

The Deeper Life - Part 1

by A.W. Tozer

The Deeper Life is a life of spiritual growth and maturity, where one forsakes the world and turns wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Duration: 34:03

Scripture: Hebrews 6:1

Topics: "Deeper Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that spiritual matters cannot be reduced to formulas, despite our attempts to do so. He highlights the importance of a genuine faith and a personal encounter with God, which surpasses the impact of carefully crafted sermons. The preacher encourages turning away from the world and turning towards Christ, as this leads to a deeper life filled with joy and radiance. He clarifies that this does not mean completely isolating oneself from the world, but rather distinguishing between the worldly system of unbelief and the natural aspects of life that God has created. The sermon emphasizes the need to seek Jesus and find deep satisfaction in Him.

Transcript

The deeper life, what is it, and how can I enter into it? I really haven't a text, but I have been reading this verse in chapter six of Hebrews, therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of the laying on of hands and of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. Let us go on unto perfection.

It has been a sort of an overall text. Then I have also shown from 1 Corinthians 3 and other passages of scripture that one of the great problems, even of the early Church, was that of the static Christian. It is one of the great problems today.

I think it is a problem even greater than that of getting people converted. The problem of the static Christian, how to get a Christian interested in becoming more than an average run-of-the-mill type of believer that you see everywhere. And so many of us become static, or are static.

It is the static Christian is one who is retarded in his progress. Paul said, What doth hinder you? You did run well, but now you are hindered. And thus the progress is stunted and retarded, and the growth stunted.

And then there is the lack of moral dynamic which every Christian ought to know. Now, this is the static Christian, and I believe that if we will listen, we will hear God speaking. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

And I believe that if we hear what the Spirit says in our day, we will hear God say, Moses my servant is dead, therefore arise, go over this Jordan, and into the land which I have given to you. Every place the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you. I believe we will hear the Spirit of God say, Let us go on unto perfection.

Let us go on beyond repentance from past sins. Let us go on beyond forgiveness and cleansing from past sins. Let us go on beyond the impartation of divine life.

Let's be sure, however, that we get these first things settled first, to the point of absolute assurance. There can be no deeper life until there has been life. There can be no progress in the way until we are in the way.

There can be no growth until there has been birth. And all the efforts toward a deeper life will only bring disappointment unless we have first settled the matter of repentance from dead works, and the forgiveness of sins, and the impartation of divine life in conversion. But now to break down the deeper life, I want briefly to mention that it's two things, as I shall say today.

It's more than that, but two I want to mention today. One is a complete forsaking of the world, and the other is a turning wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's not only my opinion of it, but that is what the Bible teaches about it, and that is the standard formula that has come down to us from the very early days of the Church.

You will find it written into the great hymns of the Church, and you will find it written into the great books of devotion of the Church down the years, that these two things are necessary for a Christian who will go on and break the static condition and become a flowing, moving, progressive, dynamic Christian. There must be a complete forsaking of the world and a turning wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we'll talk first about this forsaking of the world.

It's entirely possible to be religious and not to have forsaken the world at all. The proof of this is that you will find professed Christians wherever, or at least almost wherever, you will find non-Christians. I want to be as broad-minded and fair as I can about this, and I suppose there are places where you will not find men claiming to be Christians.

I don't know whether gangsters who habitually and as a system destroy by death those who are their rivals, take them out and shoot them. I don't know whether you would find any professed Christians among or not. Although I do know this, that when certain gangsters have died by the bullet, they have been mumbled into the kingdom of God and squirted into the kingdom of God by oil and all the rest, and their leaders have tried very hard even to get those bloody men into the kingdom of God, unsaved, unblessed, untriven, unforgiven, and without time even to say, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

And yet people try to get them in. So I presume that there are those who claim to be some kind of Christian who even engage in the mutual extermination of each other for the sake of the South Side or the North Side or the West Side racket. I do remember of a young man who was a murderer who was sentenced to the chair a few years ago and was to die out here in Cook County Jail, but they set his death

hour for a certain day and then later reversed it and changed it because they said it fell on a holiday of his religion, and they didn't want to put him to death on a day that was a holiday of his religion.

