

There is a Way that Seemeth Right to a Man

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Outline

The importance of the end goal in life.

- Life is a journey with a heavy commission, traveling towards an end.
- Bible cares little about journey, only end matters.

The importance of choosing the right path in life.

- Tozer emphasizes the importance of the end goal over the comfort of the journey, citing biblical teachings.
- Tozer urges listener to take right path for right end, as all paths lead to finality.

Deception in spiritual journey.

- Tozer warns of deception, noting that what seems right can be wrong.
- Tozer warns of deception in religion, emphasizing importance of self-examination and proof of faith before it's too late.

False ways and the importance of following the right path.

- Tozer: The way of the drunkard doesn't seem right, but it's the way that leads to death.
- Tozer: The way of the gangster, murderer, harlot, and thief doesn't look right, but it leads to death.
- False teachers abound, promoting doctrines of demons and lies.
- Tozer warns against naming names in sermons, citing biblical precedent and personal experience.

False beliefs and the importance of living a life of Jesus Christ.

- Tozer: Expertise in identifying counterfeit money comes from familiarity with real government issue.

- Tozer argues that people are drawn to false religions because they seem right, but ultimately, only Jesus Christ is the true God.
- Tozer warns against self-deception, highlighting examples of those who appear righteous but are actually on the path to death (drunkard, thief, harlot, worldly-minded, carnal professor, and procrastinator).
- The way of life is the way of Jesus Christ, and it's crucial to be serious-minded and think about the consequences of living a lifetime in error.

The importance of following Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, and He calls us to follow Him by renouncing sin and taking up our cross (John 14:6).
- The Lord has people in various denominations and churches, including Catholics, Greeks Orthodox, and Calvinists, who have found the way to salvation despite their differences (Acts 15:14-18).
- Tozer emphasizes the importance of having a good conscience towards God, rather than focusing on details of baptism or mode.
- Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their hypocrisy in religious practices, highlighting that it is the heart that defiles a person, not just external actions.
- Jesus and his disciples eat with unwashed hands, demonstrating that following God's laws is more important than following man-made rules.
- Tozer warns against external religion, emphasizing the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Message

We turn to an old and often-used verse in the 14th of Proverbs. Many, many years ago, I don't know how many years ago, I talked once on this. And I have been thinking it over the last days and want tonight to use this verse as a basis for a few considerations.

The King James Version text reads this way, there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. And this is not a comforting verse, and I wish it were, but it isn't. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end of it are the ways of death, a way and the ways.

Now, here in this verse, as many places in the Bible, human life is likened to a journey, and you and I are on a journey, whether we believe it or not. And we're travelers carrying a very heavy commission. Like a wartime messenger, we're commissioned and strictly accountable to Almighty God. And we cannot go backwards, and we cannot stay still. But life is a journey, and we're traveling that journey toward an end. And the Scripture says, the end thereof.

Now, let's think a little together about this, the end thereof. The Bible cares very little about the journey, but the Bible cares everything about the end of the journey. By saying the Bible, I mean, the teaching of the Bible. Of course, God it is who cares. God cares not so much about whether the road is long or short, whether it's crooked or straight, whether it is paved or muddy, whether there are rocks in it, or whether it lies a black macadam all the way. He doesn't care about that. He only cares about the end.

Today, it matters very little to the men and women of this world about the end. They think only about the comforts of the way. We have inventions that have made it comfortable. Our journey is more comfortable than it used to be. I often smile when I think about our modern methods of transportation. How they now make it possible for a man who has no reason to go where he's going, to go comfortably. They now make it possible for a little man who doesn't amount to much in his own community, to travel in such luxury, that as Caesar, or any of the rest of them of the great men of the world, wouldn't have believed it possible. The commonest man can lay his money down now, can rise and travel as a king; and the magic carpet of olden times is nothing compared with the way men can travel now.

So, because we can thus travel in luxury, almost in royalty, we get the idea that if we're going somewhere, we amount to something and there must be some reason for it. I think the old wartime slogan might well be back. Is this trip necessary? Why are you going? People are careful or are thinking only about the comfort of the way, but not the end of the way.

Now, the blessed teachings of the Scripture, reverse that. They do not care very much about the journey, but they care everything about the end of the journey. And remember, that to every man there is an end of the journey. And at last, that will be all that matters. It won't make too much difference how you got there. It won't make too much difference about whether you were comfortable or uncomfortable on your journey. But if you got where you're going; if you accomplished what you set out to do; if you succeeded in achieving; and above all things, if the destiny that is yours is finally the one that God has ordained so that you can go at last assured and right, that's all that matters. And remember that when the end comes, there's no changing it.

