

# Death Is Not the Worst Thing

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Please turn to Revelation 9, and we'll read it together, that is, we'll read it responsibly, all taking part in it. We'll go over this chapter, chapter 9 of the book of Revelation, reading responsibly.

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

<sup>12</sup> One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do

hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Now, you have heard, of course, on the radio today that the great Secretary of State, former Secretary of State, has died. And you may have also heard that there will be coming from Geneva, the foreign secretaries of England, France, and Russia, along with our own Herter, back for the funeral which will take place on Wednesday.

These are important things. That Geneva conference, which will be resumed, I presume, after the funeral. But we have read tonight, within the compass of twenty-one verses, truth so vastly much more important that the day will be when we, looking back with the wisdom of hindsight, as they say, looking back upon ourselves, this May, so that we may be able to remember this Sunday of 1959, we will say how foolish we were to be interested in anything else but the revelation of God, which is a light shining in a dark place.

Now, in this ninth chapter of the book of Revelation, we will touch some high spots in it. But you will know, if you have been listening to me over the last few Sunday nights, that my method in this series, and in fact I should say that my method generally, has not been to attempt to interpret all the symbols.

The Bible is a book of symbols. It has a great many as it weres and like untos. Do you notice that? The Bible rarely leaves you stuck with a symbol. It smooths it and softens it and takes the sharp edge off and says it is like unto and it is as it were.

The reason for all this is that the intensity and immensity of spiritual things is so great, the two being one, it is so great that human language will scarcely avail, it will not avail, to express it. So we fall back upon these symbols and the as it weres and like untos and after the appearance of as you find in the Bible so much.

Now, I say that it is not my intention to try to interpret these symbols nor force every passage to fit a pattern. I rather pity the man who starts out with a foregone conclusion and then trims every passage to fit it. When I first began to study the Bible, I of course was indoctrinated immediately into prophecy as a young man, and I still have an old Bible with a wide margin. I went over that Bible when I was too young to know any better, and I explained everything in the margin.

And all the passage I said, now this fits into verse 4 over here, and then further on it says, and that belongs to over here, and there never was a Daniel that knew more about where everything belonged than I did. But you see, that's when I was a young man and didn't know any better. But now I would not attempt to force every passage to fit a pattern.

It is far better to come to God and say, O God, thou knowest all things, and I do not. Thou art in heaven and I am on earth, and then expect God to give you a direct truth, the

direct revelation to your heart of what things mean, than to try to take truth and bend it and shave it and fashion it to fit preconceived ideas.

You know, there was a Greek man once. He was an old rounder, a kind of a gangster, we would say now, and he had a very nice house. He kept an inn and had a nice house. His name was Procrustes, and he had a bed there, and as a sort of a lark, a sadistic prank, he would force everybody that stopped by for a glass of water and a bite to eat before they left, he would take them in and make them lie on his bed. And if they were too short, he called in his servants and stretched them to fit it. And if they were too long, he chopped them off. And that has been known ever since as the bed of Procrustes.

Well, Bible teaching can be like that if we don't watch. We can start out with the bed already decided upon. We know how long it ought to be. We don't make any allowance for some people being a little shorties and other people being tall. We say this is how tall people ought to be. And whether it's more painful to be stretched to fit or cut off to fit, I leave it to those who underwent that terrible agony.

But I wonder if the Word of God breathes and bleeds and lives and suffers and feels, if sometimes when we in our attempt to show that our Procrustes' bed is the only length that we can pull the verses of God's word to fit them and cut others off. I have found places where it said in the margin that there were seven points there and I counted eight. I've done that over and over. And I found only six at times. But we'll pass by that. And I'll point out that we will attempt tonight to see what this is saying to me now.

Suppose that I could tell you that I could give this to you in detail and tell you exactly who the star fallen from heaven was, and what the bottomless pit is, the pit of the abyss, and exactly what the key of the bottomless pit is, and what the smoke is that comes out of the pit, and what happens when the sun is darkened and the air by reason of the smoke. And if I could tell you exactly who these creatures were that came up in verse 7 as the shapes of locusts, like under horses prepared under battle, with hair, the hair of women.

