

A Call for a Return to God

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Now I hold in my hand a book, and it says Holy Bible on it. And this book has so many virtues, that no one can ever say, this is the virtue of the Scriptures. It has so many crowns on its head, that no one can point to one and say, this is the crown. It has so many functions, that no one can say, this is the function of the Scripture. You can never say this, that, always it's they, because there are so many.

So, I would say tonight and using for the subject matter that 30th chapter of Isaiah which we read, that one mission of the Holy Scriptures, is to find us. It's to find us. When the Bible says a man is lost, it is exquisitely accurate in what it says. We're lost. People are lost. The world is lost. And we don't know where we are.

Once in the city of Pittsburgh, I was staying at the Roosevelt Hotel, and if you've ever been in the Golden Triangle, it's a golden labyrinth to me. I got lost. And I couldn't find my hotel. And I told them afterward about it, that I wasn't lost, the hotel was lost. But somebody was lost there that day, all right. And it's easy to get lost in the world and not know where you are. Not know what times you're living in. Not know what events mean. Not know the mood of the hour or the spiritual temperature of the hour.

Now, the one mission of the Word of God is to find us. It is to locate us and to identify us and identify our times. And it's to show us what's wrong with us and also to show us what's right with us. And I'd like to stop there and accent that, that mostly in our eagerness to make things better, we're inclined to overlook what is right with us. And this is never good. Always we should acknowledge anything that is right with us, that God says is right with us. And whereunto we have attained, there abide, when cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

There is no virtue in digging at yourself all the time with a pick. There is no virtue in always condemning yourself, because the Word of God shows us what is right with us as well as what is wrong with us. Now, I say us, meaning Christians, because it is well known that there is nothing right about a sinner. There is nothing right about a lost man. There is nothing right about a rebel.

And I think it's safe to say that there is nothing right about popular religion as we know it today. But the Word of God is very quick to say, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And I saw His eyes shining as He pointed to that man and said, well, look at this man. And when the woman, the woman of Sarepta came to Him, He said there were many, many lepers in Israel in the days of Elijah, and yet to none, to none did faith come. This woman, this foreign woman had faith.

The Lord always approves whatever He sees that He can approve. But, of course, the technique of the evangelist who is not led by the Spirit is to go into a church assuming

that everybody, from the pastor to the janitor, is a thoroughgoing scoundrel, and then begin there with that presumption. But that's not the way the Word of God does it. The Word of God always finds you.

The business of a good doctor is not only to tell you what's wrong, but to slap you back and tell you when you're all right. And so, the business of the Word of God is not only to tell me when I'm wrong, but the business of the Scripture also is to tell me when I'm right, and say, well done, and go ahead, you're My child.

Now it finds us, it locates us, and it brings our time into focus, so that we can, or God can, pronounce upon us either judgment or a proof. And there is a unique felicity in the Word of God, a wonderful ability to find parallels, moral parallels, and spiritual parallels. I am somewhat delighted as I get around a bit, and read the mail, and meet and talk with people, that the old ironclad, rigid, dispensationalism that put every verse in one pigeonhole, another verse in another pigeonhole, and said do not disturb until Christmas, is pretty well passing away.

While we all believe in the dispensations of the Scripture, there is coming from everywhere onto the church of Christ, the fundamental element, the evangelical element of the church of Christ, a feeling that while we recognize the dispensations, we do not allow them to draw iron curtains around us, but that the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, draws parallel, moral and spiritual parallels, between different dispensations, between peoples, and times, and situations, and dangers, and opportunities.

For instance, the New Testament parallels the Old, so that when you read the Old, and then read the New, you begin to find yourself. And then, when you look at your own times, you will find they parallel the Old Testament and the New Testament. So that regardless of, and going across, the dispensational lines, there are the moral and spiritual parallels, the deep principles that underlie all dispensations, and all the works of God, so that we can locate ourselves, and know where we are.

And brethren, I'd like to say to this little congregation tonight, that you could do yourself a wonderful world of good, if you would take some time out, just as you take a week or two weeks out for a vacation, to sort of get hold of yourself physically, and get off the strain. If you'd take a little time out, and it wouldn't hurt you if you missed a meal, some of you are worried about calories.

