As Many as Received Him

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer
November 22, 1953

In the Gospel according to John, the first chapter, verses 11 to 13, he came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, verse 11.

We had as the subject of our sermon the last time I spoke here, before Dr. Kligerman's coming, He came unto His own things, the world. But His own people received Him not. Now, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Now, God has stepped out of his way to talk about certain persons being born. And God never does anything that is ordinary, and He never does anything that is routine, simply. Everything He does is alive, meaningful, and brilliantly significant.

And here we have God talking about certain people being born. What is there significant about that? That the great God Almighty, who rounded the earth in the hollow of His hand, and set the sun shining in the heavens, and flung the stars to the most far corners of the night, that this God should take seven lines in our English version to talk about people being born.

I had always thought that was a most ordinary thing, that there wasn't anything about that that had any particular significance. That's the only way there is to get into the world, is to be born. And they're being born all the time. There are dying a hundred thousand souls and more a day, and there must be more than that born every day, for the population is increasing.

So, whatever a hundred thousand people and over do every day, can't be new, surely, except for the parents. And everybody knows that we're all born, everybody here was born at least once. And there isn't any use to come around giving us any of that blarney about sliding down a sunbeam, or the stork winging his way over the meadows. We were born, and we were all born, everybody was. Now why should he talk about anybody being born?

Well, we're born into the world, and each birth has certain characteristics, certain significance. And our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the most downright and realistic teachers that ever lived, speaks about it here. He said, born of the will of the flesh. Now, the biological urge, the will of the flesh, is back of every birth. And the will of man, that's the social arrangement whereby people marry and get social approval. And from this, men are born. And then, of blood, that's the level of life on which we're born. We're born of blood, and our birth has to do with blood and bones and all the rest.

I saw on a streetcar transfer, this allegedly funny little squib, that a young mother took a baby to the butcher. She had no scale. She took a baby to the butcher and said, Mr. Schmidt, I'd like to have you weigh Junior for me. And he weighed Junior and handed him back and said, 13 pounds with the bones. And that's supposed to be funny, and I thought I'd throw it in.

But the idea is that we're born and there are bones to be considered there. And blood and flesh and tissue and hair and hide and gristle. And when we're born into the world, that's what's born. And where everybody was born, and a hundred and probably a hundred and twenty to thirty thousand people were born today. I may be off there a bit in my statistics, but somewhere in that neighborhood, what's a few thousand more or less than the millions that are living in the world.

So there's no news particularly in somebody being born, and yet here's God turns aside and inspires an apostle to talk about it, and has it recorded by divine inspiration in a book, preserves it at the cost of blood and tears and toil and prayers and hard work for 2,000 years nearly, and gives it to us in our familiar English, that there are certain people born.

And the reason it is significant and not ordinary is that these are born of a mystic birth. And it hasn't anything to do whatsoever with this common birth that you and I know. He says plainly that it's up on another level. It isn't on the blood level. They were born out of blood.

There is a birth that hasn't anything to do with blood. There is a birth that hasn't anything to do with bones or tissue or gristle. There is a birth that there is not back of it the urge of the flesh. There is a birth that has not back of it the social arrangement, the will of man, the desire of parents for children, the determined will of people to propagate.

Jesus said I'm talking about a birth that doesn't touch any of this. Nothing, nothing of this is associated with it at all. It's another kind of birth. It is a mystic birth. And it is an act of God, this birth. They were born, said Jesus, and their birth was an invisible birth.

All the births you and I know are visible births. The baby is there and grows to manhood or womanhood, and it's visible and audible and tangible. It can be seen and heard, and we are all willing to admit.

So, there is, there is this sight. The senses can touch the, the average birth. When you and I are born into the world, the senses could get to us. They could see us and touch us and hold us and weigh us and wash us and clothe us and feed us. Jesus said that there was, there were certain people born, and they were born upon another level altogether. It hadn't anything to do with human life as we know it. It hadn't anything to do with bones and flesh. It hadn't anything to do whatsoever with earth that it was of heaven. It hadn't anything to do with the flesh.

