

(Reformation Within Protestantism): Return to a Biblical Church

by A.W. Tozer

The Church is the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, and an ark on the floodwaters, and it is essential to understand its biblical concept and purpose.

Duration: 45:05

Scripture: Matthew 7:21, Matthew 18:20, John 10:9, Acts 2:47, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:25, Hebrews 10:25

Topics: "Reformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the common attitude of taking the church for granted. He emphasizes that many people view the church as a social institution without questioning its significance. The speaker urges listeners to reconsider their perspective on the church and to recognize its sacred importance. He uses the analogy of two young couples, one focused on a serious and purposeful life while the other seeks only pleasure, to illustrate the different attitudes towards the church. The speaker concludes by inviting those who are unsure of their faith to come forward and seek a personal connection with Christ.

Transcript

Now, I'm continuing to talk to you about the need for reformation in Protestant churches. The fact that it's needed came to light more than, pointed up more than usual this last week. A reporter from one of the papers, the telegram, called me and asked me if I had seen that about the United Church talking about introducing the confessional into the Protestant church.

And I said, yes, I'd seen it. And he said, what did you think of it? And I said, well, it's one more step toward Rome. He said, do you think it'd be all right to confess our sins to each other? And I said, no.

Confess our sins to God. Some of the others were a little rougher than I was. They called three, I think.

And a different paper had a story in yesterday about the confessional star. Sometimes I feel like a prophet. I start saying things, and the first thing you know, it all comes out in the paper.

I see that instead of a reformation, that we are going to go back and ask Pope's forgiveness and ask him to take us back in. Now, I hope that won't happen while I'm alive, but it'll happen before the book of Revelation is fulfilled. And that only points up the necessity for a reformation of a reformation, for the

Protestants are the sons and daughters of the Reformation.

And as you remember, by a reformation I said we meant a change or changes that would result in correction of abuses or faults, that would result in the bringing of the Church back to its original place of power and usefulness. Now, I want tonight particularly to talk about the need in modern circles for a return to a biblical concept of the Church. About the beginning, the first quarter, about right after the World War, First World War, we had a visitation in the United States, not of spiritual power, but we had a visitation of what I have named tabernaculism.

That is a revolt from the Churches, and I can understand why there was the revolt, because the Churches were pretty dead. And we had that tabernaculism then born, which was that everybody who had a good personality and could preach would start himself a tabernacle around the corner, get himself a crowd and pull out of the Churches and then proceed to poke fun at Churches. And that went on until the Depression, and the Depression had an odd effect on this thing.

It went away into debt, you know, to build big tabernacles, and the man who founded left town and nobody else could keep it up, and the crowd wandered away, and the mortgage holders foreclosed, and Church and tabernacle after tabernacle was left high and dry in the States. I don't know about Canada. I would suppose that we are very much alike, in spite of that little tongue-sticking-out deal that they're having between Ottawa and New York now, and Ottawa and Washington, we're still an awful lot alike.

And I suppose it was true up here, too. But the strange thing happened, the Depression killed that. You know, nobody had any money, and so it didn't pay anymore to go around starting tabernacles, so the boys quit it.

But we got great big barns everywhere all throughout the States. They're not good for anything, but they left behind them a residue, and the residue was a bad, a dangerous philosophy. That is, a dangerous theology of the Church.

The Church was thrown out and said to be of no account, and to come when you please, go when you must, no creed but Christ, no law but love, no pastor but Jesus, no membership, no anything. Well, that has left us high and dry like a shore after a storm when the wind has blown the flotsam and jetsam in. Now, I believe that it is time for us to reconsider again the matter of the Church, and I want to talk about it tonight, definitely with an evangelistic appeal.

We're going to close by singing the great song, Grace that is greater than all our sins. But we have come to take the Church for granted. Most people think of the Church as a social fact that they've gotten used to, and their attitude toward the Church, toward Protestantism generally, is that a matter of course.

And every person, even the average Christian, thinks it is in favor of the Church, you know, the same as they're in favor of motherhood and decency and sanitation. But it's accepted as a convention that they never question or doubt, and if anybody questions or doubts it, they're considered to be Communists or the village atheists. And people will even pour, they'll even join and support and pour out their money to support social conventions.

But I wonder how many ever sit down and say, now wait a minute, what is this? Maybe the Church is just another something that's here and it hasn't any value or any reason for being here. I wonder how many present-day Christians have ever searched the scripture with a serious burden on their heart to know what

the Church was, if it is simply a convention that's carried over, or what it is. I wonder how many Christians have ever prayed earnestly for light from heaven about it.

