

Let There Be No Apology for Choosing Christ

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Summary

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the transformative power of God's love, citing Paul's intense affection for God as an example. He argues that Christianity is not just about personal salvation or ethical teachings, but about bringing God into human life. Mr. Tozer says we need to prioritize eternal life over temporal pleasures, emphasizing the importance of making the right choice in life and standing firm in one's beliefs without apology. He encourages listeners to embrace their faith and spread the gospel, rather than feeling sorry for those who are not saved.

Message

In the Book of Romans, the first chapter, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God; the Gospel which He had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name. Fourteen, I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Then, linking that with a very famous testimony, or statement, the man made in the sixth chapter of Galatians where he says, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. And verse 17: From henceforth, let no man trouble me. For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Now hear these latter words particularly, and in all that I have read is the testimony of a transformed man. Here is not the weak alibi of a failure, but the bold assertion of a triumphant spirit. He felt and he knew the power of the Christian message. And so, he taught and testified out of his own victorious heart. It was this probably more than any other thing except the power of the Spirit within him which made his words so heavy, so freighted as they have come down to us

through the years. He felt and he knew the power of the Christian message and he taught out of his own victorious heart.

Now, he said in that first chapter, that he was separated unto the gospel of God. And here, he didn't bother to mention what he was separated from. And in this, he stood on firmer ground than many do today who talk about nothing but what they're separated from. Now to him, what he was separated from was incidental. And what he was separated unto is fundamental. Though he did when occasion called and two or three times tell the other side of the story when it became necessary, that he was separated from Pharisaism and sin. But he said in his famous treatise that he was separated unto the gospel of God.

Now what was it that captivated this man, almost transported him? For he was a transformed man. Well, at bottom, it wasn't a thing at all. It wasn't even an idea. I run into people that are very much lifted up by ideas; a great idea strikes them, and they'll come all brimming over with an idea. They will write me. They have gotten a new idea. They say, I saw in verse so and so in the Greek, such and such, and it's just transformed me. It's a wonderful idea. Well, Paul was there ahead of them. For every idea that any man has today, Paul had twelve. But nevertheless, it was not an idea that transported and captivated the man Paul, it was a Person, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

And here we find in the man Paul, a man permanently in love. This man was a big man with titanic powers of soul, all set and fixed upon God and His Son; inveterately fixed so that there was no changing it, no backing out from him. He was an inveterate lover of God. He was fixed in his great mighty affection for God, for the Son of God, for the gospel of God. And he knew what he liked bordering on entrancement. He said, the love of Christ constraineth me. And every translator has trouble with the word, constraineth me. It seems he had in mind that he had within him a volcanic heat and that he was swept away like a forest fire or forest before a tempest. He was unable to control himself because of the entrancement of his soul. There's no question about it, my friends, this man was an intense man. He was not only transformed morally, but he was transported. He was captivated. He was swept along emotionally.

And to break it down now a little, he stood, this man, at the focal point of all prophetic light, and this prophetic light converged upon Jesus Christ our Lord. And all the prophets in the Holy Scriptures looked down. And it was the Eternal Son here, the seed of David by natural descent certainly, but the Son of God proved triumphant by the Holy Spirit who raised Him from the dead. And so here we have revealed in this first of Romans, in glowing incandescence, all the wrath of God. For the gospel reveals the wrath of God and all the righteousness of God. For the gospel reveals the method by which man is made righteous again in the sight of God and the grace of God and the salvation of God and the forgiveness of God.

So Christianity has to do with God. That's what we learn from the man, Paul. We learn it from Abraham and David and then the rest, but we learn it more particularly from the man, Paul, that Christianity has to do with God. Christianity engages to bring God into human life. That's what the church is about. That's what it's all about. That's what all those steeples are about and all those cathedrals and all those temples and all those chapels and all those tabernacles. That's what it's all about. That's why there are translations of Scripture. That's why we have hymn books. And that's why we have Christian literature. That's why we have Bible schools.

Christianity has to do with God. It engages to bring God, I repeat, into human life. To make men right with God and to give them a knowledge of God and to bring them to love and obey God, and to perfect in them finally, the image of God. That's what Christianity is about and that's what it's for. And so, after having said all this, in that first chapter of Romans. I think actually, that chronologically, Romans comes after Galatians. But as the Holy Ghost put it down here, we have it in Romans 1.