I ate breakfast with a man this morning, a very handsome young man, and he said, I'll take the 400-calorie breakfast, please. And he worried, the people worry about their calories, and worry about their weight. And that's good, I suppose, but brethren, there's something that's more profounder than that, something profounder than our health. And that is our relation to God, where we are in God's will for us, where we are at this moment, in the overall purpose of God for our lives in this day.

And I say it wouldn't hurt you at all, if you were to take a day off, and perhaps miss a good dinner, and get a little lean once, and let the things of this world kind of fade out on you and get a little empty. You'll feel bad, and your stomach will protest, but it won't kill you. Nobody died from missing a meal. I'm not a faster, and I'm not pushing that on the

people, but it might be a good idea sometimes, take a day or so, and examine yourself in the light of God.

Now introspection, if it's carried too far, becomes a hindrance to the very thing we're trying to do. Everlastingly digging up the corn to see if it is growing, is one way to be sure we'll have no corn. And everlastingly digging at our own spiritual life, to see if we're making progress, is one way of arresting all progress, and bringing it to a dead stop. So that I do not recommend a continual digging at ourselves, but I do recommend that since one mission of the Holy Scriptures is to find us, locate us, take our pulse, settle on our spiritual health and pronounce on it, and prove or condemn or command or warn or encourage.

I recommend that between now and, say, the next ten days, or between now and the next two weeks, take a little time out before God, not just the hasty morning devotions, but take a longer time out, and search the Scriptures and read them, and get on your knees and put all commentaries aside, and all these, what do you call them, marginal notes, and get a plain text Bible, and get on your knees and let the Holy Ghost talk to you.

You know, brethren, it's possible even to have too many translations around, possible I got so many that sometimes I get bored with them, and they bother me. Just get a good one, it doesn't make too much difference which one, but the King James is always a good, safe one, and with plain text, just read the Word of God and let it talk to you. And it's wonderful how it'll find you.

Now, the New Testament, I say, parallels the Old, and the Old and the New find a parallel in the day in which we live. Israel's condition in 700 B.C., as sketched here in Isaiah 31 to 33. Notice the condition they were in. Now, we read all this, so it'll be familiar and fresh in your mind. They were in a state of rebellion. They rebelled against God, and rebelling against God is like walking against a cold, fierce wind. Always walking against a cold, fierce wind. Going ahead against the will of God is like flying a little, light, one-motored plane against a tempest, hardly making any headway at all, barely staying up and getting nowhere. Rebelling against the will of God, going one way and God wanting you to go another.

Now, search yourself tonight and think this over. Is there any rebellion in your heart? Do you want something which you're afraid, if you sought the will of God, you'd find He wouldn't let you have? Or do you want to avoid something which you know and have reason to believe God wants you to have or do? Well, now that's rebellion, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Let's not take it lightly. Let's take it seriously.

The will of God is the health of the universe. The will of God is the harmony of heaven. It is the peace of paradise. The will of God is salvation itself. The will of God is life. The will of God is everything a moral being can want, and bucking the will of God even on anything, even on any little thing, and in trying so hard.

I heard today about a man. I personally know that that man has gone against the will of God, tragically and shamefully. He has flouted and violated the will of God, not and repented of it, no, but is living in it and has crystallized it and hardened it so he'll never

get out of it. And yet they say, I heard only today, that that man is present at the pre-Sunday school Bible class. He's present at the Sunday school. He's present at the morning service. He's present at the evening service. He's trying desperately by being present and searching the Scriptures and being pious to make up for the fact that he has violated the will of God against his own life and that he's bucking the cold, tempestuous wind of the will of God.

My brethren, the will of God is the health of your life. It's your safety, and we're not safe any other place. And if you are anywhere in a controversy with God, on any line, holding anything against God, then remember this, that all your Bible reading and all your prayers and all your faithful attendance at church won't mean a thing. It won't mean a thing. It's simply whistling by the cemetery. It is simply talking big to hide our shameful fears.

Get right with God, and you can sleep another hour. Get right with God, and you can relax. Get right with God, and peace will come to your heart.

