

Anselm - Proslogion – Chapter 1

Come now, you small and insignificant person — step away from your daily business for just a moment. Escape, if only briefly, from the noise and clutter of your own thoughts. Set down your heavy responsibilities for now, and leave behind your exhausting work. Give yourself over to God for a little while, and simply rest in him.

Go into the quiet inner room of your soul. Shut everything out except God and whatever genuinely helps you in your search for him. Lock the door behind you, and then look for him there. Speak now, my whole heart — speak now to God: *I seek your face, O Lord, your face I seek.*

Come then, Lord my God — teach my heart where to look for you, and how. Teach me where to find you, and how to find you.

Lord, if you are not here with me, then where am I supposed to look for you, given that you are absent? But on the other hand, if you are everywhere, then why — since you must be present — do I not see you? Surely you live in a light that no one can approach or enter. But where is this unapproachable light? How can I even get near it? Who will guide me and bring me into it so that I might see you there? And by what signs should I look for you? In what form will I recognise you? I have never seen you, Lord my God. I do not know what your face looks like.

What is he to do, O most high Lord — what is this exile to do, cut off so far from you? What is your servant to do, who is torn apart by love for you and yet pushed away from your presence? He longs to see you — and your face is too far away from him. He wants to draw close to you — and the place where you live is beyond all reaching. He aches to find you — and has no idea where you are. He is desperate to search for you — and does not know what he is looking for.

Lord, you are my God and my Lord — and I have never seen you. You created me. You made me again when I was broken. You have given me every good thing I have. And still I do not know you. I was made, in the end, for the purpose of seeing you — and I have not yet done the very thing I was made to do.

And you, O Lord — how long? How long, Lord, will you forget us? How long will you turn your face away from us? When will you look at us and hear us? When will you open our eyes and show us your face? When will you give yourself to us again?

Look at us, Lord. Hear us. Light us up. Show yourself to us. Give yourself to us, so that things may go well for us — because without you, everything goes so badly for us. Have pity on our struggling and our reaching out towards you, because on our own we can do nothing.

Teach me to look for you — and show yourself to me as I look. Because I cannot even begin to search for you unless you teach me how, and I cannot find you unless you reveal yourself to me. Let me seek you by wanting you. Let me want you by seeking you. Let me find you by loving you. Let me love you in the finding of you.