

# My Soul Thirst

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer's sermon emphasizes the deep longing for God and the importance of seeking Him with a pure heart beyond mere intellectual understanding.*

**Duration:** 40:15

**Scripture:** Psalm 42:1

**Topics:** "Seeking God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of relying on God's word rather than human wisdom. He shares a story about a rich man who leaves a vast inheritance to his son, but the son remains poor and hungry because he never reads the will. The preacher then refers to the Song of Solomon, interpreting it as a love story between a girl and her shepherd. He suggests that this story represents Jesus as the rejected shepherd and the king as the one who tries to win her favor. The preacher encourages the audience to seek a deep relationship with God and not be swayed by the desire for popularity or companionship.

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## Transcript

I want to begin by saying that there is a vast difference in poems, between the texts which I have read, and the great Bible giants, and the shining souls that have lived through the Bible times, and the present-day Gospels. The thing, for instance, about the Lamb, David, is how David sought after the Lord in the Book of Psalms. As a half-pontiff asked for the Word of God, the whole pontiff asked for the Word of God.

And so they prayed for God, for the living Lord, when shall I come and appear before God. And oh, God, thou art my God, all the world I seek thee. My flesh, my soul, is precious to thee.

My flesh is in the ground, place of the Lamb, whom thou art. To see thy power and thy glory, says I to thee, O David. And then he continues, he says, my soul will follow it high, that it will not abandon that upholds me.

Now that's the language of the Lamb, David. You'll find it through the Old Testament, and you'll find it beginning back with Abraham. And taking all the way down through, they were a festivity, a lot.

And the difference between them, between the time of their lives and the time of our lives, is that they sought him and found him and sought him still and then found him and sought him more. But he, the living Lord, didn't accept him and keep him, no. Now there is a difference.

And every day there is in my heart, and I can't say it is, but I can, I can think about some great souls, some great souls. And I'm nice about them. And how there are very many who come near Jesus to us because they are associated.

They said, we don't play the Lamb, and they have no virtue for us. They get their virtue when we get ours, from Jesus Christ our Lord. And they say, we found it now, it does.

And ours is the same as theirs. So we're not deifying him, we're not shamanizing him, but the name that was associated with this church, with Paul's church here, when he said, I sing the gloss, you doubtless I follow after. If I may at the end, and I forget the things which I do, for unto those things it was this, that gave music to the name of Augustine, and Tala, and Jacob Bates Tempest, and Richard Rowe, and Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bernard of Cluny, and John of the Cross, and Madame de Mines, sound to us.

Why do they bring us up like king and instruments when we hear them? Not to say my name had anything to do, and I don't have potential in my nature, but that they were associated with the long crowd, and Nicholas of Keats, and Dan Reichenbach, and Lorenzo Stapoli, and Ceneron, and Henry Cecil, and Samuel Rutherford, introduced with Henry Cecil there, that said, there is a difference in hearing a lute sweetly played, and only hearing that one had it been played. Most Christians, I'll get the word to this effect, they only hear that there has been a lute played, but they've never heard it. Well, that was Henry Cecil.

And then there was Samuel Rutherford, and Catherine Heber, and Samuel Twain, and John Milton, and Samuel Medley, and Sir Stephen, and Paul Gerhardt, and Sennett, and Dobridge, and the names, the musical names, and why? The musical names, because they associate with us, it's told. We see them as the deer that's been chased by the hounds, and see longing for the water, and say, let me alone for my soul to see God. And they caught him again.

And what a tragedy it has been in our time, that we are taught, believe on him, accept him no more. And that's where we are today. And what I'm trying to do, my brethren, is to say that we don't care so much exactly what you receive at a given time.

That's not the point. When you aim the arrow, it reaches away, and leaves its target to the arrow to itself. It is direction and motion that matters.

That is the direction. And if we're moving toward God, I'm not so concerned that we have a great image. Not at all.

What I want to see is, as the old book that I've been quoting from, ever more crying after him, thou lovest. If that is the testimony of your soul, ever more crying after him, thou lovest. And you know that I've heard of people who got blessings like this, and that's what I'm looking for.