This birth is of the Spirit. It hasn't anything to do with the will of man. This birth is of, by the will of God. It is a mysterious invisible birth, a mystic birth, a birth of another kind. Some people are very greatly perturbed when you use the word mystic. They want to

chase you out immediately and replace you with a man who is as afraid of the word mystic as you are.

I'm not afraid of it at all because the whole Bible is a mystical book, a book of mystery, a book of wonder. You can't trace any simple thing, not any simple phenomenon that you can't trace back any distance but what you come blank up against mystery and darkness. There isn't one lonely idea your mind can entertain of natural phenomenon anywhere that you can trace back that doesn't run up against darkness and mystery. And it is much more so upon the spiritual level where these ones were born. It was a mystic birth, a birth of the Spirit, contrary altogether from every kind of birth that any man knew.

If Jesus our Lord had merely talked about people being born, he would never have been heard, and his teachings never would have gotten into print, and they never would have been preserved because it's too common everybody's born. But these people were born of a birth that was not of the body but of the heart. They were born not into time but into eternity. They were born not of earth but of heaven. It was an inward birth, a spiritual birth, a mysterious birth, a mystic birth.

And then again in this text, I'm only giving you what's here, understand, restating it in other words, that's all I ever do really, is to restate truth in other language, sort of give a free-running translation on the old texts. That's about all preaching amounts to. You can tell your own stories, and outside of that preaching is just a free translation in modern language of the old solid truth. So, all I've said up to now is plain here in the book.

And then this birth is by a particular grant of God. I know there is a sense in which the sovereign God is over all. And I like to think that there isn't a child born anywhere into the world that God doesn't own. That is, he owns it as His creature, it's here, it's a creature.

Somebody said even about the many thousands that are born out of wedlock, one great philosopher said, there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents. And so even those that are born without benefit of clergy, without the formalities of the wedding, are nevertheless owned by God Almighty as creatures born into the world. They're here, and that there's in that sovereign sense in which everything that is born is born by the will of God.

But that's down on the level of nature, and it isn't what our Lord was talking about here. He said that this other birth, this mystic, mysterious, spiritual birth, was by a particular grant, which was altogether other than, and different from, and superior to, the first kind of birth. He said that it was this birth that gave men the right. They had the right to be born, and they were born into the Father's household, and they became children of God.

Now, I believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Some of you now will proceed to faint, and I sure will kindly be around with an ammonium bottle, and bring them to, because you have had, you've seen fire in men's eyes when they talk about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But I believe in both. That is, I

believe that God is the father of them that believe, and thus there is a fatherhood in God, the Father for whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

God is not the Father of the sinner, but He is the Father of them that believe, and therefore there is a fatherhood in God. And I believe in the fatherhood of God only. I do not foolishly stretch it to cover all mankind. God is not the father of the two that kidnapped a six-year-old baby and shot his brains out. God is not the father of the murderer and the whoremonger.

God is the Father of them that believe, so there is a fatherhood of God. And I'm not going to let the liberal and the modernist chase me out and run me down the alley and back me a white face against the wall and make me deny their fatherhood of God. I believe in the fatherhood of God.

Furthermore, I believe in the brotherhood of man. God has made of one blood all people to dwell upon the face of the earth, so that everybody that's born into the world is born of the same blood. And our skins may be a bit different, and our eyes slope a different direction. Some hair may be red and some black, some curly and some straight, and some tall and some short, and we may differ from each other very greatly.

But where there is nevertheless a vast human brotherhood, and we all descended from that man, that man Adam, whose mortal sin brought death into the world with all its fruits, and so there is a brotherhood of man. Everybody is everybody else's brother throughout the whole wide world. But then there is another brotherhood within that brotherhood, and that is the Brotherhood of the Saints.

