

# Funeral Service for a.w. Tozer

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having fellowship with God and the consequences of seeking satisfaction in the world.*

**Duration:** 54:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 14:1-9, John 14:15, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:20

**Topics:** "Funeral Service"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of remembering our Creator in our youth and not being deceived by the false belief that worldly possessions can bring true satisfaction. He highlights the futility of seeking power, wealth, and pleasure as means of fulfillment, as they ultimately lead to emptiness. The preacher also discusses the five-fold attachment that Christians should have to Christ intellectually, volitionally, exclusively, inclusively, and irrevocably. He concludes by urging the audience to live a life joined to Christ, crucified to self, and filled with His life.

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## Transcript

As Dr. Bailey, the president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, must be of the General Council, which is now in session at Phoenix, Arizona, for me to take his place and to also represent the Board of Managers at New York. The family has expressed, one, his simplicity, and second, the worship of Jesus Christ. The scriptures will be read by Reverend H.P. Williams, past Alliance Church.

Dr. Harold Mason will lead us in prayer. Dr. MacAfee, who was identified with Dr. Tozer here for some 16 years, will read the obituary. President of Trinity College will speak in behalf of the ministers of the Chicago area.

Ms. Anderson will minister in music and the meditation by Reverend Paris Reedhead, pastor of the New York Gospel Tabernacle and very close of Dr. Tozer. One could not be around Dr. Tozer very long without realizing that he was an ardent lover of the old hymns of the church. Two of his favorites we'll be using this afternoon.

Will you please turn with me to hymn 595. Hymn 595. For our comfort and edification the same Psalm 90.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world. Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Thou

turnest and returnest ye children of men.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carryest them in thy blood. They are as asleep in the morning, they are like grass which groweth up.

In the morning it grows up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth. For we are consumed by thy wrath, are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our sacred sins countenance.

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath. We spend our years as it were. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by means of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow.

For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Learn, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days that afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

Let thy work appear before us, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon thee, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us. Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

May the Lord bring his own blessing and comfort and encouragement to our hearts through the reading of the 90th Psalm. Father, we bow before thee, who in infinite love and care, right here, thou art not far off, Lord, since thy presence, thy blessed, holy, our Father, the valley of the shadow of death. We stand just now at the gate of heaven, and the glow and glory of it reaches us here.

We thank thee for our beloved, how indebted we are to him, because he gave thee his life that might be given back to us in service, in blessing. Thank thee, Lord. We thank thee for these who force of this blow most immediately.

Blessed art thou, Lord. Make thy face to shine upon us, the dear children, each of them, their families. Lord, how near thou art and how much we need thee in a time like this.

Help us to go out from this place rededicated, reconsecrated to thy holy purposes. The gate of death is not inviting but bypassing through. Call attention to the fact that it is better on thee, and that the transient life that we now live, with its cares, its needs, its separations, is a path, a path which shines more and more brightly as we make our way.

Oh, hear and help and bless and comfort and sustain. In the work of thy servant, doctor, establish thou it and grant, dear Lord, his life, his words, his great spoken, and his wonderful writings. We use these terms, dear Lord, feel thou wouldst be pleased that we do.

We use them, flections of our own weakness and inadequacy and limitations, and in recognition of what to do with a consecrated, competent life. Grant, dear Lord, that the wonderful message of this life, spoken and done, may move us all Godward with holy resolution. How good thou art, how great thou art, sufficient thou art.

And so, dear Lord, once more we give it all over to thee and accept thy will and providence through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Born April the 21st in 1897 at Lagos, Pennsylvania, Dr. A.W. Tozer began

preaching at 20 years of age and was ordained at the age of 20.

After serving the large Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Chicago for 31 years, Dr. Tozer became the preaching minister of the Avenue Road Church of the Alliance, Evangelical Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Throughout his busy career, he has been much throughout the United States and Canada as a speaker at Bible conferences and conventions of all denominations. Since 1950, he has edited the Alliance Witness, the official organ of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, which has one of the highest circulations of any evangelical denominational magazine.