Now, we can change it. A man is given a certain journey, a certain mileage is built into him, we'll say. He's got half a million miles, mileage built into Him. And God says, all right now, you can go half a million miles, and then you will fall apart, and you will not go any further. That's it. Now, at

the beginning, everything depends upon whether we start in the right direction. Because the end of the journey is altogether dependent upon how we aim, what direction we take, whether the journey is started right. But after you have used up your mileage and God says, all right, you're finished, your through, why then, it's too late to do anything about it.

Now, I'm very much concerned my brother. I'm not concerned to amuse you. And I'm not concerned even to cheer you up. But I am very much concerned that you might take the right path leading to the right end. Because the way that leads to the end that is right, is the only right way. All paths lead to an end at last. And there is an end for everything in the sense of a final finality. And then there is an end in the sense of achievement and destiny. But only the right way leads to the right end.

And you're here tonight, and I don't want to unchurch anybody nor suggest nor feed into your mind any doubts, but I only want to ask as a pastor, if the way you are going now will lead to the right end. Because you see, there is a way that seemeth right.

Now, this suggests the possibility of being mistaken. Religious deception is one of the most prevalent things that you know of. Even the person who earnestly seems to be going right may be mistaken, because it says here, there is a way that seemeth right. Do you notice that the path seems to be right? And the very fact that it seems right, makes it that much more treacherous. If it did not seem right, everybody would be suspicious and say, well, that couldn't be the right way. It couldn't possibly be the right way. But every false way, has certain proofs that it's the right way; and you have to dig beneath the surface to be sure. You have to test and know.

Things are so much alike. Good is so much like evil, and evil so much like good under certain aspects. Truth is so much like falsehood and falsehood so much like truth when seen under certain lights. Just as a wax orange is like a real orange when seen under certain lights. Just as gold looks like brass and copper, and copper looks like gold under certain lights. But we have to do more than see them under certain aspects and under certain lights. We're duty-bound to be sure about ourselves, because things seem to be so much alike. A live man looks like a dead man and a dead man looks like a live man. See a man lying under a certain light in a bed or on a couch, and you don't know whether he's alive or not. You may even have to call in a doctor to determine whether he's alive or not, because dead men look like living men unless you examine carefully.

So, there are things that are unlike and absolutely hostile to each other and contrary to each other yet may seem on the surface to be the same. So, in religion, so in the journey from here to God, so in the journey from here to heaven or from here to hell. There are many things that seem right, and the ways are so many. And there are so many people shouting from so many house tops that my way is the right way.

There is every likelihood that even a small congregation that we have here tonight for some reason; even in this small congregation, there's every likelihood that there are some who are honestly deceived. You see, this is not a question of a man knowing better and doing it anyhow, this is a question of a man being honestly deceived about the direction that he has taken; and such persons are doomed to a rude and terrible disillusionment in the awful day of Christ when the end has been reached, and when there is no reversing. No going back, we've reached the point of no return.

So, it's important to prove it now while we can do something about it. It's very important that we should, now, while we can test ourselves and be very, very sure. Because we only have so much mileage in this, you know, and we're traveling, and we're on this journey, and we're going to reach the end of it one of these times. And it is very important that we don't allow ourselves to be fooled by appearances.

And then it says here, the way of death. Now I've tried to talk briefly about the end thereof and the way that leads to the end and the way that seemeth right. And now we talk about the ways of death. Now, have you noticed that these ways of death are not the way of the drunkard, the gambler, the thief and the gangster and the delinquent? That's too obvious. And the Bible doesn't say in here anything about it. It says elsewhere, but not here. It's a very comforting thing to fill hell with drunkards and say, well of course, a man that gets drunk and drives when he's drunk and beats his wife and drives his children out the back door and lies in the gutter overnight, of course, that man is lost. Of course, he's on the wrong way. But you notice that the Bible doesn't have it in focus here at all. It says there is a way that seemeth right, and the way of the drunkard doesn't seem right. Nobody ever saw a man staggering down the street pouring out filth and blasphemy from his lips and say that man is right. He's on the right road. Nobody ever did that.

And yet, when we talk about the wrong way, we think about the drunkard, and we're glad to use him as a dumping ground to dump all our own sins over on the drunkard and say there's your man. But the Bible doesn't say, the way of the drunkard. It says that's the way that seems right, and the drunkard's way doesn't seem right. It's wrong, but it doesn't seem right, than the way of the gambler, the man who spends his time playing the horses or playing cards or playing the roulette wheel here in one of the gambling dens. That doesn't seem right. Everybody knows that isn't right. And they say that man is wrong. `He's desperately wrong. You can look at him and know that he's wrong. You can look at him and be sure that he's wrong. All the marks of his wrongness are upon Him. The Bible says there is a way that seems right and yet leads to death. Not the way of the gambler, though that leads to death, but it's not what is before us here.

