

# Doors of Hope

by A.W. Tozer

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*The door of hope is a symbol of God's love and redemption, available to us in times of trouble and despair.*

**Duration:** 40:57

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 45:22, Hosea 2:14-16, Matthew 7:7, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Hope"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the concept of the 'door of hope' mentioned in the Bible. He begins by discussing the history of mankind as builders and the simplicity of a building, emphasizing that a building always has a wall, floor, roof, and a door. The preacher then shares a personal story of a man who faced bankruptcy and contemplated suicide, but his wife encouraged him to pray and seek God's help. The preacher concludes by referencing the Bible verse in Hosea 2:15, which speaks of God giving the valley of Achor as a door of hope, and how it represents God's provision and restoration for His people.

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## Transcript

Or see the second chapter. Let me read a few verses, beginning with verse 14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her nests, and speak comfortably unto her.

And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Acre for a door of hope. And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, that thou shalt call me Ishii, and shalt call me no more Baelon.

For I will take away the names of Baelon out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground. And I will bring the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them lie down safely.

And I will betroth thee me forever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. And I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.

It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth. And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and the church as real. And I will sow her unto me in the earth,

and I will have mercy upon her, mercy.

And I will say to them that were not my people, thou art my people. And they shall say, thou art my God. Now I have one verse here that I want to accent a little.

And I will give her the valley of April, for a door of hope. And she shall sing there as in the days. Now I'm to talk about the door of hope, and where it's likely to be found.

And I'll begin by reminding you that mankind has always been a builder. Long before history recorded the deeds of man with ink, man himself recorded them in stone. There have been all kinds and grades of buildings, from the Simpton hut to the most elaborate cathedral, or the great tall sky-touching buildings of modern civilization.

But we are not to allow the complexity and size of the buildings to blind us to the fact that a building is, after all, a very simple thing. It has a wall, and a floor, and a roof, and a door. Now that's about it.

Everything after that, extra added on. But if you have the walls, and the floor, and the roof, and the door, in and out, you have a building. And of all the parts of any building, the part that has been the most has always been the door.

The door has worked itself into human language. You'll find it in poetry, in art, and even in music. And you will find it in figures of speech everywhere.

The idea of the door, even our Lord said, I am the door. If he by me of any man enter, he shall go in and out and find pasture. And we read all through the Bible about the door, and we find the door appearing every place, I say, in literature, language, everywhere.

The door seems to be the most important, or at least the most attractive part. And I suppose that we could easily understand why. Because the door is the blessing, and then it protects you after you're in there.

And when we walk away from our homes and see our loved ones for the last time for years, in some cases, it's always framed in the door that we remember them. And when they come in the door, again, that we see them when they come to greet us. So the door has fascinated mankind, and has given itself a language and a meaning that no other part of any building could have, unless it were that not even the foundation can compete with the door for popularity in wide usage.

I was thinking about doors when I thought I'd give this message this morning, and I thought of some of the evil doors there are in the world. I have been in prisons, I have never been incarcerated for a crime, but I have been in prisons, numbers of them, and I think one of the most chilling sounds to be found anywhere on earth is the creaking sound of a prison door closing, the great lock being turned. And the prison door is distressing.

And there's the door to the mausoleum, and you may have your own list of doors. Maybe somewhere at some time, some terrifying door, that open door that closed and shut you in, or that opened and let somebody or something come out of which you were. So there are evil doors, but there are also blessed doors.

I wondered, as I thought about this, what the political orator would say if they took away the cottage doors, for they love to talk about the vine-covered cottage door and the rose door. Well, it is beautiful, and I don't

mind telling you poor city victims that a little cottage circled against the side of a hill with flowers growing around it is a heaven on earth compared with the finest apartment building that ever was in the face of God's patient earth. So you may not like me for that.