Well known as a religious writer, he is the author of *The Pursuit of God*, *The Divine Conquest*, *Wingspread*, a biography of A.B. Simpson, *Let My People Go*, the biography of Robert Jaffray, *The Root of the Righteous*, *Born After Midnight*, of *God and Ben*. His articles have appeared in almost every evangelical magazine and his editorials are currently running in alternate issues of *The Life of Faith*, a leading British magazine in London. A book on the attributes of God was published by Harper and Brothers in August 2001 under the title, *The Knowledge of the Holy*.

Dr. Tozer received the LITTD degree from Wheaton College in 1950 and the LLD degree from Houghton College in 1952. He was vice president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance from 1950 and served on the board of managers of the Alliance from 1941 until the present. His alliance pastorates, in addition to Chicago and Toronto, included Morgantown, West Virginia, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Toledo, Ohio.

After a brief illness which pulpit on Sunday, May 12, 1963, Dr. Tozer died suddenly at 1245 a.m. Sunday, May 13, 1963. He is survived by his wife, his sons, Wendell and Forrest of Chicago, Illinois, Aidan and Roland, Miami, Florida, Dr. Lowell of El Cajon, California, of Lincoln Park, Michigan, and his daughter, Mrs. Rebecca Paul of New York. A pastor to pastors, Dr. Tozer, he has left us a minister to minister, many of whom are here to pay their respects to him in memory of him who challenged us with the message with Christ.

I have been crucified, but I live, yet not I. Christ lived, so he challenged us and encouraged us, and we found strength through his message. And by pulpit, he showed us the reality of the living Lord, Jesus, the triumphant one. And when I speak representing the clergy in the Midwest area, I speak in recognition of Dr. Tozer's ministry, several coordinated efforts wherein ministers have been represented.

I think of MidAmerica Keswick on the organizing council and the organizing committee, trying to bring this message of the living Lord in Christian hearts. He was conscious that there were many Christians who longed to know him in a better way, so he paused to help us along the way. His was an effort to lead Christians through the Word of God to see the greatness of God and greatness of their faith.

He wanted men to know God. He sought to introduce sinners to their Savior. He longed to help the Saints to know the life of victory through surrender and faith.

Thousands of Christians heard his lucid application of Scripture to Christian living, MidAmerica Keswick messages. He was a speaker at six of the first eight conventions of MidAmerica Keswick, a member of committee, and one of the original council members. But he also served in a larger sphere, and the testimony to his influence on the national scene is found in recent ministry at the National Association of Evangelicals, where we as ordained ministers and other delegated Christians had the opportunity of hearing him.

And once again, it was that same of union with Jesus Christ which makes the difference between defeat and triumph. In the message of the believers' union with Christ in his death and resurrection characterized A. W. Tozer's last public appearance before the delegates of the National Association of Evangelical Convention in Buffalo, New York on Thursday morning, I can still see the delegates pouring in because they knew A. W. Tozer was going to give them something they could take home. He spoke on the five-fold attachment to Jesus, intellectually, volitionally, exclusively, inclusively, and irrevocably.

He defined a Christian as one back from the dead, a man joined to Christ in the crucified, but living in Christ. And I think this afternoon we still hear him say, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. He could not and would not, because of his very nature, omit young people from his ministry.

And I recall in 1954 when he addressed thousands of students at the University of Illinois, at the great InterVarsity Missionary Convention, speaking on the man God uses. He was respected and esteemed by college and university students. Dr. Tozer ministered uniquely and effectively to these thousands, stirred by his messages on the man God uses.

Hundreds of students worked in God's will and God's missionary program for the world. Students loved him. Their minds were aroused and challenged in devotion to his ministry.

And I speak particularly, if I may at this time, to his ministry to us at Trinity when he spoke during our Christian Life Week a number of years ago. He synthesized the intellectual and the devotional, and he brought a new respect to many evangelicals of the mind in Christian living. But he also helped the intellectuals to see the place of piety, of conviction, of mind and heart.

