



溪邊的樹

January-February, 2015

中華教會

Orlando Chinese Church

Web Site 網址 : <http://www.OrlandoChineseChurch.org>

祭壇和帳棚的生活

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摘錄自十二藍

讀經：創世記十二章七至八節，十三章三至四節，十八節。

基督徒的生活，是一種祭壇和帳棚的生活。祭壇是向著神的，帳棚是向著世界的。神對於祂兒女們的要求，就是要他們在神的面前有祭壇，在地上有帳棚。有祭壇，就必定寄居在帳棚裡；有帳棚，就必定還要回到祭壇去。絕沒有有祭壇而無帳棚，也絕沒有有帳棚而不回到祭壇去。祭壇和帳棚是連在一起的，是人沒有方法分開的。

祭壇的生活

創世記十二章七節：『耶和華向亞伯蘭顯現，說，我要把這地賜給你的後裔；亞伯蘭就在那裡為向他顯現的耶和華築了一座壇。』這給我們看見，祭壇是根據於神的顯現，沒有神的顯現，就沒有祭壇。誰也不能將他自己奉獻給神，而他是沒有遇見神的；誰也不能把一切都擺在祭壇上，而是沒有神的顯現的。奉獻不是由於人的勸勉，不是由於人的催促，乃是由於神的顯現。如果神沒有向人顯現，那就沒有一個人是能自動把他所有的都擺在祭壇上的，沒有一個人是能自動把自己奉獻給神的。人即使盼望將他自己奉獻給神，但是事實上人憑著自己沒有一點東西可以奉獻給神，就像有的人所說的：『我要將我的心奉獻給主，我的心卻不去。』人這一邊不能到主那一邊去。如果有一天，我們遇見主，那一個遇見，就自然而然產生奉獻。只要你遇見神一下，只要你看見神一下，你就不是你自己的。神是遇見不得的！人一遇見神，人就沒有辦法再為自己活著。

我們要知道，奉獻的能力是從神的顯現來的，是從神的啓示來的。口裡講奉獻的人，不一定是奉獻的人；教訓人奉獻的人，不一定是奉獻的人；明白奉獻道理的人，也不一定是奉獻的人。只有看見神的人，他纔真是奉獻的人。亞伯拉罕遇見了神，就在那裡為耶和華築了一座壇。保羅在路上遇見了主耶穌，就說，『主阿，我當作甚麼？』（徒二二10）。所以，生命的轉機不是因為我們自己如何定規；生命的轉機不是因為我們要為神作這個，要為神作那個；生命的轉機是因為我們看見了神。遇見神的結局，就是叫你完全掉一個頭，你不能再繼續走你從前的路。神給我看見了祂自己，我就得著了能力，捨去我自己；神給我看見了祂自己，我就沒有辦法，不得不棄絕自己。神的顯現叫你活不了，神的顯現叫你不能為自己活。神的顯現裡面有無窮無盡的能力，那一個顯現把你一生的道路都改變了。基督徒為神活著的能力是在乎看見了神！哦，不是我要立志事奉神就能事奉神，不是我要築祭壇就能築祭壇，乃是要有神的顯現。

感謝神，神如果顯現，神可以用不著說話；但是，感謝神，神顯現的時候，許多時候也說話。神對亞伯拉罕說，『我要把這地賜給你的後裔。』神的顯現給我們一個新的產業。神的顯現立刻給我們看見，今天聖靈賜下來在我們裡面作質的，將來就是我們的產業；今天在聖靈裡所得著的一部分，將來要完全得著。當神的計畫成功的時候，我們要得著完全的產業。

神向亞伯拉罕顯現，亞伯拉罕就築了一座壇。這裡的壇不是獻贖罪祭的壇，這裡的壇乃是獻燔祭的壇。贖罪祭是為著我自己贖罪，燔祭是將我自己奉獻給神。這裡的祭壇不是指著主耶穌怎樣替我們死說的，乃是指著我們怎樣將自己奉獻給神說的。這裡的祭壇，就是羅馬十二章那一類的祭壇——『我以神的慈悲勸你們，將身體獻上，當作活祭，…乃是理所當然的。』（1）。神的慈悲預備了主耶穌替我們死，神的慈悲預備了十字架將我們和基督一同釘死，神的慈悲預備了十字架對付了魔鬼，神的慈悲預備了生命活在我們裡面，神的慈悲也要將我們帶到榮耀裡去。是因為神諸般的慈悲，所以，你要將你自己當作活祭獻給神。