Now, I want to say something here, and if it isn't true of you, I don't be mad about it, but it's my belief that the average man spends more time and intellectual labor each year making out his income tax, than he spends all his lifetime trying to learn from the scriptures and from the light of the Spirit what the Church is and what he ought to do about it and what it's in the world for and what Jesus meant when he said, on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I say that if a man were to chew his pencil and walk the floor and go out for a walk and come back and try it over again and work on it and search and think and discern and divide and go through all that we have to go through to make out our income tax, every year, and me, I have to do it twice. They won't let me off down in the States.

I've got to send something to Washington, you know. So if we would spend even half as much time working on this whole matter of the Church and what it is and if it's still valid, if it's still good, I believe we could come up with some wonderful answers. But now, I want to talk a little bit about the Church and the local Church.

When we know what the Church is, we'll understand what a local Church is. The average local Church is simply, to a large extent, a social organization where well-intentioned people meet together, they know each other, they're friendly, and what draws them together is more or less coffee and friendship and skating parties and things, and those things are harmless. I drink coffee, and I don't skate.

If you'd ever seen me on skates, you'd know why. But perfectly legitimate and good, I used to when I was a kid, and my wife was a good skater, I understand, back about a few years back when we were young, and when we know what the Church is, we'll understand that these things are all right on the margin of the Church, but they're not the purpose of the Church. That is, we meet and have a gathering and drink coffee and shake hands and say hello and eat a little bit.

Perfectly legitimate if we don't need it and if we know that that's not what holds us together. But when that's what holds us together, then we don't have a Church, we have something else. It's all right, perfectly all right if we don't need it, as I repeat, but when that's all churches have, and brother and sister, we might as well admit it, that's often all churches have.

That's just all they have. I told you about the fellow who was preaching a sermon and he had it advertised out in front of his church and his topic for the coming Sunday. I had to leave town and couldn't go to hear what the dear saintly brother had to say.

But the topic announced was, Who Killed Cock Robin? Now, that kind of stuff, you know, is quite prominent and we get it everywhere. But what is this? If we know and understand what the local church is, what the church is, we'll know what a local church is and if we know what a local church is, we'll know what Avenue Road Church is. And I'm an ambitious man and I don't know whether this would ever happen or not, but this is happening to me.

I'm getting very ambitious. Paul said about certain churches, he said, I'm jealous for you. I'm ambitious for you.

Wasn't I ashamed to admit it? I'm ambitious for Avenue Road Church. I want it to become the best church in the city of Chicago, in the city of Toronto, excuse me. And I want it to become a church that everybody

will look to and all of them won't come and join it necessarily, all of them, but they look to and say, Now, how do they do it up there on Avenue Road? That's what I'm jealous for.

We should be the kind of church I've outlined last week and want to talk more about later. But tonight I say that first we've got to have a philosophy about the church. What is a church? Well, I want to give you three things tonight.

Every theologian, if any of them should have honored me by being present tonight, any preachers or pastors, missionaries or theologians, you will know that no man can say everything that ought to be said in one night or in three months. But I want to take three things tonight and show you what the church of Jesus Christ is, the true church of Jesus Christ. And then if that's true of the true church of Jesus Christ, that's true of Avenue Road Church if we are a true branch and member of that church of Jesus Christ.

First, let me say that the church is the bride of Christ. Now, Jesus Christ was a complete man. I told the young people that he was a complete man.

He had all the nature of a man. But he never wed a daughter of woman. He could have, but he never did.

He never wed any one woman, though he was a true and complete man. He never wed a daughter of woman that he might wed his whole church and his church be his bride. Now, a true local church is the bride of Christ in recapitulation.

That is, in miniature. Everything that is in the whole church of Christ should be recapitulated in a local church. Are you interested in that kind of thing, brothers and sisters, or do you want something else? I think you're interested.

And so I'm giving it to you. There's some difficulty tonight, but I'm giving it to you. And I say that the church, part of it in heaven and part of it on earth, the church is the bride of Christ.

And when our Lord Jesus has washed his bride, regenerated her, and prepared her, then he's coming back to take her as his bride. That's the whole church. But any local church is the whole church in recapitulation.

Just as, and let's see if we can think of an illustration out of the clear sky, just as an election in, say, Toronto, recapitulates a federal election, the same liberty is expressed, the same candidates run, and they talk about each other, and they plead their own worth, and they put up bulletins, and they do the same thing in a small way that on the federal level they do in a large way. Now, that's a poor illustration, but the whole bride of Christ is recapitulated. Any local church is what the whole church is, only it's that in miniature, it's that in a smaller degree.