Dr. A.W. Tozer was an even conformist desiring only to conform to Christ and to help all within his hearing to join him in this desire. Evangelical mystic of the New Testament, Pauline type, united with Christ but oriented to world needs. He was an evangelical voice in the wilderness, the wilderness of dead orthodoxy, defunct liberalism, and defeatist neo-orthodoxy, calling to saints to possess their possessions in Christ to repent and be converted.

A servant of Jesus Christ, an evangelical prophet of God, whose he was and whom he served. I live, yet not I, lives in me. Some time ago, when ministering in one of our alliances, I couldn't help but observe that the young pastor walked, talked, lectured, and prayed as would Dr. Tozer.

When I spoke to him about it, he said that others had made the same observation, and then added that although he had not deliberately tried to impersonate Dr. Tozer, yet the life of Dr. Tozer had undoubtedly left a great impression upon him. Even so, I question greatly an alliance pastor, an alliance church, that has not been influenced by and by the witness and by the writings of this man who is going to be mourned today. I have known Dr. Tozer for a good many years.

We have traveled together, we have dined together, we've had fellowship together, and I have observed for years that his walk and his talk were in perfect agreement. I never nullified that which his lips profess. As for his witness, he was uncompromising and always so timely.

His writings blessed the world, and although Dr. A. W. Tozer was an official working in the missionary alliance, we could not say that he was exclusively ours. He belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ, and had you been at the funeral service in Toronto on Wednesday, you would understand what I mean. I have never been at a funeral service where I saw so many clergymen, not just alliance ministers, but clergymen

of all denominations.

As I say, he did not belong to us exclusively, he belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ. Time certainly will never permit the reading of telegrams and cables which have come, nor even to tell you from where they come. There are so many.

But to give you a faint idea as to the worldwide ministry of our dear friend, let me just mention a few. The director of the National Association of Evangelicals, Vietnam, Holland, Singapore, Chile, Arab lands, Argentina, Congo, Guinea Mission, Ecuador Mission, Conservative Baptist Foreign Missions, the Siam Mission, then you see them from college presidents, pastors of other denominations, many, many churches. In the fact that although, as I say, an official worker of the Alliance, yet he did not belong exclusively, but to the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

I have just returned from ministering for three months in South Africa, and although wherever I went, not too many know about the Christian American as a denomination. But I was astounded at how many knew about the writings of Dr. A. W. Tozer. Just the other day in Durban, a minister said to me, it's one thing to read the editorials of your editor, Dr. A. W. Tozer.

On behalf of the president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Dr. Nathan Bailey, whose place I am in, and on behalf of the board of managers to which Dr. Tozer was a member for three years, I would state that all of us feel that in the passing of this prophet of God, a spiritual giant has been removed from us. And although we all feel the loss deeply, and although we find our hearts crying out at times, who shall take it? Yet we have found grace to say that the Lord gave, and the Lord hath given, blessed be his name forever. I would my all real love through soul, through joy, conduct me as I know me.

Dear Jesus, as thou wilt, all shall be well for me. Each changing future seems well-concealed. Our meditation will be found in John chapter 14.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, to his ministry of consolation, of comfort, and of encouragement to his disciples, close this supper of remembrance by speaking as each of us would hear again today. Let not your heart be troubled. Believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

When I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, thou mayest be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas said, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the light, known unto the Father, but by me.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father, and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not, Philip, he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.

And how sayest thou then, show us, believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak also, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. The Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to Nicodemus, told us why he came into the world. Declaring God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him perish, but have everlasting life.

The word perish gives us the secret. Better translation would be wasted, wasted, squandered. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not be squandered.

Man is the highest of God's creation. The unique difference between man and all other creation. The heart of man is an empty space, so enormous that only God himself can fill it.

The builder satisfied with the grass that they can eat, or the spoil that they can capture. But give everything that his body needs for sustenance, and his mind needs for beauty, and his hand needs for tools. He is the Son of God, and he lives his life in vanity and emptiness.

