

The Brevity of this Life and the Vanity of This World

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

September 26, 1953

Tonight, I choose a psalm, a familiar and favorite Psalm of mine, the 39th. When David established worship many years before, it tells us in 1 Chronicles that they cried and said, blessed be the Lord God of Israel forever; and all the people said, amen and praise the Lord. So he left there before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, Asaph and his brethren to minister before the Ark continually as every day's work required.

And then he says that Zadok the priest and his brethren priests before the tabernacle of the Lord, the high place that was at Gibeon to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt offering continually, morning and evening. To do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which commanded Israel. And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because his mercy endureth for ever; And with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun were porters. And all the people departed every man to his house: and David returned to bless his house. And here was a man by the name of Jeduthun with his trumpet. And his business was, to stand by when the priest offered a sacrifice, Jeduthun raised the trumpet and led the brethren in singing the praises of God because His mercy endureth forever.

Now, David was not unappreciative of this singing brother, his trumpet playing brother. So when he wrote the 39th Psalm, He dedicated it to Jeduthun. And it says to the chief musician, even to Jeduthun, a psalm of David. David wrote it when he was old.

Now, let's read it. I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue, Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. Remove thy stroke away from

me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Now, there is a little heavy note here, and it would be relatively easy to bog down in this psalm, for the man who wrote it was not in a jovial mood. This is the prayer of a man of wide experience and great intelligence. This man had obviously lived a long time. He was not a novice. He was not a new fellow lately come up, but he had lived a long time. And there were many things, no doubt, that he used to think he knew, that he wasn't so sure about now. That the mellowing influences of time had gone over his mind, like the sun over the fields and forests in the fall of the year. And David knew there were some things that he didn't know. Blessed was David when he found that out.

In Rochester last week, in my closing morning message, the chairman got up and said, now, we have a few minutes before closing time. And if any of you would like to ask Mr. Tozer a question, be brief with your questions. He hadn't told me that, so I got up and I said, Mr. Chairman, you're 25 years too late to turn the meeting over to me like this. Twenty-five years ago, I could have answered any question anybody here could have asked, but now I beg to be excused. So they dismissed the meeting.

It's a blessed thing to find out that you don't know something, and to be joyful about it and buoyant, cheerful, and know that you don't know it, and be perfectly willing to wait until that day when with a touch of His tender fingers, God steps your IQ up 3,000,000%. And then you will be so blessed and so intelligent, that looking back upon your earthly sojourn, you will think you were a moron for sure. For just one touch of the wonderful fingers of the Holy Ghost, and you will know as you are known.

Now, David knew that. And so he didn't presume to all knowledge. He was a very humble man. And he said in this 39th Psalm that he kept his mouth shut. He kept it, he used the word dumb here. We use it, not in the sense David did. He meant silent. He said I was dumb with silence. And yet, when he tried to keep still, he couldn't keep still, because the fervor in his heart made him talk. He said, when I was musing the fire burned and then I spake with my tongue. If we could have it a rule of our lives, that we never talked on spiritual subjects until the fire has burned. And then out of the burning fire of inward experience, we spake with our tongues.

They say there's an old saying that some preachers preach because they have to say something. And some preachers preach because they have something to say. There's only a matter of juggling

words around and you have the same words. But the difference is as wide as the ocean between the man who talks because he has to say something.

It's Saturday night again, so help me, and I've got to get ready for tomorrow because they expect me to say something. But this man of God said, I tried to keep from talking. And I was done with silence, and I held my peace even from good. I wouldn't talk at all, and my heart got hot in me. And while I was musing, the fire burned, and then spake I with my tongue. Now, that was the man of God. He was talking out of a vast experience and a broad knowledge of life.

And now David, when he wrote this Psalm, not only knew certain things, but he had lived certain things. And I want to say to you younger people, that is, younger in years, that there are two kinds of knowledge. There is the knowledge of information and the knowledge of experience. You can go to an encyclopedia and get knowledge. But it takes life to give you experience. You will never know anything really until you've lived it.