獻燔祭有一件事是很有意思的，就是你如果是有力量的人，你可以獻一隻牛作祭；你如果沒有力量獻牛，就可以獻上一隻羊；你如果沒有力量獻羊，就可以獻上斑鳩或是雛鴿（利一3，10，14）。但是，不論你獻牛、獻羊，或者獻斑鳩、雛鴿，總要把全隻獻上。你不能獻上半隻牛或者半隻羊。神所要的都是整個的，神不要一半的奉獻，神不要不完全的奉獻。

燔祭放在壇上作甚麼用呢？是要把牠完全燒了。人以為奉獻給神就是為神作這個作那個，但是神的要求乃是焚燒。神不是要一隻牛去為祂耕地，神乃是要這隻牛放在壇上燒了。神不是要我們的工作，神乃是要我們這個人，要我們把整個人都獻上，為著祂燒了。祭壇的意思不是作工，乃是為神活著；祭壇的意思不是忙碌，乃是為神活著。所有的活動不能代替祭壇，所有的工作不能代替祭壇。我完全為神活著，這纔是祭壇的生活。新約裡的祭，就是羅馬十二章所說的將身體獻上當作活祭，不是像舊約裡那樣燒一次就完了。我們是天天在祭壇上燒，而又是活的。是一直活的，又是一直燒的，這是新約裡的祭。

神向亞伯拉罕顯現一下，亞伯拉罕就有奉獻。你看見了神，你也就要完全奉獻。人不可能看見了神，還是冷冷的坐在那裡。遇見了神，接下去就是祭壇；知道了神的恩典，接下去就是奉獻；看見了神的慈悲，你就成了活祭；蒙了主的光照，你就要說，『主阿，我當作甚麼？』亞伯拉罕沒有聽過這些道理，亞伯拉罕沒有受過人的鼓勵，但是亞伯拉罕看見了神，亞伯拉罕就立刻為著神築一座壇。哦，弟兄姊妹，奉獻是自然而然的事。一個遇見神向他顯現的人，絕不會沒有意思為著神而活。神一向他顯現，他就完全為著神。亞伯拉罕是如此，教會二千年來，每一個遇見神的人也是如此。

帳棚的生活

祭壇的結局，是引到帳棚去。所以，創世記十二章八節就這樣說，『從那裡他又遷到伯特利東邊的山，支搭帳棚。』從今以後，亞伯拉罕住在神的家（伯特利）；從今以後，他起首支搭帳棚。並不是他出來的時候沒有帳棚，可是神不題起帳棚；等到他有了祭壇之後，神的話纔給我們看見帳棚。

甚麼叫作帳棚？帳棚的意思是流動的，是不扎根的。神要藉著祭壇來對付你自己，神要藉著帳棚來對付屬乎你的東西。亞伯拉罕有祭壇，他把祂的一切都給了神，那麼是不是從今以後亞伯拉罕連身上的衣服都沒有了？不，亞伯拉罕還有牛，還有羊，還有許多東西。但是，亞伯拉罕是住在帳棚裡的人。換句話說，祭壇所餘剩的東西，只能保留在帳棚裡。這是一個原則，就是你所有的東西都得放在祭壇上，但是還有餘剩的東西，是留下給你用的，那一個東西並不是你所有的，乃是在帳棚裡的。我們要記得，若沒有經過祭壇，就連帳棚裡都不能擺進去，但是經過祭壇的不一定都燒光。許多東西一擺在祭壇上就被火燒了，就沒有了，許多東西一奉獻給神，神就拿去，神就不留給你。但是有的東西擺在祭壇上，神還留給你用。這些從祭壇上留下來給你的東西，你只能保守在帳棚裡。

