

1 Peter 3:1

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon emphasizes the critical relationship between understanding God's nature and accurately perceiving ourselves and our sinfulness.

Duration: 15:54

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 12:18, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Timothy 2:4, Hebrews 10:25, 2 Peter 3:9, Jude 1:22

Topics: "Wives and Husbands"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preserving truth while showing love to both friends and enemies. He urges believers to build themselves up in their faith by reading the Bible, memorizing scripture, and seeking to know God personally. The preacher highlights the mercy of Jesus Christ, both on the cross and in receiving sinners, and encourages Christians to show compassion and fear in their efforts to bring others to Christ. He warns against false teachings and emphasizes the need to have a correct understanding of God and ourselves based on the study of the Bible.

Transcript

While he is a God of mathematical exactness, he is also a God that could take babies in his arms and pat their heads and smile. He is a God that could forgive and a God that does forgive. So we had better make the study of this Bible of ours the business of our lives, to find out what God is, and then conform our views to God.

And then ourselves, that's the second thing where we make a mistake in any kind of false teaching. Because any wrong idea of God is bound to give us a wrong idea of ourselves. Some people approach God through science, through the study of anthropology.

But anthropology without theology is bound to arrive at an error at last, bound to arrive at a dead-end street. You and I can only explain ourselves in the light of the doctrine that God made us, out of the dust of the ground and blew into our nostrils a breath of life, and so man became a living soul. Science has discovered many things about God, but they have not discovered it in context.

They have not begun with God and reasoned down to his world. No, they have begun with the world and tried to reason up with God and stopped short of finding God. And the result is only tragic to everybody.

If a man is wrong about God, he is bound to be wrong about himself. If he is wrong about the artist, he will be wrong about the picture. If he is wrong about the potter, he will be wrong about the vessel.

If he is wrong about God, he will be wrong about the creature. So, while multiplying scientific facts all around about us, men are wrong because they have let God out and say in their heart there is no God. Or if there is a God, he is a God of mathematics and laws, but not the God as the Bible makes him out to be.

That is all wrong. And my friend, you cannot know truth about yourself unless you first know truth about God. You came from the hand of God and back to God you must go for better, for worse, for judgment or for blessing.

And until we take God in and understand God and let God be what he claims to be and believe about ourselves what God says about us, we are believing false doctrine. If you believe you are any better than God says you are, you are in error. If you believe you are any different from what God says you are, you are in error.

You have falsified the data, or somebody has falsified the data and made you a victim. No, no, my brother, believe about yourself what God says about you. Believe you are as bad as God says you are, and believe you are as far from him as God says you are, and then believe in Christ, you can come as near to him as he says you can.

And accept what he says about you as being truth. Then there is sin. Now, sin cannot be understood until we believe in God and believe what God has said about ourselves.

Sin is that intrusive phenomenon, that ever-present ubiquitous phenomenon. There it is, hate and lying and dishonesty and murder and crime and injustice, necessitating law and police and jails and gallowses and locks and graves. But there are those who would deny it, and of course that's falsifying the data.

There are those who would rename it, and they're falsifying data. There are those who would treat it as a disease, and they're falsifying data. God said that it's a breaking of the law.

God said it's a rebellion against his will. God said that it's a nature inherited from our fathers and mothers. God said that it's an act against the faith and love and mercy of God.

God said it's rebellion against the constitutive authority of the majesty on high. God said it's iniquity and personally chargeable to the one who commits it. God says the soul that sinneth shall die.

We had better believe about sin, what God says about sin, or we will be falsifying the data. And falsified data in spiritual things is more terribly wrong, and will bring more terrible consequences than falsifying data in material things. The doctor who miscounts the number or the amount of that which he gives a patient may kill the patient.

That would be only to destroy a body. The preacher who misjudges or miscounts the truth concerning sin and man and God will damn his hearers, which is infinitely more terrible. Truth concerning God means that I must accept God's sovereignty, God's holiness, God's justice, God's grace, God's love, and all that the Bible says about God.

Concerning myself, it requires that I must believe in myself as a fallen image of God, one who once bore his image but fell. Now, the fourth is Christ himself. For if I do not have a right concept of God and of

myself and of sin, then I will have a twisted and imperfect concept of Christ.

And I have no hesitation in saying that it is my honest and charitable conviction that the Christ of the average religionist today is not the Christ of the Bible at all, but a manufactured Christ, a Christ painted on canvas, a Christ drawn from cheap poetry, a Christ of the liberal and the soft and timid person, a Christ that has not in him the iron and the trury and the anger, as well as the love and grace and mercy that he had who walked in Galilee. If I have a low conception of God, I have a low conception of myself, and if I have a low conception of myself, I have a dangerous conception of sin. And if I have a dangerous conception of sin, I have a degraded conception of Christ.

So here is the way it works. God is reduced and man is degraded and sin is underestimated and Christ is disparaged. No wonder Jude said the terrible things that he said.

