they'll write books about him and celebrate him the world knows about good men but the world has absolutely no affinity for the holy spirit because even good men are under the judgment of god and the best that we have in the world our universities our oratorical societies the best we have apart from the new birth apart from from the presence of god in the life of a man is only corruption and the wrath of god is upon it the world cannot receive it and i think that's the most i think that's the most most awful most the most terrifying thing that the sensitive

christian heart can hear is the wearing of the wings of god god wants to come down he wants to get into our houses of parliament he wants to get into our congresses and senate he wants to get into our united nations he wants to get in to our groups that play baseball and hockey god wants to get in but he can't get in because the judgment his wrath is upon men his fury is upon a corrupt and violent and vicious world so the holy spirit's restless and he can't come down and he would come down for he loves mankind he loves the blackest sinner in all the world it might be your me because sin is of the heart as well as of the body and and and upon that now it would be something else again and i suppose i wouldn't preach this sermon tonight if all i had to say was that the world could not

receive the holy spirit but that which gives me the most concern is that the holy ghost cannot even light upon christians now every christian has a measure of the holy spirit let's get that straight except the man has the holy spirit he's none of his and when the holy spirit converts the man regenerates the man there's a deposit of the holy spirit in the life of that man that is one thing i want you to know my theology is quite sound indeed in fact i preach this same sermon at moody bible institute and i'm teaching college in two other places so it's not heresy and it's not pentecostalism i'm trying to get through to you a truth that i want you to hear and it is that the holy spirit is in some measure resident in the breath of everybody that's converted otherwise it wouldn't be converted

the holy spirit doesn't stand outside the man and regenerating he comes into regenerating that is one thing and we're glad and and grateful for that that is one thing but it's quite another thing for the holy spirit to come down with his wings outspread uninhibited free and pleased and to fill lives and to fill churches and to fill denomination that's quite another thing that some measure of the spirit is in the breast of every man is good and right and real but that the holy spirit wants to come down as the dove wanted to land on the earth on the dry ground and could find no place for the soul of her foot that is also true now the spirit seeks i say among us a resting place for his feet the holy ghost seeks a resting place for his feet and we have called these lightings down these

comings down comings down of the holy ghost we have called them revivals and we're languishing for the lighting down of the spirit i will i say this to you now you know i i can't hope to continue to please people very long because i have to tell the truth and truth is not very well received not even by the saints but the simple truth is unless we have a lighting down upon evangelicalism upon fundamentalism upon such churches as our life churches unless we have a lighting down unless the dove of god can come down with his wings outspread and make himself known and held among us that which is fundamentalism today in

25 years will be liberalism you can be a certain of that and liberalism will be unitarianism because this vile world is not a friend to grace to lead us on to god we're going

the other direction have you thought about it my brother have you thought about it or are you simply running around being entertained have you thought about all this you and i are going to face judgment one of these days you and i are going to stand before the man whose eyes are like fire and out of whose mouth there comes a sharp two-edged sword and we're going to have to talk to him about deeds done in the body and we're going to have to face what they call the greatest time and there will be judged for the deeds done in the body not the great white throne judgment which is for sinners but another judgment which is for christians and we're going to have to show him that we've been serious about all this we weren't out to be entertained we were out to be that we might be holy and the

spirit is seeking a rest for the soul of his truth he's seeking it and yet i hear the fluttering of holy wings and i hear the morning sound of him who is grieved and clenched i see him looking about for signs of repentance for signs of sorrow of heart and the lynching of the judgment of god from the church when god judges the world it will be terror and fire but god wants to judge the church he wants to judge you and me his children he wants to begin at the house of the lord and he wants to begin to judge us and the absence of the full power of the holy ghost is perpetual condemnation now what are the marks of of god's displeasure upon his people what are the marks of them well let me name a few of them for you plain sins which nobody can deny sins of acts and of habits sins of

selfishness such as reveling in wealth while the world's powers living like kings while millions perish sins of the heart such as lust you know you can be a christian or at least you can belong to a good church and still have lust in your heart you can belong to a good church and still have spite in your heart because you go to the pastor or the elders or the deacon or whoever takes them in in your church and they can't look in your heart and know whether you've got lust in there or not we've all cultivated the religious brim and we all manage to look pious when the occasion comes up so when we apply for membership we smile piously and they say he's a fine young man but in his heart there is lust and god hates it and the dove won't come down he can't look in the woman's heart and see that