And then in Galatians, Paul said, from henceforth, let no man bother me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Here was a man, either a man who had seen God and was speaking out of what he had seen, or here was one of the most arrogant and bigoted men that ever lived. You can always tell the nature of a fountain by the character of the stream that flows out of it. And if you're not able to go to the fountain, you only have to look at the stream. We cannot go back to Paul's time and decide whether this expression, this bold expression, from henceforth, let no man bother me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Either I say, written by an arrogant bigot, or an insightful mystic. Either a man who saw the vision glorious, or a man who simply was churlish and said, let me all alone.

Well, that was the founder now to which this expression flowed. And I say we can't go back to Paul now. But all we have to do is to look at the nature of the stream that flowed out of that fountain down the years. It has been the 13 epistles of Paul and the influence of the man on the world. It has been like the river that flowed out from under the throne in the book of Ezekiel, every word went, things lived. And wherever that water of the influence of the man Paul went, heathen threw their idols away and dying men smiled and whispered a prayer, and poor widows managed to sing over their toils. And those who once lived in the depths of vicious and vileness now become saintly men and women who live pure lives and walk with God.

Therefore, I conclude as any sane man must conclude, that when Paul said, from henceforth, let no man bother me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, here was not the churlish word of a man who was tired of life, but here was the bold word of a transformed man, a man who had seen the Vision Glorious. He said in Galatians, elsewhere, I am crucified with Christ, and here in this chapter he said, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, by which I'm crucified unto the world and the world unto me.

And this man then, with the crucified marks of the cross upon him said, don't bother me anymore. It's all settled with me. This man had no fears and no inhibitions and no regrets and no apology, nothing to offer. No, crawling under a seat and wrote no letters of apology for his Christian faith. He said, I have no fears and I have no inhibitions. I'm a free man. I'm a called apostle, called unto the gospel which has to do with His Son, who was made of the seed of David and declared to be the Son of God. And who sends out a message which is the power of God unto salvation, and I want to come to Rome to preach to you.

And he said to the Galatians now, let me alone, let me alone. Judaizers have tried to get me down and the Manakeons have tried to get me down, and the rest of them have tried it, but let me alone. I've made up my mind. The business of the church is God and I'm in that business. That's why I'm here on the earth said the man of God in effect. The business of the church is God, and the business of this church is God. This church and any church is purest when it's most engaged with God, and it's astray just as it's engaged with lesser things.

Remember, there are less lesser things which are perhaps legitimate things, in that they are not sins. But just as the emphasis falls upon them, the power of the church diminishes and just as the emphasis falls upon God and His Son and the gospel of His Son and upon the Holy Ghost and grace and forgiveness and apostleship, the power of God rises in that church. Upon social activities divorced from God, I say, she's astray when she engages in these things. She's astray when she engages in philosophical pursuits. She's astray when she's engaged in any good for its own sake, however good it may be for its own sake. You know the difference that has been pointed out.

I don't know really whether I pointed it out for myself or whether I read it, but I've noticed it, that there were two great men who wrote great poetry. One of them was called William Woodsworth. One of them was called King David. And the difference was marked, but the similarities were many. Both of them loved the snow on top of the mountain. Both of them loved the green of the evergreen trees there on the mountain and on the hill. Both of them loved the song of the bird in the bushes. Both of them looked at the clouds and the blue sky and watched the stars at night. Both of them listened to the waterfall blowing their trumpet in the tempest. Both of them watched nature and wrote about it. But Woodsworth went to nature and then tried to go to God through nature. But David went straight to God and then looked down. There was a difference. And that's why we never sing Woodsworth on a Sunday morning.

And Woodsworth was an enraptured mystic, a lover of the world, that is, of the good world; a lover of mountains and hills and buttercups and butterflies and daffodils and all that's lovely and beautiful. And I don't mind telling you that I read Woodsworth probably as much as any other writer except the sacred Scriptures. So, I know what I'm talking about, and I love to hear him. My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky, so was it when my life began. So is it now that

I'm a man. So may it ever be or let me die. Well, all that you can quote. Up with me, up with me into the clouds for thy song Lark is strong. It's all beautiful. But he began on the earth and looked up, David went up and looked down. And there's the difference, my brethren.

And so the business of the church is God. The business of the church; we begin with God through His Son, Jesus Christ, of whom all the prophets did write. And then, when we're in God and for the sake of God, then we can look out and see all the lovely things, and we can enjoy them. But art for its own sake, divorced from God, is as dangerous as dynamite. And music for its own sake, divorced from God, can make the most selfish breed of people in all the wide world. And culture for its own sake, divorced from God can make a breed of snobs whose nose are permanently elevated.