Then here's the robber and the thief, the purse snatcher and the man who climbs in the window when you're away and steals everything he can get his hands on. The crooked businessman, the big shot gambler who robs, does that look right? Did Al Capone ever look right to anybody? Is the

man who mowed down seven men on St. Valentine's Day here a few years back? Did he look right? Did they look right? No, no. That way didn't look right. The way of the gangster and the murderer, the way of the harlot. That doesn't look right. Everybody knows that's not the right way.

But nevertheless, there is a way that seems right and that leads to death. And there is exactly where the woe of it lies. What way is it? Well, it's the way of the false religionist. Do you know, the Scripture talks about the doctrines of demons, and says that in the last days there shall be doctrines of demons, false teachers everywhere brought, teaching false religions. They're everywhere and they're everywhere now. In the last days, perilous times shall come. And those days are upon us now, days that we are speaking of right now.

The Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter time some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. The blindness that you can overlook, this is too much for me, forbidding to marry, there's celibacy, and commanding to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with Thanksgiving, and so on. Why, my brethren, these are false ways.

But you say you're one more church saying we have the right truth, and everybody else is wrong. No, we're not, and we are not. And I do not say that we have all the truth and nobody else has any truth, I would be ten times a fool If I dared to say a thing like that. I say that we have in our hands, accessible to us for very little, and you're going to borrow one from your neighbor, if you don't have one, a book that tells us the right way, the way of Christ who is the Truth and the Life; the way of the cross, the way of faith, the way of simplicity, the way of repentance, the way of righteousness. And it's not all held in this church, but there are God's people scattered all over the world in many groups and denominations who have found the right way. They have the way of truth.

But there are the ways of the false religionist. You know that. So, they look right. And they managed to doll everything up and make it look completely right.

I have been criticized because I do not name names. I get letters saying Mr. Tozer, you lay down principles, but you don't name names. Why don't you name people that are wrong? Why don't you give names and addresses of people that are racketeers and false leaders? And why don't you name people that are leading the church of Christ astray? And my answer is, two reasons. One is, that if I were to put in print what I know to be true about many people, I would be in libel suits continually. And the second is, I would not be Scriptural. The Lord laid down principles. He said, there shall be wolves in sheep's clothing. But He didn't say though that wolf lives at such and such an address. He said, beware of false prophets, but he didn't name the false prophets.

And Paul said, in the last days, perilous times shall come. And there shall be false teachers, but he didn't name the false teachers, only on one or two occasions. John named a fellow by the name of Demetrius and Paul named one or two, but mainly they named nobody. They laid the principle down and said, now, this is what is right. And if they don't conform to this, then they're wrong.

One of our preachers some years ago, decided to preach a series of sermons on false doctrines. And he really was laying them out good. He was naming them and calling them by name. And Sunday night after Sunday night, he preached on false doctrines. And the more he preached, the colder his heart got, the colder it got. So, at last, after several weeks of it, he went down before the Lord in real earnest prayer and said, Father, what's the matter? And the voice said to his heart, it's those sermons you're preaching on false doctrines. Then he said, he lay literally down and beat the floor and cried, O God, am I wrong? Am I wrong? Are these doctrines, right? And the voice said, no, you're not wrong in your doctrine, but you're wrong in your spirit. You've got a wrong spirit toward these false doctrines. And that's what's the matter with you. You're fighting false doctrines so hard that you're losing love and patience and tolerance, and you're hurting your own heart. And that's what's wrong with you.

Well, he said he went to a banker, or a man who worked in a bank and handled a lot of money, and whose business it was to test and tell and find counterfeit money. And he said to him, your job is to be able to locate and identify counterfeit money? He said, yes, that's my job, that's what I do in a big bank downtown.

Well, he said, you must have studied it a long time, he said. I did, I took a course in it in order that I might be able to identify counterfeit money. Well, he said, I suppose that you have handled vast amounts of counterfeit money before you got good and became an expert in this matter. The fellow smiled and said, the simple fact is, I have never handled any counterfeit money. And he said all the time that I was studying, I never saw a piece of counterfeit money. He said, we never looked at it. He said, what? You can identify counterfeit money and know it instantly as soon as your eye falls on it and yet you've never saw any while you were studying to work at that job? He said, that's correct.