Some of you were born in the city, and you've never been in a house or an apartment, and that's too bad, but a cottage is a lovely place. It may not have all the modern conveniences, but it's beautiful, and the nice part about the average country cottage is it's been lived in by the same people. Nowadays, your apartment has been lived in, and you wouldn't want to know by how many or who they were.

But the cottage has been lived in, and it used to be a part of the landscape. I think it was Emerson who said that when the sun arose in the morning, that the sun was shining upon the buildings, and that the landscape took in the building as though it were a part of it. Well, a cottage, with its simple door, is taken in as a part of nature. And when you look at it, you think that it is as truly a part of nature as the very flowers that grow around it and grow behind it.

So there's the cottage door, and then there's the school door, and the church door. To a great many people, the old church door is a lovely sight. The door that swings open early on the Sunday, and closes again only after the last straggler has said goodbye and has gone his way.

So the church door, and I suppose that if I wanted to do it, that I could skim over all the wide ranges of man's living and find many of them. But I read here this morning about the door of hope, and I will give them, or give her, the value of a door of hope. And we have here not only the charming figure of a door, but we have added on to it for intensification the beautiful word hope.

So we have a door of hope. And a well-grounded and future happiness is what hope is said to be. Now God built this door of hope, and I hope that I might lay before you this morning a few thoughts about this door, this door which God has built.

And yet I wonder how I describe that which is beyond all power of description. As I get older, I feel less keen to want to preach than I used to. Not that I do not love to preach, and I think I'd die if I had to quit it, but that it's fair.

The effort to say that which cannot be said, the effort to express the end, to describe that which defies all human speech, that's what weighs upon me. So when I think about the door that God has built in the Valley of Acre for the poor suffering sons of men, how am I going to describe it? Leonardo da Vinci, the great artist who painted The Last Supper, they say that he painted that, and painted and finished it. There was only a bit that he couldn't get finished.

He painted the sulky, solemn, dishonest face of Judas, and he felt that. He painted the feminine face of John, and that was all right, and the great rough face of Peter, and he thought he'd done well on that. All other parts of the picture he seemed to feel he had done well.

It would indeed be a masterpiece, but that one face he could paint. How could he work himself up? How could he whip up his genius to a white heat that he might be able to paint in that face that was like no other face that ever has been or will be world without end? That he waited for I don't know how many days or weeks or months, and always he'd come up to it, and then grown in despair, and maybe tomorrow, then the next day would come up to it, and still he didn't feel that he could paint it, and so at last, in just a pulse of despair, he just painted it and walked away. He said, that's not it, but how could I ever hope to paint it?

How could I be able to condense into that expansive canvas all the beauty and the charm and the patience and the pity that belonged in that face? So I suppose I must go on talking about the door of hope.

All this tells me that I never can hope to do it any credit because this door was different from any other door. Over in the city of Akron, Ohio, Seiberling, who was the head of the Seiberling Rubber Company, I suppose you've ridden around on his top. Seiberling had so much money, he didn't know what to do with it a few years ago, so he decided to build himself a mansion.

But do you suppose American rocks were good enough? Not for that man. You suppose that the carpets made in America were good enough? He had money. So he sent to Europe, various parts of the old country, and there he got the stones to build his building, and the entablature went over his doors, and there he got the very slate for the roof, and then when he came to finish it, not American-made thing was in the whole building.

The carpet was made in, I suppose, Persia, and the walls came from somewhere else, and the whole building had been imported. I lived in that city a while, but I never had a look at that building. I was kind of ashamed of the man who was ashamed of the very rocks of his own land.

So I never went. It must have been something to see, that hypocritical make-believe that was brought from all over the world and built there in an eastern city. Now, this building, this door of which we speak, came also, but it came down in the heart of the master builder, the one who became later the carpenter of Nazareth.

He took all the materials out of his own heart to build this building. It was love and mercy and grace and kindness and goodness and compassion, and all the tender, loving mercy that was in the heart of God went into this building, this temple. And so the door of hope is surrounded by the forget-me-nots and the life everlasting and all the charms and the beauties that the soul put into it.

