



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, I come before You right now with the specific petition that is on my heart. I know that You want to answer my prayers and fulfill my requests, but You also want me to surrender more of myself to You. Before I ask You to meet my needs today, I first want to consecrate myself more fully to You. Forgive me for hanging on to parts of my life that I've needed to surrender to You. Right now I yield these areas of my life to You, and I ask You in exchange to please fill me with more of You. I thank You in advance for answering that prayer. I also thank You for hearing my specific prayer request and for fulfilling the needs I am confronted with today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 THE ISRAELITES journeyed and encamped in the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan [River] at Jericho. 2 And Balak [the king of Moab] son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was terrified at the people and full of dread, because they were many. Moab was distressed and overcome with fear because of the Israelites. 4 And Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now will this multitude lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field. So Balak son of Zippor, the king of the Moabites at that time, 5 Sent messengers to Balaam [a foreteller of events] son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the [Euphrates] River, even to the land of the children of his people, to say to him, There is a people come out from Egypt; behold, they cover the face of the earth and they have settled down and dwell opposite me. 6 Now come, I beg of you, curse this people for me, for they are too powerful for me. Perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed. 7 And the elders of Moab and of Midian departed with the rewards of foretelling in their hands; and they came to Balaam and told him the words of Balak. 8 And he said to them, Lodge here tonight and I will bring you word as the Lord may speak to me. And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam [that night]. 9 And God came to Balaam, and said, What men are these with you? 10 And Balaam said to God, Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, 11 Behold, the people who came out of Egypt cover the face of the earth; come now, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out. 12 And God said to Balaam, You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed. 13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, Go back to your own land, for the Lord refuses to permit me to go with you. 14 So the princes of Moab rose up and went to Balak, and said, Balaam refuses to come with us. 15 Then Balak again sent princes, more of them and more honorable than the first ones. 16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus says Balak son of Zippor, I beg of you, let nothing hinder you from coming to me. 17 For I will promote you to very great honor and I will do whatever you tell me; so come, I beg of you, curse this people for me. 18 And Balaam answered the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry here again tonight that I may know what more the Lord will say to me. 20 And God came to Balaam at night, and said to him, If the men come to call you, rise up and go with them, but still only what I tell you may you do. 21 And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. 22 And God's anger was kindled because he went, and the Angel of the Lord stood in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 And the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way and His sword drawn in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey to turn her into the way. 24 But the Angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, she thrust herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against it, and he struck her again. 26 And the Angel of the Lord went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam, and Balaam's anger was kindled and he struck the donkey with his staff. 28 And the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, What have I done to you that you should strike me these three times? 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, Because you have ridiculed and provoked me! I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you! 30 And the donkey said to Balaam, Am not I your donkey, upon which you have ridden all your life long until this day? Was I ever accustomed to do so to you? And he said, No. 31 Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His sword drawn in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell on his face. 32 And the Angel of the Lord said to him, Why have you struck your donkey these three times? See, I came out to stand against and resist you, for your behavior is willfully obstinate and contrary before Me. 33 And the ass saw Me and turned from Me these three times. If she had not turned from Me, surely I would have slain you and saved her alive. 34 Balaam said to the Angel of the Lord, I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. But now, if my going displeases You, I will return. 35 The Angel of the Lord said to Balaam, Go with the men, but you shall speak only what I tell you. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. 36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab on the border formed by the Arnon [River], at the farthest end of the boundary. 37 Balak said to Balaam, Did I not [earnestly] send to you to ask you [to come] to me? Why did you not come? Am not I able to promote you to honor? 38 And Balaam said to Balak, Indeed I have come to you, but do I now have any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that shall I speak. 39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. 40 And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent [portions] to Balaam and to the princes who were with him. 41 And on the following day Balak took Balaam and brought him up into the high places of Bamoth-baal; from there he saw the nearest of the Israelites.