I hope we receive, but in the meantime, because what you want, sir, is a heart that ever more cries out, thou lovest. And a heart that's crying after the one he loves is better indeed than the heart that has such a rotten head. Now, there's a book of the Old Testament that very few people read.

The theme, it means, I don't like to read it at all. It's the song of Solomon. And most people don't read it because they don't know what it means.

But it was the very, the very joy of these great things that I've been telling you about. Bernard assumed the sermon on the song of Solomon, and he had only preached the sermon on the first chapter when he died, bearing glory. But only the first chapter.

I have his book on the song of Solomon, and the song by the psalmist seems to be loved so much. His presence, my soul takes delight, was taken directly from the song of Solomon. And it is the story of a girl very deeply in love with a young shepherd.

And yet she is so beautiful that a king demands her favor, and he pays royal to her shepherd, her simple shepherd, he gathers her in the day of the night, and comes to her and calls her to the latter. It's quite, it's quite a wonderful love story indeed. And it has been said so by the church as being the Jesus, the shepherd, the rejected shepherd, and the word all it offers is being the king, demanding or coaxing and winning, trying to woo and win, while he waits, gathering ladies in the night.

And we're accusing him, that's the story, will have made a great many songs of this one. Peace is the odor of thy grace, thy name poured forth through all the places of heaven. Thy perfect name, the virgin's love, drawn by thy unction from above, they run, they please to thee.

As well in mine the joy and desire of my heart for closer communion I pine, and I long to reside before thou art. To that happiest place, that place of thy people's abode, where saints in an ecstasy gaze and hang on a treacherous height. If I could even find a company of people that could go that far, I'd be a happier man than I am tonight.

To there would I flock, there only I cover to rest, to lie at the foot of the rock or rise to be hid in my breast. To there I would always abide and never a moment depart. Concealed in the clenched of thy pride eternally held.

These, these great souls that I've mentioned, that's the way they talk about God. That I've believed on Christ, let's go have a sober. Such is Christianity.

Brethren, if we don't have, I said this good enough, if we don't have a return to this time, the thing that I'm teaching about to you now. Even today, evangelicalism will be liberalism in thirty years, twenty-five or thirty years. Always remember that the church never runs on its head.

The church runs on its heart. Always remember that. Always remember that the Holy Ghost never fills a man's head.

But the Holy Ghost fills a man's heart. And the efforts of this Christianity with all learning, and all philosophy, and all science, which is being made by some evangelicals, they're going to get a cold thumb from Almighty God. And he will let them go their blind ways to liberalism at last.

You'll see it a little. Protesting they're not while they are. But somewhere God will have himself a people.

I don't know where they are, but God's people. And they will be those who evermore cry after him they love. Now, I want to point out that this is no place for human effort.

The old man of God says, Be wary in this work. Travel not in my imagination. He said, Now remember, you are longing after God.

Don't try to think your way through. Because there is an element of unknowing, a deep divine wish of the Godhead. I won't settle for anything less.

Now, I'm going to try not to be critical, but I won't settle for anything less. In the deep divine abyss, the soundless blatant sea of being that we call God, it is there, and it's beyond the power of thought. And it's utterly and completely futile in trying to think your way through.

And that's been our disregard in the day. The young man gets hungry and he's hot and he goes to see a teacher. And the teacher shuts him down and begins to sing to him.

He's all fixed up. And he goes away saying, Thank you, thank you, doctor. He's all fixed up, but he hasn't received a thing.

He has in his head, but his heart still goes away hungry. Listen to the old man. Of all the churches, he says, and their works, even of the works of God himself, a man may, through grace, have fullness of knowledge.

Now let's get that. Don't throw the hate. And so of all the teachers, owners, and their works, and even the works of God, can a man have any small right? Through grace, man can have fullness of knowledge, but of God himself can no man think at me.