This is the door of hope, a well-grounded anticipation of future happiness. And now, where does he put it so the sons of men can find it? Well, he placed it, says the Bible, in a valley of acorn. This door in a valley.

I have seen beautiful valleys in my time. I have gone down the valley, the Ohio Valley. There's the Ohio Valley and the Susquehanna Valley.

There are very many lovely valleys. And if religion, that is, if some religion had been man-made, we'd have found some grassy valley where some lovely water meandered softly through down to the sea. But the Bible says that God set the valley or the door of hope in the valley of acorn.

Now, you know about the valley of acorn. It was Nacchan, the man who stole the golden wedge and troubled Israel. And they put him to death, him and his family, and heaped great stones there to tell of sin and disobedience and dishonesty and lust, covetousness, and then God Almighty's punishment upon it all.

And there the man who troubled Israel lies, I suppose, still today under the shifting sands and silt of time. But there are the rocks in that valley to tell of a man but who would disobey for the sake of a little advantage. And they named that valley the valley of acorn, the valley of trouble and distress.

And there were no green grass and no charming flowers. There were soft, blasted trees and serpents and vultures, and all that the heart hates and would run from, all the valley of trouble. And yet there in the valley of trouble said, God is the door of hope, and I will give her the door of hope in her very despair.

And in the very place of trouble, I will place a door there through which she can go to well-grounded expectations of happiness to come. It's necessary to talk a little about Israel and why God said this about her. Do you remember that Israel had sinned against God, and he had a bride that had betrayed him.

And he said how she was no good, and he didn't even want to call her his bride. And he turned his face away from her, but he couldn't kill her. So he said, all right, there will be a day when after she has found that this one with whom she's taken up is not the right one, she'll come back.

And when she comes back, I will allure her and I will comfort her comfortably in the wilderness. And I will give her her vineyards from here and the valley of Acre for a door of hope. And she, as she used to sing as in the days of her youth.

Now what could that mean but that this woman had backslidden, she had turned away from God, this Israel, and had walked away and had taken up with Balaam and the gods of the nations round about. And God would not endure that, so he punished her. And he turned away from her far and wide over the face of the earth.

And we might point out that Israel is still today scattered throughout the whole wide world because she would not be true to God. And if she got her deserts along with the rest of us sinners, God would never restore her to himself again. But he says that his love is too big for him.

And so he will bring her back. And he will give her a valley and a door in a valley. It will not be the beautiful green valley of the Shenandoah.

It will be the blasted, sandy, stirring hot, serpent-infested valley of Achan, the valley of Achor, the valley of... Now, how can we apply that to our own hearts, my brethren? We can apply it by remembering that we're with temptations. And it isn't uncommon to find God's people forgetting him temporarily, breaking their fellowship and losing the sense of his love and getting so into this, or the rearing of a family, or their ambitions, that they put God, as it were, aside a little. They turn to Baal or to some other god or goddess.

And for a while, they strike a certain compromise. And in moments of stillness, they may remember those happier hours when first they knew the Lord. They may soon cover that over and manage somehow to quiet their hearts away.

And God says that that kind of people are not going to come back too easily. They may have a valley that isn't a pleasant valley. It will be a valley of Achor, a valley of trouble, just as Israel will go in in prophetic times in days to come into the furnace of affliction.

And oh, the terror of Achor, when the judgments of God fall upon her then, God says, I will set a door there. You will find anticipation of happiness. You will find redemption there.

You will find the door that's sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. You will find a door that has a knocker that can be manipulated. A child or the weakest, sickest person and yet with a sound that wakes all heaven.

For when God hears anyone, he always listens and comes and responds to the knock. You'll find that door there. Now it could be whom I am now preaching that have allowed your heart to be all covered over with the dark, ugly, since a world innocent sin.

It could be that some of you don't pray as much as you used to pray. It could be that box so eagerly hasn't been opened for several days or maybe several weeks. It could be with which you tumbled out of bed in the morning and smiled and said, it's Sunday.

