

A. W. TOZER

(1897 - 1963)

Saturday, June 3

Philippians 3:10 *I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death*

Aiden Wilson Tozer¹ was born in a small farming community in western Pennsylvania. As a teenager he worked at a tire company in Akron, Ohio. On the way home from work one day he heard a street preacher say, “If you don’t know how to be saved... just call on God.” The young man did just that and it changed his life. Five years later (1920) at the age of 23, Tozer was called to be the pastor of a little church in West Virginia. After his formal ordination ceremony, Tozer slipped away to the woods nearby and prayed for God’s hand on his ministry. Years later he would publish this prayer which he called “The Prayer of a Minor Prophet.” Part of that prayer went like this, “I beseech You, give me sharp eyes to detect the presence of the enemy; give me understanding to see and courage to report what I see faithfully. Make my voice so like Your own that even the sick sheep will recognize it and follow You.”²

God answered his prayer. For 44 years he pastored in various churches. He spent many hours each day in study and prayer. Besides his preaching, Tozer was also a writer and editor of the *Alliance Weekly* magazine for over 30 years. He wrote 12 books as well as numerous pamphlets and articles which have been compiled into book form. His best known books are The Pursuit of God (1948) and The Knowledge of the Holy (1961).

Tozer considered himself an “evangelical mystic.” This does not refer to some ‘Harry Potter’ magic or to a hermit living out in the desert hearing voices and getting visions. In his last book The Christian Book of Mystical Verse (1963), Tozer described it this way:

“I refer to the evangelical mystic who has been brought by the gospel into intimate fellowship with the Godhead. His theology is no less and no more than is taught in the Christian Scriptures...He differs from the ordinary orthodox Christian only because he experiences his faith down in the depths of his sentient being...He is quietly, deeply and sometimes almost ecstatically aware of the presence of God in his own nature and in the world around him.”³

One goal of Tozer’s preaching and writing was to bring people into intimate fellowship with God, to see God’s presence in the world around them, and to put this experience with God into practice in everyday life. Pastor Warren Wiersbe describes the sort of questions one is confronted with when reading or listening to Tozer:

“Is God real to you? Is your Christian experience a set of definitions, a list of orthodox doctrines, or a living relationship with God? Do you have firsthand experience with Him, or a second hand experience through others? Is your heart hungering and thirsting after personal holiness?”³

Can you echo the prayer Tozer writes in his book The Pursuit of God? “O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more.”⁴

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._W._Tozer

² For Tozer’s full prayer: <https://equippingsaints.com/2017/11/19/insight-a-w-tozer-and-the-prayer-of-a-minor-prophet/>

³ Quoted in Warren Wiersbe. 50 People Every Christian Should Know, p. 355

⁴ Full quote @ <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/203894-the-pursuit-of-god>