So they changed it so he didn't have to die on a holiday. So I suppose that you will find Christians just about everywhere, or men who claim they are Christians, I mean. Certainly you will find them at the racetrack, and certainly there never has been a sporting vendor so vile and violent and vicious that you will not find Christians sitting around there with their New Testament in their hip pocket.

And I don't think that there is a gambling hall where you won't find some kind of Christian there. I don't think that there's any worldly pleasures where you don't find them. It's possible to be religious and not to forsake the world.

Yet nobody can be a Christian in the right sense of the word until he has forsaken the world. Second, it is possible to forsake the world in body and never forsake it in spirit at all. It's possible to forsake the world externally and still be worldly inside.

Now, the situation with the monks and the nuns down the centuries has been exactly that. Now, I'm not saying this is the Protestants, I'm letting themselves say it. Some of the great Christian souls were those who tried to reform these monasteries and nunneries, and to get them to be in their real inner life what they were in their external, outer life.

They were hidden away from the world in their bodies and dressed a certain way in order that they might be separated from the world. And yet some of these great souls declared that these who had thus separated themselves were more surely and certainly worldly than some of those who were not thus separated. So we have Bernard, and St. Francis, and we have Teresa, and Nicholas of Cusa, and Richard Rowland, John of the Cross, and you could name them one after the other of those persons who were trying hard to rouse the Church that they might be inwardly what their profession showed them to be outwardly.

Now, Walter Hilton lived 200 years before Luther was born, and so he never heard of Protestantism or the Reformation. And yet Walter Hilton, the English Christian, was such a Christian that he wrote a series of letters to the nuns in a certain convent and warned them of the very thing I'm talking to you about. And they called that series of letters The Scale of Perfection.

It's a most wonderful book. Don't ask to borrow it. I'll tell you where you can buy one.

But this Scale of Perfection, the opening part of it at least, is devoted to this. It is devoted the same to these sisters. Now listen, sisters, you have come out of the world and closed the door on yourself and put on a certain garb which indicates that you're separated from the world.

Now, said Walter Hilton, look out, ladies, that you don't take the world with you into the monastery or into the nunnery and be as worldly in there as if you were out on the street. He said, remember that it's a forsaking of the world in your heart that makes you unworldly. And so there were several great chapters written urgently warning these women that it was entirely possible to put on the garb of the nun and to live in a nunnery, and still at the same time be worldly inside.

So I say it's possible to be religious and not to forsake the world, and it's possible to forsake the world in body and not in spirit. And it's never possible, however, to forsake it in spirit and not forsake it in practice. Now, I feel it necessary to mention this because there are some supposed broad-minded Christians who

will do almost anything that anybody will do.

I've noticed this, brethren, maybe I've mentioned it before, but I've noticed this, that in this day in which we live, all you have to do is to add for God or for Jesus onto a thing, and lo and behold, that which the Church has repudiated and all earnest Christians have written years is suddenly sanctified. I'm doing it for God, I'm doing it for Jesus. And if you can just get for God or for Jesus, those little prepositional phrases dangling on the end, and lo and behold, that which wasn't ever counted right by the Church down the generations is now suddenly counted right, because we've added, I'm doing it for Jesus.

That takes in almost everything that the world has ever done, and I'm expecting one of these days to hear about the association of Christian bartenders who are doing it for Jesus. They say, Oh, we're not like the world, we're not serving up this poison just in our own name. We used to before we accepted Christ, we used to deal this out for our sakes, and the money we made out of it.

Now we're doing it for Jesus. Now, we haven't got that far yet, but give us time, brother, we're on our way. And all we have to do is wait a little, and we will sanctify almost anything by saying you can do it for Jesus.