Numbers 22–25. Balaam

Balaam's prophecies were a remarkable prediction of Israel's influential place in history through a "Star" that would arise out of Jacob (24:17). Though God used him to speak true prophecy, Balaam, for money, was the instigator of Israel's shameful sin with Moabite and Midianite women, for which Balaam was slain and 24,000 Israelites perished (31:8 , 16 ; 25:9). And Balaam's name became a synonym for false teachers (2 Peter 2:15 ; Jude 11 ; Revelation 2:14).

(Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History and Commentaries; page 172)

Chapter 22

AND so the children of Israel sat forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab (Num 22:1)

Moving now south from this position.

on this side of the Jordan River [on the eastern side of the Jordan River] by the city of Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw that Israel all that he had done to the Amorites. And Moab was very afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was the king of the Moabites at that time. And so he sent messengers unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people that is come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that we may drive them out of the land: for I know that whom you bless is blessed, and whom you curse is cursed. And so the elders of Moab with the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hands; and they came to Balaam, and spake to him the words of Balak. And he said unto them, Stay here tonight, and I will bring you word again, and the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. And God came to Balaam, and said, Who are these men that are with you? And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, has sent them unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people who has come out of Egypt, which covers the face of the earth: come and curse me then; that I might be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, [Listen] Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed (Num 22:1-12).

So that's God's direct command.

Now, this guy Balaam, interesting character. It would definitely appear that he was a prophet of God though he was not from Israel, that God did indeed speak to him. In fact, some of the most remarkable prophecies of the Old Testament came out of the mouth of Balaam. What was his background? How is it that he knew God and was able to relate to God in such a special way? I don't know. It would seem that he was used to creating enchantments or curses, and that's actually what the king wanted him to do is to create some kind of a curse against these people. Now he had a reputation for power and putting curses on people.

And so the king sent the rewards of divination. In other words, when you go to a prophet to seek advice from God, you'd always take some kind of a gift for the prophet. That was the custom of the day. Even in Israel that was the custom; going to the prophet you'd take a gift for the prophet and ask him to seek the Lord for you, but it was always customary to take a gift for the prophet. And so the king sent these messengers with a gift with the command that he would put a curse on these people that had come out of Egypt and were now bordering his land. "For I know whomever you curse is cursed, whoever you bless is blessed."

So Balaam sought the Lord and the Lord said to him, "Don't go to the king and don't curse these people". God's direct command to Balaam.

And so Balaam rose up in the morning, and he said to the princes of Balak, You better go home: for the LORD refuses to give me permission to come with you. So the princes of Moab, they went back to Balak, and they said, he won't come. He said the LORD won't let him come. And so Balak the king sent back more honourable princes (Num 22:13-15),

Men of greater stature as far as the government was concerned. And the king said,

Don't let anything keep you from coming: For I will promote you to great honour, and I'll give you whatever you want: so come, and curse these people (Num 22:16-17).

So, now more important princes, offers of, you know, you write the check or you name the price. I'll do wonderful things for you. I'll promote you to great honor and I'll do anything you ask, but don't let anything keep you from coming.

So Balaam answered the servants of Balak [and said], If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of God, to do any less or to do any more. So he said, Wait tonight, and I'll find out what the LORD will say unto me (Num 22:18-19).

Now I can imagine that this night, Balaam was really laying it upon the Lord, "Lord please" because he was thinking about these great rewards that had been offered to him by the king, all this loot. Man, he was really drooling. "Lord, you know, I'll be good I promise. But let me go, Lord. Just let me go, Lord, please Lord let me go." I assume that this was the case because the Lord gave him permission to go but yet when he went it wasn't God's will for him to go.