Maybe that has given place now to a cold go, but you go because you feel you should and the family wants you to and you're keeping up the appearance, but in that deep heart of yours something is wrong. And you don't have the joy, the wells of salvation don't spring up anymore. It's only with great effort that you can get even a bit of water to the surface of your heart.

Now what are you going to do? Are you going to think I ever was anywhere in the first place? And I have proved that a man can't live this Christian life anyway. Are you going there? No, I beg you, don't open the door of despair. I cannot describe what is in there because I have never been myself into that, through that door, but I beg of you, don't enter the door of despair.

Don't look into that dark cave filled with dead men and the vile and evil memories, but rather remember that God said I will allure her. I will allure her. Who? This backslidden bride, this woman who has been untrue, this person who has claimed the arms of God, the Father Almighty, and has taken up with worldly means.

Now we have no bail. I wouldn't know where to look for bail if I were to worship him. I might find some relics of bail at the Field Museum, I don't know, Museum of Natural History.

I might find it there. I wouldn't know where to go to find a false god in America because we are part of civilization that doesn't any longer worship idols. But my brethren, you can find gods that woo your heart away from prayer and you don't have to go to some heathen village where they worship a stone.

No. It's in Chicago and they are the business man's gods and the school child's gods and the gods of the houses of the scholar and the gods of the traveler and the gods of the show people and the gods of the writers and artists and builders. We have lots of them.

You can't take them up in your hand and carry them, but they're there. Whatever it is you have to bail to, bail, means, Lord, you're the master of my life. You, you have absorbed my affection.

You temporarily are away from God. And we call that an idol, and it is an idol. Turn away from us completely and say I'll have nothing more to do.

They've proved they're no good. No. God never uses, use that about people.

They say the man never was any good. They say a man had a family of six children and four or five of them were old and was no good. God never uses the word no good in the sense that we do.

When God says no good body is morally worthy of salvation. And therefore we're not good. And Jesus said no man is good, only God.

So in that sense nobody's any good. But when we use the word and talk about a young man and say he's no good, we mean he's beyond. We mean that there is no hope for him.

But God never means that. And when God never says he's no good, meaning that he's, he's impossible to do anything with him. God says I will allure him.

I will allure him. And I will call her back into the wilderness. Not into the city, not into the palace, but into the wilderness.

And there I will set for her a door of hope in the valley of Asia. So there is a door of hope for you there. And it is a door, I say, the materials were taken out of the heart of God.

God's infinite mercy and his great grace and his kindness beyond description, and his tenderness to God himself, these are the materials out of which the door of hope is made. Speaking to a discouraged person. I don't often preach about backsliding here.

I don't think I've preached about backsliding. I think it's been years and years about the question that I don't. We don't believe in it.

We don't believe in it. And we so try to teach that the people will be, will stay up very much on an even keel. If we never have a keeping revival, if we never have any visitation that can get into the papers in the world, at least we're not backsliding all the time.

We're so walking with God as to keep a rather even keel, and that's what I mean by like, but. Even the best of churches sometimes, and the best of people, and the best of families, and their difficulties. So now it's not only for our backslidings, but there are other valleys of despair.

Sicknesses, for instance. Some people just seem to be born to be sick, don't they? And not neurotic, not that. There's just something else goes wrong, and then something else goes wrong, and the two things that have gone wrong have no relation to each other.

One didn't cause that, but one thing will go wrong, and then another, and I say some people have illness, either in their home or in their own part of the year round. That can get mighty discouraging, mighty discouraging. But do you know why? God will put a door of hope in that home where there's illness, or where there are incurables, and you will find there a door that will enable you, says God, to sing as you used to sing, and she shall sing there as in the days of old.

Now, she'll begin even to call God Ishii, and say, he's, you know, my friends, that there are some things you'll never learn unless you get sick. Now, this sounds like heresy in the church, because I should suppose that the average alive preacher would take the position that you oughtn't to get sick and you'd be right away. But I can't follow along there quite, because I remember that David said, before I was a slave, but since that I have returned unto the Lord.