Think about him, but he can't think around him and think equal to him and think up to him. He may well be loved, but not by love may he be gotten, and by love may he be held, but by thought never. How then can we know him with a devout and pure love to pierce that cloud of darkness and strike upon it with a sharp dart of longing love? For it's a naked intent direct unto God without any other cause than himself.

There's that word himself again, and I have been taught from that word himself occurred. Did you know that this society always began on the word himself? Christ himself, and it was himself that gave us the message. But we're away from it today and we're satisfied with the works, knowledge of God.

But you'll never get there that way, my brother. You'll bump your head and you'll never get there because thought is the intellectual element in the gospel, and there is an intellectual element in the gospel. Remember that.

Remember that one of the apintellects. And there is an intellectual element in the gospel, and that's what we call theology or doctrine. And it is theology.

Thought engages doctrine and is necessary and right. And is that beyond the intellect which we need and seek. It is that which you can't get to with your head.

Now, one song says the spirit breathes upon the word and brings the truth to sight. It seems on the scriptures how much more wonderful the scriptures are than when they are merely taught, when we were merely founded. It's founding of the word of God without the spirit breathing upon it can be totally a useless thing.

And we'll sing sometimes beyond the sacred page. What? Beyond the page. Not apart from the sacred page.

Not away from the sacred page. Not contrary to the sacred page. Beyond the sacred page I speak thee, Lord.

The sacred page is not to be a barrier to God. The sacred page is not to be a substitute for God, though it is made that by millions of people. The sacred page is the end, but only the means toward the end.

And God is the end. It is God that we seek, my brethren. ...intent unto God.

There we have it. It is sufficient enough a naked intent direct unto God and without any insult. Now, the paragraph is that if you have the text, you have the... and most evangelicals settle for that.

If you have the text, you have the experience. Now, brethren, it's all wrong. The text, you have the text.

But the experience ought to result from the text. But you can have the text and not have the experience. I remind, people remind me of an heir, a rich man, a very, very rich man died.

And in that will, he passed it on to his only son, all of his riches, running into the moon. And so the heir gets the will, borrows it from the lawyer, and carries it around. And here he is, ragged and hungry, begging his crust on the street and walking around in ragged jeans.

And they say to him, you're in bad shape, you're ragged, your skin's showing through and your feet must be cold when they're like this, and you're old. Oh, he says, don't talk that way to me, listen to this. And then he opens the will.

And unto my dear son shall peace and then he names bonds and stocks and poverty and yachts. The third child is satisfied with this. He's never had to take it.

He's never had it taken. He's never gotten anything. He simply has the will.

You and I go around with the bits of this thing. And we're lean and we're hungry and we're tame and pale and we're dry and they can see our, our, the rags that we wear. And some evangelist comes along and starts saying, you're ragged and you're, you're hungry looking and you're weak.

And we whistle up and say, why, how, what a way to talk. Am I not accepted in the beloved? Do not I have everything there is in Jesus? Is not God my God and we're in the air with God and we're going for a ragged, lonely way down the street. If you're getting to have the will, it's another thing to have what you will.

And the will of God is one thing but it has another thing. But I want to tell you that the old man said, be thou aware and don't try to think you'll come up to a point where you'll, you'll prop your way up as far as you can get. And you'll never get any further with your head now.

You might get well put. I want to give an old testimony illustration and show how, how this was. I've used this before but I illustrate with it here.

The rest of the high priest into the holy of holies. You remember there were three places. There was the outer court which had no and the sun shone down.

And when the priest was there, he had the light of nature. Then he passed through the veil. And when the veil fell back in place, that was called the holy place.

And in there there was no light of natural light. A light that the priest himself made and lighted and kept lighted. But that wasn't enough.

There was the holy of holies. That holy spot where the can of glory burned and burned. And there there was no light of nature.

The holy of holies couldn't get in there. And there was no light of spiritual theatrical light. No long-tailed painted creature enthroned in the ministerial room.

None of that there. It was the supernatural light of God he sought. It was the shining from the mercy of the priest.

