

Let Us Go on Unto Perfection

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon calls believers to surrender their own interests and desires and trust in God's sovereignty and mercy in order to overcome the cloud of concealment and achieve perfection.

Duration: 45:34

Scripture: Hebrews 5:12 - 6:1

Topics: "Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for Christians to fully surrender themselves to God and strive for a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Him. He describes the average Christian as being stuck halfway between where they were and where they should be, neither fully embracing the moral standards of the world nor reaching the glorious peak of spiritual growth. The speaker quotes Hebrews 5:11-14, which highlights the importance of progressing from being spiritual infants who rely on milk to mature believers who can handle solid food. He encourages listeners to leave behind the basic principles of the Christian faith and strive for perfection in their walk with God.

Transcript

The first verse of the Sixth. We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing we are dull of hearing. For when for the time that has elapsed since your conversion, you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again.

What be the first principles of the oracles of God? And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unfillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of youth have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. I think that's as far as I'll read. If I can't read it all, I'll have to stop somewhere.

And I'll stop with those words, two, four, six of them. Let us go on unto perfection. There was an old man, nobody knows who he was.

He lived about 700 years ago, and he wrote a book which has come down to us. And he divided Christians into four classes. He said Christians may be divided into these four classes.

The common Christian, the special Christian, the singular Christian, and the perfect Christian. He said from being a common Christian, you go on to be a special Christian. From being a special Christian, you go on to being singular.

Then from being singular, you go on unto perfection. But he was careful to say that full perfection is never reached in this life. He said that we enter the general area of perfection, but that some imperfection clings until the day when our Lord appears to glorify us.

Then we'll be as he is, and completely perfect. But he said that there was a type of Christian that might be called, from the human standpoint, at least a perfect Christian. He said that most Christians were common, and that's what I want to talk about tonight a little.

The common Christian, the common barnyard variety. I want to point out that the word common means of ordinary rank, quality, or ability, not distinguished by superiority of any kind, following customary ways. Now, does that describe you? As a believer, you're saved, you know that.

But you're ordinary, and you have no outstanding abilities or qualities, not distinguished by spiritual superiority at all, just following the customary ways of the Church. Now, I'll leave it to you whether it describes you or not, but I have observed a lot, and I do observe as well as pray, and I find that most Christians are mediocre. Mediocre is a word that we use a lot without knowing what it means, and mediocre means halfway up between the valley and the peak.

It does mean halfway between earth and heaven. It means halfway between where we used to be and where we ought to be. Now, that's why I would describe the average Christian.

And you might as well know it, the average Alliance Christian, and you might as well know it, the average Christian here on the ground. You're halfway up between where you were and where you ought to be. It means stuck partway up the peak.

There is the great shining peak up yonder, and there is the dark valley below. And you are far above the moral standards of the simple world in the valley, but you're also far below the shining saint with his adoration and his glory. Now, is this the best Christ offers to us, my friends? Is this mediocre, undistinguished, halfway up the peak business? Is this the best that the Lord offers? I do not think so.

It's our own fault. Why is it, then, that most of us are undistinguished spiritually, morally above the world, but spiritually beneath the saints? Well, I want to tell you that it's because when we hear a call to take up the cross and follow toward the hills, we begin to bargain with God like a huckster. When there's a sermon preached or a book read, the gist of which is, take thy cross and follow, go on unto perfection, why, people begin to ask questions and bargain with God.

They say, what will it cost? What will it cost me to be that kind of Christian? What will it cost me in time? You know, I don't have much time. What will it cost me in money? You know, I have a family. What will it cost me in labor? You know that I work hard.

What will it cost me in friendships? I don't want to give up my friends. As soon as you hear a man looking in the face of Jesus Christ and saying, Master, I'd like to follow thee all the way, but it's too costly, you have a poor, mediocre wretch on your hands. Then the question that's asked, is it safe? Christians want to be safe.