Now what locusts would be doing looking like horses and having women's hair? If I could tell you all these details, I don't mean to make light, I only mean to say that I cannot stretch all these on that bed of Procrustes because I do not quite know what they all mean. Now I don't. But if I could tell you what about those breastplates and the sound of the chariot running to battle, and who Abaddon is, and Apollyon, if I knew all these, and the angels of the Euphrates, the four angels that had been bound in the great river Euphrates, if I could tell you all that, still there is something that would be missing. And that that would be missing is what I want to try to find here tonight.

In other words, certain great underlying spiritual truths that are here and that are discoverable and that stick up like mountain peaks above the clouds to see, they're here. So tonight, instead of trying to explain all this, if you wanted it explained, there are hundreds of preachers who will be glad to do it for you. But let me, instead of making careful explanations of all this, let me say to you what this terrible, awful, wonderful ninth chapter said to me.

Living as we live now in this 1959 coming into summer, some of us old, some of us young, some of us middle-aged, some women, some men, some married, some single, and some well-off and some having to scrape the bottom of the barrel, a general cross-section of a city like ours, what does this say to me? What can I get out of it?

Now, with your patience, I want to give you five truths here that I find sticking right up at me, saying, here, here, if you don't know every detail here, you know this.

First one, I'd like to have you take them down. First one is that the world is essentially spiritual. You will notice here that we see things happening on the earth. There are strange and terrible things happening on the earth. There were locusts upon the earth and given power like scorpions. They were commanded not to hurt the grass. In those days, men seek death and not find it. There were locusts unlike unto horses.

There was one-third of the population of the earth that was slain and had fire and smoke and brimstone were issuing out of the mouths of certain mysterious creatures walking about on the earth.

Now, that's what we see on the earth. But do you notice here in this chapter that all of this issued out of another world altogether? In the book of Hebrews, it says that the things that are seen do not originate with the things that are seen. That the visible comes out of the invisible. The material comes out of the spiritual. The earthly comes out of the divine.

And here we see it illustrated again. Now, this is something, brethren, that the great leaders don't know. They don't know it. We're trying to discover how we can fight Russia. And I have wondered whether I ought not personally, myself, to study more carefully on this terrible plague that has come upon the earth we call communism. And I have wondered whether I ought not, myself, to throw myself into the battle to save the free, Christian world from this terrible plague of bubonic locusts that is moving over the earth and eating and killing and destroying everything as they move.

Yet I say unto you that this bubonic plague, this plague of rabid locusts did not originate on the earth. That is, they were born and lived down here. But the reason they are what they are and are as they are is a spiritual thing.

Adolf Hitler cannot be explained by psychology and the shape of his bone and his skull structure. He's got to be explained by realizing that everything in this world is spiritual in essence and comes out of a spiritual world.

All of this terrible, frightful, fearful thing that we find here in the ninth chapter of Revelation as taking place on the earth got its start in that place, they call the pit of the abyss, the bottomless pit. It got its start by a fallen angel, not a falling one, but a fallen one, a star, a star that had come down, that had fallen, perhaps that star that once shone on the throne of God. It was a spiritual thing.

When they came to Jesus and began to talk about what they'd seen on earth, he said, I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. He knew that the origin of evil was a spiritual origin, and He also taught that the origin of righteousness is a spiritual thing. He taught

that goodness that God accepts is not the goodness of mechanical acts, but it originates in the spirit. He also taught that evil was not the unwashed hands or the breaking of one or another day, but it was a wrong spirit.

This is a spiritual world, my brethren, and the visible world is a manifestation of spirit. We only see the external things, and we desperately try to understand them, but we can't understand them because we have decided that the things which are can be explained by the things which are, that the things which are visible can be explained by the things which are visible. And all this is wrong.

The things that are seen can only be explained by the things that are not seen. And all of our psychological and nervous and physical and social and political problems are spiritual in their essence. This is what the world has forgotten, and this is what I see in this chapter. I see this terrible, this terrible, these armies moving upon the earth. Where did they come from? They got their start in the pit of the abyss. I see Apollyon and Abaddon, the call of the destroyer, and I see men die.