You remember that passage in the Old Testament, my brethren, and it's twice repeated. I think that David meant ill. I'm quite sure he did.

And I have known instances of people who got sick, and while they were laid aside, they got a chance to discover a door of hope. They were too busy to see up to that time. They didn't need any hope, thank you.

But after a long siege, when they became ill, then they began to see there wasn't much in this life after all. And they found there a door of hope, and they began to say, and they found God to be to them all that he'd wanted to be all that time, and couldn't. Illness visits your home more frequently than you think it should.

Don't look at the illness, but look for the door of hope, because God puts it there, founded in atonement, and covered by the blood of the Lamb. And then there are disappointments that come to people all down the line. I've had people come to me and talk to me about their losses, about their shattering disappointments.

There's always too a way to react when you find yourself suddenly in the... In this case, I'm assuming you're not to blame. I'm assuming this is not the result of any wandering from the presence of God. I'm assuming it's simply in the course of life, things come to us as we go along.

And here we have shattered disappointments and losses, and they all add up and weave themselves into a camel's hair shirt which we must wear, which we're bound to wear and can't escape wearing. Trouble and difficulty and heartache. Now, what are we going to do? How are we going to react to these heartaches and losses? We often sigh a long sigh of surrender and say, all right for some people, some happy people to live the Christian life, for people that have no trouble, but me, I'm born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, and there's no use for me.

Some people are born, says the discouraged man, for the bright flower-covered valleys to sit beside the slow-moving river and watch it bear its driftwood out to the sea. But not me. The only stream around here is a jerky little inadequate muddy stream, and the only birds are vultures.

The only living things that grow are weeds and briars. That's my life. Again, I quote the text, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and I will give her her vineyards from thence and the valley door of hope, and I say that right beside you, if you will believe it, there is a beginning of something better.

Right where you are. During the war times, they used to have a phrase, I never liked one of the words, never used it in my life, except now I'm going to use it, the word worsen. I never liked the word worsen.

And they would say about a situation on the field, it will probably worsen before it gets better. Now, I'd like to tell you that you don't have to adopt that. Things may be about as bad as you think they can get, but don't say to yourself they'll probably worsen because right beside you is the door of hope.

Right beside you is the door of hope. Believe it. You can enter into something new and grand and wonderful that your most vivid, bridled imagination couldn't picture 20 minutes ago.

If you will only dare to believe it here. Old fellow Jacob, he wasn't too old then, he lived quite a long while after that, but he certainly wasn't a boy. He ran away to get away from death.

He threatened murder by his brother, his angry brother Esau. And he went into the wilderness, the waste, howling wilderness. Now there was a fellow who was no good.

You tell me anything good up to that time. He was no good! And yet there's nobody that's no good in that sense of the word. So God had lured Jacob.

He couldn't talk to Jacob as long as Mama was there because Mama wanted to know everything Jacob was doing. Old boy, call that an Oedipus complex now I guess, your mother fixation. My old Ulysses says he's tied to his mother's apron string.

That doesn't sound learned, but that certainly was close to it. And Jacob was that way. And he, God couldn't long as he was at home, was, Jacob do this, Jacob do that, Jacob come here son, come here

honey.

And Jacob was always being thumbed at by his mother. And God looked down and said, I see something in Jacob not even his mother knows is there. Send him his mother won't believe is there.

And it's my business to get out of Jacob that which his mother won't believe is in Jacob. Bring out in Jacob that which his mother doesn't know is there. So poor Jacob sleeping on a rock, tipped it up and leaned to sleep.

And while he slept there appeared a ladder so tall that it stood on the earth and its top reached the sky and angels ascending and descending that ladder. And in the valley of despair a door was opened and Jacob entered through. He didn't go in very far but he got inside.