This generation is the weakest that I have known, and the weakest, probably, that we've ever had since our forefathers landed at Plymouth Rock. Everybody's bleating about security. We're hanging on to the neck of Uncle Sam as a baby hangs to the neck of its mother, whimpering and bleating.

We want security, but there's no security when you have a cross on your shoulder, my friend, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die at a bite of the loan. It's not security God offers us, but a cross, and the cross is a place to die. Then when you hear anybody talk about pressing on, people ask, is it convenient? Is it convenient? There are Christians who live their lives, their Christian lives, at their own convenience.

They'll hardly ever leave their own convenience. I want to say to you that no spiritual advance was ever made at anybody's convenience, for the cross never, never was a convenient instrument, and nobody ever found the cross convenient. Nobody.

And the judgment of God will not be convenient, and there's never been found a convenient way to die. And he calls us up the hill toward the shining peak yonder, and if we stop and say, Lord, could I do it conveniently, or would it upset the pattern of my life? Shame on us, we're not worthy to be called by his name. And then there are those still weaker that never grew up spiritually at all.

They say, is it fun? We want to know, is it fun to follow the Lord? And there are some of these weak sisters, and you know there are weak sisters of the male sex, too. There are old maids that are masculine, that is, the doctor said it's a boy, but he had his fingers crossed. They really are not men.

They're just halfway in between, and there's an awful lot that, well, it's fun to serve Jesus. I haven't found it so, brother. I haven't found it so.

I've found it a fight and a battle and a labor and a struggle. Joy, yes, joy and tears of joy, but I haven't found it fun. And if you're looking for fun in God's name, why aren't you bold enough and courageous enough and honest enough to leave the church and religion and quit hanging around? If you're looking for fun, go to the world.

They'll give you fun until they bury you and put a slab over you. But if you want to serve Christ, you don't come to Christ looking for fun. Jesus Christ, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross.

But the joy was before him. We want the fun. Is it fun? And then other weaklings, still weaker, say, is it popular? They want to be with the approved group, and they won't follow unless it's approved.

They don't want to stand alone. They're too weak to stand alone. They want to escape being laughed at.

Who laughed at a Christian except a fool? And who would be so weak as to be afraid of the laughter of fools which the Old Testament says is like the crackling of thorns burning in a fire? Well, do you know why we're so slow about going on? Why we're like this? You have need that you might be taught. Why do not God's people bounce right out and start going and going and rising and mounting and soaring and climbing? Why do they have to be petted and coddled and looked after and followed around and held up? Why? Well, they've never got their legs under them. They've never decided.

The faith of God is turned away from them. You know, brethren, that is as they think it is. You see, Christ made a full atonement for it.

There isn't anything between the Christian and God, nothing. There is nothing because Christ made a full atonement, and his atonement was so perfect and complete that he turned all that was against us into something that's for us. He turned all our demerit into merit.

He turned everything that was on the debt side of the ledger into the credit side of the ledger. He put everything that was against us over on our side. That was the wonder of the atonement in Christ Jesus.

God's faith is not turned away, it is turned toward us, because in Christ, Christ is the manward side of God. And when Christ came, God was turned our way, and the faith of God is turned our way. But there is a cloud that hides him from us, a cloud, so that we walk in the shadows and walk by a kind of wobbly faith that we call faith, but the faith of God is hidden.

Now, why? Because there is between the average Christian and God a cloud of concealment. He tells himself that he's born again, and he reads books telling him that when the Lord comes, he will go zooming right off to heaven like that, and will reign over seven cities. He can't reign over his temper down here, but he expects to be a mayor over seven cities somewhere.

He read that in the gospel, and he thinks it means he, but it doesn't. Why is it? I say it's because there is a cloud of concealment between us and God. On any day, the sun is shining.

Every day the sun is shining, but sometimes it never gets through. Sometimes day follows day, and day follows day in Chicago, and you never see the sun. There are places where they tell me it's still worth weeks to go by without seeing the sun, and yet the sun is there all the time.

There is a cloud of concealment. Some time ago, I got in an airplane over to Guadalupe Field in New York City. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and of course, still lots of daylight left.