You can know about a thing by being told about it. You can read about it, but you can't know it until you have lived through it. That's why I always insist that it is more important to know less and to live through it than it is to know a great deal more, and never get to it. That's why we turn out such wooden preachers from a lot of our schools. We take them in, isolate them and cram them, and then ordain them, and put them in a pulpit. And they are like a beetle carrying a bale of cotton. They take a text and it's just too big for them. They know it. And they've got their well-marked Bible there. And they can tell you where it's found, and maybe give you the Greek or the Hebrew root. But before the people they flounder helplessly because they know so much that they don't know. They have so much information that they never lived through. Better to be a living dog than a dead lion said the Holy Ghost back in the Old Testament. Better know as much as a little poodle and be alive than to have all your head filled with information and yet be a stuffed lion. It's better to know a little and know it well.

Well, that's why a lot of these little old saints that run around are such a blessing to everybody because they don't know very much. But what they know they know with intensity. It's the difference between a pile of junk iron in the backyard and a razor blade. A razor blade doesn't know so much, but it's mighty sharp and keen and what it does know it knows sharply. But there's a whole truckload of junk metal in the backyard. But you couldn't shave with it in thousand years. You couldn't cut bread with it nor meat. It just lives up there. But the razor is smaller, but it has lived. It has been in the fire and in the heat and under the hammer's steady beat. I think that's in a hymn somewhere. And it has lived.

Now, David was a man that had lived. You meet them. We talked so much about Brother Hare. The only thing about Brother Hare is he just lives what he knows, that's all. So, he lives it. He sat up here in my office and I told him I was going to interview him. I said, I think that some of the things

God has been showing you ought to get into print; and I'd like to write it up for you and get the people to reading it. He broke down and began to cry and he said I'm afraid of losing my power with God. He says, I don't want to lose my power. He said they wanted to send a reporter out to talk to me, but I wouldn't talk to him. I don't want to lose my powers he said.

Well, he's lived it, brother. Now, he hasn't got a head full of it, but he's got a heart full and he's lived it. David lived this. And when you talk to this man or when he talks to you, you don't need to discount him. He's been in there. He's seen it. And now he's calmly speaking out of a vast background of experience. And here's what he said. He said I am a stranger and a sojourner as my fathers were.

An intelligent young man or woman usually goes through several stages of development with regard to the past. There is that bright-face, adolescent, early youth experience. When everything more than 10 years old, is old and bearded and passe. Then, as he goes on, he begins to appreciate the things that were. And then he gets if he lives it, gets geared into yesterday.

So to Him there is no yesterday nor tomorrow and a today but an everlasting now and He sees how wondrous it is to be geared up and back into the eternal yesterdays. And He goes marching through time, like a fish through the ocean with time and eternity all around about Him. And His appreciation for our yesterdays as one man call it called it grows upon him as gets older. You can always tell a novice in the things of God by His attitude toward the past.

And you can tell a rich, ripe saint by his attitude toward the past. It is not that the rich, right saint believes it because they wore their coats up like this back in 1904, that we ought to wear them that way now. It isn't that He glorifies the incidentals of the past. That's not it. He doesn't glorify the buggy and then the spinning wheel and the incidentals of yesterday. But He glorifies the residium of gold and goodness and intelligence and piety and spirituality that has piled up like a great mound of rich minerals. And he lives in that and by that and out from that, and his tomorrows are grounded in his yesterday's, and he rests down on his todays knowing that he's got the backing of his yesterdays. That is experience, spiritual experience and it's good to have that.

If I were a layman, you know what I'd like to have for a pastor? I'd like to have a young man with the experience of an old man, and then I'd be all set. Wouldn't I? But you know, you can't get them that way. You have to take a young man and then pray for him and live along with him till you break him in. And the young pastor is usually like a new shoe, all right with a lot of potentialities and a good future, but a little painful because he knows more than he's lived through.

