



# 溪邊的樹

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Thanks be to God with praises to His Name! He has led us unto to the 30th year of ministry in this community. We worship Him, because of His abundant grace and continuing provision. The Lord has raised up vessels for His purpose, teaching us that we truly can do nothing apart from Him. For this issue, we select two short articles from Brother Tozer- The prophet of the 20th century to encourage each other. All glory be unto our God and Lord!

感謝神、頌讚祂的名！祂保守帶領我們進入了第三十年的服事。我們獻上敬拜，一同數算主的豐富恩典，因祂不斷地供應我們的一切需要，又興起合祂心意的器皿供祂使用；使我們越知道離了祂、我們什麼也不能作。謹就被譽為“二十世紀的先知”的陶恕博士的著作中選載兩篇短文、以為策勵。願一切榮耀歸給神！

## The Vital Place of the Church

by A.W. Tozer

The highest expression of the will of God in this age is the church which He purchased with His own blood. To be scripturally valid any religious activity must be part of the church. Let it be clearly stated that there can be no service acceptable to God in this age that does not center in and spring out of the church. Bible schools, tract societies, Christian business men's committees, seminaries, and the many independent groups working at one or another phase of religion need to check themselves reverently and courageously, for they have no true spiritual significance outside of or apart from the church.

According to the Scriptures the church is the habitation of God through the Spirit, and as such is the most important organism beneath the sun. She is not one more good institution along with the home, the state, and the school; she is the most vital of all institutions-the only one that can claim a heavenly origin.

The cynic may inquire which church we mean, and may remind us that the Christian church is so divided that it is impossible to tell which is the true one, even if such a one exists. But we are not too much troubled by the suppressed smile of the doubter. Being inside the church we are probably as well aware of her faults as any person on the outside could possibly be. And we believe in her nevertheless wherever she manifests herself in a world of darkness and unbelief.

The church is found wherever the Holy Spirit has drawn together a few persons who trust Christ for their salvation, worship God in spirit and have no dealings with the world and the flesh. The members may by necessity be scattered over the surface of the earth and separated by distance and circumstances, but in every true member of the church is the homing instinct and the longing of the sheep for the fold and the shepherd. Give a few real Christians half a chance and they will get together and organize and plan regular meetings for prayer and worship. In these meetings they will hear the Scriptures expounded, break bread together in one form or another according to their light, and try as far as possible to spread the saving gospel to the lost world.

Such groups are cells in the Body of Christ, and each one is a true church, a real part of the greater church. It is in and through these cells that the Spirit does His work on earth. Whoever scorns the local church scorns the Body of Christ.

The church is still to be reckoned with. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." (Matt 16:18)

## **God Must Be Loved for Himself**

God being who He is must always be sought for Himself, never as a means toward something else.

Whoever seeks other objects and not God is on his own; he may obtain those objects if he is able, but he will never have God. God is never found accidentally. "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

Whoever seeks God as a means toward desired ends will not find God. The mighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, will not be one of many treasures, not even the chief of all treasures. He will be all in all or He will be nothing. God will not be used. His mercy and grace are infinite and His patient understanding is beyond measure, but He will not aid men in their selfish striving after personal gain. He will not help men to attain ends which, when attained, usurp the place He by every right should hold in their interest and affection.

Yet popular Christianity has as one of its most effective talking points the idea that God exists to help people to get ahead in this world. The God of the poor has become the God of an affluent society. Christ no longer refuses to be a judge or a divider between money-hungry brothers. He can now be persuaded to assist the brother who has accepted Him to get the better of the brother who has not.

An example of using God for selfish purposes is the well-known comedian who, after repeated failures, promised someone he called God that if He would help him to make good in the entertainment world he would repay Him by giving generously to the care of sick children. Shortly afterward he hit the big time in the night clubs and on television. He has kept his word and is raising large sums of money to build children's hospitals. These contributions to charity, he feels, are a small price to pay for a success in one of the sleaziest fields of human endeavor.

One might excuse the act of this entertainer as something to be expected of a twentieth-century pagan; but that multitudes of evangelicals in North America should actually believe that God had anything to do with the whole business is not so easily overlooked. This low and false view of Deity is one major reason for the immense popularity God enjoys these days among well-fed Westerners.