Now, the fact that man has a broad brotherhood doesn't mean men are saved. They're not. And when they're saved, they leave the old brotherhood of Adam and enter the Brotherhood of the Redeemed, and that's another brotherhood altogether. Where the liberal and the modernist make their mistakes is that they are trying to level everybody, Christian and non-Christian, religious and irreligious, the saved and the lost, the believer and the doubter, all to one level brotherhood, and say that mankind is a brotherhood and therefore we're all the children of one father and therefore we're all saved. All that's nonsense and it's unscriptural and isn't true.

So, when the liberal says he believes in the fatherhood of God, he doesn't believe in the fatherhood of God in the sense that the Bible teaches it. He believes in it in another sense which is not scriptural.

And so, I do not believe with the liberal, but I believe in God as being the Father of all of His redeemed children. And I believe that there is a brotherhood of man which comes by the first birth and another brotherhood which comes of the second birth. And oh, by the grace of God, I want to dwell in that sacred mystic brotherhood of the ransomed and redeemed, that fellowship of the saints gathered round the broken body and shed blood of the Savior.

Redeemed how I love to proclaim it, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And that's another brotherhood, brethren, all together, because it's a brotherhood of the second birth. It's a brotherhood of that mystic, mysterious birth that puts us over into eternity

instead of into time. A child born into the world is born into time, but a man born into the kingdom of God is born into eternity and born up on to eternity and hath everlasting life.

So that these that are born that our Lord took time to tell us about, are born of another kind of birth. It's a mysterious birth and it gives us a particular privilege. As many as received Him, to them gave He power, which is, the word, power, doesn't mean dynamics.

It doesn't take any dynamical power on the part of a man to become a child of God, but He gave us the privilege, it means, the right, the legal right to become children of God. And we are born into the kingdom. You know, some people don't understand the doctrine of adoption.

I've heard people get up with happy faces and say, I thank God I'm adopted into the family of God, poor little orphan. Aren't you glad God found you on the doorstep and took you in? You were no relation to Him, but He decided to take you in, make you His, that's precious. Now, if that's the best you can do, I say you ought to be happy about that.

But I know something better than that altogether. Not God found me in a clothes hamper whimpering on His doorstep and said, the poor little scrawny fellow, I'll take him in and call him Mine. And thus, I'm God's by adoption. Oh no, I got in easier than that.

Some years ago, I arrived in a house out in Lagos, Pennsylvania. There is such a town as that. Out from town, of course, not in the town. I was no city slicker. I was born a mile from the nearest post office. And my little mother, Prudence Tozer, they didn't have any birth certificates in those days. That's so long ago that they didn't, I wasn't even recorded, you know, they didn't even put me down. I don't know. I know I got born though, because I'm still around. But I was born of my parents, and I got into that family by birth.

I had a playmate that grew up with him, fought with him, wrestled with him, and argued with him and loved him. His name was Wood, Dors Wood. And so, Dors Wood and I, Dors used to talk about the fact that, well, he was quite a grown boy before he knew that he was adopted. I knew it all the time, but we tried to keep it away from Dors.

Believe it or not, even as a growing kid, child, I never told my pal that he was adopted. I used to fight with him, and I don't know why I didn't get mad and tell him, but I didn't. I kept the secret. Dors never knew until he was quite a big boy that he had been adopted. Not perfectly all right. I think it's wonderful to be adopted.

I knew two dear little girls out in Hawthorne, New Paterson, New Jersey. I was riding along once with them in the car, these two sweet little girls, and they began to talk to me and they said, you know what, Mr. Tozer, our Daddy and Mama, they like us. They love us. Because you see, Mr. Tozer, and they started to give me the facts of life. You see, Mr. Tozer, the ordinary baby, when it's born into a family, the parents just have to take what they get. And if it isn't what it should be, they just have to take it.

