

The Holiness of God - Part 2

by A.W. Tozer

The sense of the Holy is a deep awareness of God's presence and holiness, which inspires reverence, worship, and repentance.

Duration: 15:09

Scripture: Exodus 13:21-22, Isaiah 6:2-3, Isaiah 6:5, Ezekiel 1:4-6, Revelation 7:11-14

Topics: "Holiness Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the word of God and the need to regain a sense of reverence for the holy. The sermon references the book of Revelation, specifically the scene where angels worship God. The preacher also mentions the creatures in Ezekiel who came out of the fire and worshipped God. The sermon highlights the presence of God in the pillar of fire and emphasizes the need to dwell in His presence. The sermon concludes by reminding listeners that God is a consuming fire and that everyone will ultimately face judgment.

Transcript

For you see, the presence of this Holy One allows only holy beings. In our humanistic day, our day of watered-down Christianity, our day of sentimental Christianity, that blows its nose loudly and makes God into a poor, weak, weeping old man, in this awful day, that sense of the holy isn't upon the Church. I was just talking with Brother McAfee, we're talking about Brother Mathieu being interested in European missions, somebody else comes interested in the Hebrews working with the Jews, somebody else working with the Mountaineers, somebody else concerned with memorizing Scripture, somebody else with foreign missions, and I said, well, everybody seems to have something that he feels is tremendously important, and maybe it could be that the constant preaching that I do on the person of God, that I too should be seeing only a part of the great truth, that there's more.

But I said this, if you're going to be narrow, then I think we ought to be narrow on the right thing. And therefore, if I'm going to emphasize God and the holiness of God, and the awful, unapproachable quality that can be called that awful thing, that one, that holy, I say that I think I'm on the right track. It isn't all, but it's something we've almost lost in our day.

And the thing is important depending upon how much of it we've lost and how much of it we need. And we have lost the sense of the Holy One almost altogether. Take over in the book of Revelation, that seventh chapter.

Look, it says that, the seventh chapter, yes, the angels stood around about the throne and about the elders and the four beasts, and they fell before the throne on their faces and worshiped God, saying, Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and power and might be unto our God forever and ever. And one of the elders answered, saying, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. He said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serving day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. Now, there are people in the presence of God, but they're there in the presence of God not only by a technical redemption. You see, what I worry about in this hour is that we're technically Christians, and we can prove it.

We can prove that we're Christians. We're Christians technically. And anybody can open or flip open a Greek lexicon and show you that you're a saint.

But I'm afraid of that kind of Christianity, because if I haven't felt the sense of vileness by contrast with that sense of unapproachable and indescribable holiness, I wonder if I have ever been hit hard enough to really repent. And if I don't repent, I wonder if I can believe. Now, we're told, Just believe it, brother, just believe it.

Now, come on, let me take your name and address. What's your name? Oh, yes. What church would you like to go to? Well, we have it all fixed up, my brethren, but I'm afraid our fathers knew God in a different manner than that.

Bishop Eischer used to go out by the riverbank and kneel down by a log and repent his sins all Saturday afternoon, though there probably wasn't a holier man in all the region round about. He felt how unoperably vile he was. He couldn't stand the dingy gray, which was the whitest thing he had, set over against the unapproachable, shining whiteness that was God.

Go to the book of Isaiah, and you see the fiery burners there. With twain he covered his feet. There wasn't any envious creatures before the throne.

There wasn't any of the flippancy that we see now. There wasn't any of the tendency to try to outlook hope and be funnier than the clown. There was a sense of presence, and these holy creatures, for they were holy creatures, they covered their feet.

Why? They covered their feet in modesty, and they covered their face in worship, and they used their other wings to fly. These were the seraphim. They're called fiery burners.

Then there's Ezekiel 1 and 10, and we see there creatures coming out of a fire. Now, God speaks of himself often as fire. Our God is a consuming fire, it says in Hebrews, and in Isaiah 33, these words, Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? And this is sometimes used as a text, who of you is going to go to hell? But, my brethren, if you will read it in its context, it does not describe hell.

