

1 Kings 16-18 - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon calls for a deeper understanding of God's majesty and the importance of living in obedience and prayer like Elijah.

Duration: 1:27:21

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:1-18, Matthew 4:4, James 5:16

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing gratitude for the venue and encourages the audience to attend more frequently. The sermon then focuses on the book of James, specifically chapter 5. The speaker mentions the growth of a soul and the growth of a work, referring to biographies and autobiographies of Christians. The example of Hudson Taylor, a missionary in China, is highlighted as someone who started as a young boy and eventually founded the China Inland Mission. The speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer, especially in times of poverty and need. The sermon concludes by mentioning Elijah as an example of a man with similar passions as us who prayed fervently.

Transcript

Oh, wonderful to have you. How many here for the last time? Well, that's the only way to live. You should live as though this were your last day on earth.

What if you die tonight? Would it be okay to go straight to heaven? Nothing to put straight? No apologies to your parents for your bad manners and all that kind of thing? How are you? Nice to see you. We've got some new friends along, too. Here, there are others, too.

Do we have a hymn book? Bethany, I should sing, I mean, should sing better out of this now. Oh, I see you've gone on tape now, too. That's great.

I saw your tapes advertised, your videos. Great. Well, my prayer this week has been this, that in this session, which begins, obviously, tonight, till it finishes, which may be Easter, I don't know when.

I mean, not this meeting tonight, but that won't last till Easter. My one prayer is that this series of nights that we have together will give us a new revelation of the majesty of God. Yes.

If I could reduce the problem of the modern church to an irreducible minimum, it's this. We do not know God. We know about him.

We know theology. We know something of the Word of God, but we don't know very much about the God of the Word. And it really is my intense desire that this, what we call winter session, the winter weather's here already, will be, to me at least, and I hope to you, a new revelation of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God which passes knowledge and the personality of God himself.

A lot of this is captured in the 20th hymn here, and I want us to sing this with our hearts as well as with our lips. The trouble with so many of these hymns, again, is they're only half of what they used to be. You'll have to reprint another one, another hymn book.

Number 20, I'll worship the King. You'd better stand and sing. Please.

Let's pray. Lord, as we sing this majestic hymn, we're reminded of our own frailty. We acknowledge we're frail children of dust.

From dust we came, to dust we return. We're very frail in our understanding of thee. We think of your glorious majesty as this.

Him has declared it, that whose robe is the light and whose canopy space. And as Isaiah says, the earth is his footstool and the clouds are the dust of his feet. Lord, I want to invite you, and I trust all of us do.

I'm sure Melody, these others do, and I pray the students do. We want you to invade this sanctuary Friday night by Friday night. Maybe it will be shattering for us in some experiences as you expose us to ourselves as well as to your glory and your majesty.

As you expose us to your light, we realize that we still in a measure walk in darkness. As you expose your strength, we realize again our weakness. As you expose us to your majestic revelation in your word, we shall realize our ignorance.

For your word comes to our rescue because you have said it's the lame that take the prey, not to the strong. This race is not to the swift. This battle is not to the strong.

Our frailty is an advantage. It casts us more on yourself. Our ignorance is an advantage because we plead almost grown in your presence for wisdom.

Oh, that one night you may baptize us with a spirit of wisdom such as we have never had before. Lord, we don't want you to say to us when we stand before the millions around your throne, we do not want to say, I had many things to tell you down there at last days, but I couldn't tell you. You are too immature, too preoccupied, too diversified even in your thinking.

Grant that we may be able to say with the apostle Paul, this one thing I do, and that one thing be to pursue the holiness of God. Lord, I do not believe the world has yet seen the mightiest power of the church. I don't believe as many do that it finished with the New Testament or the days of the apostles because you've told us that your Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Nevermore did we need a baptism of strength than we do this day. Never before were our enemies so arrogant, so wealthy, so dominant, so projected on the press, in the press, the newspapers, on the TV screens, in the radio, in the schools, in the colleges. It seems as though almost the conspirators have tried to de-deify the Lord Jesus Christ to tell us how little of the word we can believe instead of how much.

Lord, I believe I express the desire of all our hearts tonight, we are candidates for all the fullness of God. We don't know what all that means. We may have to stretch our hearts to contain more and stretch our thinking.

But Lord, we pray that just as in the tabernacle of old there is a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day, that there's such a pillar of fire over the last days whether I'm teaching or anybody else is teaching, that it will throw its light not just to the boundaries of America but to the ends of the earth. Lord, if we put it in modern, simple language, you would ask you to make this room, I would ask you each night to make this room the workshop of the Holy Ghost. Conform us, shape us to the image of your Son.

We don't want to be famous people, we want to be holy people. We don't want to be known by men, we want to be known by God. And it seems all to be settled in the word, Lord Jesus, that you gave us, blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

As a poet said, O fill me with thy fullness, Lord, until my very heart o'erflow. In kindling thought and glowing word thy love to tell, thy praise to show. O strengthen me that while I stand firm on the rock and strong in thee, I may stretch out a loving hand to wrestlers in life's troubled sea.

As we open your word, we pray you'll open our eyes, open our minds, and then open our mouths to declare the revelations you give us and the purpose you have for each of our individual lives. Lord, I don't believe that the redemptive work of God in Christ or through Christ was to get us into heaven or escape hell or save us from vicious sins. Those are fringe benefits and beautiful, but Lord, I believe it was the whole redemptive program that blood and sweat of Gethsemane and the agony of Calvary and the glory of the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit that marvelous day was all that we may be conformed to the image of his Son.