I warn you, brother, you can't do anything for Jesus that Jesus wouldn't do, and you can't do anything for God that God has interdicted and turned the canon of His judgments against. The only thing that I can do for God is that which is holy like God, and the only thing that I can do for Jesus is that which Jesus has allowed and permitted and commanded me to do. But to live like the world and say, I'm separated from the world in spirit, I'm separated in spirit, and I don't have to come out of the world because I'm separated in spirit.

I know where that came from, boy, I know where that came from. If you would sniff that a little, I know what you'd smell. You'd smell brimstone, because that argument came from hell and certainly belongs there and doesn't belong in the Church of Christ.

Never possible to forsake the world in your spirit and not forsake it in reality. Now let me give you an example of what I mean. Bible examples I have here, Noah.

God said to Noah, I'm going to destroy the world, make thee an ark, make up a gopher wood, and so on. And Noah did that thing. Now, suppose that I'd preached on separation from the world and I'd have said to Noah, Noah, don't you think you ought to get into the ark? Boy, Noah said, that's the old-fashioned idea.

After all, what is the world? Give me a definition of what you mean by the world. The Church can't agree on what's meant by the world, and therefore I'm separating from the world in my heart. But I'm going to stay right down here on the ground and sleep under the bush and eat off the tree and live like other people, but I won't be like other people because I'm separated in my heart.

You know what would have happened to Noah? He'd have been sending up bubbles before very long when the fountains of the great gate broke and the rain came down and the flood covered the mountaintops. Noah's carcass would have floated and bloated and distended along with the rest. But Noah knew that to forsake the world meant to forsake the world.

So it said he went into the ark and God closed the door. Take Abraham. God said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country and out of thy way from thy kindred unto a land which I will show thee.

Now Abraham could have said, Now I have had a call from God to forsake my country and my people and to go to another land. But he said, I don't think I should take that literally. I think that that means forsake them in spirit, and so I'm going to live right here in Ur of the Chaldees, but I'm going to go into the Holy Land in spirit.

No, my brother, Abraham had to go out in fact. And so Abraham departed and Lot with him, it says. Abraham went and took some people with him.

Then take Lot, for example. When Lot finally got into Sodom and became mayor of the town, the angel said, Escape for thy life and look not behind thee. Well, Lot could have said, he could have even written several articles on it.

He could have had a debate on it and a panel discussion on it, especially among young people who don't always know it all. He could have said, Now let's have a panel discussion on Escape for thy life and look not behind thee, what it means. And while they were discussing it, the fire could have fallen and destroyed Sodom and Lot along with it.

But Lot knew that Escape for thy life meant, Get out of Sodom and stay out, I'm sending fire on you. Then when those first Christians were told that to love the world and the things of the world meant that man didn't love God, they didn't hold discussions on what the world meant, or what was meant by the world, or how far they could go and still please God. They got out of the world and they separated themselves completely from everything that had the world's spirit.

And the result was they brought down fury on their own heads. And that same world exists today that existed then. And hear me say this again, some of you have told me you don't believe it, but listen to me while I tell you again, and repeat it again, and the great God Almighty either now or later will confirm the truth of it, that the world is no different now from what it was when it crucified Jesus and martyred the first Christians.

It's the same world. Adam is always Adam wherever you find him, and he never changes. And the reason we get along so well is that we have compromised our position, and we have allowed the world to dictate to us while we, in turn, are permitted to dictate a little to the world, and so we have compromised it.

And the result is there are very few people that are in any way embarrassed from the world. I'm afraid if we ever get too popular or the community accepts us here, I'm afraid of that. The church that this unsaved worldly community accepts is never a church full of the Holy Ghost.

A church full of the Holy Ghost who is separated from the world and is walking with God will never be accepted by the community. It will always be looked upon as being somewhat off-center. So maybe if the laws are such that you're protected, then civilization is such as it is now, you won't be attacked, but you'll be looked upon as being a little bit off-center.