And then the old fellow when he gets too old and begins to die down from the top. Then he becomes a problem maybe. But it would be wonderful, wouldn't it, if you could have a young man with a young man's bright-eyed enthusiasm with the experience and mellowness of the older man.

There have been a few. I believe Murray McCheyne was a man like that. David Brainard was a man like that. But usually, it takes the average one of us with limited intelligence, it takes us half a lifetime to learn to live and then another half to get ready to die.

So, the world doesn't really get much good out of us. We serve an apprenticeship and about the time that we're to be declared ready to go to work, why, they send the wagon around for us. But this man, David, had lived a long time. He'd suffered a lot and he'd wept a lot. Now, I suppose that there isn't a man in Scripture, that bawled more than David did. Read the book of Psalms and see they're salty with human tears.

And yet, there wasn't a bolder, braver man than David. He never ran from anybody. He ran at them. And he was a soldier, a strong soldier. But he was a sensitive man, a man of great inward conflict and fiery zeal and faith that geared into heaven. So, he was a mystical man with heaven very near to his fingertips. You only had to raise his head a little to see over in and the contrast between what he felt he wanted to be and what he was, was always deviling David. Many a night David got a little sleep, but his pillow in the morning was damp with salty tears. He was a man who lived and yet there wasn't a happier man in the entire Bible as David. The book of Psalms leaps with delight. It leaps with the joyous abandon of a young child picking flowers on a June morning. The Book of Psalms is the happiest book in the entire Bible unless it is Philippians and Philippians, written by Paul, another old man who lived in jail.

Nowadays, you don't dare talk about death nor jail nor hell nor dying nor old age nor anything serious. People want to be entertained and they want to give back and forth their quips and the, I know the French word but can't pronounce it. That's the day we want that, and we say, I liked that fella. He's a card because he's a scream. He's got a wit there. He just tosses the ball of wit around back and forth.

And we want that now but Paul and David and Abraham and the rest of them, the one about whom we preach all the time. They didn't care so much for the cute saying as they did for the eternal truth. We're living in the age of the smart aleck now. And it doesn't make any difference if it's true, if you can say it in a cute way. Give it a backlash and make it click, why, it's all well, David said, my days are as a handbreadth.

Now here was David's estimate of his own life. And I should very much like to cheer you younger people and console you older ones. But I'm preaching the Bible, and the Bible says that the days of a man are as a handbreadth, the breadth of your hand, that's the days of a man. Now, that is the wise man's measure of his life. He says it's just a handbreadth. Yes, I'd be saying, my hand is pretty big. I got big hands from working on a farm until I was 15. So, I take it that that would be five inches across. Let's call it five inches. Some of you ladies of course, would have a much smaller handbreadth. But David said that the life of a man is but a handbreadth.

We hear the baby has been born. The Robinsons or the Smiths have a little baby, and the news goes around. And we say, what did they call him? Well, they said they called him John. They called him John after an old uncle. So, his name was John, Anderson or Robertson, whichever it was I said.

And so, we have John Robinson. Pretty soon he toddles and after that he talks and then after that he walks right and gets out and plays in the backyard and then goes to school and then gets into high school and then gets into young manhood. And we think it's been a long time. But it isn't very long. From the time the announcement goes out, the Robinsons have a new baby. They called him John, God winks His eye once and we read in the newspaper obituary, John Robinson died last night at his home in such and such. The same man and how long has it been? It's been the wink of God's eye. It's been an handbreadth. That's all.

That's how long you're around here. And that's why I'm a serious preacher. Even though occasionally I spoil it by, what my boys would say is a half witticism. But I'm serious because this is a serious business, my friends. And you and I ought to be serious-minded people. David was, for David said, my life is about a handbreadth. And then he said, I'm a stranger and I'm a sojourner as my fathers were. He's just here for a little while. David never accepted this world as being his home.