亞伯拉罕的生活一直是祭壇的生活；直到有一天，他連獨生的兒子都擺在祭壇上了，神怎麼作？神沒有把以撒收去。是的，你擺在祭壇上的，的的確確神收去；神不能讓你為自己活著，神不能讓你憑著自己的喜好活著，神不能讓你憑著自己的能力活著。祭壇是把你所有的收光。但是，擺在祭壇上的東西，神不一定都把牠燒了。有許多東西，像以撒那樣，雖然你擺在祭壇上，但是神再把那一個給你。不過，在你手裡的這些東西，你不能再以為是你的；這些東西，你只能放在帳棚裡。

有人要問說，『如果我將我一切所有的都給神，是不是說我應當把所有的東西都賣掉？是不是說我所有的錢都得拿出來散光了？如果我奉獻給神，那麼我家裡只能有多少把椅子，有多少張桌子？我只能留下幾套衣裳？』有的人的確為著這些問題在那裡作難。我們要記得，我們有兩種生活，一種是在神面前的生活，一種是在世界裡的生活。在神的面前，我們所有的的確都在祭壇上；但是，在世界裡活著，許多物質的東西還是需要的。我們活在這裡，還得有衣、食、住。我應該把所有的都奉獻給神，完全為著神活著，但是，如果神說這一個可以留著的話，好，我就留著。我們對於這些物質的東西，乃是用帳棚的原則來對付。這些東西是為了我的需要而留下的；我如果不需要它，我就可以捨棄它。我可以用這些東西，但不能被這些東西摸著。這些東西可以在我手裡，也可以不在我手裡；可以加添，也可以減少。這就是帳棚的生活。

所以我們要學習一件事：沒有經過祭壇的東西，是我們所不能用的；放在祭壇上的東西，不是我們自己可以收回的；神在祭壇上所留下的東西，是要用帳棚的原則來守住的。

第二個祭壇

創世記十二章八節說，『從那裡他又遷到伯特利東邊的山，支搭帳棚；西邊是伯特利，東邊是艾；他在那裡又為耶和華築了一座壇。』這是亞伯拉罕第二個祭壇。祭壇引到帳棚，帳棚又領你回到祭壇來。有了祭壇，就所有的東西都不是你的；經過祭壇而留下來的東西，是放在帳棚裡的。沒有甚麼東西是抓住你的，你的良心在神面前是平安的，你能坦然無懼的對神說，『我沒有一樣是不給你的。』這樣，帳棚就必定會領你回到祭壇去。如果你的東西長了根，你搬也搬不動，放也放不下，你被牠抓牢了，你就不能有第二個祭壇。

當你在祭壇上奉獻的時候，你把一切都給了神。神是要把有的東西留下給你用，但是你自己不能揀選那個是放在帳棚裡的，那個是放到祭壇上之後還要拿回來的。你的一切都得放在祭壇上。神所留給你的，你就放到帳棚裡去。每一件放在帳棚裡的東西，必須先問過神，神說可以留，纔可以留。沒有一件東西是你自己可以定規留下的。所有的東西，都要先經過祭壇，先問過神，然後纔可以放在帳棚裡。放在帳棚裡的東西隨時可以回到祭壇去；甚麼時候神說這個東西你不必留下，你立刻可以把它拿去。如果你把那個東西抓在手裡說，『這是我的，』你就缺少了一個祭壇的心，缺少了一個奉獻的心。這樣，你就不能回到第二個祭壇去，你就不能說，『神，我是為你活著的。』

神要我們把一切都放在祭壇上，然後把祂所留給我們的都擺在帳棚裡。擺在帳棚裡之後，纔有第二個祭壇。最可貴的就是第二個祭壇。我們何等容易因為受了一次的鼓勵，發了一次的熱心，所以奉獻了，可是過了三年五年，我們在世界上收集了許多東西，我們就不能回到祭壇去了。如果我們的生活一直是帳棚的生活，如果我們能設有第二個祭壇，這是何等的寶貴！哦！東西不是問題，問題是你的那個奉獻到底怎樣。

祭壇和帳棚的恢復

亞伯拉罕也有失敗，他曾離開了祭壇，離開了帳棚，下到埃及去。可是，後來他恢復了。他是怎樣恢復的？創世記十三章三至四節：『他從南地漸漸往伯特利去，到了伯特利和艾的中間，就是從前支搭帳棚的地方，也是他起先築壇的地方；他又在那裡求告耶和華的名。』回到祭壇和帳棚，這就叫作恢復。今天有沒有誰是失敗了？有沒有誰是跌倒了？有沒有誰是變節了？有沒有誰已經下到埃及，有了自己的要求，有了自己的盼望，有了自己的羨慕，有了自己的追求？如果有誰要走恢復的路，就要回到祭壇和帳棚來。神的話給我們看見，亞伯拉罕的恢復，就是再回到帳棚的地位來，也就是再回到祭壇的地位來。恢復就是回到帳棚來，恢復就是回到祭壇來。