But there was no daylight, and there hadn't been daylight in New York, just muddy rain all day long, and it's still raining. And after everybody had got on board, and they fastened their seatbelts, and were ready to take off, a friendly, smiling captain swaggered out and stood and relaxed and talked to us. It was not a nice day to fly, so he wanted to make us land lovers feel comfortable.

And here's what he said. He said, now it's raining, but he said we'll be in Chicago in a little over two hours. And he said, in just 15 minutes we'll be into the sunshine.

He said, just be quiet, just wait. It's raining now, and it's dark, but in 15 minutes we'll be into the sunshine. So there was a revving up of motors, and the usual bounce and wobble, and then smooth, and we took off.

And in less than 15 minutes, the bright sun was shining down on us, and beneath us was all that mess of rain and mud and smog and smoke and all the rest. But we were into the sunshine. The sun had been there all the time, but there was a cloud of concealment between us and the sun.

Now, my dear friends, the holiest saint that ever lived, the happiest saint that ever lived, didn't have any God any nearer than you have him. But the trouble is, there's a cloud of concealment between you and God, where you say, what do you mean, Mr. Dozier? Well, I'll spell it out for you then. Let me spell it out.

What do I mean by this cloud? Well, I mean a cloud of pride, for instance, and stubbornness. Well, that gets in people's way. People are proud, and it becomes a cloud over them, and the sun shines on their

heads, but it can't get through.

It can't get through. And then there's a cloud of stubbornness. Some people are just plain mules, and nobody can do anything with them.

You can't push them around. They're always on the defensive, always, and at the cloud. And then there's self-will.

Some people are sweet as honey as long as they're having their own way, but they turn into sour grapes as soon as they're opposed. That's self-will. And then there's ambition, even religious ambition.

And then there's anything that I claim for myself. Anything that I say is mine, get between me and God immediately. Anything that I claim is, say, that's mine, that's a cloud of concealment, and it shuts out the face of God from me.

And nothing will bring that face into full focus. Nothing will drive this cloud away. Not prayer, not fasting, not faith, not anything, until I have given that up to God and said, God, I don't own a thing in the wide world.

Everything belongs to thee. And then self-love is another thing that gets in the way. Self-love and self-gratulation and self-admiration.

You admire yourself. Sister, young lady, you're good-looking, and the trouble with you is you know it, and you tiddle out about it, but it's in your way nevertheless. I'm just thinking what Mother Nature will do to you, honey.

I'm just thinking what Mother Nature will do to you. You're slim as a willow now and pretty as a picture. If you give Mother Nature time, and she'll make you bulge where you don't want to bulge, and she will put wrinkles where not all that you can buy in the drugstore will take them away, and she'll make you sag, and she'll do things to you that are not kind, and you'll lose all that.

And if all you have is your good looks, God help you, woman, you'll be a pauper in short time. Mother Nature will rob you of everything you stand for, and everything you have and love and live for. Then there are men.

You've got your muscles and your biceps and your shoulders and your athletic cups and all the rest. You're somebody. I've often said that any ordinary blue-nosed mule from the hills of Kentucky can kick harder than Floyd Patterson or Andrew Johnson.

And why should I compete with a mule on his terms? If I want to compete with a mule, I'll compete up in the intellectual realm or in the spiritual realm. I can beat him hands down. But if all I have is muscle, he's got more muscle than I have, and I'm number two to an ordinary mule.

Now listen, young fellow, you're proud of your muscle, and you like to go around unconsciously showing your profile. The day will be when you lose your teeth and your profile will collapse. I mean it, I mean it.

In God's name, is that all you've got? If that's all you've got, you're a pauper. Time and Nature will take it all away and leave you a pauper in the end. And yet you've got your self-admiration.

Now get between you and God, and it's a cloud over your head, and you admire yourself. And then there's money. Some people are covered with a green canopy, and they can't see God.