That's what you've told us we're elected to be, conformed to the image of the Son. We remember all the students who have been here and have come out from this fellowship. Wherever they are tonight, bless them.

We pray for the literature as it goes out. Sanctify every piece. Particularly in this horrible day of abortion, we pray you'll bless this ministry that particularly you've given to dear Melody.

As the tapes go out, the audios and the videos, as this issue of the paper goes out, Lord, make it a terror to the devil. Let's sing again. We must sing one.

I never feel we've been here if we don't sing. It's hard for me to sing it. That's number one.

Only one man that ever lived could play this. Now, Bob, don't get angry with me here. Nobody ever played Holy, Holy, Holy like Keith.

Keith, listen. Maybe he is. Maybe he's playing it up there.

How do you know he isn't? Don't look so incredulous, you know. I preach long and strong, but never wrong. So let's sing it.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty. Courteous. So to Melody and what I call the senior staff here and others, I want to thank you for the facilities using this lovely place again.

It's home to some of us. If it isn't to you, well, come more often. Okay, let's look at the Epistle of James.

James, the fifth chapter. And I guess you'll guess what the subject is. There are many, many, many great biographies and autobiographies of Christians written in two volumes.

A very classic work on Hudson Taylor, the first volume, the big thick thing, is called *The Growth of a Soul*, which shows you the growth of the boy that got saved to a time he became a lonely missionary in central China. He founded the China Inland Mission. All the other missions went on the coast, but he penetrated into the center.

The second volume is called *The Growth of a Work*. A remarkable thing, that man never asked for a penny, never took an offering in a meeting. Now, it's no good you doing that.

If your faith hasn't stretched that far, you better not try it. But maybe it will stretch so far. Verse 17, Elias.

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. Now, that cuts away all the excuses we make that we're not kind of angels or half cherubims or born with a super intellect or something. He was a man of like passions as we are.

If you doubt that, he stood up to 850 men and ran away from one woman. Isn't that amazing? So, he must have been as nervous as we are. What did it say? He was a man subject to like passions as we are and he prayed.

That's volume 1. Volume 2 is verse 18 and he prayed again. Now, I don't know how you were raised and what background you have. I'm very glad that I wasn't raised in a day when my Sunday school teacher brought Muppets or Puppets or something like that along.

We were taught properly, of course, in England that I still remember many of those wonderful Sunday school stories. You know, the favorites were then the altar and now David and Goliath. Oh, we loved that.

You know, the odds are so different. Or Samson. But as I've read the background of the story of Elijah, I wonder why Elijah isn't listed with the same kind of persons.

I don't know any man more heroic in the whole of the word of God until Jesus himself came than Elijah. Turn back to the 18th chapter, pardon me, the 17th chapter in the first book of Kings. Now, in case I forget, you know, I do forget sometimes.

Martin, you're too young to forget. I know that. Do you know the law that there are three things about old age? Do you know that one? The first is loss of memory.

I can't remember the other two. But it wasn't until I read this, I must have read this 70 years. It wasn't until this week I realized this is a classical example, this story, if ever there is one.

It's a classical example of a man that shut up heaven. What he bound in heaven was bound on earth. And what he released in heaven was released on earth.

Why didn't anybody ever tell me that? You can't plead ignorance. I've told you tonight. Look at my watch.

I don't use it much. At the end of the first, in the first book of Kings chapter 16, beginning at verse 30, let me tell you my old joke again here. I read, of course, from the Living Bible, King James Version.

The NIV, how many of you have an NIV? Good, burn them. Do you know what the NIV is? It's exactly the same text as a Jehovah Witness Bible. It has 500 less words than the King James Version.

Some of them should be omitted from the King James, but not all that anyhow. But, verse 30, 1 Kings 16, 16 verse 30 says, Ahab, the son of Amri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. Now, 58 years before this, there'd been a dividing of the kingdom.

Then you have an old succession of kings. The last king that we mention here is Ahab. He was the seventh.

Now, the second king did more evil than the first. The third did more evil than the second. And you go right down until you come to Ahab.

And he does more than all the aggregate iniquity of all the kings that were before him. Verse 33, verse 32, He rode an altar to Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove and did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

In his days did Heel, the Bethelite, build Jericho. He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son. Why did he rebuild Jericho? Well, why did it fall down? Some men that walked around it, how many times? How many? Right.

You've got a new version. This lady just made a new version. She says seven.

They marched around seven days and then on the last day they marched around what? How many times? Oh, I'll leave. I'm going to do your homework for you. You're lazy enough apparently without me encouraging you.

Okay. He rebuilt Jericho which God said should never be rebuilt. And it says what? He rode up an altar to Baal and then he raised groves.

Do you know what that word there really means? The nearest we can get to it is a totem pole. It's a place where they assembled to worship but they did not assemble to worship God. Okay.

Elijah the Tishbite, chapter 17, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, there shall be no before whom I stand. You know, if you stand before God you'll never kneel before anybody else for sure. There shall not be dew nor rain these years according to the word of the Lord.

According to my word. The reason this man was so courageous was he had a deep, deep settled conviction that you and I have to have if we're going to serve God. And that was that the word of the Lord came to him.