It was the writer of Ecclesiastes who allowed to do that which perhaps at some time all of us would like to do, to see how much it takes to satisfy the human heart. And so to David's son was given the opportunity of testing in measure and degree that none of us could experience. The fact that the world and all it contains is inadequate to meet the need of a human heart.

Through all that was offered to him, these he exploited to the very full. The first was power. His father of that captured enemies surrounding, until it was just a few that remained.

The soldiers of Solomon succeeded in driving them to their knees until finally he could from his throne view the civilized world as he knew it, and say, all men everywhere pay you to me. But then when he realized there were none that would dare to lift their fist or sword against him, he asked his heart if that seek satisfied, namely power over their fellows. And the answer that came from the empty chamber was vanity of vanity.

War is vanity. Soap bubbles. It seemed so insecure it offered nothing, nothing that would endure.

Then said he, he gave himself to wealth and all that it could procure, to money and all that it could buy, the things his eyes could see, his hands could handle. And when gold was stacked in coffers as bricks against the wall, again he asked his heart, now that you have wealth to bring, are you satisfied? The answer that came was that that he'd heard before, of vanity. All is vanity.

Then said he, there remains pleasure. I will provide their all they desire. I will enjoy all that men have given their lives for.

He said there was nothing that my eyes saw that I kept back from me. And when he was too jaded and exhausted to see satisfaction, nothing could stimulate or arouse him again. He asked his heart, are you satisfied in this time that was beyond recognition, for there was nowhere else to turn, for all that's in the world is the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh.

The answer came back, vanity. He said, what is the end of man? Is it just to eat, to drink, to live, to die? And there came again the memory of what he'd learned from his father and seen in the prophets. And he gave them grip our hearts today.

Remember now thy creator in the days of our youth. What did he say? That satan's grand delusion that the human heart can be satisfied with the things of this world is a lie. And those who perceive inevitably find their lives have been wasted and squandered.

For man lived simply to be the form upon which clothes were laid, the vessel into which food was given. Man had nobler purpose than to perpetuate his own existence. God from the beginning wanted someone like himself for God is love.

And so he gave to this creature image and likeness, a mind with which to think, emotions with which to feel, volition with which to live. And then he put that being in a body. And he said, I'll meet with you there.

And as I fill the universe in my body, I will allow you to fill your body with yours. And I will come and meet you there. And that which was glorious was not the fact that man could design his own tools and procure his own food.

That which made man glorious was the fact that he had been made for fellowship with God. Man's love that ought to have gone to God and to have completed the circle with God's love for man's love returned to him, turned in upon himself. And the turning of the love of the heart inwardly is what is known in the essence of sin is but self-love and selfishness.

And so God if anyone lived thus in the circle broken and made the end of his being but things that he could handle and that he could experience with his body, that power that he could exercise over his fellow, to whatever level he might be living, he was utterly wasted. And God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that who's in him should not be wasted. And the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing your need and mine with the body and personality like ours, that the full weight of the temptation which had brought the race into ruin could fall upon him.

And we even breaking the silence of his pilgrimage, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. And so the sinless son could now bide himself with you and your humanity, reach down across the years to you and to me and draw us to himself. And then to go to the cross and die my death in yours, in my place and in yours, that we should not.

That that great mountain that separated from God, that sin of rebellion and treason, anarchy, and that had led us to transgress the pure and proper law and will of God, that his justice might be satisfied and the barrier removed and nothing from him. And he could stand mercy seated and bid us come, that we should not be wasted. And so today we find that there are those whom God has sent among us that heard the call, come labor and heavy laden and find for all your labor and your burden no rest or peace.

Come to me and I will give you rest. And when one has come and partaken of that rest, rest from the fear of death, rest from the weight of guilt, rest from the candid, rest from all the terrors of the life unknown in the future, undiscovered. Rest in the work of Christ and then to find that not only as the burden lifted but the heart is satisfied.