The teaching of the Bible is that God is Himself the end for which man was created. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" cried the psalmist, "and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. 73: 25). The first and greatest commandment is to love God with every power of our entire being. Where love like that exists there can be no place for a second object. If we love God as much as we should, surely we cannot dream of a loved object beyond Him, which He might help us to obtain.

Bernard of Clair Vaux begins his radiant little treatise on the love of God with a question and an answer. The question, why should we love God? The answer, Because He is God. He develops the idea further, but for the enlightened heart little more need be said. We should love God because He is God. Beyond this the angels cannot think.

Being who He is, God is to be loved for His own sake. He is the reason for our loving Him, just as He is the reason for His loving us and for every other act He has performed, is performing and will perform world without end. God's primary reason for everything is His own good pleasure. The search for secondary reasons is gratuitous and mostly futile. It affords occupation for theologians and adds pages to books on doctrine, but that it ever turns up any true explanations is doubtful.

But it is the nature of God to share. His mighty acts of creation and redemption were done for His good pleasure, but His pleasure extends to all created things. One has but to look at a healthy child at play or listen to the song of a bird at sundown and he will know that God meant His universe to be a joyful one.

Those who have been spiritually enabled to love God for Himself will find a thousand fountains springing up from the rainbow-circled throne and bringing countless treasures which are to be received with reverent thanksgiving as being the overflow of God's love for His children. Each gift is a bonus of grace which, because it was not sought for itself, may be enjoyed without injury to the soul. These include the simple blessings of life, such as health, a home, family, congenial friends, food, shelter ' the pure joys of nature or the more artificial pleasures of music and art.

The effort to find these treasures by direct search apart from God has been the major activity of mankind through the centuries; and this has been man's burden and man's woe. The effort to gain them as the ulterior motive back of accepting Christ may be something new under the sun; but new or old it is an evil that can only bring judgment at last.

It's God's will that we should love Him for Himself alone with no hidden reasons, trusting Him to be to us all our natures require. Our Lord said all this much better: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

## 教會的重要

在這世代裡，教會是神的旨意最高的啟示、是主用自己的血買來的。按聖經所說，任何有效的宗教活動，都必須是依屬教會的。讓我再說得清楚一點：任何事奉，若要得神悅納，就必須以教會為中心，以她為出發點。管它是聖經班、派發福音單張小組、商界基督徒委員會、神學院，或任何從事各種宗教活動的獨立團體，都該檢討一下，因為脫離教會，或在教會以外舉辦的任何宗教活動，都不會有真正的屬靈意義。

根據聖經所載，教會是神藉聖靈居住的地方，因此教會非常重要。教會絕非普通社團。就如家庭、國家或學校之類；教會是各式各樣組織中首要的，因為只有教會才源於天上。

專愛問難的人，也許會問：上文所指的，究竟是哪一間教會？他也許還會提醒我們，教會四分五裂，就算其中有真正的教會存在，也沒有人能指出來。對這些冷嘲熱諷，我們大可不必理會。我們身在教會內，自然比教會外的人更明瞭她的缺點；但無論在哪裡，只要教會在這黑暗、不信的世代中，發揮她的功效，我們就始終深信她的重要。

只要是信主得救的人，在聖靈裡敬拜神，又願意離棄世界和屬肉體的事情的，即使為數不多，但一經聖靈招聚在一起，就成為教會。教會內的信徒，可能散居世界各地，面對不同的環境和生活，但只要是教會真正的一分子，他裡面自然會有一種渴想歸家的本能，就如羊對羊圈和牧羊人所生出的渴慕一樣。一有機會，真正的基督徒就會聚在一起，安排聚會，一起禱告，一起敬拜，一起研讀聖經，以他們所領受的方式擘餅記念主，並且竭力將福音傳給沉淪的世人。

這些基督徒群體，正是基督身體的細胞；每一群都是真正的教會，也是普世教會的一部分。聖靈就住在這些細胞組織裡，又藉著他們在地上做祂的工。誰人輕視這些地方教會，就是輕視基督的身體。

教會始終是不容忽視的。“陰間的權柄，不能勝過他。”（太十六 18）

## 神被愛慕必須只因祂是神

渴慕神必須因為祂是神的緣故。絕對不能用“愛神”來作為追求別的事物的方法和手段。人若尋求其他的東西，而不是神自己；祂有本事的話、祂可能獲得那些事物，但祂永遠不會得著神。神從來不會被人偶然發現的。“你們尋求我，若專心尋求我，就必尋見。”（耶二十九 13）