And I do believe that it is possible for us to enter into a gray area of what is termed the permissive will of God. Yes, God will permit you to do it but he doesn't want you to do it. And I believe that a person can zero in right in the heart of God and the direct will of God for his life. You can be right on dead center with God's will for your life. And I think that there is a gray area that you can get over into which God will permit you to do it. But it isn't really His direct will. He isn't really pleased with it. "But He is", but you've insisted, you're pressuring, you're forcing, you're whining, you're crying; "Ah, go on then." you know. Oftentimes your kids, you know, they've laid it on you like that and you think "Okay, go ahead and go." but you really don't want them to. You're so tired of hearing them griping, whining and complaining; "Get out of here. Go ahead; go on, tired of hearing your complaining. " And so I assume that this was the case because God said, "All right go". And God said to Balaam at night, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with

them; but the word which I shall unto thee, that shalt thou do. So Balaam rose up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went (Num 22:20-22):

God was angry with him for going.

Now, God expressed His direct will in the beginning, "Don't go with them. Don't curse these people". That was God's direct will for his life but he was going off into an area. God permitted him to go but God was angry with him for going. Leaving the place of the center of God's will; I think that it is possible for a person to do that.

But out of the center of God's will you can run into all kinds of problems, all kinds of adversities. And before he had gone very long, very far down the road an angel of the LORD stood in the path with a drawn sword ready to take off his head. But fortunately his donkey saw the angel, though he didn't. And so the donkey turned off the path and Balaam took his stick and hit the donkey and got it back on the path.

And they were going through a vineyard and in those vineyards they have rock walls along the pathway to keep people from going over and picking grapes. And so he's going between these rock walls, past these vineyards, and the angel of the Lord stood in the path again. Balaam didn't see him but the donkey did and the donkey sort of tried to edge over against the wall and got Balaam's leg pinned up against the rock. And he beat that poor, little donkey again.

And so again he got him going down the road and the third time stood in the path, but this time there was nowhere for the donkey to go. So he just sat down. And Balaam began to beat him again.

And God opened the mouth of the donkey (Num 22:28),

Now to me it is an interesting thing, the great pride that some people have because God has spoken through them. God spoke through me. You know, like you're something super special because God spoke through you. It is true, God still speaks through donkeys today and that should deflate anybody who thinks they're something special and something really glorious. You know, people ought to bow to them because God speaks through them.

God opened the mouth of the donkey, and the donkey turned to Balaam and said, Hey man do you think it's right beating me these three times? (Num 22:28)

"Look, have I ever done anything to you like this before? Haven't I been a good little donkey?" And Balaam said, "You bet your life I'm doing right. If I had a club I'd kill you, you rotten beast". Boy, talk about being mad. That's really being mad when a donkey talks to you and you talk back to him instead of just being dumbfounded. You know, if a donkey talked to me I'd just, you know, uh. He was mad. He wished he could kill that donkey at this point.

It's amazing at how out of tune and out of sorts we get when we're out of God's will. You know, we're wanting to do our own thing and God puts a block in our way and boy, we become angry. We become upset because God is blocking this, which I've got in my mind to do. You get out of the will of God you can really get out of sorts in every area of your life; your whole life just gets out of sorts completely.

And so, at this point God opened the eyes of this prophet and he saw the angel of God standing there with a sword. And the angel spoke to Balaam and said, "You better be thankful for that dumb little donkey you got because had he not turned aside I would have taken off your head". Balaam said, "Oh, I'll go right home. I'll turn around and go right back home". And the angel said, "No, you've come this far. You know it's in your heart to go. You go ahead and go but you just make sure that you don't say any more than what God tells you to say". And so Balaam went on to the king.

And so the king brought Balak up into a high mountain where he might overlook all of Israel, camped down there in the valley. They came to Kirjathhuzoth, the city of the streets, literally. And so Balaam said to the king, "Build me seven altars here, and offer sacrifices unto God". So they built seven altars and he offered seven oxen and seven rams. And Balaam said to the king, "Now you stand here and I'm going to go up and maybe God'll speak to me and whatever God shows me I will tell you".