And so when the priest got in there, he had nothing. Absolutely nothing. Would you like to have been a high priest and know that the God that made heaven and earth was dwelling in fire between the wings of his children? That that great God with his youth and his sea of endless bounded beings, this terrible God that made heaven and earth and all the things that are there, this God was there.

And the priest was moving toward that God. He said above the helping. That's very good.

Cool. That's your denomination. That's that natural thing.

Then there went a little further light. That's your, that's your theology. And he had to go on until there was no natural light, no artificial light, but a pure shining.

And there in the presence of the supernatural shining, he had nothing but the blood and he had nothing to his story but the character of God. And he was all alone. And the blood started to go in with the priest.

They could help him, his helper could help him to get through the veils apart so that his eyes were open. They could not enter into that holy of holies. That was alone with blood.

And the blood protected him from the, from the burning. For he would have burned and he burned in a fire. Except the blood was there to protect him.

And he had no one there to pat his back. Nobody there to show him a check. Nobody there to reach him.

Nobody there, nobody there to help him. He had nothing but the character of God to assure him. And he was all alone.

When you meet God finally, you have to be alone in your house. You can take the crowd to get you converted if you haven't been converted. Take the crowd to get you through to the fullness of the Holy Ghost you haven't got.

You have to be alone in your have to be alone in your You have to in your house. You have to be alone in your house. You have to be alone in your house.

You have to be alone in your be alone in your house. You have to be alone in your house. You be alone in your house.

You have to be alone in your house. You have to be alone in your house. You have to be alone in your You have to be alone in your house.

You have to be alone in your house. You have to in your be alone in your house. You have to be alone in your You have to be alone in your in your house.

I read a letter in one of the Evangelical magazines of a man who said, I have accepted the doctrines of such-and-such a denomination, and I expect them to bother me. He had allowed somebody else to make up his mind for him. That's why millions of people became Catholics, because somebody does their thinking for them, somebody assures them, somebody says a word of assurance and consolation, and all of their thinking's been done, and all of their responsibility's taken by somebody higher up, and all of them obey.

Now, is that unkind? I hope it isn't. I don't mean it to be so. I only say, this is why such religious denominations can hold their people.

They never say, if you, you have to find God as a rope on the water brook, you have to seek God alone, and I'll help you and cling to you and do my best, but when he meets you, it'll be by yourself, and you can't take an authority. Nobody can come and say, all right, it's done. I'm hereby now, as of today, this hour, declare you all right.

I almost got there, my, somebody, some happy woman said to me, I think you've got it. Well, I thank God I found out better, because that is, somebody pointing to me and saying, you've got it. But brethren, what we want is, I repeat, ever more crying after him, and looking for, looking in his direction, with nothing, nothing, but a naked intent unto himself, intent unto God.

But I want God, and want nothing more. Now what shall we do? When Christ has removed all the legal time left, I heard a sermon today by some fellow with a very young voice. I didn't wait to hear him out, so I don't know who he was, and I don't know from where he speaks.

He was very carefully pulling all of the nerve out of the passage, being justified that he's in Christ Jesus, and so on, telling how that was figures of speech that were being used, figures of speech, and figures of speech. And when he was through, all I had was an illustration. Brethren, they can't rob me, I'm too tough, and I'll be robbed.

And let them try to rob me, but I won't be robbed. I believe that when Jesus Christ redeemed me, he meant he redeemed me. And I'm not going to be chewed away by some bright fellow who tells me that was a figure drawn from there.

And when he said, I'm justified, I'm not going to be chewed away by some fellow who said it was an oriental illustration drawn from a court of law. Maybe the illustration or the figure was drawn from there, but back of that figure is more of reality. And my life and future and hope depends upon that being more than an illustration.

It's a glorious, solid, hard core of facts, harder than the rocks of Egypt. It removes all the legal hindrances. The word legal sparked me off to say that, to get a defense.

I believe there are reasons why I ought not to go to heaven. I believe that there are governmental reasons why I ought not to go to heaven. I believe that a holy God masters the universe according to holy law.