Twenty years later to him the second time and he went on further and explored the riches of the palace of peace. But then to get just inside and though like the wonder the sun is gone down from darkness to the rest of stone still in my dreams I'd be near my God to thee. That's where that song came from, this imagery of Jacob's troubles.

I knew a good man years ago, a good man, a praying man, a tender man. He told me about an experience. He said he and his wife had only a little boy, maybe three or four or five years old and of course their whole was centered upon this little lad and he was growing more deeply into their affections every hour that he lived.

And then the day came when this little boy got sick. They hadn't been Christians. They hadn't been Christians.

He said they had just been careless livers. He said the day came when they took that little boy out and buried him and he and his wife came back alone, back to the house that had been made noisy by a five-year-old. Socks and little shoes and little short trousers and little shirts lay around to remind them.

And they said, do you suppose we can go back? And he said, well, we'll try it. We'll go back. He won't be there and he'll never be back.

But we'll have to live. He said, we can't die with him. We're going to have to get adjusted somehow.

They took each other's hands and walked back. And they opened the door and went in. And these children around your home, you know that you don't clear up the evidences of their being around for six months.

There's always something there, something you find. They sat down and they looked around and everything was there but the boy. And they sat down on the door.

And this apologetic but firm man said, I am the sheriff. I have come to tell you that you are, where your business is up will be up for sale. You're bankrupt.

You're done. You're finished. And he said, that came before we'd hardly had time to sit from our boy's funeral.

Now we were bankrupt. Now, we not only had lost our boy but we had lost everything. And I knew the circumstances and I knew the very home where the boy had lived would have to go.

He said, I decided what I'd do about it. He said, I knew where there was a revolver in my room and so he decided I'd go to the bathroom, take my gun, go to the bathroom, shut the door and get out of despair. He said, my wife read my mind and I know how you feel.

But she said, all is not lost. Did you ever think, honey, that if we'd pray maybe God would help us? Well, he said, no. Well, she said, listen, I don't pray either and I've been as bad as you.

But she said, in this darkness, in this bitterness, God. So these two poor pagans, without much instruction, dropped to their knees and lifted up their hands and faces to God and began to pray. And they were both converted.

That was years before the hour that this man was telling me about it. But there was still tension as he talked. He was now in a high key position where he could reach many men for God.

Longness of those dual losses had been drained away from their hearts and the pure waters of joy were flowing now. All because a woman, badly instructed, without much truth, but with a little faith, said to her husband, I believe we'll find a door if we look. And even in our valley of bitterness, and they in their ignorance found that door that night.

Go thou and do likewise. If there's trouble in the home, don't you give up. So give her a door of hope in the valley of despair.

If there's trouble in that business, give up. If your nerves have gone until you're afraid, the breakdown may be just around the corner, don't you give up. And don't you give up no matter what.

For God says there's a door if you'll only believe. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. The spirit and the bride say come and let him that heareth snooze, whoever will, let him come.

And come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly in heart. And ye shall find rest unto your souls.

So let's stop and say, now it looks as if I was no place to go from here. All right. Straight ahead, there's the door, a door of hope that God has opened for the poor dying sons of men.

Enter and you'll find all hope and all your anticipations of happiness and good. Shall we pray? God and Father of our Lord Jesus, we thank thee this hour. Thou has not left, thou has not allowed us to wander into the serpent infested valley and left us there.

But thou has deluded us and wooed us and even there has placed the door. Wherever we are, there's a way out and a way in from that spot. Thou has so arranged it in thy grace.

Thou has sent thy son Jesus to die, to rise, to live, to plead, to be for us, advocate above as Savior by the throne of love. While he's there and we are here, the Lord is within touch. We bless thee.

We will not despair. We will not give up. We will not surrender to the sins of the enemy.

We will dare to believe that with every temptation thou wilt make a way. Thou wilt turn our tin into silver and our silver into gold. Thou wilt give us the garments of praise for the garments of heaviness.

Bless thou the word spoken this morning. We ask it of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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