And so he went to a high place. (Through The Bible C-2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries)

IS SATAN GIVING YOU A HARD TIME in your life of faith—in the Christian race you are running? Expect it if you are a believing child of God! Satan hates your God. He hates Jesus Christ. He hates your faith. You should be aware of the devil's evil intentions. He wants you to lose the victor's crown in the race you have entered by faith through grace. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews gives us good New Testament counsel: Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:1-2) The Holy Spirit, in giving us in the Bible a wide variety of encouragement, uses many figures to portray the believing people of God. He lets us think of ourselves as farmers, plowing and planting and reaping. He lets us think of ourselves as carpenters, planning and constructing. Again, He lets us think of ourselves as soldiers, bearing the strong armor of God and going forth to stand against the enemy. But here, the Holy Spirit describes Christian believers as runners on the track, participants in the race of life. He provides both strong warning and loving encouragement: there is always the danger of losing the race, but there is the victor's reward awaiting those who run with patience and endurance.

There are important things each of us should know and understand about our struggles as the faithful people of God. First, it is a fact that the Christian race is a contest. But the race is in no sense a competition between believers or between churches! As we live the life of faith, we Christians are never to be in competition with other Christians. The Bible makes this very plain. Christian churches are never told to carry on their proclamation of the Savior in a spirit of competition with other churches.

Our contest is with Satan: All of us Christians have a common enemy, that old devil, Satan. As we stand together, pray together, worship together, we repudiate him and his deceptions. He is our common foe, and he uses a variety of manipulations to hinder us in our spiritual lives. When by faith we have entered this lifelong spiritual course, the Holy Spirit whispers, "Do you truly want to be among the victors in this discipline?" When we breathe our "Yes! Yes!" He whispers of ways that will aid us and carry us to certain victory. The Spirit tells us to throw off everything that would hinder us in the race. He tells us to be aware of the little sins and errors that could divert us from the will of God as we run. But here is the important thing: He tells us to keep our eyes on Jesus, because He alone is our pace setter and victorious example. In a very real sense, faith is fixing our eyes on Jesus, keeping Jesus in full view regardless of what others may be doing all around us. This is excellent counsel, because as human beings we know we are not sufficient in ourselves. It is in our nature to look out—to look beyond ourselves for help. This world is big and deadly, and we are too weak and not wise enough to deal with it! It is also a human trait to look beyond ourselves for assurance. We hope to find someone worthy of trust. We want someone who has made good, someone who has done what we would like to do. The Hebrews writer points us to the perfect One, our eternal High Priest, seated now at the right hand of God. He is Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith. He has endured the cross and is now the eternal Victor and our Advocate in heaven.

Differences of opinion: One of my not-too-secret enjoyments is having a little fun with the human translators of the Scriptures. These have been good men, I know. But as scholars and language experts, they sometimes seem confused. In the King James Version of this text, for example, Jesus is called the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Other translators have called Him the Pioneer. One translator simply says "the Starter and the Finisher of our faith." Scholars in another version call Jesus "the Leader and perfect Model of our faith." Still another translator suggests, "Jesus, the princely Leader and another describes Jesus as "the Forerunner and Finisher of our faith." Fortunately, we can put all of these suggestions together and come up with a clear, simple, forceful portrayal of Jesus. He is Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Author and the Pioneer of our faith. He is the One upon whom the Christian faith rests. He is the One who blazed the trail. He is the One who is leading us through life to a successful consummation. In these studies from Hebrews, we have referred often to faith. The faith we are considering is not that which you might regard as your own personal faith. Jesus is more than the Author of just your faith. He is the Author, the Pioneer, the Leader, the Perfecter of the faith subscribed to by our fathers through out the long centuries. The faith of our fathers rests on the biblical teachings and truths concerning God and the person of Jesus Christ. It is truth that God made the heavens and the earth, that God subsists in three persons, that God spoke to men through the prophets. It is truth that God sent His one and only Son into the world in order that whoever believes in Him should not perish. It is truth that to effect our salvation, Christ had to die and to rise again. It is truth that He is now at the right hand of the Father, that He is interceding for His believing people, that He is coming back to take His people to be with Him forever. It is truth that God has promised a new heaven and a new earth, that death will finally be put down, that the enemy of our souls will be destroyed. This, in brief outline, is the faith of our fathers. Christ Jesus is the Author and Finisher of that faith, regardless of our personal attitudes or whether or not we demonstrate perfect confidence. But Jesus helps us with that, too! It has been my experience that if we are fully acquainted with and deeply moved by the truths on which our faith rests, our personal faith will spring up joyously in confidence and delight.