Green bills between them and God. And some have friends that are in the way, and some have positions. Now, why is it that it takes us so long to get rid of this cloud of concealment, and sweep it away and get the sun shining, and get up to peak towards the top? Well, it isn't God's fault, and it isn't God's will.

God wills that his children should grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He wills that we should go on to perfection. He wills that we should wholly be, the old song says.

And he wills that we should be Christians going on unto perfection. And why don't we? Well, you see, we like ourselves too well. We struggle to keep up a good front.

Some people pity seekers when they come to an altar. I don't pity them, as a rule, because they're a struggle. Some say, Oh, look at that.

Isn't that beautiful? Oh, dear, isn't that beautiful, that struggle? You know why they're struggling? They're fighting God. And it's never a good sight to see anybody fighting God, never. They're trying to keep up a good front.

They don't want to surrender. They don't want people to know how little they are, and how useless, and how small. They don't want anybody to peek into the poverty of their own heart.

They want to keep up a good front. We Americans pay millions and billions of dollars yearly to keep up a front. Now, you tear the front down, you have a man, he's a poor tramp in his spirit, in his mind, in his heart.

And then we try to hide that inward state, and disguise our poverty, and preserve our reputation at any cost, and keep some authority for ourselves. We want to have a little authority around. We don't want to give it up.

God wants you to take all authority out of your hands, so you don't have any authority left at all. He wants to take it away from you, and he'll never bless your right until he's taken it. As long as you're in command, as long as you say, Now listen, I'll tell you how to do this.

No good, brother. You'll be common, you'll be mediocre, you'll spend the rest of your life being dull of hearing, attending tap meetings and attending churches, and all the means of grace at your disposal, and yet getting nowhere. And then we like to take some glory for ourselves, too.

We like that. We like to have a little glory for ourselves. We're willing that God should have most of us, but we'd like a commission.

We'd like just a little bit for ourselves, and rescue part of ourselves from the cross. We're willing that two-thirds of us should be crucified, but not three-thirds. We're willing that four-fifths, but not five-fifths.

We just won't take it. We won't go until we contradict ourselves. We pray and then get in our own road.

We plead to be filled and resist the Holy Spirit. We plead to go up and still won't go up. Now, my brethren, there is such a thing as a cloud of forgetting, and I want to talk a little about that.

What do I do about all this? What do I do about all this? Well, do you remember the journey of Jesus? Do you remember that journey? And the old man says, See who by grace may. I guess not everybody can see this, and I don't suppose everybody can hear this, for even the writer in the text says, This will we do if God permits. I'm not exactly a predestinarian.

That is, I don't quite believe in the predestination of all things from the beginning, but I'm inclined to think that some people were just born to be little. They'll never amount to much. They go to heaven, they'll be by the grace of God, they'll take nothing along, they'll go empty-handed, they'll get through by the mercy of God.

That's the only way anybody gets through, by the mercy of God. But God willed that you should not only go through, but he willed that you should take with you rich sheaths, diamonds, pearls, silver, gold, tied in the fire. He willed that you should have a harvest of souls.

He willed that you should send your good works before you. He willed that you should be a productive Christian, a fruitful Christian as the grapes of arbors of Palestine. He means that, and yet a great many of us aren't going to have a thing.

We're not willing to pay the price. We just won't. The writer of Hebrews, it might have been Paul, said, You're dull of hearing.

He said, I can't talk to you the way I want to because you've had time enough, but by this time you should be way up there signaling the others to come on up. He said, you're way down here, only part of the way up, and you can't even understand me, don't even know what I mean. Just so you can't talk to people unless you're funny, you can't talk to them unless you've got a lot of thrilling stories.

Occasionally I tell one if it illustrates the point, but you can't make yourself heard. But, you know, we've got to cease defending ourselves. That's the trouble with us now.

We're defending ourselves. We've got our guard up all the time. We walk around with the idea, nobody's going to put anything over on me, as if anybody was trying.

You know, if that goes far enough, that becomes paranoia. You become a paranoiac. I've met people who think they're so important that the United States government is trying to destroy them.