There's a difference as wide as heaven between the man who is here and accepted as his home and the man who is only sojourning here. In the old country part of the United States where they meet in tents or in camp meetings and have straw. You sometimes hear some marvelous theology packed into some of the old prayers they make. I like to sit and listen. I think God forgives me. I'm not praying. I'm listening.

And I believe that's all right occasionally. And I like to hear some of those old prayers and some of the dear old sisters who pray, O God, help us to wear this world like a loose garment. I like that very well because that's it, brother. You can't get out of the world. Even Jesus said they are in the world. But they wear it as a light garment. It is something that can be zipped down and tossed off when you hear the trumpet. It isn't something you're all bound up in. Lazarus in the grave was all bound.

And the Archangel Gabriel couldn't have taken him away. He had to be unbound. But God never means His revived and redeemed people thus to be bound. He means that we should live here and, in the world, wearing the world like a loose garment, ready to throw it off and go heavenward at the slightest impulse of the Holy Ghost. And he said I am a stranger here. I just came for a little while. I think about people and how much like children we are.

The Bible often likens this to children and uses a child as an example of the profoundest spiritual truth. We're like a child. We come into the world. We have our little playground, and we have our little front yard. And usually there's a fence around it, and everybody wishes he was on the other side. And some migrate and get over there. But they find it's the same as it was on this side of the gate. But there's a little child. He's pushed around and disciplined and fed, and he grows some and gets hurt a lot and cries some and laughs some.

And then the evening time comes around, and the little fellow, they tell him now you got to go to bed. But no matter how long they've been up, they never want to go to bed. I never saw one yet that ever did. I have seen them little ones fall asleep on their highchair. But that was sheer necessity. That wasn't the volitional. But little children, they don't want to go to bed. You always have to shoo them off and run them off to bed. And then tell them stories until you wear them out. To get a child to go to bed; they just don't want to go to bed.

And God looks down at this little tribe of flesh and blood with all its cares and fears. And he finds that we don't want to go to bed. We just don't want to. God says it's appointed unto man once to die and after that good judgment. God says you have got to go to bed, son. You're only here for a little while, that's all. Your life is like a handbreadth, and one of these days you're going to lie down and sleep, sleep till the morning, sleep till you're awake. But nobody wants to sleep.

Once in a while, some poor, reckless fellow, mad and filled with conflicts that are like storms at sea will kill himself, but it's not many. Mostly we don't want to go to bed. We get diseases and we run to doctors and divine healers, and we send off for pills and we hope for the best. We don't want to sleep, nobody wants to. I have looked at people so old, you wonder why they didn't just reach down and loose their strings and go off to heaven, but they don't want to. They still want to stay around, this veil of tears, they still want to be here, but God has to sometimes tell us, now, go on to bed.

He had to tell Moses that. Moses was 120 years old, and he was overdue. So, God called Moses and He said, Moses go on up on Mount Moriah and go to bed. And Moses went up on Mount Moriah and he said, Father, I'm not sick and I'm not blind and I can hear as well as I ever could. And I have as much strength as I ever had and the sun shining bright, and I don't want to die. And God said, Moses, lie down and die. He's the only man I've found in the Bible that died completely well because God told him to.

And I have often wondered how he accomplished it. Did you ever stop to think, how if the Lord told you to die, how you'd work it. I wouldn't know how to work it, would you? Now, He didn't say commit suicide. He didn't say that. You know, the only thing I could think of to do would be to stop breathing. But then you'd feel that sense of suffocation and you'd be breathing first thing you know.

But Moses simply laid down at the command of God and stopped breathing. And there laid his body, and his soul was with the God who gave it. And the devil came for his body and the archangel Michael rebuked him and God took the body and buried it. And no man knows his grave until this hour. Moses even didn't want to go to bed. And Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the rest waited as long as they could. There's something to me very tender about that.

Our life is a handbreadth, and we are as sojourners here and as strangers on the earth. And he says, man, at his best state, is all together vanity. Now, man at his worst state may be less than vanity, but at his best state he is no more than vanity. He equates with vanity, as they say. He is vain. And of course, vanity in the Old Testament means emptiness. It means unsubstantiality. It means the condition of being delusive and disappointing.