Listen to this from Philippians. For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it even as the Lord the church.

Now, there is a figure drawn from the husband and wife and applied directly and without apology to Jesus Christ and his church. He says, Just as a young man would not marry a dirty bride, so Jesus Christ will not marry a church that has blemish or wrinkles or spots or any such thing, but that he wants a glorious church and he wants to present it in that day, and he loves that church as a man loves his own bride. Now, that's here.

Have you ever thought about this? One time there was a man named Adam, and he was just there all by himself. He was the first bachelor. He had no wife.

He was just there. And God said to Adam, Adam, call in all the animals and name them. Adam called all the tame animals, for they were all tame before the fall, in before him, and he named them.

And according to the Bible, names are given after their nature. And everything was named after its nature. He named the bear after the bear nature and the lion after the lion nature and the elephant after the elephant nature and whatever was there.

He named it according to its nature. Then it says, This touching little thing. But for Adam was found no one wife meet for him.

No meat for him was found. M-E-T-E. And some people think that that means, just means, that there was no woman yet.

But it means that they had not found any nature like his to have a mate, to have someone that was meat for him. Not a mate for him, but meat for him. That is, that was worthy of him.

There had to be somebody who had his nature. And there wasn't anybody, because there were all the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, but they didn't have the same nature as the man Adam. He was superior, made in the image of God.

So God said to Adam, Adam lie down. Adam lay down and went into a deep sleep. There in a state of deep anesthesia, God operated on the man and took from his chest a rib.

And God, who had made the man, now fashioned the woman, the rib into a woman, gives her life and calls her woman, the life giver, who shall give life to all the race. And when Adam came out of his sleep, he looked around and he saw Eve, and she looked good in his sight. And Adam knew Eve and she conceived a son, and thus the race went on.

So this is how we got our start. But now there was another Adam, for in 1 Corinthians 15 it tells us that there is a second Adam, the last Adam, and that Adam was Jesus Christ the Lord. And he had a nature that was divine.

He was divine. He was God in the flesh. And I said a while ago, and shocked some of you by saying it, no doubt, that Jesus was a perfect and complete man, but he wed no daughter of woman.

He wed no daughter of woman because there was not found any worthy of him. So God put him as the old Adam in old days, on the cross in a deep sleep. And he opened his side as he opened the side of Adam in ancient days.

And out from his side there flowed not a rib but the water and the blood. And from that water and blood, God is washing and cleansing and preparing a bride worthy of Jesus. A bride just as he didn't create Eve

from nothing as he has Adam.

He created Eve from the wounded side of Adam. So the Lord is not creating a race that does not exist to be his church. He takes the race that now exists and takes certain members of it and washes it in the blood that came from that wounded side and gives by the Holy Spirit the nature of Christ to the bride of Christ.

So she'll be worthy of him. There was not among the sons and daughters of Eve, there was not one that was meet for Jesus. He's preparing himself a bride meet for him who has his nature, as Eve had the nature of the husband out of whose side she came.

The old theologian in ancient days said, God took the bone that made the woman not from Adam's head that he might lord it over her, not from his feet that she might lord it over him, but from his heart that she might understand him and he might love her. Now that's what the church is, the bride of Christ. My dear brother and sister, if you are a member of the true church of Christ and therefore you are a member of that company that will make up the true bride of Christ, and we as a local church recapitulate, that is, we are in miniature the bride of Christ.

And this is what a church is, you see. This is what a church is. And then secondly, the church is the body of Christ.

I've already mentioned that so much and talked about so much, we hardly need to take time with it. But Jesus Christ is the head and just as the head is on top of your body, directing your body, so Jesus Christ is the head of his church, directing his church. My hands do this because my head tells it to.

Some people wonder why my head tells my hands to wiggle, but they do. My hands wouldn't think of it, you see. So my head directs my body.

And Jesus Christ being the head of this church, he directs the church. The head of this church is not A. W. Tozer or A. N. McNally. The head of this church is Jesus Christ the Lord.

He is the head of the church of which the church is the body. But of course this church is not all the body of Christ, but this church is in miniature the body of Christ. And the church are the members, the Christians are the members of the body of Christ.

Now what I'm giving you is no cult doctrine and it doesn't require anybody to start a new church. Oh, I never started a new church, never want to. I mean to start a new denomination.