And I recommend that some of you that are so nice, you're no good. I recommend you read the book of Jude once. I recommend you read that book of Jude.

Get your teeth filed and to a sharp eating edge. Get your teeth into something. Dare to believe something.

Dare to stand for God. This awful day of so-called tolerance, this awful day when men are ready to believe anything. The newspapers will carry headlines about the tragically mistaken group they now call, after four or five changes of name, Jehovah's Witnesses or Father Divine or what have you.

No, my brethren, you and I are not called to smile and smile and smile. We are called sometimes to frown and rebuke with all long-suffering and doctrine. We must contend but not be contentious.

We must preserve truth but injure no man. We must destroy error but not harm people. Where men were wrong in other days, they contended and in contending became contentious.

They tried to preserve truth and so to do it they destroyed those who held error. All this is wrong. Let us preserve truth but injure no man.

Faith of our fathers, we will love both friend and foe in all our strife and love thee too, to preach thee to whose love knows how, a kindly, even, virtuous life. In closing, here is what he says to us. He says in verse 19, Let's pity them, let's be sorry, let's pray for them, let's weep over them, let's turn away from them.

Verse 20, Now he has come to his own, true believers in God and Christ. Then he gives them four or five things to do. I'll pass swiftly over them.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Are you these days building up yourselves? Have you read a book of the Bible through recently? Have you done any memorization of scripture texts or scriptures these days? Have you sought to know God or are you looking to the radio for your religion? Or have you a Bible and do you study it? Build up yourselves on your most holy faith. That's one.

Praying in the Holy Ghost. I do not hesitate to say that most praying is not in the Holy Ghost. The reason we do not pray in the Holy Ghost is because we do not have the Holy Ghost in us.

No man can pray in the Spirit except his heart is a habitation to the Spirit. It's only as the Holy Ghost has unlimited sway within us that we are able to pray in the Holy Ghost. I do not hesitate to say that five minutes of prayer in the Holy Ghost will be worth more than one year of hit and miss praying that isn't in

the Holy Ghost.

Praying in the Holy Ghost. Third, keep yourselves in the love of God. Be true to the faith, but be charitable to those who are in error.

Never feel any contempt for anybody. No Christian has any right to feel contempt, for contempt is an emotion that can only come out of pride. So let's feel no contempt.

Let's be charitable and loving toward all while we keep ourselves in the love of God. And then, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of course, that is the second coming of Jesus.

Looking for Jesus Christ's coming. The mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ that is coming. Wonderful, isn't it? That his mercy will show itself that he is coming.

Even his mercy will show itself then, as it did on the cross, as it does in receiving sinners, as it does in patiently looking after us, Christians, and it will show itself at the coming of Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Then, verse 22, If some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh, there is a charge that we should win others, that we should do everything in our power to bring others to Christ. Saving them with fear, pulling them out of the fire.

Wesley, all his life, referred to himself as a brand plucked from the burning. Never called himself anything else than a brand plucked from the burning. He knew that he was on fire already with the hot flames of hell when Jesus Christ grabbed him out of the fiery pit and extinguished the fire by his own blood.

Wesley became Wesley. He never dared to rise and think of himself as a great Oxford man or a great genius. Always he thought of himself as a brand plucked from the burning.

So now we look forward to Jesus Christ's coming, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is what the old silk weaver said about it. These are a few short lines from Thurston.

There is a balm for every pain, a medicine for all sorrow. The eye turned backward to the cross and forward to the morgue. That's what Paul said.

If ye do show forth the Lord's death, till what? Till he come. There is a balm for every pain, a medicine for all sorrow. Some of the old saints in days gone by called the communion service the medicine of immortality.

We couldn't follow them in every one of their beliefs, but that I think they were right. The medicine for all sorrow, an eye turned backward to the cross and forward to the morgue. The morgue of the glory and the psalm, when he shall come.

The morgue of the harping and the palm and the welcome home. Meantime, in his beloved hands are ways. Meantime, what are we going to do? Give up to the heath? Meantime, what are we going to do? Give up to the liberals? Meantime, what are we going to do? Give up to the dead church? Meantime, what are we going to do? Give up to those who have chosen to walk in the low shadows of Christianity? Never dare to contend without being contentious.

Dare to preserve truth without hurting people. Dare to love and be charitable and dare. Meantime, in his beloved hands are ways.

And on his heart, the wandering heart at rest. And comfort for the weary one who lays his head upon his breast. Thank God for the old silkweeds who walked with these saviors.

It was not that God took them. So let us think of the medicine of immortality today. Let us, by the grace of God, with charity for all and hatred toward none, with determination to be loyal to truth, if it kills us, let us put our chin a little higher and our knees a little lower.

Let's look a little further in to the throne of God, for Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Let us be courageous, attentive, severe but kind. Let us pray in the Holy Ghost and keep ourselves in the love of God and build ourselves up in the most holy faith and win all we can until the day of the glory and the song.

Amen.

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