And if he runs his kingdom according to holy laws, I don't belong there. Every one of them is either intent or in purpose. And so there's got to be a justification somewhere.

There's got to be a redemption. It has to be done to legally permit me to have God and God to have me. And it's been done.

Thank God it's been done. Read Romans 3. So remember that every illegal hindrance has been taken away. There's nothing that can stop you except yourself.

Not a thing in the wide world. And all the depths of the fullness of glory. And there's not a reason why we can't enter in.

If we still tether more chiasm with a naked intent of love. Well, then I point out to you that there's only the elite of our way in. I have tried to deal with people who try to sink their way in.

A man used to come to me and talk about, he was a very good student and a very good thinker, and I think he was. He'd read widely and was quite a theologian. And he'd quote King Paul with Charles B. King and arrived at a revelation of grace that would satisfy him.

He had become a paranoiac and believed that the United States government, I think it was, was persecuting him or something. Downright schizophrenia. He'd gone off, you know, he'd gone off because he was trying to sink his way in.

Oh, brother, you know, there's a time when all you can do is believe God. Believe what he says. Believe.

And love. Believe and love. The old brother says, For God himself shall well be loved, but not sought.

By love may he be gotten, and by love may he be honed, but by thought never. The great God all-universe that overflows into immensity can never be surrounded by that little thing you call yourself. Like never, never, never.

He knows that all he could do would be to stand at the lowest point of God and think down there, you never can rise to the face of God. But love and faith, love and faith, these, these, by these we can know God. By love and faith.

Oh, I wanted to tell you that the very happy knowledge that there are no vacuums in the Kingdom of God. You know what a vacuum is? It's an empty place where there isn't anything, not even air. And nature abhors a vacuum, so they say, and that wherever there's a vacuum, unless it's protected by a hard, air-resistant coat, or water, whatever it be, and the Kingdom of God also abhors a vacuum.

When you empty yourself, God Almighty rushes in. And the reason for that is that we are satisfied with what we have. But if you have been, you will find that God will rush into the vacuum.

Somebody wrote this. Drawn by love, after them I follow fast. Drawn from earth to things above, drawn out of myself at last.

But nothing shall be found there. Drawn out of myself at last. And I have to tell this to many of you, and to many of us.

We've never been drawn from earth. Drawn out of myself at last. What a happy hour when we've been drawn out of ourselves.

And there's a vacuum. And into that vacuum rushes the blessed presence. Listen to this.

You must know that it does not consist in anything else than the goodness and greatness of God, and of our own nothingness and information to every human. In subjecting not only unto Him, but for love of Him unto every creature. In the renunciation of all of our own, and a complete recognition of ourselves to His good pleasure.

And all will be done by us simply for the glory of God, and for His pleasure alone. And because He thus wills to be thus loved and served, and this is the law of God, in fact by the hands of the Lord Himself, there are to be faithful servants. This is His easy yoke, and this is His burden light.

One of the great things of our days. And He is a wonderful King, friends. In every talk, He always says the same thing to everybody.

I have mentioned names from Augustine on down, to later times. And you can read their hymns, and read their devotions, and you'll find that they all add up to the same thing. A favor and a heathen.

A Calvinist and an Armenian. An Episcopalian and a Catholic, as He lived in the day when it was power and light. And they add it up to the same thing, so that the Holy Ghost doesn't say two things, He says one thing.

And He says the same to everybody that's listening to Him. And so, I can quote from almost anywhere, and not be contradicted, the same Holy Spirit says the same thing to all His children. He says, pour yourself out to me.

Empty yourself. Bring your empty earthen vessels, not a few. Bring them, and empty yourself.

Same thing. For the glory of God alone may all stand. So that for God Himself, says Paul, He says, for instance, not mentality, not intellect, but the Holy Ghost.

He knows the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that's in Him. And God, but the Holy Spirit. So that you can't climb your way up Jacob's ladder, hand over heel.

And you can't think your way through. You can only love your way in and believe your way in. And come and meet Him just like it's time.