No. You can stay in the Christian and Missionary Alliance and belong to the Avenue Road Church and not change your doctrines at all. Because this is not a new doctrine.

This is believed by everybody that takes time to think what they're believing. No man ever hated his own flesh, it says. And so Jesus Christ can't hate his church.

He loves his church because his church is a part of him. He nourishes it and he cherishes it. Now thirdly, I'm giving you three figures of speech.

Two of them from Paul himself and one of them from the Old Testament. The third thing I would say that a church is, the church, and if the church then any local church, and then if any local church then Avenue Road Church. It is an ark on the floodwaters.

That is, as the ark of Noah floated on the waters containing all of the race that was going to be salvaged. So the church of Jesus Christ is an ark on the floodwaters. And hear me now without hesitation.

It contains all that will be salvaged from the fall. Remember that. All in the ark are saved and all out of the ark perish.

Now that is a perfect illustration. All around about us, all around about us, there's a perishing world. The perishing world.

And we float on the top of it on a little ark called the church. And all that are not in the church will perish. You say, now hold on a minute, brother.

Do you mean to say that if you don't join the Avenue Road Church we'll all be lost? No, no, you didn't think I said that, did you? I didn't even think you thought I said it. But what I say is the church is the ark containing the ransom. And outside of the ark there is the floodwaters of judgment and death.

Inside of the ark there is life. And so outside of the living church of Christ there are the unregenerate, the lost. Inside there are the regenerate, the saved.

You are not saved by joining a church. That's a mistake that the local churches make. I was converted, as I've said here before, just on my own, more or less.

I just got converted. That's all. I went and got converted.

I don't know. I had a little help. I heard a man preach on the street and had a little help.

But I got converted. And then I looked around for a church to join and I joined a church. Then I understood I should be baptized and I went and got myself baptized.

I went to what they're now called Disciples Church, Church of Christ. The old Dr. Wise took me down into the water and brought me up and he said, Thank God, a newborn soul. Well, he believed that.

I crossed my fingers on that one because I knew better. I knew that I'd been born again in my mother's attic, down on my knees, praying a year and a half before. And therefore I knew I wasn't a newborn babe.

I could walk and talk and I was already preaching. So I wasn't a newborn babe. But I went and got immersed because I felt I should.

Now that isn't a pitch for immersion, though I believe in it. It's only to say that's the way I felt and that's what I did. But I wasn't converted then.

I had been converted before. But now I was baptized as a proof of my conversion. And I got into the church.

I got into the church the day I was converted. That is, the day I was born again, I entered the church. And they all came in by the door into that ark.

And Christ is the door and whosoever will be saved must come in by the door for there is no other ark on the flood. Suppose somebody said, Well, hold on a minute now. Don't be bigoted and narrow.

Let's be tolerant about this. We don't want to get in Noah's ark. We want an ark of our own.

Well, there weren't any other arks on the flood. You either get into Noah's ark or perish. And a few got into Noah's ark and God preserved the race, salvaged from the judgment a small number.

So in the church of Christ God is salvaging from the wreck a small number. A fatal error is the independent life. You say, I'm a Christian but I don't associate with any churches.

I'm a Christian but I don't feel a necessity whatsoever to join the church. There are hypocrites in the church. Yeah, that's true.

Hypocrites in the church. Jesus had his Judas's carrot. Paul had, Peter had his Ananias and Sapphira.

Paul had his Demas. So they do. We always have hypocrites in the church, I suppose.

That is, in the local assembly. But not in the true church of Christ. And for a while, the local assembly sometimes and the true church of Christ are not synonymous.

And sometimes there come into the church persons who have never come into the church. You know what I mean. That is, there are people who join a church who have never been born into the church.

Some churches actually throw the doors open. And they say, now while we sing the closing hymn will those who want to unite with the church come to the front. And Al Capone could come, you know.

And just anybody could come down and join. Nobody asks them anything. Just take them in.

I don't believe in that at all. I know you don't. I believe that if you're going to get into a local church, you should first be in the universal church.

That if you want to join Avenue Road, you should first be in the church which you purchased with his own blood. You should get into the church for the new birth. By the operation of the Holy Ghost regeneration.

And then join a local assembly. But I am a Christian and I don't believe in associating. All right.

But I want to point out it's impossible to receive Christ and reject his people. You know how to find the shepherd, go where the sheep are. If you don't know where the shepherd is, go where the sheep are.

All else being equal, you will find the shepherd with his sheep. And so if you will hunt around where the sheep of the Lord are bleeding and nibbling, you will find the shepherd there. So I believe in the assembly of the saints, the people of God coming together.