亞伯拉罕回來了，後來怎樣？創世記十三章十八節：『亞伯蘭就搬了帳棚，來到希伯崙慢利的橡樹那裡居住，在那裡為耶和華築了一座壇。』希伯崙是與神交通的地方；永遠的交通，繼續的交通，是在那裡。亞伯拉罕到希伯崙來居住，在希伯崙再築一座祭壇為著神。我們要記得，如果要與神交通，就永遠不能脫離祭壇。

求神賜恩給我們，叫我們在祂面前看見奉獻的緊要，叫我們活出祭壇和帳棚的生活。

THE LIFE OF THE ALTAR AND THE TENT

Watchman Nee

Excerpted from Twelve Baskets

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12.4, 8; 13.3, 4, 18

The life of a Christian is the life of the altar and the tent. God requires of His children that in His presence they have an altar and that on the earth they have a tent. Altar calls for a tent, and a tent in turn demands an altar. It is impossible to have an altar without a tent, and likewise impossible to have a tent without a return to the altar. The altar and the tent are interrelated; the two cannot be divorced.

The Life of the Altar

Genesis 12:7 reads: "The Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he built an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him." Here we see that the altar is based on divine revelation. Where there is no revelation there is no altar. Unless God has appeared to a man that man cannot offer his all to God. It requires revelation to produce consecration. No man on his own initiative can present himself to God. Man cannot come over to God's side. But the day a man is met by God, that day consecration takes place in his life. If you get a sight of God you are no longer your own.

We need to realize that the power to offer oneself to God comes through revelation. Not all who preach consecration are consecrated people. Not all who understand the doctrine of consecration know the reality of consecration. Only those who have seen God are consecrated persons. God appeared to Abraham, and the immediate issue was that Abraham built an altar to God. The Lord Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and Paul immediately asked: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) A turning point in our spiritual history does not come through our decision to do something for God; it comes when we "see" Him. When we meet God a radical change takes place in the life. We can no longer do what we did in the past when I meet Him Himself, and then I have the power to deny myself. The matter of denying self ceases to be optional when we have met God. "No man can see God and live." If God appears to any man, the whole course of his life is altered. Oh! It is not my decision to serve the Lord that enables me to serve Him. It is not my will to build an altar that produces an altar. It is when God comes out to a man that an altar is built. When God appeared to Abraham He said to him "Unto thy seed will I

give this land" (Genesis 12:7). Divine revelation brings us into a new inheritance. It brings the realization that the Holy Spirit has been given to us now as an earnest of the inheritance which later on we shall possess in fullness.

God appeared to Abraham, and Abraham built an altar. This altar was not for sin offering, but for burnt offering. It was not a matter of settling the sin question, but of offering the life to God. It was the kind of altar spoken of in Romans 12.1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." It was the mercy of God that caused the Lord Jesus to die for us; it was the mercy of God that provided the Cross on which we died with Him and on which the devil was dealt with; it is by the mercy of God that we have His life within; and it is the mercy of God that will bring us through to glory.. It is on the ground of His mercies that God beseeches us to offer ourselves a living sacrifice to Him.

Note in connection with the burnt offering that while a person of ample resource might offer a bullock, one with less resource might offer a sheep, and one whose means was still more limited might offer a dove (Leviticus 1.3, 10, 14). But whatever the offering, the offerer had to offer up the whole. God cannot accept less than an utter consecration.

And for what purpose is the burnt offering placed on the altar? To be wholly burnt. Many of us think we offer ourselves to God to do this or that for Him, whereas what He is wanting of us is not our work, but ourselves. What the altar signifies is not doing for God, but being for God. Unlike the sacrifice of the Old Testament, Which in one act was finally burnt, the sacrifice of the New Testament is "a living sacrifice." The meaning of the altar is the offering up of the life to God to be ever consumed, yet every living; to be ever living, yet ever consumed. God wants these lives of ours consecrated to Him that throughout their entire course they may be ceaselessly being consumed for Him.

