

Four Old People

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon highlights the vital role of older believers in maintaining faith and righteousness in challenging times.

Duration: 49:49

Scripture: Luke 1:5-6, Luke 1:18, Luke 1:39

Topics: "Preaching"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the idea of living for God in difficult times. He emphasizes that God never abandons His people, even in challenging circumstances. The speaker also discusses the importance of not underestimating the impact of older individuals in society, highlighting their wisdom and ability to see beyond the surface. He encourages listeners to prioritize their relationship with God and to serve others selflessly, just as the four friends in the Bible did.

Transcript

I want you to turn, if you have your Bible, to the book of Luke. Gospel as Luke gives it. I take two selections from, two selections from that book.

Luke 1, 5. There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea a certain priest named Zechariah of the course of Abiah. His wife was of the daughter of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

And they were, well, both well fitten in years. Then in the second chapter, beginning with verse 25, And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon. The same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.

And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then he put him up in his arms and blessed God, and said, Lord, now let us bow thy servants at heart and feet according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. Delight the likeness of Gentiles in the glory of my people ever. And skipping to verse 36, And there was one Anna.

In other words, if you take the H off the front and the H off the back, you have a Hannah. So put it on here, and if you take them off, you have Anna. There was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Samuel, of the tribe of Asa.

She was of a great age, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and she was a widow for about four score and four years. She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she came in that when she did, parents likewise, unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel.

Now, I'm going to do a very unorthodox thing. I'm going to ignore young people and talk to older people. There are three cults abroad in the land.

There are the cult of feminism, the cult of laymanism, and the cult of youthism. They're all cults, and they're all in Scripture. But in order to get along with friends and influence people, you're supposed to blow your nose like a trumpet and tell about the fine young people.

They're just like all the other young people since Adam's time. No better, no worse, about average. And as for knowing anything, the average young person doesn't know too much.

But when we get over this youthism cult, get back to Bible principles. For people went to church together. They didn't separate the old from the young, didn't ask how old they were and demand their birth certificate before you know where they were allowed to pray.

But everybody worshiped God together, and I think we need to get back to that. And any of you young people that may be listening to me, now if you get mad, you'll only have to repent and come and ask me to forgive you, or you might just as well shut up and be quiet. But I'll tell you something, you desperately need the older people.

And I don't say that because I'm now getting older, because I've taught that ever since I was old enough to hold a Bible. But I want to share with you what my life has discovered about these four old friends of God. There were some old friends of God, four of them.

I've talked briefly this afternoon, although I promise you it'll be quite long, about these four old friends. Well, who they were walking with God. It was Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth.

Now, we think of it as being hard to live for God in times like these. But I want you to know that God never missed a lounge for evil times. And my guess is we ought to stop kidding ourselves and say, if I had lived in the days of Christ, I'd have been a good Christian.

But I can't live now for Christ, this day of television, jet airplanes, and culture. I can't do it. If I'd lived in the days of the prophets, I should have.

But let me tell you that God never missed any lounge for evil times. In the Old Testament days, the greatest souls were the ones who came up out of the worst form. You couldn't think of any worse time than Enoch would have been, and yet Enoch walked with God and was not the God chosen.

Then there was Noah, and Noah, as the times got so bad and corrupt that God had destroyed the world, and Noah lived like shame, and yet Noah found grace and God's trust. Then there was Abraham, and look at his time. There was no revelation, no Bible, no hymn book, no church, no prophet, no preacher, no

evangelist, no anything.

And here up in Ur of the Chaldees, as tradition says, Abraham was an idol-maker, and yet the Spirit of God spoke to Abraham. He came true and became the father of the faithful. Hands don't make men good, but God does make men good.

Hands just provide the chance to send out the people. Well, and there was Moses. You know the rotten time that Moses lived in, and how God blessed him, and Elijah, that terrible period when they had that wicked king and that more wicked wife of his, Jezebel.

And then there was Elijah, and Elijah was the good God put into heaven in the chair of fire. Now, let nobody be discouraged about these times in which we live, and don't let anybody excuse themselves for living a shoddy Christian life in times like these, because we are not living in times anyhow, we're living in God. We've got to live on supper.