I remember in classical literature only one example that comes to my mind now that illustrates vanity. Vanity was down in the realms of the blessed or the realm of the dead. And he saw an old girlfriend that had been his sweetheart by the name of Beatrice. And she died before they could marry on Earth. and she had died, and he had never forgotten her and had waited to see her in the next world and, you know, it's all that kind of stuff, more or less goofy, but anyhow it illustrates something.

And this, this donkey was looking around and suddenly before his wandering, and delighted mind, Beatrice appeared. And he forgot his etiquette and raced up to her and threw his arms around her to pull her to his bosom, but his fingers came back empty to his breasts. It was not Beatrice, but a phantom. It was only a phantom. And he was hugging to his breast a vain delusion and vanity. Now, that at least illustrates out of classical literature that which the Holy Ghost said, that man at his best stages is all together vanity.

That's why you never can go along with the world and be a very good Christian. And that's why the better Christian you are, the more you'll see through the world. I say frequently that the world had better stop lying to me, because I can see through them long ago. They don't have it. They patronize us and look down on us and leave the impression by the fling of the head and a shrug of the shoulder and raising the eyebrows. They leave the impression that they've got it. And we poor Christians don't know what we're talking about.

Don't you be taken in by the world. The world doesn't have a thing that will last. Man at his best stage is all together vanity. And we have our ambitions and our plans. Some would like to be the richest person in the world, I suppose, in order that they might be the richest person in the graveyard at last. And some would like to be the best-looking woman in America so she could be Miss America. And some would like to be the best singer in the world, so they get the top billing. We have our ambitions. And there is a delusive and deceptive philosophy abroad.

That that is sound, that that sound, that if we get adjusted to that way of looking at things, we will be normal. But that if we don't get adjusted to that there's something wrong with our head. They can't talk that way to me. I've got a sneaking suspicion, somebody's head has got a bat in it, but I don't believe it's the Christian. I believe it's the man who accepts without challenge the values of the world. The young woman who dreams on her bed at night and rises in the morning and thinks of nothing else would sell her soul in order that she might be a movie queen or that you might have some high position and get her picture on the front of magazines.

And then they tell me that's normal. That's life. That's it. And get adjusted to that and yield to it and let that become a part of your makeup. And you'll never have a nervous breakdown or blow a fuse. You'll be alright if you get adjusted. You mean to tell me that Dante would have been sane if he had gotten adjusted to a phantom and that made love to spook?

Then he would tell me that he would be wise. He would have been a fool, ten times over a fool. The world doesn't have it. Tomorrow morning, there'll be a newspaper on your porch. And if you're as silly as I'm afraid you are, some of you will be reading it while you squirt your grapefruit. And you'll get the philosophy out of it and you'll get its values. And now let's see this is the 27th. All the magazines are out now they are out over these last few weeks. The monthlies and the weeklies will be out in the middle of the week.

And we read them, and we allow that spirit to enter into us, Time and Life and all the rest. Pretty soon, we've got the cheap little worldly, carnal philosophy that's founded upon delusion and that glorifies phantom. Into the middle of all this comes the great, tall figure who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, who went down into death and pulled its ugly teeth and broke its damnable jaws and came out of the grave the third day and stands with a world on His shoulders and says, come unto me and I will give you a rest. We Christians are not to be pitied, and we certainly ought not to envy those who make love to phantoms and glorify spooks. We thank God we have sound things and reality and truth. But the world hasn't it.

What does the poet say, lasting joys and solid pleasures only Zion's children know. Solid joys and lasting pleasures only Zion's children know. The rest of them have nothing. You could go with me tonight. I got a letter from her just this last week.