You know, when Satan came to Jesus, what did Jesus do? In modern language, he threw the book at him. Every time Satan came, Jesus said, It is written, it is written, it is written, it is written. Well, that's what God wants us to do.

The word is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path. His courage was established in his convictions. All right, verse 2. The word of the Lord came unto him saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the book.

Kill it that is before Jordan. Now, this man is going to stand up against a multitude of people. Do you remember the Proverbs? Proverbs, what, 28.1 says, The wicked flee.

It doesn't mean that little thing that bites is a wicked flee. It means the wicked flee, they fly. I think those little things are wicked, sure, but the wicked flee when no man pursueth But the righteous are as bold as a lion.

What's it say in the, what psalm is it there? Psalm 3, I think, in verse 8. I will not be afraid, though a horse should encamp against me. Montgomery, an old English hymn writer, said that prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air. His watchword at the gates of death, he enters heaven by prayer.

O thou by whom we come to God, the life, the truth, the way, the path of prayer thyself hath taught, Lord, teach us how to pray. There is no ministry more searching than the ministry of prayer. You can get by in other things.

You know, I didn't realize until yesterday, you smart folk have thought this often, I'm sure, but you know, Jesus said to his disciples in Gethsemane, Watch with me. But he never said pray for me. The disciples said, Lord, teach us to sing.

No? What? Oh, oh, it was Paul who said, men ought always to sing and not to faint. No? Two struck out twice. Oh, James said, when you're sick, sing to one another.

That would make some of us sick if somebody sang to us, wouldn't it, sometimes? You know, the self-sufficient do not pray. The self-satisfied don't want to pray, and the self-righteous cannot pray. There are men going around these days doing all kinds of miracles.

What have you got? And they're living in adultery, and they get by with it. Some are frauds with money, and they get by with it. But you see, in prayer, essentially, the psalmist says, Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands.

That's significant of our dealings with the world. And a pure heart, which is our relationship with God. There's nothing more demanding.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Which means, of course, again, into the presence of the Lord. The psalmist was an amazing man. Tragic in some way.

But even though he was wealthy, and he sat on a throne, he had armies. Can I say this? He was on the top of the charts singing. Yeah, he got up there, and he said, in the streets, they're singing, Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands.

He had an army. I guess he lived in a palace. He had all the accoutrements of a king.

And yet his language is, Bow down thine ear and hear me, for I am poor and needy. Prayer is the language of the poor. Again, he says, This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.

When do you cry most to God? When you're at the end of the line. When you've no patience left, or when you've no grace left, or when you've no resources left. You cry in your poverty.

Why should we cry in our riches, as well as in our poverty? The word of the Lord came unto him, and said, Get thee hence, and hide thyself. Notice there, that's chapter 17, and verse what? Verse what? Verse 3.

Hide thyself. If your Bible's big enough, if it isn't, to look across the page, turn to chapter 18.

And verse 1 says, It came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, Go and show thyself. The secret of his life, again, is obedience. I said it often, I'll say it again.

Some of you haven't heard this wisdom, so I must share it with you. Trust and obey. For what? And if you don't trust and obey, you rust and decay.

So do one or the other. That's right, put it down, you may never hear that again. But it's true.

I got that from an old, old, old Nazarene preacher in England. He used to quote that over and over again to young people. Trust and obey.

It's no good having profound theology, it's no good having a lot of knowledge of the Bible if we don't trust and obey. Go hide thyself. So what did he do? He went and he hid himself by the brook Kirith, that is before Jordan.

And it says, You shall drink of the brook, and I've commanded the ravens to feed me there now. I hate to say this, but a raven is a carnivorous bird. They've got a lot of their family around here, not my family, their family.

Those big ugly birds, you know, that fly on the road and they dive down and eat the corruption that somebody's knocked over a stinking skunk, but they still eat it. I suppose that's their particular flavor, they like it. Then up the road, somebody else, somebody killed a deer at the top of our road a while ago.

All the birds were there eating, devouring. Now an eagle will never eat corruption, never eat carrion. That's where we're likened to eagles, I suppose.

We should never eat it either. Reading junk and watching TV junk. But you see, the scholars get by here, they say, Well, do you know that word raven is there? It's capable of being translated two ways.

You can translate it as a bird or the same Hebrew word is used for Arab. Well, mercy on us. Doesn't that increase the miracle, an Arab feeding a Jew? I've commanded an Arab to feed thee there.

What? No, no. No, I believe it came. You know.

Now what do you think he did every morning when he got up? Do you think he climbed up to him and said, Lord, don't let anybody shoot my bird down, he's bringing my breakfast right now. Maybe this means we should only have two meals a day. That would help us out a lot down there, wouldn't it, Melody? Bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening and no snacks in between.

I understand now around here they don't eat between snacks anyhow. Bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. Go hide thyself.

Do you think he left his mailing address? Send my mail on. The hardest thing in the world is to get away from people. You can't tell me one man inside of the Word of God or outside of it who hasn't been a loner.

That doesn't mean he just goes on an island, Isle of Patmos or something, but it does mean he knows how to separate himself from people. Just reading the Word of Jesus today, come ye apart and rest awhile. Get thee hence and hide thyself by the Word of the Lord.

I've commanded the ravens to feed you there, so here's his obedience. He went and did according to the Word of the Lord. I've told this story often.

Let me abridge it. Dr. Tozer, one day when I went to his office, was reading a dog-eared letter from a little man that died about two years ago now in Africa called Buma. That little man got saved in a Baptist church.