I have. I've dealt with people. I knew a fine old gentleman back east, a gentleman, a gentleman.

He'd come to see me and talk a few minutes and courteously get up and leave. He believed that the United States government was trying to shoot poison or electrical charges into his brain to destroy him. Now, the United States government never heard of him.

God knows that man's old voice is bad enough, but no, they never heard of that poor fellow. Never. They never heard of him.

He was simply thought he was so important. You see, that pride, that is a self-love that becomes a disease after a while. And if you don't watch it, it'll become a disease.

And you'll imagine that everybody's out to get you, and you'll be defending yourself, and pretty soon you'll begin to defend yourself against God himself. And even God can get to you. Well, you're going to have to put all that under your feet.

You're going to have to put all that good front that you've preserved so long under your feet. That inner state that you're afraid people will see, you're going to have to trample all that under your feet. And that cowardly questioning, does it pay? What will it cost? And is it fun? And is it popular? And is it convenient? All that you've got to trample under your feet, and you're going to have to obey the word which says, Let us go on unto perfection.

Now, you say, Mr. Tozer, what kind of perfection? Well, I haven't read a little, and I find the Salvation Army has one idea of what perfection is. Pentecostal people have another. Methodists have another.

Presbyterians have another. But somewhere up there we add up. And when a saint begins to get near the white cat's feet and see the shining face of God near to him, he's likely to look around and see another fellow there that's of a different denomination, but he's going up the same route, he's taking the same course.

So I'm not preaching the lion's doctrine to you tonight. In fact, I don't believe in the lion's truth. I never preach the lion's truth, I never did, never will.

It's God's truth, not a lion's truth. The lion was only 80 years old, and the truth was before the world was. So you and I are not to preach a lion's truth, we're to preach God's truth.

And if the Christian Missionary Alliance preaches it, we're A for the Christian Missionary Alliance, and happy is the Christian Missionary Alliance. But don't ever try to strap me down and say, will you preach the lion's truth, because my answer will be, no. I'll preach God's truth as found in the Bible.

But I believe the Alliance comes mighty close, and I believe that I don't know any other group that teaches it any better, so I'll say that much. So I'm not denying the truth they call the lion's truth, I'm simply denying that it's the lion's truth, and it isn't Methodist truth, and it isn't Calvinistic truth, and it isn't Arminian truth. It's God's truth.

Jesus said, I am the truth, and anybody can have Jesus. I don't know whether I fit so well with the brass or not, but anyhow, anyhow, I believe this. Well, now we've got to transfuse things under our feet, brethren.

We've got to get rid of some things. This defending ourselves, always having our fists clinched a little bit. A dear old lady used to help at the altar out home, and well, I say out home.

Really, I've lived so many places I don't know where my home is. Born in Pennsylvania, saved, called to preach, married and preached my first sermon in Akron, Ohio. And I've lived 31 years, exactly half of my life in Chicago, Illinois.

But this little old lady, when she'd come to the altar and would see somebody praying with their fists closed, she'd say, now open your fists, honey. She said, it's bad psychology, she didn't use the word, to pray with your fists closed. She said, you're hanging on to something.

She said, let go, let go, let go. Do you want to open your hands? She said, that's it, that's it. I heard of a fellow once who had fallen over a cliff or something, or down in a well, and he had been given to understand that it was a long drop to his death.

And he had a rope, but it was a short rope, and he let himself down and felt the end of that rope. And he hung on for dear life to the end of that rope. Finally he prayed and made up his mind to die, and let go, and

dropped two inches.

I heard of the lady, now I don't preach anything about jewelry. You come out here clanking like the jailer, it'll be all right with me. I don't preach about jewelry.

But there was a brother who did, and he was preaching, and a woman came to the altar. She came night after night, struggling and fighting and praying and droning and got nowhere. Finally she rose to the full stature of her feminine nobility, and she said, I'll do it, I'll do it.

She pulled the ring off her finger and tossed it onto the platform. I'll get it up. So she went away happy.