For our need is to deal with the past, but also to deal with that which was the need when we were made. Saint Augustine, and he said it more eloquently than perhaps it has ever been said since or could be again, O Lord thou hast said that we cannot rest until we rest in thee. That life is a wasted who does not savingly know Jesus Christ.

It was just two weeks ago on Sunday afternoon that Dr. Toses was with his associate pastor in Toronto, Al McNally, and he opened his Bible to the notes that were there, to the page where his text was found, Colossians chapter 1 verse 20. And looking with curious eyes he said, I'm speaking tonight and at council on Sunday. The hope of glory.

Then he said, brother, if it were possible that my family and my friends and the people of this church come to know what this has come to mean to me, Christ in us, I would gladly give my life. He spoke as he had never spoken before, so said, that very message will be by tape transcription played at council. The only life that can possibly escape being wasted and squandered is the life where Jesus Christ has come to fill the aching empty void.

My friend, what made you? He carved into you an empty place that only he can fill. You vainly seek to fill it less or other. Our brother Toses has finished his work, but his work shall never be finished.

He's slipped from the hands of family and churches that he served and loved him, and those who claimed him for his own because of affinity. He belongs now to the ages, others that will test his writings in the years to come, to even better than we evaluate what he said and written. They'll know the man.

He was never a merchandiser of words. He lived for one thing and every page pulsates with this purpose, that men may not be wasted, that life may not be wasted, that days may not be wasted, but that we might, vitally, personally, inwardly. You say you love the man, W. Toses.

You say that he is known to you as friend, and so do I, but the test and proof of that friendship is not the protest or the profession we make today, but it is that degree to which we are prepared to allow Jesus Christ to come into the empty chamber of ours with himself, and that we in turn shall share with others as we shall meet them, giving to the Lord Jesus what he's purchased with his blood, all that he's ransomed by his grace, and that to be used by him. The life of Dr. Toser is that Jesus Christ is enough. You give to him a mind that's dedicated, abandoned, a body that's willing, and he is enough.

His name is El Shaddai. I do not believe that God intends to raise for our generation another Dr. Toser, but I do believe that for you and me that have had the blessing and the privilege of this ministry to allow Jesus Christ to do in us everything that he taught, and when we present to the Lord Jesus Christ, first our bodies in union in death, present to him our personalities for his service in your home, your place, in your ministry, you then will be able to say, yes, he was my friend, my teacher, not because you can reminisce the days you spent together, but because having heard you believed it of himself, our Lord Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. Those of us who mourn the passing of one whose memory shall enrich the days, however long they may be, we might close words and say, if you love him, obey his teaching, for he taught you never sought to bring attention to himself, but always at Christ.

The message was Christ in you, the hope of you. Our generation needs not another A.W. Toser, as much as he shall be nearest to the church, but our generation needs you with me, utterly abandoned to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he can do in us and through us all that he desires. May it be, therefore, that we who hear the way, the truth, and the life, and realize that any life less than filled with the fullness of Christ is to some measure, let it be I say, that we in gratitude to God for all he's done and all the ministry he's brought to us, just ask the Lord Jesus to do in us and through us what he desires.

Then the life and the memory of the one who's labored among us will have that enduring memorial that I know he seeks, the reality incarnate in your heart of the truth he preached. Although announcements are seldom made services, yet I'm very happy to make this one as it was given at the Toronto Canada on Wednesday. Dr. Toser had a long-standing desire to see a evolving loan fund established.

In lieu of floral memorials, Mrs. Toser has requested in the expressed desire by some friends the establishing of such a memorial fund available for student assistants in Bible schools and colleges and at

the graduate. Those desiring to contribute to such a memorial will be able to do so through the church and should so designate their wish. There are envelopes for their use at the back of the church.

Favorite hymn of Dr. Toser's, number 134, But Jesus hath our valley of sorrow, and bade us immortal to heaven ascend, lift then in triumph on high, for Jesus hath risen and man shall die. Hymn 134. And now may the amazing grace of the Lord Christ and the unfailing love of God and the constant in comfort of the Holy Spirit be with us all till it comes.

Amen.

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