But they were rebellious in that day. It says they were rebellious people, and they were self-confident people. They trusted in themselves, and they were a people who misplaced their confidence, and put their confidence somewhere else. And they were seeking advisors and counselors and having conferences, and they had their princes and ambassadors running all around but finding no help. And God said tartly that they were ashamed. They found no help at all.

Now, I don't want to enter even close to that deep, dismal swamp of politics, but it sounds a little like a parallel with the United States of America here, all of this self-confidence and rebellion against the will of God, and this, seeking advisors and counselors and Secretaries of State and plenipotentiaries and having conferences and princes and ambassadors traveling about.

If everybody would ground himself for exactly ten days and think and get straightened out and give his soul a chance to settle and the dust a chance to settle and the fumes of burning gasoline a chance to settle, we'd find the air would begin to clear and we'd find the will of God.

But conferences, Will Rogers used to say that peace conferences were the direct cause of war, and if we could stop all peace conferences, we'd end wars. Of course, he said it with tongue-in-cheek as Will would, but there was more to it, you know, more than there was a certain amount of sly truth in his humor that peace conferences, people are conferring too much, and there you can't flip your dial anymore on the radio, but there'll be somebody on their asking somebody else questions.

Questions reminds me of the Irishman's definition of metaphysics. He said it's a blind man in a dark basement looking for a black cat that isn't there. And metaphysics has its parallel in the modern effort to find peace of mind. If a man can hit a home run, we promptly interview him and ask him what he thinks of the international situation. And if he can sing and so, as to bring the teenagers to their knees with rapture, why, we ask him what he thinks of the atom bomb.

And we're interviewing and conferring. There are too many conferences, brethren. When God Almighty made the heaven and the earth, it didn't come out of a conference. And when Jesus Christ died on the cross, it wasn't by any action of a council.

Now I know that a certain number of conferences have to be held, I suppose, just the same as there have to be certain visits to the dentist and certain banquets and after-dinner speakers. I know that. We have to shave, and nobody likes it. There are certain things that have to be.

Oh, my district superintendent is here. I forgot. But I must go on anyhow and say that these things are necessary. Board meetings are necessary, I know.

But brethren, after all, if we get to God first, we could cut down the length of time it takes to find that we don't know anything about it anyhow. A committee, you know, is a group of people which singly can do nothing. But when met as a committee, can officially vote that they know not how to do it. That's the difference.

Now, brethren, I believe in committees and conferences and boards, and we never fail here to have our board meeting and I go to all conferences except I miss one once in a while. But remember this, dear friends, that if the members of the conferences and board meetings and young people's groups and all the rest who decide on how things go would get to God first, we'd have some light when we get to talking with one another. But we meet without light and pool our darkness and then go away again. That's often the way it is in these conferences, these political conferences.

These political conferences, if Secretary of State would stay at home, we could push war years into the distance, into the future. But if he continues to run around, he'll get his in it yet. He's a Republican too, God help him. But if he continues running around and shooting off, we'll get into it, somebody will get mad and assassinate somebody and then hell will break out on the earth.

God says, you'll find no help wherever you go. You're looking for help and you're holding your political conferences and you're running about and you're asking questions of people who don't know and then they ask you and you don't know.

A Episcopalian rector that I spoke of this morning came to me over to Highland Lake. He said, there are some questions I want to ask you, Brother Tozer, or two of them. So, he asked me the first one. He said, how do you resolve that problem? Well, I said, Brother, I don't know how to resolve the problem and to answer the question, I don't even have the problem. I haven't yet got far enough along. I don't even have the problem, not let alone the answer. Well, that was a dry well. He came to a dry well that time.

Then he asked me a second question and he was on my territory, and I had the answer, but not the first one. The first one had to do with the relation of time and eternity, how Christ could step out of eternity into time and the historic, all that old neo-Orthodox stuff. And Brother, I don't even have the problem, let alone the answer. But there are answers, and God has the answers and we'll not find them running about asking questions because bpeople don't know.

And so, God says now here, put this in the Book. Put this in the Book. Think of the irony there. Write this down, He says. Put this in a Book. Put this in a Book that my people are rebellious people, that they want My protection, but they don't want My will. They want My blessing, but they don't want to obey Me. They want My heaven, but they don't want My walk on earth.