And the evangelist said, Aha, have I got something for missions here. He said, Now that must be a valuable thing to struggle like that for four nights. So the next morning, as soon as he could get in, he huffed off to the jewelry store and had her to pray.

Jewelry said \$2.39. She was struggling. And you know what holds you back? It's a cloud over you and God, and it's made up of things just as silly as that. Just as silly as that.

You'll never be more than the common Christian until you give up your own interests and cease to defend yourself. You put yourself in the hands of God and let him alone. We try to help God.

I never had a truthful, but what I helped attended struggles and labors. And with everything else, when I fly in an airplane, as I expect to Monday back home and get out of here, every time it banks to the left, I turn a little to the right to help the plane. I forget that it weighs several tons and doesn't need me, but instinctively I flip over a little and help to keep the thing from flopping over on one wing.

Listen to me, we can just be as silly as that when it comes to the things of God. We want to help God out. No, no.

Give yourself to God. Turn yourself over to God and say, Father, I'm sick of being a common Christian. I'm sick of this mediocrity.

I'm sick of being halfway up to where I want to be. I'm sick of seeing other happy Christians, and I'm not. I'm weary, God, of the whole thing, and I want to go on.

I want to know these. One man had a great experience with God and blossomed out into a great, wondrous experience. Walked with God and became known.

People came to him, and they said, Brother, you were known as old for a long time as this average one of us, and suddenly you're blessed all over. What's happened to you? Well, he said, I'll tell you. I don't rightly know, but he said, here's when it happened and how it happened.

He said, One day I appeared before God, and I said, Now, God, I have something to say to you, to thee. It's this. Never as long as I live, ever again, will I say anything in prayer that I don't need.

He said, From there I started out. Never, God, will I say a thing in prayer that I don't need. Let yourself go.

Now, reflect back here. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. If you don't like that, go back to 1 Corinthians 3. See what the man of God says there about those Christians that were carnal and that didn't follow on.

Always we find the masses halfway up or down in the shade. And a rare Christian, now and again, will push his way past everything. I admired that man Bartholomew.

He was blind and he wanted to see. And he said, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Peter, the deacon, he called him aside and said, This isn't right.

Don't make a racket here. This is church. He said, Don't pray here.

He said, This is no place to shout, Have mercy on me. And he tried to strike him up, and here's what it says. It says, The more they tried to stop him, the more he prayed.

There's your man. And I don't know what color he'll be, and I don't know what denomination he'll belong to, and I don't know what school of thought he'll be out of, but I know one thing. If he looks Jesus Christ in the face and presses on past all opposition, even past deacons and elders and even preachers, and pushes on and presses on, that man will make it through to a high place in God.

And he will have something to distinguish him. He will be nearer to peace. I preached one time on being filled with the Holy Ghost.

Oh, I preached it around everywhere. I preached at Moody Church, and Wheaton, and every place. But this time it was in a southern state, and there was a little Baptist woman there, a nice little lady, and she said her church didn't teach that, and she went out of there roaring mad.

And she couldn't sleep that night. She said, I'll never go back to hear that man. Now, incidentally, many Baptists do teach it, and I preach for the Baptists right along And they listen to me, and with joy believe it.

But this church didn't. Then she said, I'll never go back to hear that man. Never.

So her husband went off to bed, and pretty soon he was in dreamland. He wasn't bothered. But she was.

And she got her Bible out to see whether I was telling the truth or not, and she searched. And at four o'clock in the morning, the light broke through. And joy came to her soul, and God met her, and she saw that face.

And she leaped to her feet and dashed in the bedroom and shook her astonished husband awake and said, I've got to go tell the preacher. He said, you mean go tell him at four o'clock in the morning? Oh, she said, that's right, it's four o'clock. Well, I'll wait till morning, so she waited till six.

And at six o'clock she came to tell me, and her face was as round as the full moon. That was many, many years ago. And a few years ago now, I was back in that town and I saw her, older now, but her face was still round and still happy.