They are telling me, snuggling up warm in the backseat of the car, telling me about it. They said, you see, when the child is born into a family, the parents just take whatever they get. But you said, you know what, my Daddy and Mama came and picked me out and they wanted me, and they made something out of that adoption business and said, they didn't just take us because they couldn't help it. They came and got us and they were as happy.

And I thought that was the most perfectly beautiful thing that I had ever seen. Of its kind in the world, that parents were wise enough to take away all the shock from their little lives and say, no, you're not born of us actually, but you're better than that. We wanted you. We went and got you. So, if that's the best your theology will allow you to be, why, you may rejoice and say, thank God, He wanted me and went and got me.

But the Bible says that God gave us the privilege of being born. Now there's no poetry here. This is not poetry. Sometimes we use a poetic phrase and you have to edit it down, you know, squeeze the water out of it and the air and get it down to a germ of truth to find out what it means. But this is not poetry. This is theology.

And it says He gave them power, authority, the right to be children of God, which were born. So, you see now, why they got the news item, why they got the byline, why God Almighty put it in His news that certain people were born that weren't born ordinarily, weren't born just after the average rut and routine of things. These were privileged few, and they had a right given to them that wasn't given to any others. The right was that they should be born children of God. They should actually be children of God.

Now, these are the only ones that possess that right. Let us not yield to the pressure, especially around Thanksgiving and Christmas. From now on to the 26th of December, we will be subjected to a quiet but powerful pressure to believe in the religion of Cain. Jesus' picture will be in the newspapers and there'll be parts of Scripture increasing until finally they'll put Luke, second chapter, on the front page. We'll get more and more and more religious until Santa Claus gets out of the woods and out of the country.

Watch that now and don't let anybody pressurize you into accepting any sloppy, badly thought out and unscriptural doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God over all mankind, for it isn't so. The child that is born of flesh and bones and blood and sinew is not a child of God. He's a creature of God, but not a child of God. He's a child of God only when he's born by a special privilege and right and grant of God Almighty. And God has given a grant, a privilege, to certain ones, and he's denied it to all others to become the children of God, in a sense that even angels do not have.

There'll be a time when we'll no longer cringe before angels. There'll be a time when we'll no longer feel like saluting or salamming before any broad-winged angel of heaven, because the Scripture says that God has made Jesus for a little time lower than angels, that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man.

But Jesus was not originally lower than angels, but they were lower than Him because it is written that all the angels of God worship Him, and what He is we will be. Not in essential deity, certainly, but in all the rights and privileges and standings we will be

equal to Him and like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And the day will be when the angels, if there's any salamming to be done, they'll do it. And if there's any saluting to be done, they'll do it. For the children of the Most High God have the high grant and privilege given to them. We don't believe that. We don't half believe that. If we half believe that, we'd begin to act like it.

You read, Americans are so democratic they love kings and adore queens. And you've read in your newspapers and elsewhere of how already they're taking little Prince Charlie—I think he's cute, don't you, little Prince Charlie? They're taking little Prince Charlie and they're starting to educate him, to make him a king. You're royal stuff, they're telling you. They had an awful time with Elizabeth.

I followed her from the time she was this high in the newspapers and newsmagazines. Cute little thing, full of sass and talking, used to push her old granddaddy around and make him shut the door, Grandpa, and so the old King the Fifth, George the Fifth, had to go shut the door for his little granddaughter. She learned how to be a queen, though, and she's doing a good job of it. She always deports herself well. I could think of First Ladies, but we won't go into that. But this First Lady of the British Commonwealth of Nations, they have a right to be proud of her. She's acting like the Queen she is because she was trained to it from the time, they could get her settled down long enough to listen.

Little Prince Charlie has taken up the torch and now he's being trained. I can't see why, if we believe that we have the special high right to be children of God, we don't begin to act like children of God, instead of children of the world and of the flesh.