And put this in a book that they're an untruthful people, that they're a lying people, an untruthful people. You know that there must be an awful lot of liars among evangelicals. I don't know any. Now remember that. I'm not accusing anybody and I can't think of any except those who say they have 1,000 when the church seats 208. But outside of that I don't know where the liars are but there must be because I hear things about myself. Never happened in the wide world.

I heard at Highland Park that I had done something that was all right and I don't know nothing wrong but something that I was supposed to have done, Billy Graham, and I hadn't seen Billy Graham in five years so what couldn't have happened, yet somebody started that it had happened. Somebody told a lie to their brother. I don't know who it was but somebody. My people are untruthful people, My people, and unbelieving as well. And they insist on hearing religious talk.

I have a note which I want to write on sometime. I learn more from myself by the grace of God than I do from anybody else. And when I get an idea it pops into my head when I pray or when I read about it I take a note on it and then later on I develop. Maybe it will lie three years.

And I have a little note that says this. Why is it that some Christian people are always at the church, always at the prayer meeting, always asking prayer requests, always carrying their Bible, always eager for orthodoxy, always ready to defend the truth, and yet they're the sourest, grouchiest, and meanest, and nastiest, and hardest to live with people in the world. Now I haven't settled that question yet. Can you help me, Brother Thomas? I don't know why.

I asked old brother M.A. Dean. Do you remember old M.A. Dean? Ma Dean they called him. M.A. Dean. I asked Brother Dean about that. And Brother Dean said, young fellow, and I was a young fellow then, he said, young brother, it's like this. He said, some people are spiritually cross-eyed. And he said, they look two directions and they're looking one way and going another.

Now he said, that's the way I've resolved it. I doubt whether that would be accepted out in Fuller Seminary among the great brains there or in any other of the great seminaries where great minds are. But it seems to us simple people to be the truth that people are just spiritually cross-eyed. And they're untruthful and they're unbelieving and yet they're some of the most pious people in the wide world. And they insist on hearing religious talk all the time. And yet there's no humility there. Humility is a beautiful thing. Simplicity is a beautiful thing.

I told Brother McAfee about a Latvian woman. Now my brother Bill is here, Petlov. He'll know about Latvia. I don't know where Latvia is exactly. I know it's one of those middle European arrangements there that's always a kinder box. But there was a woman at

Highland Lake, maybe 35, though I would have not told her that, but she's probably 35, a blondish, high cheekbone, the typical Slav type, you know, square-faced.

And she came so modestly and said, Mr. Tozer, there is something I would like to ask you. And I said, all right. She said, I am a Latvian refugee. I was a teacher in my own land and I fled before the Russians and I'm here in the United States and I am a Christian. I have been born again and I'd like to ask you a question. And I said, all right.

She said, you talk about a spirit-filled life and the question I want to ask you, she said, is the spirit-filled life for plain people like me? Isn't the spirit-filled life for apostles and great evangelists and great people like that that need it? She said, do you think that a simple woman like me, she was not a simple woman, she was a brilliant woman, had been a teacher in her own land and spoke English except for she couldn't get the diphthong, beautifully.

Well, here she was, humble and meek and so humble that she was willing to forego the full walk in the Holy Spirit because she just thought it wasn't for her. God looks on people like that and loves them, don't you think? The Lord may surprise her by giving her a Christmas present and giving her that which she feels she's not worthy to receive.

Ah, brother, humility's a beautiful thing wherever it is found, and pride is just as heinous wherever it is found. And yet there's the religious talk all the time. People are wanting to hear religious talk and more religious talk and more religious talk and yet never hear the real voice of God. Isn't this an ironic thing here? Sometimes I get blamed for being a bit sarcastic but, brother, the Word of God is so sarcastic sometimes you can shave with it. It's so sharp.

Listen to this. He says, if I can find it here now, he says, they say, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. He says, don't tell the truth to us, prophesy unto us smooth things and prophesy deceits. Do you know what I would do if I were a layman, if I delivered milk or dug ditches or ran a streetcar or was in any other profession and wasn't a preacher? Do you know what I'd do when I entered a church and I sensed the pastor was giving me smooth things? I would get up, scoop up my hat and leave the building. And as I went, I'd scrape both feet and get out of there. I'd never want to stay in that church where men speak smooth things.