If you could go with me tonight, and cared to, I could take you in a 40-minute drive from here, 30-minute drive into the ghetto section, one of the ghetto sections of this city in where murder, rape and brutality and drunkenness and every kind of vice is rampant. And I can take you upstairs and down a hall where a rattail light let down on a wire burns without shade to light the way through the ratty, spooky hall. And I can take you into a room, a room where a woman sleeps on a dirty or at least an unkempt bed with old clippings piled from the floor as high as you can reach. But

strange as wonderful she's a Christian. She's an old actress and trooper who traveled all over the country with her husband as a theatrical feature until he died, and she got old and crippled and arthritic.

And there she is waiting for the Lord for she became a Christian in her old age. I've been down to see her, and Chase and I went down one time. I frankly admit I was scared. He acted normal. But I was afraid. It was after night. And I didn't know when one of those shadows would suddenly materialize into a man with a club, but it didn't. God protected us and we went up there, gave communion to the older lady. Now, she's an old actress.

And she has her old clippings there, yet I guess She knows a good many of the old troopers. She told us that she had just received a basket of fruit, or box of food and fruit from Jim Jordan and Molly Jordan. I forget now what they call them. McGee. Fibber McGee. She said, we just received a box of fruit from them, in memory of the old days when they played the circuits together. Now there she is. Now they send her a box of fruit occasionally. But what's the world done for her? The world laughs and claps. And as she did her dance in the days when she had a beautiful figure to look at, they drool at the mouth and their eyes got unnaturally bright, and they watched her and made perhaps obscene comments as she danced.

And then they forgot her and picked up somebody younger that they would rather hear or see and she faded away. And now, if the Lord hadn't found her and she hadn't been converted, she'd have been one more forgotten old human wreck. And they're all around, all around.

I went down here in my favorite drugstore the other day and I saw a magazine, and on the cover of that magazine was a famous actress, getting along little now. But she's one of the most famous of the actresses. You would know her name in a second if I mentioned even the first name, because you couldn't get away from it even though you were as chaste as snow and as pure as ice water, you ought to run into this old lady somewhere. You can see it all. Do you know what, I've seen better looking things in my dreams riding on brooms.

Now, I tell you seriously, I tell you seriously, she is a high concentration of brass and burnt-out sex and homeliness. And a voice like our rusty buzzsaw and a vocabulary like a drunk sailor. And I'm not telling you who she is, but her father was a senator. And I pray that God Almighty will keep contempt out of my heart because contempt is not a good Christian emotion.

Contempt means there's pride present. But it's awfully hard for me to keep from shuttering and turning my back on that degenerate, leftover, dragged in, pulled in as a rat pulled in by a collie dog. And there she is, the stringy, sexy, crude remnant of a human being. She's now in early 50s, I think. Give her a few more years and she'll go down the sink. And her memory won't even be in the

minds of the generation. What has life done for her. All life has done for her, is cynically etch, sin and hell on her painted countenance. That's all.

Life at its best is vanity. And the best the world has to offer anybody is vanity. And I've picked out of course, I admit, I have picked out a very low case there. But the Bible says that man at his best, he's vanity. The statesman that would sell his mother-in-law to get an extra vote; that would sell his honor to get a vote. That statesman, he comes in when the band plays and he's forgotten and dies and is no more. He's a vain thought and a vain show. A landowner buys his land, gets rich and dies, and it's all a vain show.

The famous author, he autographs his book. Every once in a while, they'll say such and such will be at the book store or somewhere else, and he'll be autographing books and you go in and there he sits looking like the high concentration of all intelligence and sophistication. God says he's a vain show. The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power and all the beauty, all that wealth there gave, await alike the inevitable hour and the path of glory leads up to the grave. There's nothing anybody can do brethren.

Shakespeare's bust, is somewhere with copies over all around in the libraries of the world, but unless Shakespeare found God through Jesus Christ and changed mortality for immortality, and change the earthly life for eternal life, he's a flop and the failure. And not all of his fine sayings of rounded periods and brilliance for he was one of the world's most brilliant men. Not all of his human brilliance can do anything for him now.