I don't know whether you've ever heard him, he's gone to heaven long, but he used to say that no Christian ever ought to live under the circumstances. The Christians ought to live, maybe in the middle of them, but they ought to live on top of them. But we're saying they live in the circumstances or under the circumstances.

Well, look at the times they had. There was Herod the king. He was king of Judea, and Israel was an occupied country, and the religion of Israel was at a low ebb.

It was divided between the Athenians and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and there was a corrupt priesthood, and there was nothing good, nothing to encourage anybody. The priests were all rotten, and yet here were four old men and women walking around on the earth just waiting to go. God's dear old friends.

And here they were, here were these two now, Zechariah and Elizabeth, and they had saved the corruption which is in the world by love, and they had stayed faithful in a mess of unbelievers. And they were both righteous before God. Don't let any good fundamentalist hear me say that, because he's a tall ship that can be brought through with a pail of water, because nowadays you're not supposed to say anybody's righteous.

But God said these two were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of God's blameless. Now, these are comparable times in which we live. They're pretty bad times.

Nobody except the liberal would say anything else, except they're anything but good times. Wicked men are God in the earth, and here's what he lives in, and all this revival on they say. And there are four dumb people who say that those that leave are revival times.

You know Buddhism is having a revival? Baha'ism is having a revival? Mohammedanism is having a revival? Shintoism is having a revival? Animism is having a revival? Judaism is having a revival? And the Roman Catholic Church is having a revival? If, by a revival, you mean a greatly stepped-up interest in religion, all religions of the world are having a revival partly because they can afford it. You know, when times get bad, Christianity languishes because we can't afford to carry it on. We can't have the big campaigns.

Nothing will cure a big campaign quicker than depression. A lot of people that are out, you know, they're the modern thingy, but just let depression come and they'll collapse overnight because it's the good money that's helping us to get on. The fact is, there's no revival going on anywhere in the right sense of the word.

There's just a lot of interest in religion. People are scared, and so they turn to religion, but not necessarily to Christ. Well, you and I can do one of two things.

We can either walk like Zechariah and Elizabeth in the middle of all this corruption and keep ourselves keen. We can, you know, we can do the opposite. We can, you know, we can save them for the diseases and benefits in the time in which we live.

We can accept it, accept it as normal, clap our hands and say, Oh, you've missed the boat. I've been told I've missed the boat, but I replied that I wasn't trying to catch that boat. Anyhow, that boat and a lot of other glasses can go on without me, and I'll be quite happy.

Well, we can conform to the religion of our times if we want to. I weigh 145 pounds, dripping wet. But I stand here to tell you that I'm a non-conformist, Christ-born, and a rebel, and I will not conform to the times.

Up to now, I've been able to get a hearing and refuse to conform to the times, but if the day ever comes when to conform to the times, and if Christ will have to go to be heard, then I'll go out and start where I started before, on the street corner, police there. But I won't conform to the times. They say you're supposed to do it.

They say, Don't you know we have the same message? But it's just different times we're living in. I know the voice of the serpent when I hear it. The fist of the serpent is in that, and I recognize it.

So, we can either conform or we can withdraw from the whole business and falter from such turnaways. Now, there's a place, even in times like these, for us to live where we can hear the voice of God speaking to us. We don't have to be queer, and we don't have to go to a monastery.

We can do it right in the middle of the world in which we live. That's where I am living. Now, you can live right in Jerusalem that thirty-three years later crucified the Son of God, and yet they live right in a wrong world.

Now, living right in a wrong world means that you are going to have a lot of irritation. The fish that goes along with the current hasn't any trouble with the current, but as soon as it gets the other way, the current gets sore at it. And just as long as you go the way the wind goes, everybody will say you're very fine, and they'll commend you for being deeply religious.

But if you decide to go God's way instead of the way the wind blows, they'll say that you're useless, or that something has happened to you that you're not quite all this, or you're a fanatic. So, you can go along with the times, or you can be like Zechariah and Elizabeth and refuse to go along with the times. And personally, I've decided long time ago I've decided that.

You know, here's a funny thing, people. You ought to find this out. Some of you young people ought to hear this.

They say that if you don't conform to the times and find a common ground for getting along with everybody, that nobody listens to you. Well, the more I non-conform, the more people want to hear me. I don't know why.