I used this in South Carolina and a man at the back was smiling and he came up afterwards. I liked the story on Buma. I said, did you? He said, yeah, because my daddy was the pastor of that church and I was in the church when it happened.

The little guy ran to the front at the altar call, got wonderfully saved. Going out, the pastor looked at him, he never saw black people in their meetings anyhow. And he said, what can I do for you? And the little fellow said, give me a church, give you what? Give me a church.

Oh, oh, you're the man that was kneeling at the front a few minutes ago. No, I'm not. Yes, you are.

I know the color of your suit. Nobody else has a suit like that. You were kneeling at the front.

You're the man that was kneeling. No, he said. I'm the man that came from there.

He said, that man you saw died down there. Wouldn't it be nice if everybody knew that when they got saved? And that's what Romans 6 is all about, buried with him in his baptism. If you go in there unbroken, unrepentant, all you do is go in that water a dry sinner and come out a wet sinner.

Won't save you. Well, when he couldn't have a church to cut the long story short, he went outside of Durban in South Africa, walked up the road, found a footpath, followed the footpath, found a stream, went by the stream, found a cave, took a rock and he marked on the outside of the rock. And he stayed there twenty-one days and twenty-four hours.

And didn't eat any bread, didn't eat anything. He just drank water. At the end of that he said, Lord, I want to preach.

And that preacher said, I couldn't preach. So you tell me that I can preach. And he labored and prayed and God revealed himself to him and said, you're going to preach and you're going to have a healing ministry, which is unusual for a Baptist, I guess.

All due respect. But anyhow, that's what happened. What happened? He went to Durban.

They gave him a shack across the tracks, just a tin building that held about ten people, there were about ten or twelve going. He built it to a congregation of about two thousand every Sunday morning. Not only did white people go, government officials went to hear him.

God had told him he would have a miracle ministry and he believed God. Everywhere he went people were healed. He called some deacons one night and said, can you come to a hospital? Yes.

So they went to a hospital. He reported in to the lady at the desk there and she said, yes, his number is, what, say twenty-two in room thirteen. Oh, the deacon went as white as death, he said.

Did you hear that? To the other deacon, yeah. You heard what he said? Yeah, room, number twenty-two, room thirteen. That's the morgue.

He said, yes, that's right. Pastor, do you know that, that, that, that it's the morgue you go into? He said, well, it was a morgue Jesus went to when Lazarus was in it and if he's the same yesterday and today and forever, what's the problem? Well, they went in the morgue, he looked at number twenty-two, you know, everybody was quiet in the place and so. He just pulled the curtain on one side and then he pulled the cover and there's a guy laying like this, you know.

And Doom was just a little guy so he climbed upon the, on the body of the man and laid on top of him. I wouldn't dare do that. And he just said, in the name of Jesus Christ of Napper's rise.

And the corpse went ahem. Now, if he'd done that with me on him, I would have hit the ceiling. What happened? I got this book, I wish we could get permission to reprint it.

Did you read it? Wasn't it wonderful? It's the only copy in America as far as I know. I understood that there was a lot made and they got burned or something, some fire in Africa. But we still have that copy.

And he subsequently had a ministry like that. You see, he dared to believe God. Got on a limb, sure, he got the word of God.

God told him in that cave. Now, the wonderful thing to me is not that he went to that cave and stayed twenty-one days and nights without eating, just drinking of the stream. It's that he went back the same day every year for about twenty years.

Said goodbye to his wife, goodbye to the deacons. And went in the cave and stayed twenty-one days and twenty-one nights. You know, some people go, oh, I remember that.

I've written it in my Bible, you know, in case you forget when you got through with the Holy Ghost. Well, if you forget it, I don't think you ever had it. I don't believe we have to put it down on paper, at least.

I don't have to put it down on paper. But he went back anyhow. Stayed twenty-one days and twenty nights.

If you buy a new car, you don't expect to fill, you know, if it's twenty-five gallons it holds, you don't expect to fill it up once and run it for the rest of your life, do you? Are there repeated baptisms of the Spirit? Mr. Finney said that in Dean Martin. I started using illustration, I forgot the other Sunday. If you came in this room and it was dark, and you walk in and you say, there's no, there's nothing in that room.

There is, there's air, otherwise you'll fall down. There's no light, you switch the light on, it's full of air, you fill it with light, you fill it with people, you fill it with song. You can fill what is full over and over and over again without emptying it.

What about a glass of water? Well, fill it with water. Then what do you do? You drop one spot of ink in it and it colors the whole glass. It's full of water, now it's full of color.

You fill a room, it's full of air, then it's full of people, you turn on the heat, it's full of heat. Some lady visited the Avon lady and she comes down the island, everybody smells. And she fills the room with fragrance, so that the room is filled with light, it's filled with people, it's filled with song, it's filled with heat, it's filled with perfume.

Do you think that you got everything that God had for you the night you were filled with the Holy Ghost? If you think that, you do think that, you're wrong. Why does Paul pray for people who are filled with the Holy Ghost, number one, that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will? Or that they may be filled with joy and peace in believing? Some of those things kind of evaporate, they're subject to change and decay. And so, if you don't, I do, I know I need repeated anointings or what we call them baptisms, if you like, of the Holy Spirit of God.

I think most of us would do with a baptism of wisdom, wouldn't that help most of us? Just you and I, Melody. Okay, dear. Yes, that's what we need.