Why do we have men of such fiery swords as Ravenhill and others of his kind? They're sick inside when they see the children of heaven acting like the sons of earth, and they may go too far and be extreme and cruel in their slashings, but they're right in doing it. We ought to be cut to pieces and flailed for this thing, of living like sons of the earth when we're children of heaven, living like Adam when we belong to God. For we have the right and privilege.

Now, to be children of God, how do these persons get that privilege? These born ones that were born of the mystic birth, how did they get that privilege? It says they believed, and they received. Now we hear that so much that I'll skip the believe part about it because we believed ourselves into a blind alley in our time. Every time you pick up a track or hear an evangelist or sing a song, it's something about believing.

Everybody goes around believing and they never get much. So that I only say that they believed in that they were not cynics nor doubters nor pessimists. They took an optimistic, humble, trusting attitude towards Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They were believers. And then they received Him.

Now here's what I want to lay my emphasis upon tonight. They received Him. As many as received Him, to them gave He power. Now this word, received, here is not passive. Everybody knows the difference between active and passive. Passive is when I receive the action. Active is when I do the act.

And we have come to a religion of passivity in our day. Toward God, everybody's passive. And we receive Christ; that's passive. But the Bible knows absolutely nothing about passive reception. For the word here is not passive, it is active.

This word, receive, here and accept. We have, accept, in our time. Everybody goes around saying, will you accept Him? Will you accept Him? Will you accept Him? And we make a Fuller Brush man out of Jesus Christ. He meekly stands waiting to know whether we'll patronize Him or not. We need what He has, but we're sovereignly deciding whether we'll receive Him or not. Now, my brethren, passive accepting is unknown in the Bible. Now let's get there. Passive accepting is unknown in the Bible. Nobody knows anything about it within the confines of sacred writ.

And I for one am tired of being told what to believe by people who copy everybody else just like parrots. Put the ministers on perches and they all say, Polly wants a cracker, good morning, in exactly the same tone of voice, and write books about it, and edit magazines, and sing songs.

And if anybody challenges it, they look over their religious nose at you and say he's either radical or he's touched with modernism. When the simple fact is that we have been taught that passive acceptance is equivalent to faith when it is not. The word here in the Greek is not passive, it is active. You go to any lexicon, you go to any modern translation, and you will find out that somewhere they get across the idea of take, took, take. As many as took Him, says one fine translation, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.

So, it is taking instead of accepting. They took Him instead of received, in the passive sense. As many as took Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. So now I want you to put this down, no matter whether you're a layman or a minister to be, or a missionary or a student, I want you to take this thought down, that receiving Christ savingly is an act of the total personality. That is, it is an act of the mind and of the will and of the affections.

And it is not only an act of the total personality, it is an aggressive act of the total personality. I want you to put that down, or at least salt it down in your memory, that when Jesus said, or when the Holy Ghost said here about the works of Jesus, that as many as received Him, it meant and means as many as aggressively took Him with their total personality. It didn't mean sit and quietly accept. It means they took Him with their total personality.

Everything they had became a hand reaching forth for Jesus Christ. All of their will and all of their affections and all of their feelings and all of their intellect took Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord.That's what it says here. Now, it actually says it in the Greek, as many as took him actively, they became the children of God.

So, we have here that word, it's an aggressive taking, an aggressive act of the total personality. If somebody should come along who could make himself heard to thousands instead of to a few hundred, if somebody should come along with as much oil as intellect and as much power as penetration, I believe that we could yet save fundamentalism from the dogs. I believe we could yet save evangelical Christianity from

the dead-end street in which she finds herself. For never forget it, evangelical Christianity is gasping for breath. Don't you let for a second, don't you let crowds fool you, and don't you let anybody teach you that because there's a lot of religious activity and a lot of religious thinking that therefore there's a lot of religion, a lot of spirituality. That isn't so.