Even if they are cowards themselves, they'd rather admire somebody who isn't, I guess. So, let me tell you, I'm telling you, if you want to be heard, don't lick anybody's palm, and don't follow after anybody. Stand out for God.

Dare to stand out for God. But remember one thing. If you're going to be good when you're old, you've got to start when you're young.

Zechariah and Elizabeth didn't suddenly get lost in their family. That is the result of a long lifetime of walking with God. You're going to be ready to be dull when you're old.

You're going to have to be ready to live when you're young. And if you expect the arms of the Lord to encourage you when you're old, you're going to have to keep the arms of the Lord when you're young. So, remember that.

Now, we conform to God's people. I love God's people. I do.

I love them. I don't always agree with them. Even when I come to camp meetings, I don't agree with half I see and hear.

But I'm willing to put up with a lot of things because they've got people. And now that we've got people, just like when you've got a family, you don't agree with everything your kids do. And there are times when you wish that you could get away from them, first of all, but when you get to the railroad station, you want to come back.

You know how that is. But you love them because they're your people. I don't agree with my people, but always, but they're my people.

So is God's children. They're my people. They've been my people now for a good many years.

Some of them are in heaven and some of them are on earth, but they're my people. And if you mingle with God's people, who do you mingle with when you're back home? I know you're around mingling with the Lord's people. Yes, but when you get home, who do you mingle with? Who are your friends? Now, there's a place I enjoy here.

I chose to greet and joy comes with mercy. And if you want to be like this old couple, Elizabeth and Zechariah, you're going to have to practice the presence of God. You're going to have to find a secret place.

You're going to have to go there often. And you're going to have to turn off the television and the radio and get your Bible out. Dust off that Bible.

Get it out there and learn to read it. And learn it all over again. Well, that's that.

Now, where were those two fine old people? And do you know, here's the thing I want to straightly stress. They had fruit in old age. They were very old.

It says, well stricken in years, and yet he was born to them that day, prophet of prophets John the Baptist. They had fruit in old age. And the Bible promises that we'll have fruit when we're older.

I don't believe ever there ought to be a time in anybody's life when he leaves ten pounds and doesn't get any fruit. I think that we ought to keep on bearing fruit until we die. It may be that because of physical or mental weaknesses, we might not be able to carry the old load.

That's another matter, and that the man retire while he's retired. That's all that. But you oughtn't quit.

You ought to retire to serve God, not to quit. Well, now, let's look at these other two. Here was Simeon and Anna.

They weren't in relation to Anna, so far as I know. They just were Christians around the temple there. But here was Simeon.

Now, while the Pharisees lived like righteous sepulchers, and the Sadducees, the liberals of the day, spread their evil run beneath, and their lawyers quibbled about words, here was a good old man who was walking his job right in the middle of it. It's a wonderful thing to be able to walk in the rain and not get wet. It's wonderful to be able to walk through a cold wind and come out clean.

It's wonderful to live in a corrupt age and be uncorruptible. It's wonderful to live in a bad age and be good, to live in an unbelieving age and still keep your faith. I preached to them.

They were kind enough to ask me to preach the anniversary sermon at Houghton College here not long ago. Houghton College, 75 years old. 75 years old.

I was too nice to tell them that now I could be a little older by a few months, but I preached the anniversary. Why did they ask me to preach the anniversary? I'll never know, but they did, and I preached it. So when I got up to preach, I said, Well, I suppose that I ought to add my congratulations to the rest of the congratulations that you're receiving by cable, telegram, letter, and personal conversation.

And I said, I want to congratulate you, but I don't want to congratulate you for the reasons you think. I'm not going to congratulate you for being 75 years old, because that's nothing to live 75 years. All you have to do to live 75 years is just don't die.

You know, that's all. There's nothing to it. If you just don't die, then you'll live 75 years.

There's nothing to that. There are lots of things older than 75 years. There are mud puddles in the wall that were wallowing around there before Houghton was ever heard of.

And there are crows that tell me living in the trees. The poet talks about the century-living crow that grows old and dies among your branches. And there's the coral trees out on the coast that were out there when Abraham walked in from Ur of the Chaldeans.