God appeared to Abraham, and Abraham offered himself to God. Abraham had not heard a lot of doctrine about consecration, nor had he been urged by others to consecrate himself; but Abraham had seen God, and when that happened he immediately built an altar to God. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, consecration is a spontaneous thing! Anyone to whom God has manifested Himself cannot do other than live for Him. So it was with Abraham, and so it has been with everyone who has met God throughout the two thousand years of church history.

The Life of the Tent

The altar has its issue in the tent. Genesis 12:8 says: "And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent." From now on Abraham lives in a tent. Actually he lived in a tent before, but not until he had built the altar does the Word of God bring the tent into view.

What is a tent? A tent is not a settled abode, it is movable. Through the altar God deals with ourselves; through the tent God deals with our possessions. At the altar Abraham had offered up his all to God. Was he thereafter stripped of everything? No! Abraham still possessed cattle and sheep and many other things; but he had become a tent-dweller. In other words, what was not consumed on the altar became attached to the tent. When we place our all on the altar, God claims many of our possessions, but what He leaves for our use belongs to the tent.

Abraham's life was a life of the altar. A day came when even his only begotten son was offered upon it. But what did God do with Isaac? He restored him to Abraham. What you place on the altar God accepts. He cannot allow you to live for your own pleasure. The altar claims your all, and while God restores certain things from the altar, they can no longer be regarded as your own; they are related to the tent.

Some people ask: If I give my all to God, do I not have to sell all my possessions and dispose of all my money? If I consecrate myself to God, how much furniture may I have in my home and how many garments in my wardrobe? Some people are truly perplexed over such questions.

But we need to remember that we have a life to live before God, and we have also a life to live in the world. In our life before God all must truly be on the altar, but for our life in the world we, still have need of many material things. We need clothing, and food and a dwelling-place. We ought to consecrate our all to God and live for Him alone; but if He says I may retain a certain thing, then I retain it. Nevertheless, we must apply the principle of the tent to such things as He permits us to retain, for they are given back to us to meet our need in the world. We may use them, but we must not be governed by them. We can have them, or we can let them go; they can be given, and they can be taken away. This is the principle of tent-life. Let us learn this lesson, that we dare not use anything that has not been placed on the altar, neither may we take anything back from the altar, and what God gives back must be held on the principle of the tent.

The Second Altar

Genesis 12:8 says: "And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar unto the Lord." This is Abraham's second altar. The altar had led to the tent, and now the tent leads again to the altar. If our possessions are not held loosely on the principle of the tent, they will cause us to take root, and there will never be a second altar. When we have consecrated our all to God, He lets us use certain things in the tent; but we have no choice as to what we take there. Everything must pass the altar that goes into the tent, and what has been placed in the tent may have to go to the altar again. At any time God may say: "I want this thing." If we cling to it and say, "This is mine," then in heart we have forsaken the altar and cannot say to God that our life is being lived for Him. We may have built our first altar, but in process of time we may have accumulated many things that cause us to depart from the life of the tent. If so, there can be no further altar. But how precious it is if we can always be tent-dwellers and can build a second altar!

The Recovery of the Altar and the Tent

Abraham had his failures. In his history there was a forsaking of the altar and the tent, and a sojourn in Egypt. But there was recovery. How did that recovery come about? Genesis 13:3-4 tells us: "He went on his journeys from the South even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai; unto the place of the altar which he had made there-at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord." Recovery is a matter of returning to the altar and the tent.

Have any of you failed? Have any of you gone down into Egypt, so that now you have your own interests and your own aspirations? If you are seeking the way of recovery, you will find it at the altar and in the tent. Abraham's recovery involved his return "unto the place where his tent had been . . . unto the place of the altar which he had made." But what happened to Abraham after his recovery?

Genesis 13:18 records: "Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." Hebron means "fellowship." After his recovery Abraham entered into the place of continuous fellowship with God. And Abraham built another altar. If we are in fellowship with God we will never forsake the altar. May He be gracious to us and cause us to see the importance of consecration so that we may live a life of the altar and the tent!