

# Jesus Christ the Rock

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

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## Message Summary

Tozer emphasizes the importance of preparation for the end times through faith, steadfastness, and a commitment to the word of God. He encourages believers to have their hearts ready for whatever may come, and to endure patiently through trials and tribulations. Tozer also highlights the centrality of Jesus Christ as the only means of approaching God, arguing that those who reject Jesus will remain unconverted. He prays for the help of God to prepare the church and its members for the end times.

## Outline

### Enduring trials and faith.

- Tozer prays for faith and steadfastness in the face of unexpected challenges.
- The speaker prays for spiritual preparation and help in enduring trials, asking God to strengthen their faith and hope.
- Tozer visited Toledo and spoke at a church where William Bryan is the pastor, drawing a large and enthusiastic crowd.

### Jesus Christ as the Rock of Salvation.

- Tozer recounts a chaotic convention experience with rowdy engineers, despite a beautiful week with brethren.
- Tozer emphasizes Jesus' message of the kingdom of God being taken from the religious leaders and given to a nation producing fruit.

### Building spiritual structures based on God's blueprint.

- Tozer emphasizes the significance of the rock as a symbol of strength and permanence in Christ's message.
- Tozer warns against building a spiritual life based on human blueprints rather than God's design.
- A.W. Tozer: Stone rejected by stonemasons was actually God's chosen stone for building the Church.
- God took the rejected stone and made it the chief cornerstone, determining the direction and size of the rest of the building.

## Jesus as the rock of salvation.

- Tozer warns of forgetting Jesus' danger as a "wonderful friend and dangerous enemy" during Holy Week.
- Tozer: Jesus is a rock of refuge for all, including the poor and marginalized.
- A.W. Tozer shared his belief that Jesus is the only manifestation of God and emphasized the importance of being with Him.
- Tozer's attempt to convert a Hindu man through Scripture and personal testimony was unsuccessful, despite their friendship.

## The importance of being shaped by Jesus.

- Tozer emphasizes the importance of being shaped by Jesus, not one's own desires or expectations.
- A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of being broken and changed by God, citing examples from the Bible.
- Tozer encourages those who are weary and burdened to come to God, who will break and change them gently and lovingly.

## Jesus' role as God's lamb, lion, and rock.

- Tozer argues that God breaks us to make us new, fit for His eternal temple.
- Tozer: Humans tend to blame others for their own mistakes, like the Pharisees in Holy Week.
- Tozer emphasizes the importance of being like Jesus, citing Him as the only worthwhile thing in life.

## Message

Now, Lord, we are before Thee again for another hour of worship, the reading of Thy Word, singing of the hymns of worship and praise, meditating together over the things that matter. We thank Thee for this passage that we just read. This tells us what is to be and what will come, prepares us mentally to receive it. We pray Thee then Lord, prepare us in our hearts because what we know with our minds, sometimes we don't know really. And these things that are before us that are up there waiting, when we come into them, even though we know and could turn to the Scripture where they're found, when they come, they're shocking, terrible, and incredible.

So, we pray that Thou will give us faith. Give us steadfastness and give us that which Thou didst mean when Thou did say, they that endure unto the end. Lord, we won't let anybody interpret this away for us. We won't let anybody divide this and dispensationalize it. We stand by it. Here it is. They that shall endure unto the end they shall be saved. Lord, we would before Thee ask that Thou

wilt help us that we may get our hearts ready for quiet endurance. And then whatever comes and whatever it means, we're on the right side. Help us Lord to endure patiently whatever comes to us. We haven't any of us Lord endured much yet. Certainly, we have not endured unto blood, striving against sin. Certainly, Father, we are among those who have to admit that we've been treated like spoiled children, and we haven't much. We haven't much to show, not many scars, Lord, and not many things that ever happened to us. But, O God, we pray that Thou will prepare us for our time. And prepare this church and prepare the people of it and prepare those that are here this morning for that hour when things will begin to move and the world will catch fire, and those enemies that we thought we had bottled up and that they were safe. They will break out and get loose on the earth and things will begin to burn.

And then, we ask Thee to help us Lord that we might know where the Rock is that's higher than we are. That Rock that is higher than I which the Psalmist spoke and that the hymn pleads, to the Rock that is higher than I, let me fly. Lord, help us, and bless us this morning. Wilt Thou, we pray Thee, help us that our faith may lay hold on Thee, our hope may be cheerful and bright, our expectation may meet Thy promises, that our giving may be sacrificial, that our worship may be pure and inward, and that we may get great help out of this morning service.