So it isn't a great thing that you should be 75 years old. But I said, let me tell you this, when I set the conditions from 75 years ago to now, the change in philosophy, the change in politics, the world wars, the depression, the liberalism, the modernism, the upside-downism, and all of the wars and the changes that took place, and I said, let's ensure all of these changes, hope in life, good and excellent, but it's in faith of our fathers, the Holy Faith. After 75 years, I said, accept my congratulations.

Not that you're 75 years old, but you've kept true to God for 75 years. Now, that's what you congratulate people about. Pharaoh was a good old man, and he walked with his God that said, Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem.

As this God had gone up and down the streets of Jerusalem, examining and testing and searching, suddenly he cried, Behold, there's a man in Jerusalem. His name was King. God had found him.

He was just and devout, righteous and merciful, waiting for the constellation of Israel. That is, he was a convinced believer in the prophecies of Scripture. Now, we don't preach prophecy anymore.

Mussolini knocked the crops out from under, and the Second World War shut all these prophets up, and I don't know what they've done with their crops. Probably burned them or ripped them someplace, but I still believe in prophecy. I still think Jesus is coming, and when Khrushchev mounts the muscles of hell and begins to crow, I recognize I heard Hitler crow years ago, and Mussolini, and Tolstoy, and all that stuff.

Where they're crowing now, I don't know. But I can guess, and I'm going to guess where Khrushchev is going to crow one of these days. And I'm not worried about that, because I believe in prophecy.

I believe in the sovereignty of God, and I'm not afraid to kill him. I believe it's a sovereign God running his world. I believe he's running it, as I said yesterday, according to his eternal purpose, and I don't think anybody is going to catch him unaware.

I don't think he'll notice it. You, that's that hunk of metal into the air. That's the thickness that God would greatly surprise you.

The God who knows everything that can be known, and has known it, and does, and one ever does ask, know all that can be known? That poor little thickness. It's like a half-headed boy playing with marbles out on a muddy road. And God Almighty who made the heaven and earth and all the things that are therein, and tossed the sun up into the sky, and the stars to the four corners of the night.

That God who makes the galaxy beyond galaxy, and then everybody went into a pillow fight, even in Washington. You know, they had to get their smelling salts out, because somebody threw a little hunk of metal up into the air. How serious can you get? God's still on the throne, my brothers, and he's still the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph.

And he's still running his world, thickness to no thickness. Well, it had been revealed to this man, it had been revealed to him, that he wasn't a guy. He was a just man and a devolved man, and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

The Holy Ghost was upon him. I wrote an article called, How to be Filled with the Holy Ghost, published in Christian Life magazine. The magazine makes me sick, and I tell the editor every time I see him, but I wrote, I thought somebody would read it, and I couldn't read it from the witness.

So, he comes right out with a letter, a long letter. And he tried to prove that he couldn't be filled with the Holy Ghost. I never replied to the letter.

He wanted to know if I had seen him. Well, I never replied to the letter for about two months. Then he wrote me another letter.

He sent me a copy of the original letter, and he said, I'd like to have the answer to it. I deserve an answer. I should have an answer.

So, I finally sat down, and I said, I didn't refuse to reply, because I don't know what you think I was discourteous, but there are some things too sacred to argue about. And I said, my relation to the Holy Ghost is too personal and too sacred for me to argue with a man that believes as you do about the Holy Ghost. And this man went on to show in about a page and a half that being filled with the Holy Ghost was an unrealizable ideal.

He said, it's just an ideal God has set up there, but you never can reach it. Then I said, I hope that I may in therapy conclude my letter by saying that if, he said, I feel, you would spend as much time trying to be filled with the Holy Ghost as you do trying to prove you can't be, the Church of Christ might come out of her boulders. Sincerely yours, A. W. Church.

But he hasn't replied. I don't know whether he ever will. But this man was a good man, and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

In an awful time of corruption, the Holy Ghost was upon him, and he came by the Spirit into the temple, the only way to come, and it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost. We are living in times now when people are afraid to say the Holy Ghost revealed something to me, because they will send for the dogs at me and have them put away. Well, they say, you've got your Bible now.

You've had the Holy Ghost revealed. Well, they had their Bible, too, remember? They had everything from Genesis to Malachi. And the man's communion was perfectly familiar with the Old Testament scriptures, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and all of the prophets down to Malachi with Genesis.