And whoever receives Christ must receive his people, too. For it's impossible, I say, to receive Christ and reject his people. Because he said, Whosoever receives you, receives me.

And whoever rejects the bride, rejects the bridegroom. And whoever rejects the flock, rejects the shepherd. And whoever rejects those that are in the ark, rejects the ark.

And whoever rejects the ark will perish in the flood. I think that's clear enough. I'm surprised that it's not known more widely by more people.

Remember, again, I'm not giving you anything that I thought up. And I'm not giving you anything new. And I'm not giving you anything that wouldn't be approved by practically any church, any gospel church or evangelical church in the city of Toronto or anywhere in the world.

I'm just restating it, you see. And I think that we ought to have now a reformation within our own hearts that would rethink this whole thing on our knees and say, Oh, wait a minute. I wonder if I've had high and sacred enough.

I wonder if I could give you an illustration. I'm a great scholar for illustration. I don't tell stories.

I dig my illustrations out of the air. And I wonder if I could have an illustration. All right.

Two young couples. They marry in June. And one of them is a Christian couple and take a serious view of life.

And they're the love home and they're looking forward to children. The other couple love each other too in a Hollywoodish kind of way. And they look forward to skin diving and water skiing and just having fun.

Just having fun. And they're living together but having fun. They don't want any brats.

They take your time. So in the course of time, two or three years, lo and behold, both of them, gals, come through with a little baby. And one of them was wanted and one was not.

But the two attitudes of those parents toward those two babies. Now, there's what I'm trying to get at. Christian parents look at their little baby and their hearts are aglow.

And they say, Isn't she absolutely wonderful? Maybe they cry. When I heard our oldest boy, our first boy, of course, when I heard him wail his first baby wail, I broke down. I knew he wasn't sick and I knew he wasn't hungry.

But it hit me deeper, deeper than reason. It was nature. It was old Adam back there, I guess, or somebody talking.

And I broke down. I don't think my wife ever knew it, but I bawled when I first heard the little cry. And I felt a sense of sacredness.

And this first hypothetical couple feels a sense of sacredness. And so they pray and they plan and they say, Oh, wasn't God good to give us this little one? And she becomes a spiritual thing to them. Now, they know she isn't.

They know that when she grows up she'll be like other people. She'll have her tantrums. She's human.

She's a human. But all they take of her is a gift from God. And it becomes a sort of a sacrament to them, bringing up that little baby.

Now, that's one. The other couple, they've got the baby and, of course, even animals like, they're young. So after a while they learn to like the little fellow.

But they never quite see it the way the first couple does. Never occurred to one of them to say, Isn't this amazing? Isn't this beautiful? Isn't this a gift from God? Ought not we to pray that God might help us to be worthy to raise this little chap? Never occurs to them. And just as soon as she's able to be around, they send for a babysitter and they go on their way and have their time.

Get in right after midnight, poor babysitter trying to do homework. You know how it is. The point is, the first couple understood the sacredness of their baby.

The other couple were not thinking of the sacredness of their baby. They were thinking of having fun out of life and getting what they could out of life. But they took the baby as a necessary evil which they learned to like after a while and bat around and they liked him, you know.

Now there's the way with the two views of the church. If I don't know what a church is and if I only come to a church as a social fact, something I've gotten used to and that I think would be better to belong to than not belong to it, and I go join it, I take the same attitude toward it as the second couple. It doesn't have that glow of sacredness.

But if I see that there is a great church being salvaged from the wreckage, such as Noah and his family were salvaged from the judgment of the flood, and that that great church is found throughout the whole world in local groups, and those local groups, if they're true churches, are composed, they compose the great big church that will be salvaged from the wreck when our Lord returns at last. And oh, what a different attitude we'll take toward the church. We'll say, Oh God, how lovely that you ever let me get associated with the people who believe in thee.

How wonderful that I could go every Sunday and spend my time singing and listening to preaching and hearing the word expounded. And the church will glow to you. It will have a sense of sacredness on it.

And if you find any blemish in the church, you'll do what the young Christian couple does with their baby. You won't like it, but you'll try to correct it, but you won't throw the baby out because of it. You'll say, I know there are some people in the church that aren't all they ought to be, but I thank God from the depth of my heart I ever got to know the church, that he let me ever become a member of it at all, to get into it and join it and fellowship with it.