We happen to have come upon a period now when everybody's singing about tears and prayers and weeping in the temples down Mexico Way. And you can get a religious phrase kicked around almost anywhere, and right in the middle of a worldly program dedicated to the world of flesh and the devil with old mammon, with his two silver dollars for eyes sitting at the top of it, lying about the quality of their products, shamelessly praising men who ought to be put to work laying bricks.

Right in the middle of it, somebody will say with an unctuous voice that they learned in a studio how to make sound religious. Now we'll have our hymn for the week. And then they'll call it a hymn and then they'll break in with a banjo, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, and they'll sing, doggerel, the devil must blush to hear.

And they call that religion. It's religion. Yeah, I'll admit that all right, but it isn't salvation. And it isn't Christianity, and it isn't the Holy Ghost, and it isn't the New Testament, and it isn't redemption. It's simply making capital out of religion for a price. Because there's enough of sentimental people listening that want to blow their nose at least once a week good, and they can do it best if some fellow with tears in his voice sings about the poor girl that kneels in the chapel and weeps on the border down Mexico Way. If I know my geography right, that would be somewhere in halfway over the Rio Grande, but we won't go into that.

Now, the meaning of the word, took, here, as many as took Him actively and aggressively took Him. They took Him, it means a determined exercise of the will that will not deny any condition, that will meet any condition the Lord lays down.

Do you hear me now? That's something quite other from what we're hearing. As many as took Him, He gave power to become the sons of God. And took means that it was an act of the will that would meet any condition the Lord laid down.

They did not come to the Lord and try to make terms, but they came to the Lord and actively took Him on His own terms. We try to make terms with the Lord, and it won't work. And it will meet any condition the Lord lays down that'll forsake any friend or relative.

You say, now you're getting radical. I knew he couldn't preach one sermon that didn't have any radical statements in it. Well, maybe so. But did you ever read that passage that said, if any man comes to Me and hates not father and mother and husband and wife and yea his children and his very life, also he cannot be My disciple. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. If thy foot offend thee, cut it off. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. For it's better to enter into a life blind than to enter into hell with all your eyes, both your eyes and both your feet and hands. We've edited Jesus Christ down.

We fight over translations and fight over translations and get bitter over translations. Any modern translation will tell you that Jesus Christ said, if you don't come to me and love Me beyond all your family, you can't be My disciple. And if you're not willing to turn your back on your wife for My sake, I won't have you. And if you're not willing to forsake your father for My sake, I won't have you.

That's the sum of the teaching of Jesus on this subject. You say it's terribly cruel. Yes, I suppose so. But hell is so hot that God did anything and is doing anything He can do to rouse people. And God demands loyalty. Lot would have been justified if he had forsaken that ungodly family of his and left Sodom all alone. And Abraham almost did that.

Today you tell us Jesus Christ gives us salvation. Something to be added on, a boot in there, a corsage that we add on to the clothing we already have. The Lord says, no, strip to the skin. Throw off your old rags from the skin out and let Me dress you in the robes of righteousness, all Mine.

And if it means the loss of friends, lose them. If it means the loss of money, lose it. If it means the loss of a job, give it up. If it means persecution, take it. If it means the stiff, fierce winds of opposition will blow, bow your head into the wind and take it for Jesus' sake. As many as took Him, to them He gave the authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name.

So, to receive Christ is not the passive, soft affair, not the pre-digested, Wheaties religion. It's strong meat, brethren. Yes, sir, it's strong meat.

And God is calling us in this hour to give up everything and sinful pleasures as well. But in our deadly, terrible hour, our degenerate, sodomitic hour, we are making it as easy as we can for Christians and saying, just believe on Jesus and accept Him, and then you can have and go and do and be just all you did before, as long as you don't drink and run after women. Outside of that, everything's all right. Amen. Now let's get the banjo and go to work. And the result is, brethren, that we have a religion that is not too much better than Buddhism.