And drawn by your Redeemer's love, come and pour yourself out. Until at last you're delivered from yourself. You know that's your only problem yourself? You say, if you had a better pastor, I'd be a better Christian.

I wish that could be so, but you know it wouldn't be. The better the pastor that you've got, and the better Christians be, you'd be in. Because you would tend to become a spiritual parasite and lean on Him.

And all the people are in chaos where the pastor can't preach his way out of a wet paper sack. And the reason is, have no help from the pulpit, so to speak, God alone. But if you get too much help from the pulpit, you tend to be a parasite.

Lean on your pastor. I don't want you to lean on me. I believe in the three total believers.

And I believe there's man here who does his job as surely as I do. And have as much right to speak as I have. And ordination to me.

The surgeon said, no man ever laid his empty hands on mine, he said. And ordination to me. But God Almighty hasn't called a man you can ordain until the cows come home.

And you'll still be a dead man. So, my brethren, it's just be with yourself. It's just be and you'll get delivered from yourself.

Drawn out of myself at last. That's what it'll be when you're drawn out of yourself. When you're stuck too far down in the mud of your own ego, there'll be a sound that can be heard of blocking you.

When you're pulled out of yourself, and you're somebody, and you're sought seeking, you'll feel lonely. Oh, you'd like to feel lonely. Brethren, God can be loved, and be begotten, and by love he may be whole, but by thought never.

So he said, be careful. Don't try to throw yourself into a deeper life by your whips and your imagination. Don't try.

Look unto God by yourself. Keep God in your own heart. I don't mean it's not alright to go to all this and pray.

I think about the loneliness of the soul that may be cut out of the crown. Cut out all by himself. There was a little woman who pushed herself toward Jesus, and he was so crushed in the crowd that they were pressing him on everything.

But one lonely little woman, surrounded in piercing jostles, cut to him and was through with him. He turned and said, he touched me a little. He said, he touched me, and you're in a mouth.

Crowded on every side he pushed that he touched me. Boy, I didn't mean that, he said. I mean, he touched me in the face.

He touched me with love. And the rest of them were merely jostling. And so we have crowds, people just jostling.

That's all, just jostling. He's there, but they're just jostling. Somewhere, somebody pushed through and touched him.

I mean, a lot of them in the face. He touched him in the heart. You know what a lot of us need? We need to have our hearts healed, you know? We need to have the ornaments put on us.

You know the bomb? Yes, yes, yes, there's a bomb. To heal the sins of the world. To my friends, I don't know what else I can say tonight.

You know, I want to leave you and say to you that your beloved is gathering lilies. And if you walk hand to the left and say, come, my beloved, rise up. For the rain is over and gone.

Singing of the birds is heard in the land. And if you're not like the poor bride, you know what the matter with her is. She said, oh, in my hand.

She said, I've got ointment on my hand and I have my nightgown and so on. I'm all, I can't possibly get up. And so sadly he went away.

And then her heart began to condemn her. She wore a robe on. She started asking, but she said, I couldn't find it.

Oh, you daughters of Zion, she said, have you seen the star that on Israel shone? That's what the matter with her. He had come and packed up and said, I can't come now, I'm sorry, honey. I'm all covered with ointment.

And he went sadly away to his work among the myths. But she followed him. And the watchman saw her and banged her around and took to the pigeons and said, have you found him? And they said to her, what is he? What is he above others that you are looking for? And I was fool enough to make it.

I was fool enough to make it. He called, come on, come on, at the same time. And I didn't hear him.

I heard him, but I didn't have the heart to go. And now I see what a mess he's in for. And at last he said, I found him whom I saved last.

And when she found him, finally, soon as they could come forth, tears had come and blood was as red as the moon, as terrible as an army was banished. But none other than that same beloved. Oh, my friend, he'll never be anyplace but very near.

He's grieved and he's sad, but he's very near. And he waits. He waits for a vacuum to form inside their house.

Well, I don't know. But whatever it is, it's got to get out. And when you pour it out...

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