God met her that night. Now, I want to ask you this evening whether you will set your face toward the feet. Say, I put myself in thy hand, Lord Jesus, and I'll obey and I'll do, and I'll trample under my feet pride and all of these sins, these cowardly sins, I'll put them under my feet, Lord Jesus.

No matter what, I will follow thee as thou givest me power. I'll do it, Lord Jesus, I'll do it. Would you tonight take such a vow before God? You know, if you'll take such a vow, if you'll start in that direction, it won't be very long until you will be making such progress.

Do you want to come kneel down here and get a dime's worth of blessing and go away and say, I got it? That isn't the way we preach it, and that isn't the way the Bible teaches it. The Bible teaches we should set our face toward God, yield all and let him determine the blessing and the emotion and all the rest. If you'll set your heart toward him tonight, you will do that.

You're determined if God will help you, you're not going to be a common trait. You're going to press on toward perfection. Amen? Will you pray a minute? Now, dear Lord Jesus, here we are this evening accompanying a person, most of whom have at some time said they would follow thee.

But Lord Jesus, when we look at the book of Acts and then look at us, we're made to question. When we read the epistles and look at us, we're made to wonder. And when we read of the saints and then compare them with ourselves, we feel very, very small indeed.

Lord, Lord, hast thou a few here tonight, a few, who will rise and follow thee, who will say, Jesus, only Jesus, only, only Jesus. Once it was the blessing, now it's the Lord, all in all forever, from here on it will be only Jesus Christ. Wherever they meet thee, oh, hast thou some like that here tonight, Lord? Find them, O Shepherd of Israel, that leadeth Joseph like a flock.

Find them, and may they accept their faith tonight, and like Daniel, determined in their heart, and like Christ, accept their faith like a flint. And by this time next year, they'll reach so far up, so deep, they can look down on the shadowy way they inhabit now. Help this season for Christ's sake, for your family's sake.

The first verse of the sixth. We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing we are dull of hearing. For when for the time that has elapsed since your conversion, you ought to be teachers.

You have need that one teach you again. What be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of youth have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. I think that's as far as I'll read.

I can't read it all, I'll have to stop somewhere. I'll stop with those words, two, four, six of them. Let us go on unto perfection.

There was an old man, nobody knows who he was. He lived about 700 years ago, and he wrote a book which has come down to us. He divided Christians into four classes.

He said Christians may be divided into these four classes. The common Christian, the special Christian, the singular Christian, and the perfect Christian. He said from being a common Christian you go on to be a special Christian.

From being a special Christian you go on to being singular. Then from being singular you go on unto perfection. But he was careful to say that full perfection is never reached in this life.

He said that we enter the general area of perfection, but that some imperfection clings until the day when our Lord appears to glorify us. Then we'll be as he is, and completely perfect. But he said that there was a type of Christian that might be called, from the human standpoint at least, the perfect Christian.

He said that most Christians were common, and that's what I want to talk about tonight a little. The common Christian, the common barnyard variety. I want to point out that the word common means of ordinary rank, quality, or ability not distinguished by superiority of any kind, following customary ways.

Now, does that describe you? As a believer, you're saved, you know that, but you're ordinary and you have no outstanding abilities or qualities, not distinguished by spiritual superiority at all, just following the customary ways of the Church. Now, I'll leave it to you whether it describes you or not, but I have observed a lot, and I do observe as well as pray, and I find that most Christians are mediocre. Mediocre is a word that we use a lot without knowing what it means, and mediocre means halfway up between the valley and the peak.

It doesn't mean halfway between earth and heaven. It means halfway between where we used to be and where we ought to be. Now, that's where I would describe the average Christian.

And you might as well know it, the average Alliance Christian, and you might as well know it, the average Christian here on the ground. You're halfway up between where you were and where you ought to be. It means stuck partway up the peak.

There is the great shining peak up yonder, and there is the dark valley below. And you are far above the moral standards of the simple world in the valley, but you're also far below the shining saint with his adoration and his glory.

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