Now he's gone. His life is a handbreadth and he's gone. What's does the world got to offer me? And I answer, nothing at all. But God had called this man. And so, he was saying, now, what have I got? What is there now? The Mercy of God is like a ocean. The mercy of God is all around about us. And God is calling us vain creatures' home, calling us home from vanity to the Rock of Ages, calling us home to the handbreadth life of ours, from that to that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us, calling us from the cheap and tawdry values that the world offers to the things that can never perish nor pass away.

That's the ground we rest upon my listening friends. It's this that leads us to believe in Christ and in God. Not a desire to get our way, not a desire to have our prayers answered, but a desire to escape the clinging folds of mortality; the desire to escape the emptiness and the cheat and the delusion that is human life and enter into the life that is God. That's what the church is for, not to entertain morons, but to save hungry-hearted men and women that are sick of being cheated all the time and deceived.

The world is a cheat and a lie, and the whole Bible says it is. But Jesus came to it nevertheless and took upon Him the form of a man and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, so

that there isn't a dark cave in the world that hasn't a little light in it now. There isn't a human heart, however dark, but what can have the light of God's love flash into it? For the light of the world is Jesus. What wait I for said David, and I asked you what you're waiting for?

What are you waiting for? Some of you Christians, you are believers after a fashion, but you don't live for God. You know you don't live for God. As soon as you get out of here you go clunking downstairs and out onto the sidewalk, and you forget in no time everything you ever heard here. You don't live it. What are you waiting for? Waiting until a better time comes? There will never be a better time. Waiting till you get better? You'll never get better. You might as well wait to get younger as to wait to get better. Waiting till you'll live a better life? You might as well wait for a dirty room to get clean.

No, you'll never get better, you'll never get younger, you'll never get pure. There is only one thing to do and that is while the gates are still open, to come where the fountain flows for sin and uncleanness. Come and bring your empty earthen vessels clean through Jesus precious blood. Come bring your dirty vessels. Bring your life as it is, not waiting to clean yourself up and to educate your soul. But coming just as you are without one plea coming to the foot of the cross. There never was anybody so far away, but the Lord could find them in the flash of an eye. There was never anybody so far down, but Jesus Christ had gone down further. There never was anybody so foul, but the blood of Jesus Christ could cleanse it from sin.

In some of the old tracts that they used to circulate years ago, there was the story of the Christian worker that went into the saloon, the old saloon, before the day of Roosevelt's tavern. An indoor saloon, the old saw dust saloon, tobacco spit and sawdust and cigar ashes trampled on to the floor, soured and rancid from days and days of it. And a Christian worker went in, went up to the bar, began to talk to a sinner, a man who was completely down and out, and he said, the Lord can save you. And he said, you go talk to people other than I. Go talk to other people. I'm past it. He said, I left my home years ago. I've forsaken my family. I'm a liar and a thief and a drinker. I am everything, he said. I am so dirty; nothing can ever cleanse me. There was a glass of water on the bar. He looked down and here was a rose laying that had been tossed into the saw dust and had been kicked around, covered now with dirt and tobacco juice and cigar ashes.

And he picked it up; it was still relatively fresh. He picked it up and dipped it in this glass of water and then held it up. It was as clean as when it came off of the bush. And he said, you see what can happen to something that's been trampled and kicked around in the dirt. And he said I know somebody that washes quieter and cleaner than all the waters of the world. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. And this poor bum bowed his head and tears came down his poor, unshaven cheeks. And he was led to the Lord Jesus Christ by the simple illustration of a cleansed rose. No, no, that is not even a good illustration. For the Lord doesn't take a poor battered rose and cleanse it. That helped of course and it pointed the way, but that's not enough. He does more than that. If

he could have created a new rose where the old Rose was. And then if he could have dipped in the waters of immortality, that rose and said you'll never be dirty again, then you'll be getting near to it. For that's what redemption does.