We have the perfect Model: Twenty centuries ago the Hebrew Christians were told to fix their eyes on Jesus, who for the joy set before Him had endured the cross and scorned the shame. The physical pain and suffering Jesus endured are well known. He was beaten and scourged until His back was raw. Thorns from the mock crown pressed into His brow. Nails were driven into His hands and feet. But we should remember also the mental pain—the cruel psychological pain of shame and rejection. Jesus endured it all; He suffered it out. He scorned the shame by looking down on it as something not worthy to be mentioned when set over against the glory that was to be revealed. Jesus' death in our stead and His resurrection from the grave are fundamental Christian doctrines on which all evangelicals agree. I can preach these truths in any Bible conference anywhere and be assured that I will be invited back. But what could happen at a Bible conference would be for some fellow to whisper to another, "Tozer seems to be getting over on the legalistic side!" This could easily happen when I insist that our Lord Jesus Christ not only endured the cross and despised the shame, but He invites us to do the same thing! After Jesus had rebuked Peter for saying that suffering and death could never come to the Son of Man, Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Mat 16:24-25) When Jesus told His disciples that the hour had come for the Son of Man to be glorified, He added: I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me. (Joh 12:24-26 a) Paul, after saying that some believers had been circumcised to avoid the persecution of Christ's cross, continued: May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal 6:14) To those same readers he also said: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20) How can there be any question but that our Lord Jesus Christ identified us with Himself? Instead of putting the cross on that hill outside Jerusalem, Jesus puts the cross in our lives, where it belongs! We died with Christ: Evil-minded men hung Jesus on a wooden cross, just as Jesus had told His disciples they would. The salvation of a lost world was at stake. When He died, His body was taken down and laid in a tomb. When He arose from the dead and ascended to the