Okay. What do you think he was thinking about while he was in that cave? Do you ever think of that? Do you think he took a big scroll like this, first book of chronicles, and asked for delivery of the second edition or something? What was he thinking about? He was a man of light passions. Don't you think the devil assailed him? You fool, what are you doing here, in this dark, dusty, damp cave? You could be home eating good meals, you haven't had a meal now for two weeks? Come on! You know, faith that is going to be trusted is going to be tested.

Your faith and mine is not real until it's proved. You can have a theological faith that does nothing. You can believe in the fundamentals of Sri Saint and do nothing.

But faith has to be tested. And then when it's been proved, we have a new strength, a new realization that we're not standing on something flimsy, that actually we have a hold on God and by the grace of God he has a hold on us. He did according to the word of God.

Verse 7, It came to pass after a while that the brook dried up. Well, isn't that what always happens? There's nothing supernatural about a brook. There's something supernatural about a raven coming twice a day and bringing you bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening.

But the natural thing is for the brook. And the natural things always dry up first. Our courage dries up.

What seems to be our inspiration dries up. Sometimes our vision dries up. There are areas in our lives which dry up.

But wait a minute. By the same talking the supply of God's wisdom, the supply of inspiration from God does not need to dry up. It came to pass.

What do you think he felt like the first morning when he just came out of his cave and said oh the air is so lovely boy, the stream this morning this fresh water from the mountains you know it came down from the snows. Oh it, oh it isn't there. Now what do you do? Huh? No 7-Eleven stores around here or anything.

No it is God said I've commanded the ravens to feed thee there. Didn't say did he? I don't remember. Maybe check me here.

Didn't say the brook is going to last forever. He fully expected that. It was normal.

That brook will be there in the morning like it's been every morning. But it just wasn't there. You know that's something when your source of supply dries up on the human level isn't it? God has to do that sometimes.

Hudson Taylor I mentioned recently, recently? Earlier. He said that he and his people used to pray and a rich lady in America every time they prayed they got into a bind financially about every three months and every time they did this lady in America sent them a big fat check. One day they were in a real bind they prayed and nothing happened and they prayed and nothing oh they prayed more than a week nothing happened.

Maybe she died. The brook dried up. So what? Well let's do a bit better.

Let's pray and fast. Let's do some heart searching. Are you holding the power up? Is it you? Not me of course.

Someone else. Well Lord it's getting critical. The demands for money are flooding us and we've no money.

And you supplied our needs until now. And he said the Lord said have I supplied your needs? Ask the people how many, come on ask the whole of your staff how many of you are expecting this woman in America to send us money? Every hand went there. You're not trusting me you're trusting that woman in America.

So they had a nice little time of repentance and few tears and apologies to God and said Lord we'll never look to America again. But they still prayed. A nice check came from Australia.

Of course God had touched the heart over there. What's the problem? So easy to get tied up to a method or a person. The Lord by God is a jealous God.

Keep that in your mind he is jealous. He's jealous about the time we spend on other things that don't serve him time. Very often the book doesn't dry up with us we let the thing get away from us.

We know where our supply is but we feel well oh we were in a good class this morning we had a good time. Now thank God for all you get in being taught here. But by the same talking you've got to keep a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You can't live on theology. You can't live on emotion. You can't live on zeal.

They all evaporate. They're all the brooks that dry up. And God will make you as dry some days.

My goodness you think good and whatever's going to happen. You've never had a time like that do you Melody? You do occasionally. Oh.

Look. Lodge this in your mind. There are seasons in the Christian life that God gives you.

You may go through a spell that would last a week or maybe a month when it looks as though God's closed down altogether. The hands are like brass. It seems as though God isn't getting through to you.

I love that old hymn that says his wisdom never faileth. His sight is never dim. He knows the way he taketh and I will walk with him.

Of course lodge this bit of wisdom in your mind too. God does not owe you or me any explanations. If he wants to keep you in grade one.

Winston Churchill was one of the greatest men that ever lived. I didn't meet him. I saw him one day.

The greatest man in the world. Signed 2. R-O-H-A-R-R-O-W And it was a great grief to many people that the school that where the princes of England go and princes from other countries is eaten that he wouldn't go to that school. He was born in the largest house in England.

It's about twice the size of Buckingham Palace. much to the disgust of his lordly father who was a lord, very wealthy, wealthy man. Father disgusted.

Why didn't you move my son up? Because he has not mastered English. That happened the second year. Oh, his father scratching his head.

My boy retarded. What's wrong with him? He went through three years in that one class and he said it was the greatest blessing of his life. Surely he kicked and squirmed.

He wanted to go up in the class Oh, there's old Winnie. Oh, what a dummy he is. He'd been in that class now for three years.

Look at the stage when he became. Look at the writings he made. You know, we won't all go up the escalator together, even at last days, as super as it may be here.

We grow individually. Some of us are quick to comprehend and some of us are not quick to comprehend. Who knows, this may be your cave.

Because, you see, it's pretty dark in a cave. He had no electric light, in case you don't know. Where were we? Verse 7. Okay, so the book dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise and go to Zarephath, which belongs to Zidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman to feed thee there. See all these stages in his life? It doesn't go from A to Z in one step.

There's no, it's no good saying, you know, I went to my Bible school for a year or six months or whatever it is. Well, this may be a stopping place. I'm not sure they let you stay here three years in this class.