So what we need better is not less Bible, but we need more revelation. We ought to study the Bible as much or more than we do now, but we need revelation. You can't have revelation without the Bible, but you can study the Bible a lifetime and never have revelation.

The Holy Ghost has revealed, too. You can't get it from going around in your eyes on a text. The Word of God you have in you is only the shell of truth.

The truth is in the Spirit. The Spirit has to reveal the truth, too, and we can be students of the Word all our lives and let not know the truth, and never have a revelation of the Holy Ghost to our hearts once. This old man had, and God had honored him here, and put him out here, this old man, one of the fine old men of the scriptures.

What a fine old chap he was. He was the salt of the earth and the seed of survival. And men like him kept Christa, kept Judaism, from rotting completely away before the Lord came.

Well, then, now let's go to Hannah. I want to call her Hannah, but her name's Anna. She was over a hundred years old, and it said she departed not from the temple.

One version says she never got far from the temple. I love that, that dear old soul. Anybody came around and said, I've got a letter for Hannah.

Why have you framed her? Well, I don't know exactly, but you go down to the temple and wait around. She'll be there. But she never got far from the temple.

You framed her there all right. Right around the temple, he said to the dear old soul in Chicago that she lived near the church and she could see him, and every light went on, she came to service. She was too old and puzzled to know what was going on.

Maybe it was only a board meeting. But then I showed up. She was never far from the temple.

Since that, she'd come here and take him to a rest home, and she comes up to church. But as long as she was able to navigate under her own power, just let the light flick on in the church and she was there. Never this far from the temple.

All of these old abbots that love the church, don't you? I do. These old abbots. They get old.

If I see some of you, God bless you, if there's no old, only I see my very little youth. But you're getting old. But you're not far from the temple.

You're starting to hang around. Young people look at you as an old relic. Think of yourself.

They'd want to hang you up on the wall along with a duffel and a spinning wheel and an old fuzzy whip. You belong to another age. But you're not far from the temple.

You're around when the first benediction, or the first amen, starts. You're there. Hannah wasn't far from the temple, says she.

And she served God and she didn't miss anything. And when they brought the little Jesus in, Hannah was there. You know, if she'd been like Duncan, told him to come to church at weddings and funerals, she'd have missed it.

But she was there every time she could get there. So she was there. No matter when Jesus had been brought in, Hannah would have been around.

If she hadn't been there when he came, she'd have been there before he got away. Because she was an inhabitant of the temple. She was a bird that laid her nest near the house of God.

And I love that. Well, these are the four old friends of God. You old people, I want you to take comfort.

You younger people, I want you to take warning. Here are these four old people. Well, what have the years brought to you? Now, the years have gone by.

You're not old, but you're older. There are no old people, just older people. Now, there were old people there, but not now.

Well, now somebody will say, well, that tells you I've grown older and wiser. Well, I hope you have, and it's possible. And these four older friends, they have grown wiser as they've grown older.

But you know you can grow older without growing wiser. Ever think of that? We imagine that we grow wise naturally. No, no, you don't.

In order to grow wiser as you grow older, you've got to be a student of life. And most Christians aren't a student of life. They're not students of life at all.

They just gossip and don't read anything but the newspaper, and read his digest, and only read the jokes and read his digest. And they only read the funnies in the paper, or the murders and rapes. They don't care much about anything else.

Yet they're Christians. They have family plans or they can't leave them. But they're not students of life.

And yet when they get old, they say, I'm older and wiser. Don't be so sure of it, Papa, because it may be you're just older. Well, well, well, it may be you're older and wiser, but it could be that you're not wiser, just older.

To be older and wiser, you've got to be followers of the light. You've got to have to walk in the light. You know, some people lose their place in their lives because they have life and don't walk in it, and they're bogged down there and never get one inch further.

So when you're bogged down one inch and go off a little cross, you never get beyond that. And they say, I'm older and wiser. No, you're just older.

You have a facility to walk in the light, and the result is the light has dimmed down. And now, you say, but my conscience doesn't bother me. That's because you're getting old, and your conscience is getting numb.

There's a lot of things you need to have you don't have anymore because you're losing your feeling to some degree as you get older. Well, if we're going to be like this as we get older, we're going to have to be disciples of Christ. That is only use of Christ.