If I go to a doctor, I don't want that doctor to lie to me. I want to know the worst that I can prepare for. And I don't want to be cheered up. I want to be told the truth. Speak unto us smooth things. Men make reputations of being old smoothies. You can ask them a question and you don't know. It says about Paul, thou hast fully known my doctrine. But there are a lot of people that you ask them a question and you don't know when they're finished, whether they believe or don't believe.

They start in and talk all around and when they come back you still have your question but you don't have the answer. And you can't say whether they're for it or against it. Paul says, you've fully known my doctrine. He delivered his soul. He wasn't afraid of people. He told everybody what he believed.

Now what was the sentence on all this smooth deceit? This religious talk. This rebellion. This lying. This unbelieving business. This running to Egypt and trying to get help there. Running to psychiatry and getting help there and running to somewhere else for help.

Well, God says, the sentence is that you're going to go down like a wall. You're going down like a wall. And being a farmer, I've seen walls. And I know what it is for a great wall to go down. And as it goes down, rodents run every direction that have been hiding in it. And the dust begins to rise. But your wall is down. He says, you're going down like a bowing wall. You're going down like a potter's vessel that will be smashed on the cobblestones.

Now what about we and our times? I wish, I wish that I could tell you the truth and tell you that I believe that we are in times of great revival. I wish that I could tell you that I thought things were looking up. I wish. But I cannot. Not for a moment can I.

A brother who runs Highland Lake Conference in his mighty praying reminded me of Leonard Ravenhill in his intensity of prayer. And as he prayed, he said, O God, the evangelicals have a God that is no God. And they don't know the true God much anymore. And the young people have been cheated and sold downriver. We must see again the glory of God for this generation. And the burden of his prayer was, O God, this poor generation deserves to see Thy glory. Show us Thy glory once more.

Now, there is a remnant that according to the election of grace, and if we parallel the rebellion and the self-confidence and the misplaced confidence and the seeking of counselors and princes and ambassadors and dashing about and looking for things and not listening to God, then how are we to escape this sentence, ye shall go down as a bowing wall and fall as a potter's vessel? I don't think we can.

Remember that it's not good exegesis to go through the Bible taking all the blessings and giving all the curses to Israel. Remember that it's not good exegesis to underline all the promises and ignore all the warnings. Remember it, and yet it's been done. A whole generation has grown up on that kind of thing. A whole generation that never put a line under the warnings but tenderly underlined all the promises.

If you'd take the average fellow's Bible and reprint only the underlying passages, you'd think that God was a soft, spongy, spineless, moral Santa Claus who was just as full of self-pity and had no justice or judgment in his nature at all. That's because we choose the passages that please us.

A heretic, as you know, is a man who selects That's what the word means. He selects. He selects the passages that he wants. And if you go through your Bible selecting the passages that cheer you up, why, you're a heretic in that measure. Not you're teaching false doctrine, but you're not giving the whole Word of God a chance at you. It's like living all the time on upside-down cake. You've got to have some other things or there's something going wrong with you.

Now, I want you to notice over here, though, that the goodness of God came in and saved Israel and pushed judgment away 100 years. The good grace of God, even though they deserved all this. The good grace of God came, and in verse 18 he says, The Lord will

wait that He may be gracious unto you, and He will be exalted that He may have mercy upon you.

For the Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are they that wait for Him. And he says, you shall hear a voice, and He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of thy cry, and your teachers will not be removed into a corner anymore. And you will hear a voice saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left.

I wonder now if we can't parallel this. I wonder if evangelicalism, and we, starting in this church, can't parallel this. Can't we listen for a voice? Do you notice that it doesn't say you'll hear a voice ahead of you? Why? All these other times it says He goes before his people and leads them. When He putteth forth His own He goeth before them, and the voice of the Shepherd is ahead.

Why is it? Can anybody tell me? Answer me back. Why does he say you shall hear a voice behind you? Why? When you turn to the right hand or when you turn to the left, you'll hear that voice. Why? Because the Lord never leaves the path.