I see one man out of every three die on the face of the earth. I see corpses piled pyramid high. And then I try to explain it. I explain it by saying, well, it was a wrong choice made back there at Versailles. It was a wrong choice made at Potsdam. It was a wrong choice when we elected so-and-so and didn't elect the other man.

Those are not the explanations, my brethren. The explanations lie back of all that and behind all that. They talk now about so much; we hear it everywhere. Every program on the radio is interrupted to tell us that we've got to give to the folks with mental trouble. How is it? What is the percentage? I've forgotten for the moment, but one out of every four people in every hospital bed in America are there for mental troubles? And we're trying to understand it.

I talked to a good brother who used to be, well, he is still, used to be a psychiatrist. He was another denomination, a very learned fellow, a practicing psychiatrist, but he's going to be an Alliance missionary now. I wanted him to know that I wanted him to get away from the psychiatry, so I called him a head shrinker. He took it good-naturedly, but I said, Doctor, this head shrinking now, are you through with it?

He said he felt that a man with a Bible, or at least he agreed with me, that a wise, prayerful man with a New Testament could do more than all the head shrinkers in the world, because the head shrinker is looking for natural causes, whereas the man with the book in his hand knows that everything has a spiritual cause. And if you want to solve your problem, go to God and get a spiritual solution. You and I are not men with souls, we are souls with bodies. And it's not the body that matters, it's the soul, it's the spirit of the man.

Now, the springs of human conduct Jesus taught are spiritual, and that even fleshly sins, however gross they may be, even fleshly sins, are the outflow of the poisoned spiritual springs lower down. Out of the heart are the issues of life, that's an Old Testament quotation, and Jesus said, Out of the heart proceedeth adulteries and fornications, and He named a whole list of sins and said they proceeded out of the heart.

It was this that set Jesus off above and apart from and placed Him beyond the other religious teachers. He knew that you could only explain politics if you knew about heaven and the bottomless pit. He knew you could only account for a Hitler or a Khrushchev if you knew about the bottomless pit or heaven.

He knew that you could only explain a Lincoln by heaven or hell, not by his body structure or his skull shape. He knew it. Jesus knew all this and He taught it. And of course, He was kicked out and finally crucified. He was rejected and crucified because He did teach this very thing.

Well, that's point number one. We learn that the woes of the world are not the result of the, cannot be explained by any chains of cause and effect here, but that they are the result of something that lies deeper. That should have really been the sermon tonight. I shouldn't have attempted to go any further than that because there's so much more to be said and I don't want to stop there.

There's so much more to be said about this. You can argue and talk until we're red in the face or black in the face, and when it's all over, what a church is spiritual is what a church is finally. What a man is in his spirit is what the man is finally, and there's nothing else that can be said about it.

And when this earth gives up her bones and her blood and her woes and her wars, it'll be because there's one who will come down like rain upon the mown grass from another world and will introduce new spiritual things into the world. And when men are no longer tempted, it'll be because one is taken out of this world and put in the bottomless pit and chained there.

Now the second point is, right now in this world, this moment in history, the world hasn't seen anything yet. That's your second point. We're trying to work it out. I want to be patient. I want to be a patient man. I've never been a patient man, but I would like to be patient, and I would like to understand, and I would like to be patient with men who go and try to confer with gangsters. I'd like to be patient, but I can't be, because I do not believe that there's going to be peace on this earth. I do not believe that. I wish I could believe it.

I saw our latest acquisition, no hair, red face, mouth that you could put this in easily, today, our latest, 16th. And I think of those little fellows and their children after that. And I'd like to believe that this would be a good world. I think of Becky and my family, and it'll be living on. And I wish that I could say, oh, well, cheer up. I believe in the essential goodness of mankind. I don't believe in anything of the sort.