she's spiteful there because the woman across the street has a longer car than she has or a fur coat that costs more she can't see resentment that's in the hearts of people and blame there there are churches where deacons and elders sit on the same board for years with unconfessed resentment in their hearts and resentment in the heart of the man is just as bad as a dove and resentment in their spite in the heart of the woman is just as bad as the world we make ourselves very holy and we laugh at Elvis Presley I don't think he's worthy of even being laughed at myself I think he should go get lost that's the way I feel about him but I wonder after all a poor hillbilly from where is it Mississippi or somewhere he never had a chance in his life and all he learned to do was to look pretty and

wiggle and well he made a million at it he made a million at it they wanted him here in Toronto and he asked for fifty thousand dollars and the fellas was signing him up said I can't stand the spent and I can't stand Elvis so they didn't bring Elvis but why should we look down our holy noses at that hillbilly he's doing the only thing he knows to do and I wonder if Elvis when he goes into a coma and begins to swing and sing I wonder if Elvis is any worse than some of us pious people that have spite in our heart and resentment and jealousy well I hope it's not so in your choir and I have no reason to think it is but you know what they call the choir the war department because up there's where the fights take place well why don't you ask me to sing well chiefly because you can't you know

that's the case but uh we uh we have this kind of evil thing in our hearts resentment I've met people that just lived with resentment you know friends I just won't stay mad at anybody I refuse absolutely I come from a fiery nervous english strain my father could his temper was was like the trigger on an atom bomb and he could blow up I've seen him take a shovel and beat a wheelbarrow in anger you know just beat a wheelbarrow and I got it but I won't stay sour at anybody I refuse to do it I refuse to have to have resentment and uh ill will and unforgiving spirit eat at my vitals forgive the guy for god's sake forgive him sister he didn't know any better anyhow and if he did he's sorry now forgive the power and you'll feel better inside yet we've got it spite we got jealousy and we got envy

they've got pride pride of person and pride of creed and pride of possession and pride of race and pride of accomplishment and then there's coldness of heart toward the godhead we sing about god and we pray but it lacks one and we worship but coldly and stiffly and toward the languishing church back in israel the man of god warned the jews he said woe unto them that are these in zion stretch themselves on beds of ivory and make instruments of music like david but they're not green for the judgments of israel and that's where we are we're fundamental sure we are carry our soul feel bad about sure we do and we're evangelical but we the church is languishing and we don't care at least we don't care very much and then there's the poor sick world out there I for my part as I've said again

before I don't want to be happy while the world cares nobody loves the world quite enough the man who loved the world enough to die for it died for it and the man who loved israel enough to want to perish for israel cried out he wanted to be a curse for for for israel's sake that was paul but I don't know we don't seem to have it much these days much of our christianity is social instead of spiritual we should be a spiritual body with social overtones instead of that most of our churches are social bodies with spiritual overtones the heart of the church always ought to be christ and the holy spirit the heart of the church always ought to be heaven and god and righteousness and they that loved the lord spoke often one to another and what they spoke about the spiritual thing I have met men

I have met men that you couldn't talk to about anything but god you had a canadian right here in this city by the name of jaffray I wrote his life I called it let my people go robert jaffray used to be part owner of your golden mail and he became a christian pulled away from his family at this over their protest they got over it later and everybody was happy but at first he pulled away and went to the mission field that man of god that that good godly man and after a few years of searching for the lost and winning them and reading maps and going where no man in his condition should ever have gone because he was overweight and he had diabetes so that it was difficult for him to eat right and yet he went and went and went and lived on whatever he could find to eat and lived among the poor

and the miserable peoples of the world always saying to the god let my people go and winning them well that man got to a place where you couldn't talk to him I sat beside him in a in a home in chicago and I tried to discuss his common things with him you couldn't do it he he looked down and uh answer and then begin to talk about god and mission I have met people who who were so interested in the things of god that nothing else mattered now my brother and sister the holy spirit loves people like that he loves that kind of spirit and he's put to come and fulfill and to take over and to take charge I'd hope that at least an olive leaf that we might find at least an olive leaf but I don't know I don't know I thought I could come to Toronto and that I could perhaps spend my time writing during