And as long as you're behind Him and He's ahead and you're following Him, His voice is ahead of you. Calling you along, come on sheep, come on. But as soon as you turn away from the path, then the Voice is behind you. No matter which way you turn, the Voice is behind you. You shall hear a voice behind you saying, this is the way, come back here, you're off the way, this is the way, come on back here.

And I pray that to fundamentalism and to all others there may come a willingness to listen, for God is waiting. We've deserved. What have we deserved? We've deserved judgment. We've deserved it. We've deserved to go down in a welter of dust and rubble. But God said, I won't do it now, I'll wait, I'll be gracious. I'll exalt myself and show mercy upon you.

This church has done enough. We've committed enough sins here to bring the building down on us. And our society has committed enough sins. Evangelicalism has committed enough. But God says, I'll wait, that I might be gracious. I'm going to judge you, but I'll wait and give you a chance and you'll hear my voice saying, this is the way, walk ye in it.

Then he says these encouraging things, that in these days there shall be upon every high mountain and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall. Isn't this the day of the great slaughter? And did we not go just now through, a few years ago, one of the most disastrous and bloody and deadly wars in history? And have we ever had an hour when the guns weren't shooting?

They celebrated the end of the Korean War, but there's never been a moment the echo of a gun hasn't been heard somewhere around the world. And we're still hearing it in this terrible day when everything that is good and all that we've stood for has gone down and the nobility of manhood and the purity of womanhood and the dignity of childhood and the desirability of integrity in government and patriotism.

The patriot used to stand beside the flag and preach God and country and the people wept, but now a man doesn't dare have a flag. They call it flag-waving. And patriotism has become a corny thing for young people to laugh at.

And young people in, I think, Brooklyn the other day, girls, mind you, girls, girls, a group of girls fell on other girls and beat them until they had to be taken into the hospital and when a policeman came to rescue the girls that were being beaten up, they beat him until he was wounded. We have produced a generation like that, a smart aleck, fresh, self-assured, rebellious, sarcastic generation. Everything good is corny or square.

My friends, the only hope we have is that God says I'll exalt myself, I'll lift myself up, not to throw a thunderbolt but to show mercy on a poor, miserable people. And I wonder if we can't begin to listen. It's happening. It's coming. I hear it. It's coming.

I talk to this one and that one, Reformed church man, Episcopal man, Baptist people. I hear them all around and they are saying pretty much the same thing. They're saying we've been sold downriver and over the last few years Christianity has become a show, and we want God back again. We're sorry we went along with it and we want God back again. And you'll hear it everywhere. And people that used to be so sure of themselves come tenderly.

I remember one time hearing Dr. Jatterquist. He said, Dr. Jatterquist, he said, now I recommend this book, this so-and-so's book. He said, now I don't believe every degree with everything in it. He said, if I agreed with everything in it, I'd have to have written it. And he said, furthermore, by the time I wrote the last page I might not be so sure of something I'd written on the first.

Well, I know how he meant it and everybody else did, but one young preacher present, he rushed up to me and he said, did you hear that? And he was positively, he was steaming hot. He said, did you hear that? What kind of talk is that? What kind of talk is that? Why, he said, Mr. Tozer, I haven't changed my mind on a thing in ten years. He probably hasn't yet and that's been ten years ago. He's static. He's probably frozen. He's frozen. But I don't mean change your mind about Bible doctrine, but I mean go ahead.

But you know that spirit, that spirit of surefire dogmatism is pretty well lifting. And I find, and I don't say it because this brother's a Baptist. I would have said this and did say it in Highland Lake and I've said to my friends, I find probably the hungriest people now in the North American continent are Baptists. They're eager, tender people. I find them, all sorts of Baptists too. And they're eager, they've got that sound, solid, fundamental doctrine.

But please don't all even go to the Baptists. Maybe I don't mean to lose my church here. But I am saying that I find that that happened to be a Baptist pastor that told me that. I haven't changed my mind in anything in ten years, he said.

But his kind is sort of fading away. And people find that their doctrine isn't enough, that their doctrine's got to lead them to God. And if it doesn't lead you to God, it might as well be Mohammedanism. If the doctrines you hold don't lead you to God, then they are no doctrine to you. And I find a tenderness coming on people.