Most Christians just accept Christ, and then sit down and sit away some. Can't do that. That's why I don't believe much in modern evangelism.

They're Christ-susceptive all the time. I want to accept Christ. Then you go out and do the things from that time right on.

And there's nothing you won't do. When I accept Christ, I accept him as my Lord and Savior and Teacher and Master. And I'm to be a disciple of Christ.

And if I'm in the school of Christ a long time, I'll be older and wiser. But if I just accepted Christ somewhere back there and got rid of him, well, I'll just be older, not wiser. And then, to be older and wiser, we've got to learn from our own mistakes.

Most people can't do that. That's a trick, I tell you, my friend, to learn from your own mistakes. Most people refuse to admit their mistakes.

They won't, they won't admit them. You've got to learn from your own mistakes. And it's very hard.

I admit it's hard. It's hard. Especially it's hard before you're wise.

Even if you've been mistaken. You ever think of that? I mean, it's hard, but you've got it to do. And then, if you're going to be wiser as you get older, you've got to take an attitude toward life that is reverent and serious and humble.

You've got to become a mystic as you get older. I'm afraid of these hard, old Christians that are all dollars and cents. You've got to take a reverent attitude toward life, serious and humble.

And toward God you've got to take an attitude believing in the good and the wicked, of course. Now, if you have lived in the life, obeyed God, loved all God's words for God's sake, obeyed the scriptures, done what you were told, prayed a lot, read the Bible regularly, and stopped messing with yourself, maybe you've gotten wiser as you've gotten older. Hannah was.

Hannah. And so was Kenyon, and so was Zechariah, and Elizabeth. They were the very wise, old people.

And you know, when I think of my Christian life as a young person, you know who helped me? Not any young person ever helped me when I was young or didn't help me. They wouldn't know how. They couldn't.

I don't blame them. They just couldn't. But I think that some of the dear, old people around the local streets, they've been helped to know how.

Their memories are etched. Fr. Dr. Truman mentioned one Fr.

Lohr. Now, Fr. Lohr was a little bit clear, but he was clear over on the happy side of things.

He said that he was God's Daddy. He used to get up and dress fine and say, I'm God's Daddy, and the Daddy that takes care of these gardens. He said, I'm not worried.

He said, I couldn't get sick of a lot of things. And to say that he was well, he'd jump up and down. And he must have been in his eighties when I moved.

The Lord took him off the head and set him in, and he went over there as far as I know well now. He was perfectly right. He was a clear, but he wasn't a clear.

I can stand a man who's clear on the happy side. And he was. And there were a lot of others around there, old men and all.

He used to raise his feet up to heaven and pray, and he'd say, say, I don't want to go out of there. The beauty of a mistress, the beauty of St. Francis, St. Augustine, something beautifully wonderful, and far away, he'd look you right in the eyes. I remember him.

I don't remember the kids, you know, or the wild cats. I remember these old fellows. And I was only myself, it's funny.

But I learned from them. If you're wise and old, there's some say, I've grown as a tree grows. And I hope you have.

But not necessarily. Because you don't grow automatically. You only grow as you follow Christ and carry the cross and meet the conditions of growth.

And you know what the conditions of growth are, they're three. Life, that is exposure to the truth. Faith, that is the presence of the Son of God.

And mercy, that is the child of the Spirit. That's the only way you grow. But then remember, there are other ways of making progress besides growing.

When there's progress, sometimes that's only one figure's feet growing. Other figures' feet have to do with the war, a war is to be won. And if you've been, if you don't have any power of control, if you're not fighting, you're never out of that old, very tired from the battle, brother.

You've got your physical needs, you can't think anymore. Well, you ought to have a faith to turn around the world. To turn around the world.

And one can find, life is strong as a dreamer. Instead of progress through growth, it's a dreamer. And the dreamer may be colorless and dark and only asking for grips and steadfastness and ability to suffer and patience and faith, but it's a dream.

We write poetry about the dream, the Christian life as a dreamer, and it's often written poetry, because we said it's a good music, it's singable. But when you're living the dream, it isn't singable at all. You get grips in your shoes and stressors up your shoes and pounds of stones out of your shoes, and you get lusty and you join these dreams.