right hand of God the Father, that wooden cross had no further meaning in the mind of God. None at all! Some Christian churches are very enamored with splinters they say came from the wooden cross on which Jesus died. Apart from such dubious claims, that old wooden cross is no longer in existence. I hope we realize that when we sing "The Old Rugged Cross." But there remains a very real cross. It is the cross you take and the cross I take as we follow our Lord Jesus who willingly took His cross. That is why I say that our Lord identifies us with Himself. I find a deep, compelling message in the words of an old hymn no longer sung. And I am concerned for the spiritual desire now seemingly lost with the hymn: Oh, for that flame of living fire. Which shone so bright in saints of old, Which bade their souls to heaven aspire, Calm in distress, in danger bold. Where is that Spirit, Lord, which dwelt In Abram's breast and sealed him Thine, Which made Paul's heart with sorrow melt And glow with energy divine? That Spirit which from age to age Proclaimed Thy love and taught Thy ways, Brightened Isaiah's vivid page And breathed in David's hallowed lays. We have to ask, too, "Where is that Spirit, Lord?" Why must we cry in pathetic and plaintive manner, "Where is Thy Spirit, Lord?" I think it is because we differ from the saints of old in our relation to the cross—our attitude toward the cross. Half right, all wrong: In our modern gospel churches, Christians have decided where to put the cross. They have made the cross objective instead of subjective. They have made the cross external instead of internal. They have made it institutional instead of experiential. Now, the terrible thing is that they are so wrong because they are half right. They are right in making the cross objective. It was something that once stood on a hill with a man dying on it, the just for the unjust. They are right that it was an external cross—for on that cross God performed a judicial act that will last while the ages burn themselves out. So, they are half right. But here is where they are wrong: They fail to see that there is a very real cross for you and me. There is a cross for every one of us—a cross that is subjective, internal, experiential. Our cross is an experience within. It is a cross we voluntarily take, and it is hard, bitter, distasteful. But we take our cross for Christ's sake, and we are willing to suffer the consequences and despise the shame. This is where people accuse Tozer of legalism, because I charge much of evangelicalism with this modern attitude: "Let the cross kill Jesus! Let Jesus do all the dying! We will live on in our faith and be happy and have fun—and we will all get to heaven in the end!" But if we are serious about the Christian faith and the demands of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will acknowledge that the cross on the hill must become the cross in our hearts. When that cross on the hill has been transformed by the miraculous grace of the Holy Spirit into the cross in the heart, then we begin to know something of its true meaning and it will become to us the cross of power. The world is already dead: Let me remind you of something. In Paul's word to the Galatians already referred to, Paul considers the world to be already dead. He does not plead for it. He does not try to salvage anything out of it. Why was Paul willing to let the world go? I am sure I know the answer. Paul's love and interest and concern were for people. That is where ours should be, also. When John wrote that God so loved the world, he did not mean that God loved Hollywood or the ball park or the music hall. God did not send Jesus to give us a legitimate interest in the world's organized society. He did not send Jesus so that we could participate in the world's variety of fun and games. God's love and concern are for people. He loves human beings made in His image, though now fallen and lost. When I say that Paul followed Christ in reckoning the world dead, I only remind you that he was turning his back on this organized and selfish world. He was not turning his back on people and their needs and their sins. Paul cared and was concerned for every individual for whom Christ died. I should say something else here about this world and its selfish and often godless society. Why is there so much attraction to the magazines, the radio, the television, the sports, the concerts, the fun? We may be reluctant to admit it, but we have an enemy, and he has many helpers. All of these things that surely add up to fun and entertainment have an overall design of keeping people from taking God seriously. There is some great master plan that is surely succeeding in keeping men and women relatively happy in this world without ever a serious thought of God and salvation and eternal life! Millions of men and women seem to be very content with the arrangement as it is. They do not want to be reminded at all that they are going to die and that after death comes the judgment of a holy and righteous God. They would rather remain gullible and deceived than to learn the truth about this world and the next. God spare us from gullibility

When I was a boy on the farm, we "butchered" every year in the early fall. It was my job to coax the fattened hogs into the barn. I would throw them some corn, and they were pleased as they came grunting in with that corn still grinding in their mouths. But in minutes they were dead. My father would then bleed them and dress them out. That is how we got our supply of pork for the winter. The gullible pigs have never learned. Wherever they are, they are still being led to the slaughter generation after generation. All it takes is a supply of shelled corn! You may not like the illustration, but there are plenty of gullible people who have never recognized why they are being kept so busy and so well entertained with the things that are amusing and fun. Paul said that he had caught on—and he reckoned himself dead to this world and this world dead to him. I wonder how many of the saintly men and women who have lived for Christ throughout the centuries were accused of narrowness and legalism and of being spoilers. I think they knew and accepted the offense of the cross for what it is. I think they allowed the cross to kill their self-love, their self-confidence, their self-will, their self-pity, their self-righteousness. I think they were faithful in keeping Jesus Christ in full view, looking away from themselves and following Him all the way—even unto death. They took the promises of God at face value. Their eyes were on the Lord and the city whose builder and maker is God. They looked beyond the passing attractions of this world to see the lovely face of Jesus Christ shining in wonderful glory. A.W. Tozer: *Jesus, Author of Our Faith: AND OTHER ESSAYS ON FAITH; COMPILED AND EDITED BY GERALD B. SMITH; Aiden Wilson Tozer (April 21, 1897 - May 12, 1963)*

(AMP Bible; The Everyday Life Bible; Joyce Meyers; Scripture; Commentaries; Past Pastor Sermons; Dictionary; 2006; pg 246-248)
(Word 9 Bible Software; 2010; Concordance, Dictionary, Scripture, Sermons of Saints past, Devos; Sparkling Gems From The Greek)

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