Not only us, O God, but we think of the other churches. We pray for them all where the gospel is preached. Gracious Father, help the struggling churches. Help those, Lord, that are prospering, and the very prosperity may become a cause of their downfall. Help those that are struggling and let not their struggles cause them to give up. But keep us, all of us, all types and kinds where we meet in Thy name all over. Help us we pray, Our Father, that we may not fail to quietly endure. Now help us. Be with us. Send in all the funds that are needed to carry on Thy work. Bless the expounding of the Word and the singing of the hymns. We ask it in Christ's holy name. Amen.

I returned yesterday from a very pleasant and very rigorous visit to Toledo where Brother William Bryan is the pastor, a little church where Brother Zeemer preached for many years. They had splendid crowds. Not because I was there, but because they just have them. They always have them, excellent crowds. They were pushing for a \$90,000 missionary offering, hoping for it. Mrs. Constance of Colombia, Mrs. Notson of the Philippine Islands and John Vectral of Hong Kong were there and spoke at various times. I preached every night and once during the day.

There was a convention of engineers there. I don't know what they were engineers of, but Friday night, they decided to blow the place up. So about 11 o'clock was when I had nicely tucked down for the night. They started drinking, singing, yelling, pounding on doors and generally acting like delinquents until four in the morning. So, four in the morning, I might as well have been with them because I was just as drunk as they were, only in another way. I was bleary-eyed and miserable so I got what little I could out of it from there on. But I'm still feeling it. There were women among

them too, women, wives, I suppose. I don't understand such things. I lay there in bed and composed a letter to the management which I never wrote and will never send.

But really, they weren't to blame. They did their best. House detectives beat on the door and yelled, this is the house detective, quiet. But they might as well talk to the delinquents that they were. The next morning everybody was down in the breakfast room trying to look just as meek and nice and civilized as ever. If the engineers of Ohio are that kind of people, I don't know what the machinery of Ohio is going to be when they get through with it. Outside of that it was a beautiful week that I had with the brethren.

Now you'll excuse me if I approach another angle here. This is Palm Sunday. Christ rode into Jerusalem. But I want to read a passage here that our Lord spoke, for it's practically all entirely what He said. Matthew, the 21st chapter, 42nd Verse and following. This followed His triumphal entry. This was spoken between the day He entered and the time He was crucified. Jesus saith unto them, verse 42, did you never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing and it's marvelous in our eyes. That's the quotation. Therefore, say I unto you, Jesus went on, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind into powder. When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude because they took Him for a prophet.

There were always these Pharisees, chief priests, they were always caught just like the politicians are now. Always a little afraid of the public. They're always wanting to do something nasty, but they're a little afraid to do it because of the people. They despised the people, but they had them to deal with. They sought to lay hands on Him, violent hands, that would mean. But they feared the multitude because the multitude thought he was a prophet. And when a Jew thought a man was a prophet, the people, they weren't ready that he should be crucified quite yet.

Now I want to talk a little about Jesus Christ, the Rock. This familiar figure, you come on it every once in a while, in the Scriptures. And it has certain qualities, as we all know, the qualities of strength. Solid as a rock, we say. And the quality of hardness, impenetrable. We have a word we call adamant. When a man is stubborn, refuses absolutely to yield, we say he's adamant. That's comes from a certain rock, adamant rock.

And then the permanence of a rock. I've traveled through the country, and I see gray mesas, they call them out West, great rocks, standing up, short mountains, great rocks. I muse over how many generations they've seen come and go. How many generations they've seen come up and go down, come up, and go down, come up and go down. Because a rock is a pretty permanent thing. Sailors know about the rock; they want to avoid them. Or they want to use them occasionally. And

certainly, soldiers know, at least the soldiers of old days knew, they got behind rocks and they fought from behind rocks. Even in our own America, Indians used to get behind rocks and fight from there.

And the traveler knows about the rock. The shadow of a great rock in a weary land is word expression that comes from Palestine, where, when a man traveled over sandy ways until his tongue was dry, thick with thirst, he came to a rock and found the spraying and the shadow. And the cool moss growing there on the moist side of the rock, and he sat down. It was like being born physically over again. The builder knows about the rock. He chisels or hews it down and fits it into place and builds his great building. Now here, Christ quotes and applies the Scripture concerning the rock to Himself and to them. The stone He said, which was rejected by the builders, the same has become the head of the corner.

Now briefly, and I remember trying to explain this when I was in Peter back here, First Peter, that these religionists were builders, and they were busy erecting a temple. That is, they were not actually building a temple. It stood there in Jerusalem. I don't mean that literally. I mean, that they were building a religious temple, composed of human righteousness and legal requirements and interpretations and texts and prohibitions and tradition, commandments. They were building themselves a building, but the trouble is that it was their building. They were building according to their blueprint instead of according to God.