Now, somebody says, you preaching brother told you that everybody should probably get in a spacesuit and zoom out of here and get away from the world? No, I'm not saying that at all. I am saying that there is a part, a world that is not the world God means when he said forsake the world. You can eat and work and live and drink and sleep and bathe and grow and beget your kind and bring them up.

God made that. That's not the world. The world is that organized thing filled with unbelief which has got to amuse itself and which is built upon doubts, unbelief, self-righteousness, and Adam.

And the other, of course, Jesus was in the world, but not of the world. There's no contradiction here in what I'm saying. I'm making a distinction between that part of the world which is divinely given to plant and reap and cook and eat and sow and do our work and live in the world meant it to be so.

And that's not worldliness, but the worldliness is the pride of life, the pride of the eye, and the longing of the ambitious soul for position, and all of that which the world does because of the rising of its sin within it. All that's the world, and it overflows into a thousand things that the Church has habitually rejected. Down the years, the Church has rejected.

Now, the second matter is, turn wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ. First is, forsake completely the world. And that's all negative.

Notice that? That's all negative. Somebody says, "Told you he's a negative preacher.' I believe in the negative and in the positive. I do not apologize for preaching negative.

I have a quarter here in my hand. On one side is a head of Benjamin Franklin, and on the other side is an eagle with its wings outspread. And one of those is the negative, and one on the positive side.

And the electricity that lights this building has a negative and a positive, and so their negative and positive goes all through the world. You turn your back on the North, that's negative, and travel toward the South, that's positive. And so I turn my back on the world, that's negative.

And then I turn wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ, that's positive. And every effort to preach the positive without the negative is like dividing this quarter edgewise, cutting it through, and then trying to ride on a bus with that. He'd fling that back to you and say, "That's only half here.

You need the other side.' I'd better you say, "I've got the head of Benjamin Franklin there, driver.' I know, but I want the eagle on, too. That's the other side. How can you have an electric light with only the positive? You have to have both.

And so if we're going to turn ourselves wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ, there's going to have to be a complete forsaking of the world, all that is worldly in its spirit, all that is wrong for sale, all that is unlike Jesus, all that is unlike God. You must forsake that no matter what the world thinks about us. That's negative.

And then turn wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ. And this turning unto the Lord Jesus Christ I want to talk about a lot more. Next week I want to talk about that a little more, and I want to talk also next Sunday morning, developing this thought further, about the deeper life in Christ leading us to a place where we're free in our hearts from fear and inordinate loves.

Now, it's this that gives the deeper life, not the turning away. That's negative. You can forsake the world, quit gambling, quit drinking, quit smoking, quit living for the world, never go to any of the worldly places of amusement, don't gamble, don't dance, don't do any of these things.

You can quit all that, and that's negative. That has no power to impart any life of any kind. That's negative.

But it's necessary before there can be any positive. Well, the positive is, then, that you turn to Jesus Christ. That gives the power and the purity and the deep satisfaction and the joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The negative can never shine, the negative can never be musical, the negative can never be fragrant. And the man can go to a cave, you can go to a cave and leave it all in utter disgust like time on a vacuum. Go into the woods and live in a cave and still not have any power, any radiance, any joy, any inward glory.

It's turning unto Jesus Christ that gives that. And the two can be done in one act. If I'm facing north and God commands me to turn south, if I still remember, I don't know whether I could out-face or not anymore and do it in two motions.

I used to be able to do it from the time I was in the service. But if God says, You're facing north and it's the wrong direction for you, thou facest march. You can turn from the north and to the south in one easy motion.

And so when God says, Forsake the world and turn to Christ, it's one motion. I do it in one free easy act. And my turning from the world is my turning unto Christ.

It doesn't always work that way, but it can be, I say. So the joy unspeakable is when we see Jesus' deep satisfaction. Suppose, let's hunt around for an illustration.