I believe the world hasn't seen anything yet. You can take all your gas chambers and all your concentration camps and all your decimation of populations and all your sinking of ships and all the rest and add them all together for the last fifty years, and when it's all over, you'll have to say the world hasn't seen anything yet. This has always been a harsh, a violent world, a bloody, a sinful world, a tear-stained, a terror-filled world. It's always been because of the price of the monstrous inversion.

What is that monstrous inversion is what I've been trying to tell you in point number one, that the roots and sources and springs of the world are spiritual, and men insist upon declaring that they're natural and that they are material, and we try to explain ourselves by the laws of nature and forget that we were made at once in the image of God and that we're fallen angels, so to speak, although of course we were never angels, we were human beings.

And we're fallen, and this monstrous inversion is accepting the natural man as the right man and forgetting that the source and the springs of our existence are spiritual, and going down to the level of the beasts that perish in the vain hope that somebody somewhere will find a way.

Somebody will find a way, we say. Only one more conference, one more. And they say so plaintively that you could cry, we'll keep the door open, we won't close the door to any possible hope of peace, and I'm for them, and I hope for the best, but I haven't any hope because it's a vain hope that somebody will find a way; that peace shall come to the earth and men shall brothers be for all that and all that, and they shall beat their swords into pruning hooks and their spears into plowshares and sit under their own vine and fig tree.

It will never be till He comes, whose right it is to reign. When He who is the Lord of Peace, the Prince of Peace, when He comes, He will introduce a new spiritual principle into the world. Then it will come. But because the conduct and doings of the world spring out of spiritual fountains, it'll never be until that time. Never, never, never.

So, I can't hope, for the hope is vain, and the voice of prophecy cries out against our hope, cries out against the hope that we shall be able to get along with Russia. Cries out against the hope that if we all learn the English language or some other language and all intermarry and integrate and get together and love each other and put our arms around each other, all will be well.

It'll never be so, because the voice of the prophets cried down the centuries, and the echo of their voices continue to cry, no, no, that there will be wars and rumors of wars and nations shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and it shall continue to be so till he comes who is the Prince of Peace. The world has seen nothing yet, but I wish I could say otherwise. I wish, I wish that I could say otherwise.

I get invited to the weirdest places, you know, I really do. I get invited to the oddest places. I don't know why, because what I write and what I say I think is plain enough, people know where I stand.

But they want me to join this, there's a psychic, a psychic, what do they call it, I don't remember, but they're psychic, and they want me to join them, you know. And I don't believe in that psychic stuff, a woman down in a rented basement room with a weird babushka on her head looking into a bowl of blood and telling the future of mankind, I'd run like the devil to get away from that, wouldn't you? I would. I remember.

I remember Saul went to the witch of Endor and he came limping back to die the next day in battle after he'd had his round with the witch of Endor. I want nothing to do with it. I believe there's such a thing as being psychic. Psychic just means of the soul.

McAfee tells of the American businessman that went to Europe to do Europe, and when he came back, they asked him what it was in Europe that impressed him the most, and he said he thought that it was in an art gallery in Rome, the statue of Persuchus. Well, psyche, psyche is what he, I guess, meant to say.

But anyhow, this psyche, the soul, it's possible to be of the soul, but if you trust your soul, brother, you'll be worshipping Persuchus, because it's spirit that matters. It's a man's spirit, and the root of our conduct is a spiritual thing. And the world hasn't seen anything yet. God help us. God help these little fellows.

I saw a little girl. And she was so tiny that she hadn't learned to walk straight, and she's kind of wobbling while she ran. She was running down the sidewalk here, and I stopped her and said, hi. And she stopped and looked up at me, and I said, where are you going? She said, toe, which meant store.

And I looked in her two little black hands and there wasn't a penny, so I stuck a nickel in. And she left me in a whirl of dust, starting for the store out here. I think of them, little black ones and little yellow ones and little white ones, little blonde ones and little brunette ones, all around the world.

And the world hasn't seen anything yet. It has seen wars that last 30 years. It has seen pogroms and persecutions and assassinations and massacres, but it hasn't seen anything yet.