And so with every other good things: ports and travels and all the rest that humanity engages in which are certainly far from being sinful, they can nevertheless become harmful if God is not first. The business of the church is God. And whatever art and whatever music and whatever culture and whatever beauty there may be, is only offered on the altar as a sacrifice to God. That's why we sing David instead of Woodsworth. That's why when men die, they whisper, The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. They do not whisper, it is a beauteous evening, calm and free, the holy time is quiet as a nun, breathless with adoration, the broad sun is sinking in its tranquility. That's lovely, too, but we don't sing that while we're dying. We don't whisper that when death comes to our throats. We whisper rather: Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name. David began with God and looked down. Woodsworth began with man and looked up, and there is the difference.

And so, there's the difference out there in the world, that cultured world, that that good world, that world that's good and strong and fine. And don't imagine, please, that the whole world is rotten cores. I suppose in the eyes of God, it may be, but there's a lot that's fine in the world, a lot that's good in the world. There are groups of honest people trying to be good. Busy women who never have met God, but who spend their afternoons rolling bandages and PTA meetings and its civic meetings, trying to better the neighborhood, and it's all good. But my brethren, the business of the church is way above all that. The business of the church is God. And if we have first met God and have settled everything with God and we live for God, then of course we can do these other things. Paul said, from henceforth, let no man trouble me. And I wonder if we Christians have got to apologize.

This is the most apologetic time in the history of the world I suppose the time when Christians are trying to please everybody. Do you know what my business is? My business is to walk with those who walk with God. And that's your business to walk with those who walk with God. And that is the business of Christianity and the business of the church and the business of all churches, to walk with those who walk with God. Do we Christians have to apologize that we've chosen our

field of interest? I've chosen mine. David chose his. Paul chose his. And lesser likes, like you and me down the years, have chosen our field of interest.

And must we now apologize to the world for having chosen it? The world has chosen theirs, each one in his own way. And these interests all perish and crumble like snow before a blazing sun. But we have chosen that which cannot perish. Must we, I say, apologize that we've chosen eternity instead of time? For I deliberately and purposefully have. The clock on the wall is no master of mine. And the sun as it rises in the east and hurryeth away as David said it did to set in the West, is no Lord of my life nor boss of me. And the calendars as we pull the sheets off month after month and watch it get smaller, and though a year, yes, less to live. And yet, we've chosen eternity.

And I wonder whether we've got to apologize. The man Paul didn't. He had no fears, no inhibitions, no apologies and no regrets. And he stood out boldly, this enraptured man, this entranced man, who was swept before the love of God in Christ, until it was like a cyclone roaring through a forest, bending him as the wind; the strong wind bends a great tree. Not breaking him but bending him in the direction of heaven.

I have seen on the shores of the ocean, the great trees that have grown there. I've seen them even inland. I've seen trees that have stood maybe for half a century or longer. And you know the prevailing wind, whether it's north, south, east or west. And you know how you know it? Look at the trees. The trees have, if it's in a wind-swept area where the wind can get to it, you've seen it down here in the dunes, off the lake, you've seen the trees all bent in one direction. They're deformed we say, but they have bent to the wind.

And the man of God bent to the tempestuous love of God; and it bends him in that direction. And instead of being symmetrical and well-balanced as men say and taking a little of this world and a little of that world and a little of God and a little of the earth, instead of trying to balance himself up after the Greek stoic order, the man Paul said, I bend only before one breeze and that is the tempestuous love of God that sweeps me. And when Paul lived, he lived bent in the direction of heaven. And when he died, he didn't have far to fall. For he was on his way by the love of God that constrained him.

And I want to know if we have to apologize because we've chosen heaven instead of earth. There are many men who have chosen earth, many men. I have known men who when they're very old, still we're eager for more property, eager to get their hands on another dollar, eager that they might get by inheritance or by hook or crook, this piece of property.

Ah, my friends, as Emerson said, men can steer their plow down the farrow, but they can't steer their feet wide of the grave. The same man who in his 60s or 70s, or his 80s, will still with knarled, but eager hands grasp property that he should throw to the wind and get free. That man may still

love the earth, and he's chosen it; he's chosen the red clays, he's chosen it. And he lets it filter through his fingers like gold. It his. His sit-fast acres as the poet called them. They're there when he returns from his trips abroad. Ah, you and I have chosen heaven instead of earth and they don't like it. They say we're not properly educated, or we'd be more balanced, and I wonder.