What are we waiting for? What are you waiting for? You that have been hanging around the edge so long. You'll never get younger. You'll never get better. You'll never get pure. The grace of God will never get freer. The blood of Christ will never get richer. The call of God will never get tender or more persuasive. The gospel is for you, Sir, and for me. Men and women born for a handbreadth. Men and women who are at our best state, are all together, emptiness and vanity. God gave the gospel to such people as we. God wrought the gospel, man didn't.

The Gospel never was concocted by a committee. Never an archangel had a hand in compounding the gospel of Jesus. And when God wanted His detergent to cleanse the souls of men, He never called in the scientists of the world, nor the angels of heaven. But he made His own gospel, and he gave it to the world. And you could not add anything to it. Not all the wisdom could add anything to it. And not all power for it's all man needs. It's all a guilty sinner needs, is Jesus, only Jesus.

So, you that are not saved, why aren't you? What are you waiting for? What wait I for, my hope is in thee. You'll never get help anywhere else. And you'll never get better. So, take Him and seek Him and find Him and it'll be your precious treasure forever.

O Lord, save some, I don't know why. And it's that strange confusion within the heart. Why I don't come, I don't know. I don't either. Except the devil has charmed us and hypnotized us. And the Lord waits. And you Christians, you Christians that know you're not living as you should live.

You know you're not living right? Why don't you do something about it now? Why don't you start now? You'll never get any better and you'll never get any younger. Start now. O Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. Let's pray. Let's talk to the Lord about it.

Dear Lord Jesus, we say with thy servant David, our hope is in Thee. We say with Peter, Lord, to whom shall we go? Where Lord, can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Lord Jesus, there's science and psychology and learning and religion and preoccupation, but not one of them afford a hiding place against the storm. Not one of them has a fountain where we can clean our souls, not one. Lord, Thou alone is our hope. Thou alone is our hope. We bless Thee. We worship Thee. We praise Thee. We magnify Thee for Thy precious blood, the blood that cleansed Paul a murderer and John Newton, the slave of slaves.

Mel Trotter, Jerry McCauley, Billy Sunday, and 10,000 times 10,000, whose names are never known in public, but who were sinners deep died and lost, but were washed by Holy Blood,

cleansed, renewed and are now happy in Jesus. O Lord, the many who have gone on and the many who are still here.

How we thank Thee for that perfect gospel. We don't apologize for it. We don't even try to understand it. We only know that simple trust in the Precious Blood makes the soul clean and brings us into knowledge of eternal life through Jesus Christ the Savior. We pray thee for these friends who are here tonight. O God, let them not go out untouched with thoughts of holy things. Let them not go out and influenced by impulses of the Spirit.

Let them not go out as they came in, but sobered and thoughtful. We don't want them to go out heavy hearted nor gloomy. For there's no gloom, no heaviness in the cheerful call of the Holy Ghost. But we pray Thee they go out serious and sober and thoughtful and saying to themselves, I'm here for a little time and then I'll go. What am I waiting around for? Why all this postponement? Why this loitering? Why this tarrying?

O Lord Jesus, some of us were never saved in church at all. Some of his haunted a attic room or a basement room or a park or somewhere there and loneliness he poured out our wreath and raised our Bethel and met the Lord we pray there be some here tonight, that before the midnight bells toll that they might have found Thee, that they might find the Savior. Bless Thou the saved tonight, Lord Jesus. These who are unsaved to bring them in.

For the young folks that are friendly, nice kids, but O God, so far from Thee and their feelings and emotions and impulses and ambitions, so horribly carnal. Yet they say they're saved. We pray for them. O Christ, may they go on unto perfection. May they leave the first beginnings of the things of the Lord and put behind them the world and under their feet, the carnal things of flesh, and rise on Jacob's Ladder and seek the high lands and the pure, sun kissed hilltops where the air is rare and sweet embracing, where they can see over Jordan and behold the bright tops of the City of God. Grant this we pray, for Jesus' holy sake. Amen.