You just look up to God and say, God, I'm on my way. I hope I make it. I trust you.

And go ahead. And the Lord will bless you and will curse you, and after a while, you'll get a new start and go on. But don't let them imagine the Christian life is all just truth.

It isn't. It's not all a bowl of clay. There's a whole lot in the Christian life that isn't a bowl of clay.

It isn't a continuous truth, and there isn't a lot of time. Christianity now is a second Christ and then on Christmas. That's Christianity of the day.

Christianity's an endless Christmas, according to the modern, unbeliever's way of looking at things. Unbelievers, I mean evangelical unbelievers. Well, if you want to go and get along with these four or five people, there's some things you've got to learn.

Now, you've been traveling, and I want to ask you a question. You've been traveling a good many years, some of you, but have you been traveling in a straight line or have you been traveling in a circle? Out in the state of Illinois, it was perfectly flat. You could place checkers all over somewhere over the landscape.

We went out one time for a little ride with some friends in the country, and we saw a beautiful sight, a red vine, a wagon, and a farmer with a straw hat on, working around there. And I said, isn't that a little romantic? That's beautiful. We drove on and made a few friends, and we soon came to another red vine with a man out in front working alongside the wagon.

I said, look, there's finally quite a lot of life out there. There's proof of uniformity. And we drove on for a while, made a few more friends, and saw another red vine and a wagon.

Out in front, the farmer working back, and in the last century, my first call, I said to the driver, do you know what we're doing? We're driving in a circle. I said, this is the same three vines. These three vines are all the same vine.

You haven't been making any progress at all. You're lost. And he said, that last year in Illinois, you know, everything's just like everything else.

Flat. No more bumps and digs to carry around, like they have around here. And that's the way it was.

Well, I remember the story I heard when I was young of a wooden-legged man who had one wooden leg, and he got a little absorbed in a little too much mountain dew, and he started home in one of these little towns. It could have been out here in Newfoundland, I don't know, but the sidewalks were made out of wood, and one of them was a, was a, no, there was a hole in the thing. There was a knothole was in it, and he got a wooden leg and he got up in the knothole and walked all in.

And one of the, one of the ways, one of the, and the son of you, God bless you, and don't call me now. You can bite the feet of God and carry the Bible, but you don't call me. You sit up there making a wooden leg in the knothole, and you come to camp once a year, you go to church, you come to missionary conventions, but you haven't made any progress.

You're just waiting there. You're walking around with a wooden leg, traveling in circles. That ain't, it ain't my intention, but I wonder if the blood of atonement means more to us than it used to mean.

I wonder if we've conquered that bad habit. How about it, Grandpa? When you were young, you had a temple, and you used to bring it on your I.C. grandfather. But you've had 40 years to get your temple sanctified.

Have you been sanctified, or you still get mad when things don't go right? I don't mind telling you this. I've got no confidence in a Christian who gets mad. If he gets mad, he isn't sanctified.

If he gets mad, he doesn't have virtue. And honey, I have no compliment from people at birth. If they're ever prepared to pray, haven't got cleansed from their nasty senses, they're not making progress at all.

They're giving you a tongue. Mother, what about it? Years ago, I preached over there, and I told some of you then that what you need to do is put your tongue out for all you do, so you can have that much clear thought, and you'll do better. You'll get back home and stop talking, and you'll grow in grace.

Have you done it? Well, you've still got what you used to do. Well, we've got to get the strange ways out of our lives and get purified. You know, brethren, this is an awful thing to say, and I say it often to say it, but I'm quite an example of the human being, and I have never believed that in order to be a good Christian, you have to stop looking at things.

If you know you're nothing, you're nothing, you're nothing, you're kind of a monkey Christian that I don't go for. I believe the Lord sent me into the world to study the Lord, pray, help people, and have looked the King over. And you know what I've noticed? I've noticed so many Christians as they get older, they get careless.

But I've not only stopped dressing decently, but they get careless in their Christian lives, and they get indifferent. And I've noticed that as we get older we get gluttonous and clownish. And there's nothing quite so awful as a clownish old man.

You know, the young fellas cracking jokes, that's different. An old fella, he ought to know better. The son of God standing down on his old bald head, he ought to be ready for heaven, he ought to be able to take off like a helicopter without any wear and tear on him, right straight off into the heavens above.