If we're going to have to apologize that we've chosen to follow Christ. We've chosen to follow Jesus. Like the man of God we say, let me alone. I've chosen to follow Jesus, neighbor. You won't come my way and you won't believe in my Savior, and you won't give an hour of your time Sunday morning to my church, and you won't give a dime of your money to my Missionary Society, and you won't attend my prayer meeting and you won't walk with me to the house of God, neighbor.

Well, what right have you to complain? Have I injured you? Have I taken a thing that belongs to you because I'm a Christian. Have I taken anything that yours? Have I pushed you out and taking your property? I have chosen to follow Jesus, but whom have I injured? Who, I want to ask you is it that can rise and say, you're a Christian and he has injured me? No man who follows Jesus injures another. Who was it that could rise and say, Peter injured me. John harmed me. Luke did me wrong and Paul wronged me, because his Christianity, his religion, his so called cross and his Jesus caused him to harm me. No, my brother, let no man bother me.

I have chosen to follow Jesus and my choice to follow Jesus never robbed my brothers. I had two, and I took nothing from my brothers. I had three sisters, and I followed Jesus, and I took not a dime from my sisters. I followed Jesus as a lad, and I took not a cent from my mother and father. But later in life, I did help to support them a little. And I followed Jesus and I've not robbed my family. And we've had seven children, and not one of them can get up and say, Dad's Christianity has made him hard to live with and has made him tight and it's been all bad in our home because of His Christ. If there's been anything hard in the home it's been because of an unsanctified nature, maybe. It's because of the grave clothes yet that weren't stripped away from this man who's alive in God who heard the voice say, Lazarus come forth and I came. But it's not my Savior that made me hard to live with. The only reason as I've said before anybody can live with me is my Savior.

Are we to apologize and I say that we've chosen to see good and not evil all the days of our lives. We have chosen to hate the evil and love the good. All the days of our lives? Must we stand before the world to learn it well, the philosophic world, the aesthetic world, the art world? Must we stand and apologize that we've chosen to live so that we dare die? And men are living so they don't dare die.

I take advantage of every opportunity I can take. I have a little radio I bought for my wife and wore it out and she bought me another one. But I listen to the to the FM from the colleges; listen to the debates and the interviews and the talks. I listen to learned men, an invitation to learning and all that stuff. And I listen to these great men talk. Men who know more than I'll ever know; were more

learned than I'll ever be. But when they're through, I flip the switch and turn over in bed and say thank God, I have made my choice. I've made my choice to seek good and not evil, to do good and not bad all the days of my life. I've made my choice to live so I dare die. And these men can talk about Russian writers and French writers and Spanish writers. They can talk about Dali's art and somebody else's philosophy, but they don't dare die.

Voltaire, the great French rationalist, that great mind, for he had a great mind. When he was born, he was a seven-month skinny baby with a great skull and a frail body. And when he was delivered, they tossed him out on the table and said he'll die and took care of the mother. But he fooled them. Voltaire, with his long French name, but he's known as Voltaire. Voltaire was a mighty mind, one of the dozen mightiest minds that ever lived in all the wide world. How I managed to read him as I did as a lad and still not turn atheist, I don't know but I came through, that I got the benefit of what he had to teach. And God Almighty saved me from the evil that's contained in his books.

But anyway, when he was dying, he asked to be baptized into this church that he had poked fun at for a lifetime. So, they sprinkled some water on him. This man who wrote his philosophical dictionary, and beginning with A went to Z and laughed uproariously. And the whole civilized world laughed with him at religion and philosophy. But when he came to die, he said, I want to be baptized in the Catholic Church. So, they baptized him in the Catholic Church. Then, lest they think that he did really become a Christian, he winked and said, if I were a Hindu, I'd want to die ahold of a cow's tail. So, he said, I might as well to get baptized into the Catholic Church and so they'll bury me on holy grounds than throw me out in the bushes. But he didn't dare die. All of his wisdom and brains couldn't fit him for that last and dreadful hour. And for that great and terrible day when God shall shake all things, the Christian has chosen to live so he can die; and die so we can live again.