That's what I always am fearful of. When I hear men high pressuring, stampeding an audience, trying to get them to do this or that, or to give to this or that, I'm always afraid of it because I'm afraid that the young fellow may have a blueprint that God didn't draw. God said to Moses, be careful that thou build everything according to the pattern shown thee in the mount. And these religionists of Jesus' day, we're building a temple composed of human righteousness, as I say, and prohibitions and traditions and customs and ways, and they were building after their blueprint, but they hadn't consulted God. They thought they had but they hadn't. It wasn't God's blueprint. So, they were putting stone after stone in, and it looked good what they were building and then they came to a stone that wouldn't fit. There was one stone they couldn't make work.

It wasn't shaped so as to go along with their, the dimensions, the directions that their building was taking, and they couldn't do anything with this stone. It was too hard to chisel. I don't know what a stonemason calls it. What does a stonemason call it when he cuts an edge of a thing. Does he call it, chiseling it? Is that the word they use? I don't know myself. So, I probably will speak like an amateur here, and I am not a stonemason. But whatever they do to stones, to chip the thing down and get the side off of it and get it shaped up. They wouldn't work on this. They hit this stone, and they couldn't do anything with it. It sort of was alive somehow.

And they fought back, and they couldn't do anything with it. So, they just threw it away. They said this stone is no good. It didn't fit into their plan, so they rejected it as worthless. But it happened to be the only stone God ever had anything to do with here. It happened to be God. But because they were building their building and this stone was God's stone to be the headstone of another building, it didn't work. And I don't complain that Jesus Christ has no place in the average church. I don't mind that at all. I don't mind it because, why should He? Why should He?

They're building their churches. I don't mean buildings now, but their religious structures, their religious thinking, their codes of ethics, their plans, what they do; they're building, and Christ doesn't fit there. It is about the same way Socrates does and Benjamin Franklin, but He doesn't really fit there. So, I don't mind their rejecting, because why should they not reject Him. He's not shaped for a lot of these churches. But He is shaped for the church of God, the church of God. So, they rejected Him as worthless. They threw him out and said, this rock, we don't know what kind of a rock it is. We're not familiar with it.

So, they threw it aside, and God responded by rejecting their whole building; picking up the Rock they'd rejected and setting it in the corner to be the chief cornerstone, determining the direction and size and shape of all the rest of the building. And they were out in the cold with their homemade building. And we're still, by the grace of God, working on that vast cathedral of the sky, which God is building, His Son Jesus Christ being the Head of the corner. And that's all Peter said about it, but Jesus said more. Jesus said, on whomsoever that stone falls, it's ground into powder.

These are very sentimental times, very sentimental times; right this moment, this hour, because this is holy week starting today, isn't it today? Yes, today. It's Holy Week. I am not too much up on my church calendar. But it's Holy Week, and everybody gets misty eyed in Holy Week. But we're likely to overlook something here, that right here in Holy Week, the Man stood up and said, there's a rock and on whomsoever it fall, it will grind him to powder. There's a danger of forgetting that this Rock is not only a wonderful Friend, but He's a dangerous enemy. The messianic prophecies of the Old Testament showed the duality about Jesus. It fits perfectly into the attributes of God, for it was said about God, the kindness and severity of God.

And you will find all through the Bible a kindness that's incredible. God has been so kind and is so kind that it's all but unbelievable. And He's been so severe. I'm reading the book of Numbers again. And I find that God is capable of being tremendously, terribly severe. You will find the same all through here about the Messiah. Take that second chapter or take that second Psalm, why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder. Let us cast their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Now, in Jesus' time when He walked the earth, whoever ran head on into Jesus, usually went away rubbing the said's head. When they came to Jesus in trouble, they always got help no matter who it was, the Publican's child, the poor fellow with leprosy all over his body. Anybody that came to Him humbly went away blessed. Any that came to Him arrogantly, went away whimpering and angry, because this was a Rock here. And I, for my part, am mightily delighted there's a Rock somewhere.

There's a black preacher in this town I often quote, who is marvelously Spirit-taught in some things. And he never preaches a sermon, but what somewhere in it he says, Jesus is my Rock. He's known as the Rock among the colored folks, the Rock.

Well, Herod and the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees and all the rest, found that this gentle Jesus, this Lamb of God most lowly, was also a rock when He needed to be. And I just would like to remind you that this Rock, this Stone, is going to be our Judge at last. And everyone who rejects, neglects, disobeys; the rich, the proud, the arrogant, the self-sufficient, are all going to have to deal with it. We're in danger of getting so brotherly in our time, and so brotherly, everybody whimpers on everybody else's shoulder and cries on everybody's neck. We're so kind, so nice, so brotherly, we're likely to forget one thing, that Jesus Christ stood up, hard and solid, and said, who is not for Me is against Me.