If I wanted to take my choice between a lot that I see parading as Christianity and good old Zoroastrianism, or the sound teachings of Buddha, I'd take Buddha, because he was sincere about it anyhow. I'd rather follow Zoroaster and kneel twice a day to the setting and rising sun than to be a half-baked Christian that insists upon believing on Jesus Christ for salvation and then doing as I please and violating the lordship of the Savior. No, you can't do it, brethren. You can't do it.

Now some people don't like this, and that's why we always have a relatively modest crowd. I have got sense enough to know what I could do if I wanted to do it. Pull in my horns a little bit. Don't draw so much blood, and don't hew so close to the line. Follow along, and they'll follow you. Give them something to make them happy and tell them they can get to heaven, they can get eternal life and never lose it, and all they have to do is simply accept the Lord and then after that to do as they please. They'll follow you. You can have big conferences built upon that, and great Bible schools, and colleges, and

great groups of busy Christians, and great magazines all built around that erroneous idea.

Now as many as took Him, they took Him aggressively with their whole personality. Shakespeare said, or Hamlet said of Denmark, that all of Denmark is contracted in one great brow of woe. And I'd like to change that and say that all of the human personality is contracted in one grasping, aggressive hand that reaches out and takes Jesus and says, here Lord, you're mine if it costs me blood and death. You're mine if it costs me the loss of friendships. You're mine if I lose my job.

There appeared in the Alliance Weekly only about three weeks ago the obituary of Louis Henry Zemer of the city of Toledo. He had for years one of the largest churches in the city of Toledo, one of the largest Sunday school, largest churches, offerings going up to $71,000 a year for missions. This great, broad-shouldered, high-forehead German; Lutheran he was. You can be saved and be a Lutheran.

Please don't misunderstand me there. There are lots of saved Lutherans. I hear them on the air, and they preach the gospel, and I think there's a lot of fine Christians. This particular church happened to be the other kind. Somebody gave him the Alliance Weekly and he said, why they told me I could be saved and know it. So, he gave his heart to the Lord and was converted.

And when he got converted and began to preach that you could be saved and know it, he began to have revivals in his Lutheran church. So, they called him to account, and they said, what's this big idea? How come? What do you mean? So, he got up and read out of Luther to them and showed that Luther taught the same thing. They cleared him and then asked him to resign.

He said that was a promotion. So, he took a little old Alliance church, the only kind there ever were in those days, there aren't too many other kinds now, a little old Alliance church, usually back of a livery stable and over a barbershop. That was the early Alliance church as a rule, couldn't get anywhere else. He took one of those and brought it up into the great Toledo Tabernacle that has sent missionaries around the world, three of his own sons and daughters are on the field.

Well, this man knew what was. He gave up everything. They threw him out and he had to live from hand to mouth. Jobs, parsonages and all that all went out for Christ's sake. You say that is cruel.

Listen to me. Do you know that Communists do that now? Communists dedicate themselves to the cause of communism and are willing to give their lives to support their faith.

And then they tell me that with God offering me eternal life through Jesus and heaven and all the glories that lie beyond, that God's cruel because He tells me I've got to turn my back on everything to take Jesus. There’s nothing cruel about it. But we're so soft in these days. We want everything pre-cooked, pre-digested, sliced and salted.
And then we want God to come and help us eat and hold a cup to our baby lips while we pound with a spoon and splash. And we think that's Christianity. Brethren, it's not.

It is a degenerate bastard breed that has no right to be called Christianity.

The man who wants the Lord to toady to him and let him go on as he's going and still say in the end, come thou good and faithful servant, is a moral fool. And somebody ought to tell him so now, and I'd like to be the fellow.

Now I want to close. He says here, as many, as many, as many. Now that phrase is inclusive and exclusive. It includes all who will, and it excludes all who will not. What is the most important thing going on in the world today? Is it the alignment of nations for the coming of the Antichrist? I believe not. Is it the development of the new Israel? The fulfillment of the ancient prophecies? As important as that is, I think it is not the most important.