Go on world, don't bother us. Go on, sin lovers, don't bother us. We know where we came from. We know where we're going. We know Who's with us. We know Who redeemed us. Millions have chosen the opposite. They've chosen earth instead of heaven. They've chosen bad instead of good. They've chosen to live like fools. You're sick sometimes, sick.

Did you read, and if anyone is connected with that or related to it even remotely should be here, you'll pardon this for I don't know anybody connected with it. Down Union Avenue only a few blocks the other night in a thickly populated area, a 21-year-old young fellow driving an automobile with eight others with him. There had been nine, but they had let one girl off. He was taking them home. Seventy miles an hour on Union Avenue. Can you imagine? Chicken, they say, chicken? Are you afraid of it--chicken HA HA HA, and then, bang, and death. And they carried the young lad away, a young lad with an Irish name. Perhaps his old Irish parents may have told beads for him from the time he was born. No doubt now are saying mass. But he died as a fool. Man, you

can't afford to die as a fool dies. You only die one time, unless you miss the glory and then you die again out yonder in the tomorrow. For this said the Holy Ghost is the second death.

Now, we of this Christian company say to the world, don't bother us. We don't have the crowds. We don't have the prestige of some places. We say to the devil, let us alone. We don't have what they have in some places, but we know what we believe, and we know Whom we have trusted and we're going our way. And we've seen heaven open, and our eyes have had visions of God. And though like Ezekiel, we've got to sit and watch our people melt away from us. And though like Elijah, we've got to stand by the book and watch it dry up. And though like Jeremiah, we've got to be put down in the muddy pit for our testimony's sake. Don't pity us.

Pity the blind who've never seen heaven open. Pity the deaf who've never heard the sweet voice of Jesus call them home. Pity the imprisoned who were born in jail and live in jail and die in jail and go to a worse one and an eternally permanent. Pity them if you will. As Jesus walked toward the cross, the bloody, fly-infested cross, a woman shouted out something of pity, pity. And He said in effect, don't pity me. But pity these around about me. Pity yourself, pity. He said, if you want to pity people, pity those who aren't going out to die. Don't pity the ones who are going out to die.

And so, pity the blind if you will; pity the deaf. Pity those whose souls are weighed down with the cares of this world, but don't pity the Christian. We walk with those who walk with God. We've read the book. We know what we've done. Separated under the gospel of God, the gospel which concerns His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David by the flesh, but declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, and we're not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

You young people, you have reason to be ashamed of nothing but your shame. You have no apologies to make. You ought to be free, free as a bird to sing and soar. Free inside your hearts. For if you could say, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, then you can say, let nobody bother me. Don't try to influence me. Don't try to get in my way. Get out of my way as the old hymn says, ye fearful saints for I am going home. Get out of the way.

I've seen a few times in my life conviction for sin and a desire for God to be on people so strong, they never waited to push through into the aisles at all they came right over the seats. I've seen that happen. And the child of God, he has to walk over the shoulders of mankind if he has to. If he has to break his way through and like Bartimaeus, cry all the louder, God have mercy on me. Let him do it. It's well worth his trouble, well worth his time. But we have chosen the way. We've got the marks of Jesus upon us. God bless you.

I'm going to let you go a little early tonight and have deliberately shortened my sermon, but I think I've said as much as if I had leaned back and talked 20 minutes longer. God bless you. Go out into

the hard, busy world tomorrow. Go back to school, back to the shop, back to the factory and back to the office. And around you, it'll be real reek with tobacco smoke, and they will be whispering dirty stories two desks down. But you know where you're going and you know Who you're following and you know Whose name you've written across your heart in blood.

And when they try to win you to their way, to their Christmas parties or to some other fool thing, you say, let from henceforth, let nobody bother me. I know where I'm going. I bear in my heart the brand marks of the man Christ Jesus and I don't want your pity. I know where I will be Christmas Eve, and I'll know where I'll be the Sunday before Christmas Eve. Thank you, but I know where I'll be. And if in pursuance of your honest toil or your occupation or profession, you must sometimes sit where liquor is served, drink your water and let them smile. They'll turn to you in that day when the dark shadows fall and the gurgle comes into their throats and they'll whisper hoarsely, send for so and so to pray for me. But the name they name will not be the man who drank liquor by their side, but the man who refused.

So take your stand; and we're Christians here and this church is and we know where we're going and we know Whom we believe and we know where we stand. And though the whole thing crumbles around us and the world goes to pieces, we still have our eyes on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God who beareth our sins and frees us from the accursed load. Amen and amen.