Now, if you haven't formally joined by coming up front, you see, there are two ways of joining a church. There is putting yourself into the middle of it with your prayers and your money and your enthusiasm and your optimism and your worship, and then maybe for reasons known to you, never joining quite, never getting a card. The other way is to do the first things and then also take a card out.

So this is not making a closed communion out of the Avenue Road Church. Everybody is welcome here that wants to worship God, but I believe that we ought to get with a fellowship. But what I want to point out now is that the reason in closing for a public confession, why does the Lord want us to make a public confession? In the Book of Romans you will read, The Word is nigh, the inner tenth chapter, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, that is, if thou shalt confess Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth under righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made under salvation. The heart believes and the mouth confesses, and both are necessary to salvation. Even the thief on the cross made his poor, pitiful confession.

So I believe that is why God wants us to fellowship with each other and get together and witness and testify and tell the world and tell each other, because with the mouth confession is made under salvation. So now my plea and mine is for those of you who have never undergone the marvelous act of regeneration of the new birth, I urge you to think this thing seriously and remember that you get into the ark through the door and Jesus Christ is the door and if you reject the ark you reject the door and if you reject the door you perish in the flood. Remember that to become a member of the body of Christ and

joined with the bride of Christ it is necessary that you be born into the family of Christ.

And how you are born in is right here before us. It is by believing in your heart that Jesus is Lord and confessing your faith with your mouth to the people. That's so reasonable and good and beautiful that I don't understand why anybody should find fault with it in this terrible day.

I want to give an illustration. Suppose if you were somewhere or anywhere in the world down in the United Nations or anywhere and somebody asks you what's your nationality where do you live is there anybody here that would be ashamed to say I'm a Canadian if there is I'm ashamed of you I wouldn't be if I were Canadian I'd be proud of it is there anybody that would dare to decide it they would say no just a minute just a minute let's not talk about it I don't care to line up boy oh boy I line up I want them to know where I belong if I were down there being surrounded by all that bunch of hundred and how many ten nations buzzing all around me they'd say that little guy there what's he I wouldn't be afraid to say I'm an American like it or not you wouldn't be ashamed to say I'm a Canadian I like to sing oh Canada I'm a Canadian alright why then do they want to tell us that we ought to go through life being secret Christians too frightened to say I'm a Christian I tell you what Jesus Christ has honored you by finding you and laying his hand on you you ought never to be ashamed of him you ought to be able to stand anywhere anytime and lean back and say I don't care who knows it I'm a Christian over here is a Buddhist and over here is a Christian let them be what they will be I want the world to know I'm a Christian don't you?

I want them to know it I'm not a very good one I don't claim to be a good one I read the lives of the saints I know I've got a long way to go and I want you to know that I've got a sharp tongue and abrupt manner and sometimes I'll say things that hurt feelings I don't want you to hurt feelings just forgive the fellow who is too dumb to know better I don't know better you see so I'm not a good one maybe but oh brother I'm a Christian I'm a member of that body of Christ I belong to that group that's the bride of Christ and I hear the waters of judgment showering and undulating underneath me and I know it doesn't touch me because I'm in the ark along with the blessed few who have been honored by God with grace and for that reason I'm not ashamed that I don't want you to be and so my brothers and sisters do you see what I mean I want Avenue Road Church to be a church so well taught so separated so clean so good so charitable so right so much like the Christ she claims to serve and I don't have to say to anybody in the world I'm Pastor of the Avenue Road Church I can go down across the border anywhere and they say to me where are you now Tozer you used to be in Chicago didn't you I'm always getting there yes yes I used to be well where are you now well I'm preaching around here and there what did you think of me what did you think of me I don't like to say don't press me but listen I want to know I'm Pastor of the Avenue Road Church but don't tell it what would you think of me I say to you brothers and sisters I don't want that kind of a church and you don't want that kind of a church we want a separated heads up knee bent live church clean and separated knowing where we're together sure we can have skate parks sure we can have our coffee sure we can have our gatherings social gatherings nothing wrong with it provided you know that you don't need it just something on the side reliance but your center is something else it's all together Jesus Christ is your center so the way to get in is by faith and confession now there's a song I haven't heard sung for a long time and I've asked Bob if he will lead us we're going to stand and sing it even though I've preached too long I still think we ought to sing all of it and those of you may be students may be friends from other countries here studying maybe somebody wandered in or come with a friend and you don't know that you're in you hovered around the church but you can't say positively I know I'm in you of Christ by the new birth saved why we'd like to have you come down to the front and just be down here and I'll see you right after church soon as we're concluded alright Bob

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