I had the extreme pleasure; it was a pleasure, and I said it and mean it, I had extreme pleasure of preaching every night to a Hindu young man. Two degrees he has, an MBA and MA. He's a consulting engineer of one of the big concerns in Toledo. He came to hear me the first night and after that they couldn't keep him away. He told me the last night he was so tired, but he decided that he'd have to come because he had to hear me one more time.

He's a Hindu, and he's a devout Hindu, and he prays. He brought his Hindu books with him when he came. And quite to his astonishment, I knew about his Hindu books, and I had read them and I knew about his gods and could identify them and so on. Well, he talked about Jesus being a manifestation of God. He said he believed in Him. He believed in him since he was 10 years old. He's a manifestation of God. And he's such a nice man. I hated to push him. I wouldn't make a good salesman because I like people and I hate to bother them. And I didn't like to push him, but I thought I only had that one chance and sitting there in the hotel room, I decided that I was going to give him the works.

So, I pushed him, and I said, now, remember this one thing, what would you think of Christ? You heard Him say, not only am I a manifestation of God, I'm the only manifestation of God and thus sweep away, your Krishna and all the rest. What would you think of Him if He said no man cometh unto the Father but by Me? What would you think if you heard Him say, he that is not with me, is against me.

He said, I believe that. I believe that. I don't know. You couldn't do anything with him. We left friends, but he wasn't converted. And I doubt whether he ever will be unless the Holy Ghost does a miracle in his heart, because he's equated Christ with everybody else. And that's the way it is, you see now. We're so ecumenical and so brotherly and so tolerant, that everybody believes in everything, and so the result is, nobody believes in anything.

But here stands Jesus and says, the Rock, the Stone which the builders rejected. There it is. There's the Stone. And everything that doesn't have that Stone as the head of the corner gets thrown out. But He said again here, whosoever falls on this Stone shall be broken to pieces. Now that sounds terrible. He's the Chief Cornerstone you say. What did He mean by that? He meant that He was the one everybody was judged by. And here's a Stone, all every which way and they bring it to this Stone and cut it in line with that stone. They cut it in line with that Chief Cornerstone. The Chief Cornerstone is the shape that determines the shape of all the stones in the building.

And so, they have to be broken to fit. You have to break them, chisel them, drill holes in them and break them to fit. This is the doctrine that's at large in the New Testament, very large. Blessed are the poor in spirit. He submits himself to be broken. He doesn't come saying, God, I am the right shape. Well, let the church be like me. He doesn't get up as the woman did in an Alliance Church over in Ohio and say, Mr. Chairman, I nominate my husband. I've been his backbone for 15 years. He doesn't want anything shaped according to him, but according to the Lord Himself.

And that's all large there I say. Blessed are the poor in spirit and blessed are the meek and blessed are the humble and blessed are the lowly. And Jesus said, let him forsake all and let him carry the cross and let him come and let him bend and let him be ready to be cut and chiseled and bored and shaped to the right shape. If he falls on this stone, he'll be broken. If he comes to that Stone, he'll have the whole shape of him changed. And this is the trouble with Christianity now. We want people to be converted with the least inconvenience to everybody concerned, you know. We want everybody converted but with the least inconvenience.

Miss Jones, we'd like to have you accept Christ. All right, I'd be glad to do it. Mrs. Carbuncle did it down here two blocks, and she seemed quite happy. Well, Mrs. Jones, three packs of happy, happy, happy melbury or whatever they are that you've been singing about. I suppose you'd have to quit that. And those cocktails, I don't imagine that the Lord would let you go on with your cocktails, and chiseling on your income tax, that wouldn't do. And stepping out on your husband, that wouldn't do. And those long bridge parties, that wouldn't do. And those cocktail parties and you come away staggering to your Cadillac, that wouldn't do. Oh, well she said, in that case, I'm not interested. I'd like to have that happy, happy that Mr. Carbuncle had, but I don't want any of these things to change in me. I want the least inconvenienced to everybody concerned.



A cross was never a convenient thing. They say nobody ever found a convenient place to have a boil. And having had a few, I can say that usually wherever they are, that's the worst possible place. And I have never found anybody yet that would be willing to say that a cross is convenient. It picks you up, disregards you, and kills you.