But it doesn't mean because you shake off the school that you've matured, you may graduate and get a diploma in a school wherever you go. But that doesn't mean we are mature in the sight of God. He still has a lot of shaping up to do in our lives.

The greatest thing that God can do is to make men and women. There's a slogan, I've seen it many times in many homes or in shops, Bible shops, prayer changes things. I don't like that.

I say prayer changes people and people change things. You cannot have a prayer life and be static. You want to go in grace? Pray.

What the disciples do? They went off somewhere. What did Jesus do? He went into the mountain to pray. You read the gospel of Luke, you'll discover that in the gospel of Luke he emphasizes the prayer life of Jesus more than Matthew and Mark.

Yes, sure Jesus was baptized in Jordan. A dove descended upon him, but Luke says while he was praying a dove descended on him. Sure he was crucified on a cross, but Luke says that while he was crucified he was praying.

What else did he do? He went on a mount of transfiguration. That must have been awesome. There's nothing like that until you get to Revelation.

There had been something before, I'm sure Isaiah 6 is the same thing in the Old Testament language. That Jesus was praying while he was transfigured. There's nothing will transform your life more than prayer.

That is, prayer based on the word of God. There's very pains of hell you'll get old of you sometime. Not now maybe, when you get a bit older in spiritual life.

There's a time when a girl is too young to bear children. There's a time when a woman is too old. There are times in our life, I'm convinced of this, when we should be fruitful in God and we miss it and we never get the chance again.

I said that once, I think it was 1950, the first time I came to America and I was in a Christian Missionary Alliance church in Louisville. And when I said it in the morning service, the pastor was halfway up the church and he walked down on his hands and knees, crawled on his hands and knees to the altar and held on to that altar and he just cried, he bellowed, oh God, don't let my church become too old to bear children. What Shakespeare said, there's a time in the affairs of men which taken by the flood leads on to higher things.

If a boat, the big boat misses the, misses the, misses the what do you call it now, the tide, it can't get into the harbor. There are tides in all our lives, we better obey God when we know that that anointing is there. You may feel dog tired, getting into bed, you feel an urge to pray and then the body wants to take over, snap at the body and say you're not taking over, I'm going to pray.

The last two or three weeks I've gone to bed at ten o'clock at night and got up at twelve and worked until two or three and felt as fit and fresh as I've ever felt in my life. I'm going to try and keep that habit up. You can't tell the Lord to lay off, when he starts working on you, obey him.

You know this man Elijah is a remarkable character as I say. I think he should have been in the, well, let me put it this way, if I'd been writing Hebrews 11 I would have put him in wouldn't you? Wouldn't you have put in a man that can change the weather, terrify a king? They have armies looking for him, isn't that amazing? I'd like Mr. Reagan, I hope he stays in four more years, if he doesn't we're sunk. I'd like Mr. Reagan, there's a fellow keeps saying on TV, I hope you know that I was invited to the White House again.

Why advertise it? Do you think Ahab would have invited Elijah to dinner? Do you think Herod would have invited John Baptist to dinner? They were scared to death of these men. Fancy they turn an army out. Do you know they put an all nations alert out for a man of God.

Isn't that something? Well, just look miserable, I think it is. Well, I don't know what he's saying, the 18th chapter in verse 10, as the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whether my Lord is not sent to seek thee. Bless God.

Why? What did he have an atom bomb in his pocket? He doesn't have an army. Isn't he rebelling against the nation? He hasn't sworn to destroy the king. What? Why are they terrified of a man of God? Was it Elijah, the next character where the king said, I forget, I get these two mixed up sometimes, where the king says, you know that fellow, that preacher guy, he knows what I say in my bedroom.

Isn't that something? And we thought ESP was everything. Or bugging. He was bugging the king's bedroom.

He knew what the king said. Find that man, he knows all my plans. Isn't that amazing? You know, one thing that really hurts me is the church is always one step behind the devil.

I think we ought to be one step ahead of him. Somebody should come and say, I had a revelation. You know, if this is going to be an ordinary school, I'm wasting my time.

I say this with all my heart. I want last day's ministry to be one of the most, if not the most exceptional Bible school in the world. It won't be easy, but it's possible.

The great curse of the church of Jesus Christ today is mediocrity. There are too many of us and we're too much alike. This man's a phenomenal man.

Who run the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus? Who? Right? But who else came up from another world? Two men from another age, another world, turned up. I wonder if Peter didn't stand on his head and say, hey, now tell me this. How did they know that they were who? Moses and who? How did they know they were Moses? They'd never seen photographs of them.

Fun? Who did? Yeah, but I mean the disciples, when they first came didn't know for sure. But in any case, they were there. Now lots of people, and I can understand this, I was reading Ezekiel recently, some of the great Jewish scholars say Ezekiel was the greatest man that the Jewish nation ever had, the greatest leader.

Others say, no, no, that position was held by Isaiah. But it wasn't Isaiah and Ezekiel that were on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was Enoch and who? It was Moses and who? In the last book of the Revelation, when the men are slain in the street, who are the two prophets? Why? Fun? Right.

Because they'd never died, and it's appointed unto man once to die, so they have to come back and go through the middle like the rest of us. That may not be the only answer, but it's the best because I told you. That's why I'm trying to show you what a phenomenal character this man Elijah is.

The kings are afraid of him. Armies are afraid of him. Watch this old watch of mine again.