I find Bible church brethren calling me up, coming to see me, asking me if I'd seen such and such an old book. Eager, hungry people all over. And if we can get together, Dr. Maxwell calls it, the order of the burning heart. You know that? I thought you and I invented that. We called it the fellowship of the burning heart. And we don't care your denomination, but the fellowship of the burning heart.

Those who love the Lord speak often one to another. And God says that in that terrible day when out in the great world the towers are falling and it's the day of slaughter, there shall be upon every high mountain and hill, rivers and streams of water. Rivers on high mountains? They don't belong up there. They belong in the valleys.

Well, God said if they muddy the streams in the valleys and my people pray and hear my voice, I'll put rivers up on the mountains for them. And I'll put streams up on high hills for them where they don't belong. I'll do a miracle for my people. And my dear friends, it is yet to be known what God will do with us here and thus in our society and with evangelicalism if we'll only believe God.

And he says in verse 26, Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun seven times. And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people and healeth the stroke of their wounds. In that day, God will make our light brighter than it ever was before. We have been, this society, this missionary society, fifth largest now, I think, in the world with three million dollars and over for missions in a year's time, going in where nobody else goes and all of that.

And we've criticized each other a lot, but I wonder, I wonder, Brother Thomas, if we listen for the voice, we won't yet hear a voice saying, come on, you've slipped a little, but this is the way and I'm waiting. And I'll give you rivers and high places and I'll give you streams on high hilltops where you didn't know they could be. And I'll make you brighter in the world of religion seven times brighter than you were. And I'll make your day seven times as bright, and I will multiply seven days on one. I'm hearing, I'm waiting, wondering if we won't hear this from God. And I wonder for our own church.

Not more than about a month ago, I came back from the East. In fact, I even talked seriously about a home in Mount Vernon, New York, and thought maybe that it might be in the will of God that I should leave here and leave the pastor and go to writing and editing. And I said, God, if you'll show me over the next weeks a sign, a fleece, a light, a bit of light in the darkness in my church, I'll take it that that isn't Thy will for me yet. And we've never had better meetings, and we've never had warmer, warmer meetings and better times, even in this hot summer of vacationing.

And I wonder if God isn't saying to this church, all right, church, dear Brother Jones, I don't know whether he's here this evening or not, but he wrote me, oh, on vacation, he wrote me a letter and marked it personal. I'm almost done, marked it personal.

And he said, you were talking about the ministry of this church, and I just sat down and went over the records and he said, I wrote up, and then here it was. He said, now here are the old people that have gone. And he mentioned them. Many of them, Brother

Snapp and Mrs. Snapp used to know. The Gramlichs and the Moors and oh, he named a great many of them. He said, they've gone by reason of age.

And then he said, there are others. And then he named a whole list and they've gone because they've moved. And he said about 40 families have left this church in the last few years.

I think he's low on count, about 40 families to move to all parts of the country, east and west, west and south and north. And a great many have gone out as preachers and gone to the far parts of the earth. Missionaries from here and preachers from here probably running up to 50, all told 29 missionaries.

Well, brethren, a few weeks back, I wondered maybe if the old, if the light wasn't moving, but I've heard the Lord say, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun and the light of the sun shall be seven times as the light of seven days in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people and healeth the stroke of their wounds.

Now, there's only this question, two of them I want to ask briefly. One of them is, on whose side are we in this day? Are we on the side of take it easy, easy believism, or are we on the side of those who have been found and located and prophetically situated so we know where we are? We found ourselves and we're looking away from the poor dead churches and poor dead entertainism, away to God and expecting that we shall see, this church shall see, rivers where they hadn't been and streams where they hadn't been before and the light multiplied seven times.

I don't know for you, my friends, but I'm not dead yet and for myself, I want God to multiply me seven times to His church, not only to this church, not even only to the Alliance, but to His church throughout the whole earth seven times yet before I die. I want God to let something happen that He can use me seven times. If it's a book or whatever it is, I have a prayer in my little prayer book that I carry, Oh God, I have been the worst of men, therefore let grace triumph to the chief of sinners and make me the most useful of men.

And I said once across the table, I think at a Chinese restaurant, to Brother Thomas, Brother Thomas, I want to love God more than any man in my generation. And Brother Thomas said, all right, but if you do, prepare yourself for a lot of suffering. And he's dead, right? I don't know that it'll be suffering that we hear so much about.