Third point is that death isn't the worst thing that can happen to you. For I read in this chapter that situations in those days of the tribulation are such that men seek death and desire to die, but death flees from them, and they cannot find it. Death isn't the worst thing that can happen to you.

If the devil can make you believe that the most desirable thing in the world is to live and the most awful thing is to die, the devil has succeeded in cheating you pretty well. My friend, death is not the worst thing that can happen to you, for just out ahead of us in this very world where we live, there will be a situation that will pinch the spirits and bodies of men until they want to die and can't and would look to death as a relief but can't find it.

Now for the Christian, death is a journey into the eternal world. Death is a quick space flight to the celestial country. Death is what Paul wanted. It's a triumph and a victory and a rest and an eternal delight.

Our brother here tonight used a phrase that I'm going to pick it up, a rediscovery of the old hymns. I think also there ought to be a rediscovery of a place where good people go when they die. You know, there was a day of the Methodists and the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and others in other Protestant countries when they looked forward to heaven with a shine on their faces.

And then along came the prophecy teachers, and I'm one of them, and we changed heaven into an eschatology. And now it's eschatology and future events, and what Daniel saw. And I think of the ignorant preacher one time, Jerry Zimmerzill heard, he said, what did Daniel saw? I'll tell you what he seen. And Daniel seen all right, and we are more concerned with what Daniel saw than we are with Jerusalem, the golden, with milk and honey, blessed.

At council, a committee on memorials, you know what the committee on memorials is? They get up and they say in the nicest language they know and in a solemn tone of voice, on August the 14th, there are left these earthly shores, the reverend, so and so, our brother. And on September the 3rd, there went to be with his Savior, sister, her savior sister, so and so, the wife of thus and thus.

And there's a long list of them now. The Alliance is growing and we have a long list. And while they were reading that, I said to somebody beside me, well, there's one committee you can be glad you're not on yet. There's one list you're glad you're not on.

But after all, it's not so bad. And I am not at all sure that these brethren whose names were read weren't better off than we were, whose names weren't read. I'm not sure. I said it the other way, but I'm not sure. And when it was all over, they had read the list, they stood to pray. I don't remember what the man who prayed said, but what I was saying was, Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blessed, beneath thy contemplation, sink heart and voice oppressed.

I know not, oh, I know not what joys await me there, what radiancy of glory, what peace beyond compare. They stand those halls of Zion, all radiant with song and bright with many an angel and all the martyrs throng. The prince is ever in them, the daylight is serene, the pastures of the blessed are decked with glorious sheen.

If we're Christians indeed, and we're not too bogged down in our overstuffed car seats and too fond of our TV sets and our fine homes. If we're cut loose and are free, we'll feel a little nearer to Jerusalem the golden than we do Chicago the dirty. But there are too many people that are all bogged down in Chicago, the sinful, instead of Jerusalem the golden. So, this tells us in this ninth chapter that there's such a thing as a situation where death would be welcome.

One of the French novelists, I've forgotten which, there's no confession, it's just I guess I haven't had any reason to say it before, but when I was a young fellow I was a great reader of the French writers, and I forget whether this was de Maupassant or Balzac who wrote this, but it was a story built around the idea that a situation could occur where the best and most desirable thing a man could do would be to die.

And he built this situation up, I think it was taken from the French Revolution, and the character in the story had reached a place, his people had been killed and his heart was broken and he expected and was looking forward with real anticipation to be the next one shot.

But instead of that they called him out and he stood at attention before the court and they sentenced him to live. And he went out with his broken heart and his tears to live when he had hoped to die. We're too scared, that's our trouble. We're too scared because we haven't known the prince who went to prepare a place for us well enough to want to go see Him.

Suppose, young lady, that you were just married, or suppose you older women who still love your husbands, suppose your husband went to Florida or California or Arizona or wherever you like to prepare a place and said, I'll wire you, and when you get the wire, fly down, I'll meet you at the airport.

First, I'll get it ready. You know where your mind would be, you know the last thing you'd think of at night. You know that every time the phone rang, you'd hope it was a telegram read over the phone to you. You know that every time the gong rang you hoped it was a boy at the door. You know where your hope would be and your expectation. You wouldn't look forward with fear and apprehension, but with keen, bouncing anticipation to rejoining your husband again in the land, the new land, the new country, the new place, in the new home among the palm trees.