Chapter 18, let's skip over to that. No, no, sorry, well, let's go back a minute. Chapter 9, verse 9 of chapter 17.

Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongs to Zidon, and dwell there. Stop there. Here's a stopping place.

I have commanded a widow woman. What had he done before? He had a wife. He commanded a raver.

Now he commands a widow woman. God changes his method. Why did Elijah say, Lord, I can't do that now.

I mean, I'm a man of God. I mean, it wouldn't look right for me to go sponging on a widow. Well, that's the only people TV preachers get on, isn't it? Sponging on widows.

I have commanded a widow to feed thee, to sustain thee. And he arose and went and did as the Lord commanded him. Now he goes and tells this woman, what have you got? She said, I have a handful of

meal and a little oil.

And what are you going to do with it? Make a cake for my son and I. We're going to eat it and what? Die like everybody else. She went and did according to the saying of Elijah. She and her house did eat many days.

The barrel of oil failed according to the word which God had given to Elijah. Well, you see, when she went back in the house, wasn't she startled? You know, that little crude oil was shooting up like an Oklahoma gusher and going out of the front door and down the front street and the neighbors were gathering oil and the fifty-gallon barrel of meal was full to the brim? No. You know, God could send all the money that last day's needs from here till Jesus comes with one donation.

He doesn't do that. You don't want him to, Martin. Okay.

Why didn't they supply everything that they needed to the end of the trip? Because she had to exercise faith every day, that's why, and take the last handful of meal out of the barrel and the last drop of oil and put them together. That's the way God works. We get so self- confident.

Boy, we can get arrogant without having miracles like that. We can get self-satisfied and self-sufficient. It didn't fail until God ripped the heavens again.

It came to pass after these things, the son of the woman, the mistress of the house fell sick and sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? I like this nineteenth verse. He said unto her, Give me thy son.

Don't you know who I am? Have I been so long here? You haven't realized I'm the greatest miracle worker? Now, of course, I can't do this in private. You need to get at least ten thousand people. I mean, it's no good being humble if people don't know it, is it? It's no good having power if you can't exhibit it.

He took the child out of the bosom and carried it into a loft. Oh, mercy. Do you wish sometimes when he had a real anointing in prayer, he'd really been in a prayer meeting where everybody could hear you praying? Boy, would have they been stirred if I'd prayed that publicly.

Now, this is where we learn to pray. When thou hast shut the door, he ran up into a loft. What did he do? Verse twenty-one says, He stretched himself on the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O my Lord God, here I pray thee and let this child's soul come into him again.

What happened? Nothing. Prayed once, nothing happened. Prayed twice, nothing happened.

Prayed three times. You know what most of us would do is say, Look, I'm wasting time, nothing's happening. But again, faith that he's going to be trusted is going to be tested.

It doesn't say he prayed three times to shut up heaven. He said, I shut up heaven that there'd be no rain. Doesn't say pray three times for the rain to come down.

But God tests him. I've heard people scorn, you know, churches like the Church of England and others. Oh, they have so much ritual.

But we've got out of ritualism into ritualism. Do you know what a rut is? It's a grave with the ends knocked out. That's all it is.

It's a grave with the ends knocked out. And if you walk in the spirit, I'll tell you this, you'll never get into a rut. God may completely revolutionize your way of prayer, or your times of prayer.

He prayed, nothing happened. He prayed again, nothing. But the third time, he stretched himself on the child.

That's his intimacy, his compassion, his longing. And he prayed, and the child came alive. If I were to paint, I think I'd like to paint this.

You know, they have an outside staircase on the ground, those old eastern houses. I'd like to see him coming down with a baby clutching his beard, and the baby gurgling, and there's the woman, and he says, hey, sister, here's your baby, catch it. Do you think he did that? No.

We would with our showmanship. He took the child and gave it to the woman. Elijah took the child, verse 23, and took the child, and he brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother.

And Elijah said, see. Do you think he whispered it? Could I just whisper this in your ear? Your son's alive. I guess he was as much alive as she was.

Hey, your son's living. What did he say? You know, I've just been sitting in my rocking chair thinking about you, and I was thinking, this man Elijah's a wonderful man. He must be a godly man, because the barrel of meal is still going, and the water's, the oil is there, and the meal is there.

No, no, no, no, no. It seems as though she wasn't too impressed with that. What was she impressed with? By this, he said.

She says, I know thou art a man of God. What? By what? By the fact that he brought life where there was death. Isn't that the ministry of the church? You hath he quickened who were dead.

You know, I think sometimes we shoot right over the heads of people. We try and infer that every man there, that smart guy who's running about with his office girl, and that guy around there, that deacon's embezzling money. We imply that all, that they've got secret corruption, which many people do not have.

Some do assure. I don't believe the first argument that God has with a man is that he's dead, bad. I believe his first argument is that he's dead.

What happened when the prodigal came home? His brother goes to his dad and says, Oh, what kind of a dad are you? Look, I never caused you any heartbreak. I never stayed out all night and left you wondering where I was. I've been a good boy.

You never killed a fatty calf for me. Why did you kill a fatty calf for me? He said, because I don't have any. What are all those out there? They're yours.

Your brother took his half of the estate in cash. All the estate here, all the estate, all the land, is yours. All the cattle are yours.

What are you doing with them? You know, I believe God is saying that to the church today. We've got a prodigal church. Satisfied.