The house burns down, or somebody gets killed. I don't know. God never has been able to do much with me that way. He wounds my heart. That's the way I suffer. He wounds my heart. He wounds my heart and I grieve and bleed over things, over things maybe that are none of my business, His business and so mine.

And so, I want God to wound me, wound me. The man in the East who said, Brother, I walk around with a wound. I'm happy in Jesus, but I walk around with a wound. I want that wound and thus the multiplication of the ministry.

What about you? What about you? This church, it's not the biggest church by any means, but I think it's an important one. And what about you? Can't we yet ask God and expect

God to come on us with a new wave of power? Those rivers will begin to trickle down from the high places where we didn't think they were and that light that we thought was getting dim will begin to blaze up like a beacon and maybe the 29 missionaries we have out now will be multiplied twice and maybe the over 40,000 we gave to missions last year can be 75,000 in a couple more years. Do you believe that? Are you ready for that kind of thing? Or do you want to take it easy? Do you want to take it easy? Are you ready for that thing?

Well, it's time to quit and I want everybody present here tonight that says, Mr. Tozer, I'm willing two things. I'm willing to take on me the judgment of God. I have been rebellious. I haven't been all I should have been, and I have been cold, and I have kind of muddled along and been careless, but oh, I want to admit it. I do admit it tonight.

And then I'm willing to believe with you that God will be gracious to me and hear my voice and that he will be willing to multiply my testimony and my spiritual abilities yet seven times before the end, before the Lord returns. And I'm going to ask Brother Thomas to come up to pray and we'll have a closing prayer. Are there such who will say, I take both the judgment and claim the promise for a new thing in my life? Will you stand where you are? Come on up, Brother Thomas, please.

Well, everybody stood. Maybe I'm not clear or else maybe you're better people than I thought you were. But anyway, oh, may God make this real to you while our brother leads us in prayer.

Now, Lord, if we know our hearts tonight, we do want thee. We want God. We want to walk in thy way. We want not only Thy blessing, but we want Thee more than anything in this life. And as the man of God was exhorting us tonight, Lord, this thought came to me.

Here we are bound with the mechanics of running the church and the work of God. Here we are in the straitjacket of laws and bylaws and rules and regulations and methods and traditions until, Lord, we stand stiffly bound and with no power to reach out and spread our wings because we are in the straitjacket of all of these things. We would, O Lord, that thou wouldst unwrap us even as Lazarus of old was able to cast aside the grave clothes. He was loosed and let go.

Lord, help us to know how that we may be loosed from all of the things that are holding us, whatever those things may be. And let us once more know a gracious visitation of the Holy Spirit's presence and the very God Himself, not only upon us, but within us. And give us a new sense of the heartfelt love and compassion and urgency and all that accompanies the coming of God upon His people.

Let us experience Thee once more in this age before Jesus doth return. Lord, we're thinking of these places of the ends of the earth, especially the places where we so recently have been, out there where the need is so great and where the message must be given. Lord, here we are, handcuffed, as it were, with our feet in chains, our spirits locked up because of the many things that we've already mentioned.

O God, deliver thy people and visit us again with thyself. Visit us even, Lord, as we have never been visited before. And come upon us and move within us. As has been mentioned, there's a ministry that the church here may have. There's a ministry this great District across the vast expanses of seven states may have. There's a new ministry that the society can have. Lord, let us have that ministry. We don't want to be selfish, but we want God. And we feel that we're bound.

Lord, loose us, we pray, and let us go. This we call upon thee for in earnestness tonight, Lord, in all sincerity, in heart hunger, in our soul, and in sincere desire.

O God, like the locust that comes out of its shell, spreads its wings and lifts itself and goes, Lord, let us, let us, let us in the sunshine, under the sunshine, the evaporating and the drying out of the sunshine of thy very self and the penetrating power of the Holy Spirit, just dry off all of these things with which we're bound, Lord, and let there come about a new sense of liberation and joy and freedom in the Holy Spirit and new love to God and new sense of thy Spirit upon us.

O God, don't allow us to get any farther complicated with the complexities of life. Deliver us, we pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.