And our Lord went and said, I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again. And if we get the tiny little, tiny bit sick, the elders have to come wearing their shoes and soles off, rushing to pray for us lest we go to be with the Lord.

We are worldly minded, we're earthly minded, we're made of the clay, we belong to the frog pond and the swamp and the clay pit and the dust. God Almighty made us in His image and remade us in Christ into the newness of life. And heaven is our home, and the face of God is our landscape and our vision forever.

And if we get a little bit sick, we're scared stiff. And it's a proof of our carnality and our worldliness and our lack of spirituality. There's a lot of worse things than you can do than die. And for the unsaved, of course, the terrible, terrible deception out of this world into a worse one for the lost.

Now, the fourth thing is that God holds our lives in His hand and says, and they shall not find it. Men shall seek death and not find it. They shall desire to die and death shall flee from them. Men have a certain amount of freedom, but God withholds His permission. When He withholds His permission, the murderer can't kill and the suicide can't die. They sought death and couldn't find it.

We're not as free as we thought we were. Do you know it? Listen, now some of you Methodists and with a strong Salvation Army and Methodist background, you will want to shag me home cleared down the avenue tonight for saying this.

But there's more than a little bit of truth in the old Calvinistic idea that God runs His world still and that you and I are not as free as we think we are. Here were people that tried to die and they couldn't die. They searched for death with all the scientific knowledge of the civilized world and couldn't die. If God doesn't give you permission to die, you can't die.

Well, I don't know how important that is, but I think it would help us to humble ourselves a little bit if we knew that God still held the world in His hands. That God isn't the Santy Claus the modern gopelers have made Him. That God isn't the kind man upstairs. God is the great and terrible God who holds the life of the world in His hand. He speaks and it's done. He commands and it stands forth. Myriads of angels rush to do his will.

Last of all, the fifth point is, and I'll learn it from this chapter if I didn't know it from any other, that rebellious men can't be forced to repent. You can't force a man to repent by punishing him. Here we have it in the verses, their power. The rest of the men who which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood.

Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. Now here, invisible to the eye and audible to the ear and present to the touch, was the most terrible hell that the world had ever seen. With these strange creatures that had come out of the smoke that had issued from the abyss, and these strange creatures with breastplates of iron and the sound of their wings as the sound of chariots, and these that came out of the river Euphrates, Apollyon and Abaddon and all the rest. Here was hell turned loose on the earth, and one-third of the earth's population died. And yet there were two-thirds of the population of the earth left grinding their teeth in angry rebellion and saying to God, You and who else?

Brethren, sin is an awful thing, and an impenitent heart is harder than the lower millstone. I've always heard, and evangelists always use it, we preachers always use it, and we think it's so, but it bears a little bit of looking into that if you don't repent, God will punish you and make you repent. Brother, if God doesn't put repentance in your heart, all the punishment in the world can't make you repent, for the Bible tells us here that they repented not.

The rebellious heart of man is altogether too hard to be frightened into repentance. It doesn't say the fear of hell leadeth thee to repentance, it says the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. And if the goodness of God in a vision of a cross with a man dying for His enemies in blood and sorrow, if that doesn't melt you and bring you down to repentance, earthquakes and fire out of heaven won't do it.

They repented not, it says, even though one out of every three men on earth was lying dead. The other two that still remained were too hard to repent. The simple fact is that all men are morally obliged to repent, and if they do not repent, they will perish. And yet they will not unless the goodness of God leads them to repentance.

We're pretty much in the hands of God, brethren. If you've hardened yourself and been stubborn and stuck your jaw out and said, that fellow will never, never succeed in winning me, I'll never listen to him.

Well, I don't mind, because I'm just working for God. But if you're so hard that nothing will melt you, I don't know what in the great heaven above or hell below could ever melt

a man. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they repent, if one go to them from the dead.