Well, the preacher said, what did that teach you? He said, they let us see and examine and feel and live with real government issue. And we became so familiar with every denomination, every one of the the numbers of bills that are put out by the government, and the silver, so that we knew the real things so well, that as soon as any variant appeared, we saw the difference in a second.

The preacher relaxed and went home smiling and told God what a fool he had been. He said, Heavenly Father, I have been out trying to teach the people to avoid counterfeit money when all the time I shouldn't have been teaching them to know the real thing so well, that they'd be able to know the false thing across the street. So, he gave up his series against false doctrines.

So that's why I never preach against Adventism nor against Father Divinism or against any of the isms. My business is to tell you all about Jesus Christ and all about what He did for you and all about what He will do for you and all about what the Bible teaches about the great major facts of the world and of heaven and earth and hell. And when you get familiar with them, you won't need to worry about false doctrine, because you will know false doctrine clear across the street. So the way of the false religionist is a way that seems all right.

I wonder tonight how human beings educated in American schools can believe some of the things they believe, but they do, because they seem all right. Father Divine, for instance, bless him, peace, it's wonderful. And he seems all right. Everybody's happy, saying peace, peace, peace, and they claim to live right. I think they do. But they say he's God. And God says, I am God. This little man says, I am God. I wonder who's going to die. The God who says, I am God, or the little god who says, I'm God. I wonder who's going to be buried and put away shamefacedly underneath the ground one of these days? The God who made the heaven and earth and says my name is Jehovah, I am God, or the little man who doesn't know who his father was and who says, I'm God. I think I know which one is going to be buried. And yet there are people following him. All sorts of people saying peace, it's wonderful and lining up just to get a touch of the father, poor people.

Then there's the self-righteous. The self-righteous, those who believe they're all right. You know, it's possible, brother, to be wicked as the very devil and still think you're all right. That's a wrong way. The drunk man who staggered to his feet and says, I'm not so bad. And right in the midst of his drunkenness, defend his own righteousness, self-righteous on the wrong way. But he looks all right. There's the carnal professor, the religious minded fellow who loves poetry and the Scriptures, but he's not renewed inwardly. And he's been confirmed and baptized, and he's been given the work, but he's not a Christian, nevertheless. He's only a professor of Christianity.

Then there's the worldly-minded person. The man James said, ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore who will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. And John says, love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And yet that same worldly minded fellow shows up with his new suit on Easter, and shows up with his flower on Mother's Day, and shows up with all the external accoutrements that indicate that he's a Christian, but he's got a mind that worldly. He belongs not to the kingdom of God, but to the kingdom of Adam. Then there's the hopeful procrastinator, who's putting it off.

All of these I mentioned as samples of those who seem to be all right. The drunkard doesn't. The thief doesn't. The harlot doesn't. But these seem to be all right. And because they seem all right, they go on believing themselves to be all right. And the end thereof are the ways of death. Can you think of anything? Are you serious minded enough to think with me a minute here and say to

yourself, how terrible, how terrible to go on a lifetime, thinking honestly, believing that I'm alright. And then finding in the end that I was all wrong and was on my way to death?

Well, what is the way of life? The way of life is the way of Jesus Christ our Lord. He said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And they said, mine eyes have seen thy salvation. And He said, I am the Door and by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. Jesus Christ, that's the way. You can state it, this denomination or that one, but it's Jesus Himself is the way and He calls us to Him. He calls us to Him to follow Him to take His cross, and walk with Him, and be willing to renounce sin. For He came to delivery his people from their sin and publicly owned Him as the Savior.

For if men will not own Him, He says, He won't own us. But if we own Him before men, He will own us before the Father which is in heaven. It's all so very, very simple. Come unto Me. Believe in Me. Receive me. Accept Me. Take My cross and follow Me. It's all so very simple that the church doesn't half believe it and the world doesn't believe it at all. So, the way that leads to God and to peace and to a good end and to happiness at last, is the way where Jesus Christ is found.

And you know, He has His sheep everywhere. He has His people, His sheep, thank God, who know Him. Not only in this church, but in many churches. I often look back and remember the Catholic woman that I knew in another city. She was a converted woman. She loved Jesus Christ with glowing devotion. Her eyes shown when she talked about the Lord and salvation. And she did more for me and my family, I think, than any protestant in that city.

But she was a Catholic and went to the Catholic Church. She found the Lord somewhere in the middle of it all. Now, I admit, I don't know how. In the midst of all the paraphernalia, I don't know whether I'd ever see the Lord, but she found Him. You will find them among the Greek Orthodox. You will find them in Mar Thoma church by the thousands. You'll find a few among the Coptics. You'll find them among the Calvinists and the Armenians, the Baptists and the rest. The Lord has His people. They have all found the way. They've put away the way that seems right and they've taken the way that is right, which of course, always is Jesus Christ the Lord.