He that falls on this stone, he shall be broken to pieces. God has broken them all down the years, the great, mighty Paul, Peter and down the centuries. But he will beautify the meek with salvation. And you will find all of those that came humbly to take His shape and be shaped according to Him, children, Mary and Nathaniel, Nicodemus and the Centurion, and Paul and the rest of them. They all came and they were shaped, chains were broken, broken.

People are afraid of that word broken. They don't want to be broken. And the weary and the heartache and those with the heartache and sinful, were never turned away. Never. They find Him as soft and gentle as the arms of an adoring mother. They will come and be broken, yield and let Him change them.

Now, that's what our Lord said. He said that in Holy Week. Isn't that a strange time to be saying it. But He said it in Holy Week. Some people fear this expression, whoever falls on this stone shall be broken. Shall be broken, they're afraid of that. But let me tell you something. Something is going to break you. I don't care how tall you are and how much you weigh. I don't care if when you go to a doctor, the doctor slaps your back and says, get out of here, you're healthier than I am. I don't care, something's going to break you.

Sickness is going to break you. Age will break you. Sorrow will break you. Worry will break you. Time will break you. Toil will break you. I read just recently that they think that what ages people is radiation. If they keep on testing atom bombs, there'll be a world full of old gray beards here on our hands in no time. That's what does it. But they say it may be radiation that breaks you down, makes you get old. But it will come, just as sure as you live, something will break you. You're the rock. You're the granite. Your heart is adamant. No, my brother, you're just a person. And Sister, you're just a person.

And as a person, something's going to break you. Now, it depends on whether you're to be broken by circumstances or by the Lord Himself. And the only reason He breaks you is because he wants you to fit into his everlasting temple. He wants you to be part of that grand cathedral of the universe. That vast cathedral where choirs of angels will be singing the glory of God forever. For they will rest not day nor night, saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty. He wants you to be part of that, but he can't make you part of it, the shape you're in, morally and spiritually. So, he's going to change that by breaking you and making you new.

So, in love, He fits us in. In love, He breaks us. In love, He changes our shape to fit His and with Himself as the model, He makes us after His own likeness. So that when He comes, we shall be like Him and shall see Him as He is.

A great ambition of the church of Christ ought to be to be like Christ. So, we can come, we can come to Him and come as little children, tramping on our own wisdom and our own goodness and all the rest and letting Him be everything. But it's here and it's good to notice that He said it in Holy Week. Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

So, the thing to do then is to come and fall. The Pharisees took it wrong; you see. The Pharisees took it wrong. They perceived that He spake of them and they sought to lay hands on Him. Isn't humanity a weird outfit? Go to a doctor, and the doctor looks over and says you have something, and you want to kill the doctor right away. You come to Christ and Christ says, the trouble with you is sin, and they want to lay hands on Jesus immediately. They always want to kill the doctor.

A fellow is found wandering around and he thinks he's in Ohio when he is in Missouri. And the policeman drives up and says you're not in Ohio. You're in Missouri. And he gets mad at the policeman instead of saying, well, I'm awfully sorry. I'm a big fool. My compass must have misguided me. And going where he ought to be, he gets angry with the man who locates him. That's the odd thing about humanity. Jesus walked around among the people telling him them about themselves, and instead of looking at themselves and saying, say that's true isn't it. I ought to do something about it, they wanted to kill Him. It's always been like that.

So dear friends, let's remember that this one who rode so meekly into Jerusalem and who died so humbly a week later, rose again from the dead, and He's at the right hand of God, and He is the Rock. And if it's necessary for Him to fall on the nation, He will do it. Sometime, He will do it. But all who come and fall upon Him shall be changed into His image and likeness, and shall be like Him, and shall see Him as He is. It's wonderful, I think. It's wonderful.

So, I go on instead of losing interest in all this. I'm gaining interest. I can see more and more that this is the only thing that's worthwhile. This is all. Who is it, they said when He rode into Jerusalem? But we'd better find out, for a lot of people don't know. We better find who is this? We better find out. He is God's Lamb. He is God's Lion. He's God's Rock. He's God's Great Physician. He's God's Shepherd of sheep. He's God's Healer of human wounds.

So let us think about Him today and let's think about Him this week, and let's let Him have his way with us. The highest ambition a human being could have would be to be like Jesus. And if a man attains, even in some degree, likeness to Christ, he's wiser. And having done it, he's wiser than all and greater than all of the great of the world.

Be like Jesus, this my song, Jesus, Jesus only. Tonight. I want to talk on that fifth chapter of Revelation, giving the closing out of that fifth chapter Revelation, where all the creatures worship and say, worthy is the Lamb. I'd like to have you come back and bring your friends along. We'll have a great evening.