This is not hell at all. And if you will go to almost any of the commentators, they will say this is not hell, because the next passage says that he that has clean hands and a pure heart and doesn't lift up his soul under vanity and answers the question, What is this devouring fire? What is this everlasting burning? It is not hell, but the presence of God. Who among us shall dwell in the fiery burnings? Do you not know that if

you were enabled to do it, fire can dwell with fire? And you can put the ray of hot iron or the iron into the fire, and the iron can learn to live with the fire by absorbing the fire and beginning to glow in incandescent brightness in the fire.

So we dwell in the fire. These creatures in Ezekiel came out of the fire having four faces, and they went straight ahead and let down their wings to worship. And at the word of God's command, they leaped to do His will, these awesome holy creatures about which we know so little and about which we ought to know more.

Then there was God when he spoke to Moses out of the bush. There was the God when he went with them in the pillar of fire. What was God saying? For it says in the thirteenth, I believe, is it, of Exodus, where it says that the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light by day and by night.

And he took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, that he might lead them in all their journeys. My friends, this was God dwelling there in that awesome fire. It was God dwelling there.

And then when the tabernacle was made and the cherubim of gold overshadowed the mercy seat, what was it that came down between the cherubim wings? What was it that only one man could see? And he, once a year with blood, he did not dare go in. I wonder how many high priests ever looked at the Shekinah. I wonder that that high priest, with all the protection of the atoning blood and the commandment of God, when the priest pulled away the veil, the great heavy veil, and took four men to part the great veil.

Tapestry they pulled apart. And this man went in trembling into the presence. I wonder if he ever dared to look at the fire.

I wonder if, being a Jew as he was, and worshiping the great God Almighty, the Holy One of Israel, I wonder if there was a high priest, one in twenty, that ever dared gaze on that fire. He was not told he couldn't, but I wonder if anybody ever dared do it. I noticed that the very cherubim covered their faces, and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

And John fell down when he saw the Savior, and had to be raised up again almost from the dead. And every encounter with God had been such that man went flat down and went blind, and Paul went blind on Damascus Road. What was the light that blinded them? Was it the cosmic ray coming down from some exploding body, or from two colliding galaxies that tell us about? No, no.

It was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God that dwelt in the bush. The God that dwelt in the Shekinah, between the peasants, between the wings of the seraphim.

And what was it? That when they were all together in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as the rushing of a mighty wind, and a fire appeared and sat as a tongue of flame upon each one of them. What did that mean, and what could it mean but that God was branding them in their foreheads with his fiery holiness to say, You're mine now? The church was born out of fire, my brethren. She was born out of fire as the creatures in Ezekiel 1 came out of fire.

The church was born out of fire, but we have gray ashes today. But we are to be men and women of fire, for that is our origin. And hear these last words, these words that tell us how God shall someday untune the sky.

The heavens and the earth are reserved unto fire. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved. What fire is that? Is that to be the atomic fire, that fire of a hydrogen bomb? Don't allow yourself to be fooled by the scientists.

Don't allow your spiritual perceptions and concepts to be dragged down to Oak Ridge. Don't think in terms of the scientists. That awesome fire out of which the seraphim moved, and that fire that dwelt between the cherubim and that blazing light that not fall flat, that's the same fire that shall dissolve the heavens and the earth.

The awful presence of that holy thing, that awful thing. Don't accuse me because I say thing, but because I know it's a person. He is God the Holy One of Israel, but there's something about him that is awesome and awful.

So that one of the definitions I repeat of the word that we have in the New Testament is the awful thing. Now, the Holy One and the sinner, O man, O man, sinner man, you're going to decide when you'll serve Christ? You're going to make the decision? You're going to push God around? You're going to accept Jesus or not accept Jesus, receive him or not receive him, obey him or not obey him? You're going to go proudly down the aisle with your chest out? You're going to lay your head on the pillow tonight with a heartbeat between you and eternity? And you're telling yourself, I'll decide this question. I'm a man of free will.

God is enforcing my will. No, no, but I have words for you. Listen.

Art thou not from everlasting, O Jehovah, my God, mine Holy One? Thou art of pure eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity? Habakkuk 1, 12 and 13.

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