the week and then spend saturday getting ready for sunday preach on sunday and then go back but I find I can't do it I carry the burden of it and the load of it on my heart and if the people aren't going to aren't

going to obey if they're not going to follow god if they're not going to surrender right to their waste of time are god looking for a people of people who want to be right he's looking for a little spot at least where the waters of his displeasure are dried up where there's no more judgment no no no more death where there's filth and flops and gorgon cleaned away and where the blessed holy spirit can come and come down in power he wants to do that at avenue road church he wants to do that beginning with we were on the platform maybe I don't know he doesn't always and going to

every everybody in the church he wants to do that for us now I close by telling you an honest story this a man was on the train once I don't remember where I was traveling from but he got on and he sat down with me and I knew the man he was a missionary from one of from India and he seemed very tender and broken and he said that I'd like to ask you something because I'm troubled I'm bothered and I'd like to ask you something and I said I'm so used to it and just another one I thought but he said this is my problem now he said about he named a number of years back he said a strange thing happened on our mission compound in India he said we had been having blessing and people were blessed and everything was going all right but he said the missionaries got together for a little conference in

this field in India and the native Christians were there and we were all sitting around together and he said a Presbyterian preacher a missionary got up to preach it and he preached and he sat down and he said I suppose I'll never be able to describe what happened and I don't know why it happened but he said suddenly there came down on that assembly something like the like like like a like a wave of love and light and he said it broke it up completely and he said one missionary ran to another one said forgive me forgive me and another one ran to the other and they wept and hugged each other now he said a strange result has been this has had a strange result it is this he said in my home it's been completely transformed now he said my wife and I were getting on perfectly well normal

Christian home but he said oh they're different since that time home is heaven now but he said now that didn't bother me but here's what bothered me he said since that time I am so tender and I weep so easily that it bothers me he said when I get up to preach I am just as likely as not to break down and cry now I said never was that way before but he said since the coming down that day that sudden wonderful visitation in India he said I just cry so easily that my heart tender and he said that I get up to preach and there it goes again he said now coming across on this ship I had this experience so they asked me to take chapel on shipboard one morning and I did and he said they told me there were some communists who would be present in the church and he said I took my check and there it

came again he said this memory of all the glory came down on me he said I just began to cry like couldn't finish my sentence I said what did communists think of it did they make fun of you oh no he said they were very reverent about it I'm not saying anything good about a communist I can't but at least in this case the holy ghost had cut them out even of a communist and then I said to my friend Bert you've asked me for advice how can you overcome your tender heart he said for God's sake father don't cry we got so many dry preachers in the United States now down there we got so many and of course you have them here we got so many dry preachers and we got so many men who couldn't shed a tear I said if you can keep the tears of God on you and keep your heart tender keep it brother you've got

a treasure I'd never give up but you know how he got that away the coming down the lighting down now I don't think that first-team preacher had anything to do with it he might have you know God knew this but they got right with each other they got cleaned up they got uh trouble out of their heart and they got their sins put away even missionaries got their sins put away and when when there was no more evidence of

the displeasure of almighty God the holy ghost came back you know what I believe I believe that this church and you who are now in this building I believe that we could have and enjoy a sense of the divine presence so sweet so beautiful so tender that it would change our whole personality that it would change our attitude toward each other that it would clear up a lot of things

some of you are troubled with inside of you that it would be like the coming of spring to a landscape sweet and fresh and warm with birdsong and sunshine and there'd be no fanaticism and there would be no wild doctrines and there'd be no supported wonders there would just be a coming back we could find no place for the souls of each people and I wonder if that isn't the trouble now with motion you want to be filled and blessed but you're not willing to pay the price of letting your life get cleaned up so you're not only a Christian you're not only accepted Christ but you've gotten right so God can do it are you concerned are you interested next Sunday night I want to talk about how to be filled with the spirit but unless unless the impurities and the things that God hates our sins out of

our lives we won't be able to do anything about it you say are you tired in this church what's wrong doing no I just know people I know people you're just people you're nice people they're just people and I don't think too much maybe that's the reason he just isn't at home he's here he'll always be here oh I miss you always but he's not free and he's not happy in a minute as he could be and would be if we'd all push to put away dishonesty and impurity and spite and jealousy and envy and hate and unforgiving spirit and pride immediatism and vanity or any other thing and say

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2201.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/why-does-the-holy-spirit-not-fill-the-church/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net