Maybe it's ridiculous, but it will illustrate anyway. Suppose that somebody decided and had the power to do it, and he had a lot of gremlins or angels or something at his command, and he said, Now I'm tired of this darkness. I'm tired of this darkness.

I want you to wipe the heavens clean of darkness. And he got a thousand or a million or two million or ten million gremlins, or some of the kind of imaginary beings of Moss, and they mopped the heavens of all darkness. It would still be dark.

You don't have to worry. You go back to bed, gremlin. Just wait till the sun comes up.

The coming up of the sun will do what all the mopping of the heavens would never do. Just wait for the sun. So some people try, by the negatives, to get themselves blessed.

They won't do this. I remember one boy who wouldn't drink pop, and he stood at a soft drink counter over in Ohio and was very disturbed about a glass of pop. He said that he thought it was whirly.

Well, he was an unhappy man, and I have never seen a happy Christian yet that was ever world conscious. Never. If he's trying to get loose from the world, or if he's worrying about what is the world, or if he's writing letters to find out what the world means, he's never a happy man.

He's busy with these negatives, and I've never seen a happy man yet that wasn't up with Jesus Christ the Lord. The sun comes up and the darkness goes out, and not all the little creatures in the universe could wipe the heavens clean of darkness as long as there's no sun. But when the sun peaks up, the night departs and the clouds flee away, and the shadows are no more.

So when we turn with all our hearts unto Jesus Christ our Lord, then we find the deeper life. Then we find in him the power and the purity and the satisfaction and the joy unspeakable and full of glory. Nothing can't be something, and the negative can't sing, and negative doesn't smell good, and negative can't give off fragrance, and negative can't feel delight.

Only the positive. Only when I turn my eyes and gaze upon the Son of God and my inner heart is taken up with his person, then every instrument inside my music room gets tuned and music starts. Then radiance

comes to the light and joy breaks out, and Peter said, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

So it is. That's the deeper life. Two acts can be done at once.

Turning from the world, turning unto Christ. Then all the natural things, eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, and all the natural things which God created to be done, and which are not of the spirit of the world, but are natural and of God, they'll all be sanctified, too. And they'll become fuel for the fires of the altar that rise day and night unto God.

So the common things, the things we call secular, won't be secular anymore. The mundane things won't be mundane, they'll be heavenly, too. Because the commonest thing, the peeling of a potato, the commonest thing can be done for the glory of God if we have turned from the world and the world's ways and are looking full in the face of the Son of God.

Then the sun will shine, and all the gremlins of hell can't wipe the sunlight away. If hell should send up a legion to wipe away the sunshine, it could wipe the face of the earth and desperately follow the sun around the earth and never succeed in keeping the sunshine away from the earth, because when the sun shines on the earth, it's sunshine. So hell can't destroy your spiritual happiness if you're gazing at the face of Jesus, for he is the Son of Righteousness, revealing in his wings.

Turn from the world, turn full heart unto Christ. Next week I'll have more to tell you. Let's pray.

Our Father, we well know that spiritual things can't be reduced to formulas, even though we struggle so hard to do it. An impulse of faith, a sudden reckless daring of the soul in its leap after God, could do more for us than all the carefully laid-out sermons could ever do. But we've done all we can do.

We've appealed to the intelligence, made some explanations, tried to say in our bracing modern English what has been said with great and stately dignity in our Bibles. My God, now take this that has been spoken and apply it to our hearts. May we, one after the other, turn from Adam's unbelieving world, with its self-confidence, its self-reliance, its arrogance, its pride, its mad pleasures, its love of wealth, its love of praise, its love of publicity, its inordinate love of clothing and of fine things and of rich things.

Turn us, we pray Thee, from it all, not only in our hearts but in reality. And then turn us to Jesus Christ Thy Son. We need him, Lord.

If we gave up the world and didn't have him, we'd be in a vacuum. Thou'll quickly take us through that little vacuum and take us to Jesus Christ, who is the radiant source of everlasting life and peace and joy, world without end. We ask it in Christ's name.

Amen.

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