Instead of that, we find a little clown hanging around, a teasing old fella. Had a teasing old man in that church in Chicago. He died and he didn't have no attention to him.

He died, and he was so teasing that when the kids made any noise he'd get up and walk down the aisle and stare at them. And they were scared of the old fella, and that he was quite a Christian, you know. They're noisy Christians.

But they were teasing. Some get greedy when they get old. Isn't that awful? Listen, getting greedy about your money when you get old reminds me of what happened out in a prison somewhere in the West.

They had a bunch of fellas around there sentenced to die. They were in death row and they died. And they came to them and they said, now you've got a lot of books here.

Here's a list of books. And you can have any book you want. And one of them says a book he wants to read.

One who had four or five days to live says this book. And what do you suppose the name of the book was? Out of a boy from the states in England. He was going to die in four or five days, but he wanted to read up on his English.

So at least he would die dramatically. How completely silly English is. Now it's just as bad to be greedy when you're old.

You can't take that along, Pop. Why don't you let us do your mission? Why don't you give us the work of God? You'll come in in one piece. We'll drag you and pick you up and slide you down into oil or whatever there is in those days.

And when you go back, you're going to get treated just exactly the same. You'll just be in one piece. There'll be nothing you can take with you.

So how perfectly silly to try to pile up your money when you're old. Yet I found greedy old people. Doctor, I know women all don't do any of that, folks.

But, uh, well, what can we do, fam? Just mourn the waste of years. That's my, that's about the only grief I have is the waste of years. People think I'm a very busy man.

I get letters almost half the letters I get that say, I know you're a very busy man. Oh, if they knew how much I love, and if they know how lazy I've been down the years. I'm used over it.

Let mourn the waste of years. And you young people, take example from this, and don't waste yours. And pretend to take advantage of every opportunity to look at Moses and Jacob, and how they had no chance.

And yet, they grabbed hold of the least little bit of information they could get and made good on it. So take a stumbling block to you, to old professors who aren't living right. Back in your home church, when you were a little older too, nobody in it under 50, you would say, how many did you do for them young people that's going to the dogs? You don't know that some of them started to go to heaven and saw you and turned off to the dogs.

I wonder how many of did you do for them? don't know that some of them started to and saw and turned You don't know that some started to go to heaven and turned off to the dogs. I wonder how many did you them young Other people would be glad to live in the better enough, in the 60s. Some people live so the only thing they can do in the world is die.

And the greatest thing they can do in the world is to die. Others live so that people agree when they die. They were darker.

They weren't old. But boy, they could chew up a new needle. Chew what was sold, and trade what was sold tomorrow, and help the poor, and pass out clothing to the poor, and one day something hit him, he died.

And they gathered around and they said, We can't give her up. She's indispensable. And they sent for Peter and explained the circumstance, and Peter said, Well, I didn't think there were any indispensables, but look who's here.

So Peter said, Get out of here, everybody. And he laid his hands on him to roll him from the bed. He went back to a needle.

She was so useful, they just couldn't let her die. But some people are so useless, that the only thing they can do is the church, is the phone. Oh, man.

If we're older, let's try to walk with these four. If we're younger, let's try to throw it in. But if we get older, we'll be like them.

Let's go. Oh, Lord Jesus, Thou ageless, timeless, immortal One. Time hath not laid its hand on thee, and the years have exacted no tribute from thee.

Thou remaineth in thy years for evermore. We thank Thee that in the very near future Thou art going to impart to us the immortality which is Thine. And we shall be glorified and so delightfully entreated as Thou art.

And Thou art going to give us of the same deathless, immortal body and mind that relished it without its past. Oh, Christ, prepare us for that day. And we can save us from bogging down and getting sulky in silence.

Help us to pray to our God to be as fresh and warm and vigorous as the old temple of our body and heart. Forgive us for our wasted years. Forgive us for the people that we have turned aside by our conduct.

And may we pray that from now on, everybody will, when they see us, want to turn to our Savior because they saw us live. Bless us, we pray, through the rest of this afternoon. We will assert, we will spoil the discourse, touch the mind of the troubled, warm all our spirits together, and greatly bless us.

We ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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