Our psychic friends are trying to bring back the dead, you know. Trying to some old fellow that died, and they set up a situation and they bring him back, and he always comes back and talks like a fool. They never manage to sound it. They're always half-witted, I guess, but they sound half-witted, even though they might have written great books, painted pictures, you know, and done wonderful things while they're on earth. But when they come back, they sound like idiots. I'm all well and happy and feel good to hope you're the same, you know. Sounds like a hasty letter. And they're trying to get a message back from the other world.

But listen to me, if your husband or father or relative or friend who died some years back could come back and stand by your bed and speak to you and warn you, it wouldn't help you, because if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they repent, though one came to them from the dead.

There's something terrible about the impenitent human heart, something violent and stubborn, too much to describe. Only the goodness of God can soften a man's heart. But oh, how thankful we ought to be if there's a tear, if you've got it in your heart to be sorry, if there's something inside of you that grieves, if there's something in you that's sorry you did it.

If you look on His cross and bow your head that you put Him there, how thankful you ought to be, for there are millions that don't care. Electric chair facing a young man, he'll set his jaw and go. Sometimes they repent. But if they got pardoned, I wonder what they will do. I've had more funerals in my time, and the sorrowing relatives promised me they'd come to church. And some of them came once, but I never remember any of them that ever came twice, with one exception.

I have in my mind now a family, and I could talk about it, but I won't. But outside of that, I can't recall. Mostly they don't show up at all, or if they show up, they don't show up twice. If the human heart loves its sin, it will love its sin, even though locusts and fiery horsemen are everywhere about it. The sun is clothed in darkness, and the moon turned into blood. The human heart will still love its sin.

They repented not of their fornications and of their evils, even though the world around them was dark and men were dying on every hand. Dear friend, if you want to know God, if you want to know God, you're so much better off than most people, for they don't. And if you feel in your heart a longing to become a Christian, you're so much better off than most, because most people don't. And if you've got a sorrow unto repentance within your heart, you ought to thank God and nurture it, nurture it.

The story I read of the two men who were lost in what they call Norther, out in the far west in Montana. Incidentally, those Indians were from Montana that were here this morning and not from South Dakota, as I erroneously mentioned. But out in Montana and the Dakotas, where the terrible Northerners come down, they were caught, these two men. And they knew as night came down that it was a little fire or terrible death by

freezing, and they searched their pockets all through. Matches had all been used up, no lighters, nothing.

And finally one fellow, getting way down into the seam of an old leather jacket, got hold of half a match and held it up, half a match. And they looked at it in the waning light, and they said, our life is between my finger and thumb. If this thing works and we can get a little fire here on the lee side of the hill, we can live.

If the wind blows it out or the wood doesn't catch, we might as well shake hands, but we're done. No searching party would find them for days and days, and then would find their cold, stiff bodies in stark death. Then they took their coats, held them tight, stood as close together as possible, and got some rough material and prayed and struck the match. Flew up and then dimmed down, and then leaped out and caught a little chip and then a piece of wood, and then they got it down on the ground and began to pour it on. Pretty soon they had a roaring fire. Managed to live it out and stay alive until the searching parties came.

But at one moment they held in their hand, between thumb and finger, a half-match. You know what that half-match is, man? That's your desire to repent. You got it there. God gave it to you, or you wouldn't have had it.

Oh, how you should nurture it. How you should ask God for help, that it might catch and flame up and lighten your soul.

Shall we pray? Now we're going to have a moment of prayer. And before we do, I'd like to know if you'd like to be prayed for. Is there anybody here who would say, Mr. Tozer, would you please pray for me that that little... Yes, God bless you, sir. I see your hand. Go up back there. Who else? Yes, sir. I see your hand. Who else? Yes, I see you. Who else? Yes, I see you, too. Yes. Who else?

Holy Father, there are three men and one woman. They have asked us to pray. O Father, they hold in their hand tonight a little truth, which if it lives and flares up, it could be life to them. But if they let it die and go out, it could be death to them. For Jesus' sake, Father, grant that these may have help now from Thee. We pray it in Christ's name.