You know, friends, if you're mistaken on some details, it'll be all right anyhow, if you have found Jesus the Son of God. You get into an airplane and forget your baggage, you have your ticket, you'll make it all right. If you will get to where you're going. You can be mistaken about what town that is down underneath. You can be mistaken about the name of the plane you're on. You may even be mistaken for the moment about the line, the company that's flying it. But if you have your ticket and the plane is bound to the right city, you will be alright.

So, Christians can be mistaken about a lot of things and yet right in their hearts, and they can be right about a lot of things and yet wrong in their hearts. You say, which mode of baptism is right? I answer you with the answer of a good conscience to God. But have you got Jesus? Is He your

Savior? Do you love Him now? Are you trusting Him now? Then you're all right, you've got your ticket. And you're all right, even though you're mistaken about the little details around the margin. God isn't hard to live with and He isn't demanding, and He isn't exactly. He only wants to know that you love Him with all of your heart.

What kind of God would God be that made a difference between heaven or hell, whether somebody had or hadn't pronounce some word over me; Had or hadn't put water on my head; Had or hadn't dunked me into the into the water; Had or hadn't confirmed it? What kind of God would he be, that would make arbitrary rules, as arbitrary as the rules of bridge or baseball and say now, you either play My way or you go to hell. What kind of God would that be? He certainly wouldn't be the God of the Bible. He certainly wouldn't be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who never cared about details.

The Pharisees were great for details. Their phylacteries had to be so wide. They stood in a certain position to pray. And they wouldn't walk over the grass on the Sabbath day for fear they trample out the seed out of the head of grass, and thus be threshing. They wouldn't gather an egg or eat it that had been laid on the Sabbath day. And otherwise, they made pests out of themselves. And they thought that God was such a one as they. Jesus Christ smiled and said, you don't understand. You don't understand at all, because I am here to save you. I'm here to be your Friend and your Redeemer and to die for you and to rise; and you come and follow Me. And if you follow Me, everything will be alright.

So, he turned their eyes away from eggs and grass and days and meat and clean hands. Those old Pharisees were so rotten inside, you could smell them a block away. And yet, they wouldn't eat without washing their hands. They scrubbed themselves very carefully before they would touch a bite of food.

Jesus came in one day, relaxed and easy, traveling along with His group telling them about God and heaven and salvation. And Peter said suddenly, say, I'm hungry. And the Lord said, well, it is getting late. Let's eat. So, they got a basket out and all got a meal. The Pharisees were ringed around them, all ringed around them, their little beards shaking, you know, all around Him. And Jesus sat down, broke the bread and handed Peter a piece, Bartholomew a piece, John a piece, and they all began to eat. And they ran around saying, look, look, He doesn't wash His hands before He eats. Look, he's defiling himself. Jesus stood up, put His lunch down and said to these hostile men around the body, not what enters into a man's stomach defiles him, but what comes out of his heart makes him unclean. And they all turned and slunk away, because crawling out of their hearts were vile worms and serpents and toads and evil vermin and rodents. They were bad inside, but they were careful to wash in soap before they ate their lunch.

So, Jesus always smiled about the outside. He said, what do you have inside, friend? What's inside of you. What do you have inside? It's the religion, the way that is right is the religion of the heart inside. And if you've got Christ in your heart inside, it doesn't make too much difference about the other thing. Salvation that depends upon the weather I never thought much for.

Suppose that a man lived way out in the Arizona desert, and he was dying, and there was a little creek there and in wet weather the creek flowed, but in dry weather it didn't. And he had gotten converted, and he loves the Lord. But he was dying, and the pastor couldn't baptize him because the creek was dry. And the Lord up in heaven looking down says, too bad about that because if it had rained and it had water, he would have made it through. But it didn't rain, and they don't have water and I've got to send him to hell. Too bad, I'm sorry to do it. Depart from me.

Can you imagine a grotesque situation like that? Never, never, Brother. Can you imagine God condemning a man because he didn't wash his hands? You should wash your hands, surely. But what's that got to do your relation to God? Jesus Christ is your relation. He's your link. He's the golden link that binds you to God.

So, you take Jesus Christ, love Him, believe Him, follow Him, trust Him fully, then obey, then obey Him as much as you know how. But in the meantime, know that He's your salvation. He's everything. There is a way that seems right, smooth and externally alright, but it's a deadly way for it leads to the way of death. I hope you're not on it. If you are, you don't have to be. You can change tonight. You can move over unto the way that leads to God which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us stand.