Is it the growth of communism and the preparation for the taking over of half the world by the communists? That's tragically important, but I think that's not the most important. Is it the development of the atomic secret, which will someday send airplanes through the sky and ships across the seas by the invisible atom, that will someday cook your food and warm your house, drive your automobile by the invisible atom? Is that the most important thing? I think not. Is it our mastery of nature?

I heard somewhere, I have not seen this, but I heard somewhere of a watch or clock, and you know how it's powered? It's powered, that is, it's wound up and kept going by the changes of the air. You heard about that atmospheric change. It gets warmer and cooler and hotter and cooler and colder and hotter, and as it does, it keeps winding this thing. That's what you call mastering nature.

They sure put a saddle on old Mother Nature that time, didn't they? Is that the most important thing? No. Is it not our ability to light our cities with the light from the stars? Philadelphia, soon, next week, is going to light the city with a star. They're going to have Santa Claus down there, beard and all and ho-ho, and they're going to turn the star loose to light a certain section of the city or a certain parade of some sort to light up old Santa Claus' whiskers. And they're asking the stars in the heavens above to conspire with them. Mastery of nature, is that the most important thing? No, I don't think so. What is the most important thing?

Oh, my brethren, this is it. The mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost whereby he selects and rejects. That mysterious, invisible, and totally silent operation of the Holy Ghost by which as many are selected. As many, he says, as many. That's a selection out from within. That's an exclusive selection and an inclusive selection. And it excludes all that are not in and includes all that are in. And it's done silently. It's done in messages and meetings like this. It's done wherever the Holy Ghost takes the Word and begins to select. As many as received Him, as many. Nobody knows who they are quite nor where they are always.

But this mysterious Holy Ghost, invisible, unheard, but yet wonderfully, terribly present. Selecting, selecting, selecting. One here, one over there, two over here, three across yonder. This church, nobody. That church down there, one. This church over here, two.

Maybe for weeks, nobody. The mysterious Holy Ghost is finding his selection. As many, as many.

That's the most important thing that's going on in the world today. For that has to do with eternity. All these other things have to do with time. They have to do with the souls of men. And all these other things have to do with the bodies and social lives of men.

So, the most important thing in the universe is going on right in this building tonight. God is selecting men and women. As many as took him. Would you be one of them? And the bride says, come. And the church says, come. And the Holy Ghost says, come. And the Son says, come. And the Father says, come. And we all say, come and take him. Come, come.

The Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior. Come and take Him. Take Him if you must walk over your own family to take Him. Take Him if you must leave your job to take Him. Take Him. Make Him yours tonight. That's the most important thing in the world. And there's nothing that can compare with it. Would you bow your heads in a moment of prayer with me, please?

O Lord Jesus, Thy going forth has been from of old, even forever. And Thou art moving from eternity that was to eternity to be, passing by. And the magnetism of Thy presence is finding a few. A few that are one with Thee in yearning and longing, a few.

O Christ, even as Thou didst walk down the streets of Jerusalem and they came out of houses and leaned out windows, others glowered and walked away, so it is today. My Lord, we beseech Thee, help those that are rejecting.

We pray Thee, let them reject. Those that will receive, we beseech Thee, let them receive. We say, Selah, Amen. So be it, God, Thou invisible, mysterious Person, present in our midst. The Physician is near, the sanctifying, healing Jesus. The Lord and the Savior is near.

We pray Thee for those who, up to this hour, have been careless, shallow, modern, irresponsible believers, who want tonight to change all that and to settle it with Thee, that they will take Thee as their Savior now, that they will make Thee thine, theirs, that they will make themselves Thine, that they will lay hold of Thee by all the aggressive act of their personality, believe on Thy name, receive Thy Person, and cease to be sinners, and move over into the new and heavenly birth that makes them children of God. Grant it for Thy name's sake. Amen.