凡以尋求神作為達到願望的方法、那人絕不會找到神。全能的神，天地的創造者，不會是諸多珍寶之一，甚至不是所有珍寶的最上品。祂是包涵萬有的，要不祂就是一無所有。神不會被人利用。不錯，祂的憐憫和恩典是無限的，祂耐心的諒解是難以測量的，但祂不會幫助人追求個人的私利。祂不會幫助人達到目的、而結果會篡奪祂為了維持他們的利益和感情理應有的地位。

然而，流行的基督教最熱門的說法是、神的存在就是為了幫助人們在世上獲得成功。窮人的神已經變成一個富裕社會的神。基督不再拒絕在貪財的兄弟之間作一名審判官、或是引起分歧的人。現在，祂可以被說服來幫助相信祂的弟兄、使祂的境況好過不信的人。

我們現成有個為了自私而利用神的例子。有一位著名的喜劇演員，在他一再失敗後，向神許諾說，如果神幫助他在娛樂世界成功的話，他會慷慨地奉獻給照顧生病孩子的事工作為報答。不久，他趕上了夜總會和電視的黃金時期。他守信地募得一大筆資金來興建兒童醫院。他認為，這些捐給慈善機構的奉獻，是對人類在最不起眼處之努力的成就、所付很小的代價。

人可能會原諒這個藝人的行為，看作是 20 世紀的異教之風。但在北美福音派的眾人其實應該相信，神與這整個事情有什麼相干，是不容被輕忽的。這種對神性那麼庸俗和錯謬的看法，是現今神在被養得肥胖的西方人中、享有極大的名氣的主要原因。

聖經的教導是：神自己是人被造的目的。“除你以外、在天上我有誰呢。除你以外、在地上我也沒有所愛慕的。”（詩七十三25）。第一、且是最大的誡命是、盡我們全人所能的愛神：在這樣的愛的前提下、是容不下第二個對象的。如果照我們所應該的來愛神，我們當然不能夢想在祂以外還有一個喜愛的對象；或許祂能幫助我們得到。

克萊爾沃的伯納德在論及“神的愛”的題目上、是以一問一答開始他那光芒四射的小論文的。問題：我們為什麼要愛神？答案：因為他是神。雖然他進一步多抒發了些他的想法，但對被啟發的心就無需再說什麼了。我們應該愛神，因為他是神。除此之外，天使也想不出什麼了。

只因祂是神的身份，神自己就值得被人愛戴。“祂”就是我們愛祂的原因，正如“祂”也是祂愛我們、和祂所有的作為一己完成的、正在執行、和繼續作不停的原因。神的這一切主要是出於祂自己那美好的旨意。要想找第二個原因，是徒勞無功的。它也許可以提供神學者一些工作，在他們的教義書籍上添加幾頁，但是否真能起任何解釋作用是值得懷疑的。

但神的本性願意分享。祂創造的奇妙大工及救贖的大能、是祂美好的旨意的完成；而祂的美意更廣佈到所有的被造。只要看看正在玩耍的健康孩子、或聽聽日落時的鳥鳴，就會知道，神心意中的宇宙應該是一個歡樂的宇宙。

那些能在靈裏因神自己而愛祂的人、會發現成千的泉源從彩虹圍繞的寶座湧上來，並帶來無數珍寶，要賞賜給那些因著神滿溢的愛而以敬虔、感恩的心領收的祂的兒女們。每一件禮物都是恩典的獎金，因為它們不是被刻意尋求的，所以能無傷靈魂地被人享有。這些禮物包括生活中一些簡單的祝福，如健康，住家，家庭，相投的朋友，食品，房屋等自然的純樂趣，或是音樂和藝術等較人文的情趣。

離開神想自己尋索要找到這些珍品的努力，一直是數世紀以來人類的主要活動，並成為人的負擔和人的苦惱；而接受基督的背後卻隱藏著努力爭取這些珍品的動機、可能是日光下的新鮮事。或新或舊，它們都是邪惡的、最後只能帶來神的審判。

神的旨意是要我們別無用心地、單單只因為祂自己而愛祂，相信祂是我們所有的本性需求。這方面我們的主說得最好：“你們要先求他的國和他的義，這些東西都要加給你們了。”（太六33）。