And logically, looking at its crops, exhibiting them maybe at the state fair. Men and women are not just bad, they're worse than that. They're dead, infested and in sin.

Now, when a prodigal says to his father, let me tell you something, I've been keeping tabs on my brother. He's been living an immoral life, gambling, drinking, wild. He's dragged the family name into the gutter.

Have you noticed that the father never once accused the boy of sin? He didn't say, the boy, the eldest son, he said, my brother's bad. The father said, he's dead. You know, there are only two kinds of people in the world.

Not rich and poor. Not black and white. Not intellectuals and dumb folk.

Not slaves and free. Just two kinds of people in the world. The Lord really put this on my mind last year.

Just two kinds, that's all. People who are dead in sin, and people who are dead to sin. Now, you're in one of either category, you can't be in both.

Dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. Now, you're not thinking out, surely you're not. Read Philippians 2, isn't it Philippians 2 that begins, in time past he walked according to the course of this world, according to, in time past.

The trouble with most churches today, they're still in Romans 7. Oh wretched man that I am. Don't tell us, you're advertising it with your face. Oh wretched man that I am.

But he didn't stay there. There happens to be chapter 8. Chapter 7 is a funeral march. Chapter 8 is a wedding march.

Any of you ever read Milton's Paradise Lost? Did you? No? None of you? One of the great classics, you read it good. It's an interesting thing. He wrote Paradise Lost after he got married.

Now, that's true, it's facetious. No, no, it's true. But then he wrote Paradise Regained.

When? After his wife died. Now, that's historic fact. I think about every time I read Romans 7. This is Paradise Lost.

Romans 8, Paradise Regained. You know, most Christians could be as victorious if they were Mohammedans. There's no more victory over sin than the Mohammedans have.

Either sin has dominion over you or you have dominion over sin. You're either dead in sin or you're dead to sin. You know, there comes a time, if we go on to know the Lord, where we not only go to the cross, but where we get on the cross.

Now, a man can kill himself, drink poison, cut his throat, shoot himself, but he can't crucify himself. Supposing he could cross his feet and hammer a nail, glide them through. He could nail this hand to a cross, maybe.

But then he's free with the other hand. Crucifixion is something that God does. Again, in Romans chapter 6. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin that might be destroyed, that hence forth we should not serve sin.

Now, that's a Now, I'm quite sure in Old Testament language, you see, there's so much of Elijah that's kind of reborn. Now, I'm not talking about reincarnation, that's nonsense. You can shatter that forever by the fact again, it is appointed unto man once to die.

Not to die every 25 or 30 or 100 years. Just once. But Elijah and John Baptist have the same thing.

They both have the same anointing. They both worked in deserts. They both wore camel skins.

They both had trouble with the king. They both had trouble with the queen. Neither of them got much attention.

But that's the cost of being an outstanding man or woman for God. What does Elijah do? Chapter 18. It came to pass after many days, the word of the Lord came to Elijah in a third year saying, Go, show thyself.

It was, Go, hide thyself in the previous chapter. Go, show thyself. So Ahab and I will send rain upon the earth.

And Elijah went to show himself, and was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, who was the governor of his house. Now Obadiah fed the Lord greatly.

It was so ingesible cut off the profits of the Lord that Obadiah took, took a hundred and hid them in a, in fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water. That's all they deserved anyhow. Let's go to verse 17.

It came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah. He saw him and he may have said, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? Isn't that something? Oh, I'd just love to hear that Mr. Reagan said, Well, I'm starting my second four years, and my first thing that I've told the government to do is close down last day's ministry. That would be an honor.

They're such a trouble to me. They're setting up barriers against my jurisdiction. Better still, if they it would be.

Again, as I've said before, you know, the greatest honor in the world was given to Paul, the apostle. My great hero after Jesus. Remember somebody tried to cast demons out of a man, and the demons got up and kicked the preachers around? I think they did it right.

What did they say? Jesus, I know, and Paul, I know. Isn't that something, to be bracketed with Jesus by demons? Listen, preacher boy or missionary fellow that expects to go to missionary, you're not much good until you're under the devil's danger list. And that means you'll go through hell, maybe on earth while you're there.

Demons stand back and say, Jesus, every time Jesus moved there was a commotion in hell. What in the world is he going to do? Everywhere Paul went he had one of two things, a riot or revival. We have neither.

I think I'm right in saying this. Check with Martin if I'm wrong, he'll tell you after. Wasn't it in the days of Solomon there were no prophets? Were there? Why? Well, in God's name, why do you need prophets when the glory of God fills the temple? The trouble is we've neither glory nor prophets.

And we still go on satisfied. We don't say we're going to be like Elijah. We're going to stand together as a group here, and you can do it, of course, as a family here at last days.

My goodness they were serious weren't they? Verse 30 Elijah said come near to me. He repaired the altar of the Lord which was broken down. He took twelve stoves according to the number of the tribe of the sons of Jacob.

He put them all together to show them now that the twelve tribes were reunited, that they're solid. Now what did he do? Looked up his Old Testament. He can't do anything without a word from the Lord.

Oh this is a wonderful verse I think. Verse 30 says it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice Elijah the prophet came near and said Lord God of Abraham, now let's go back. That's what he was doing sitting in the dark in that cave.

Every time the devil assaulted him he says look what God did for Abraham. Gave him a son. How old was he? Over 90.

His wife 90. It's impossible. Well darling Abraham you're a wonderful man.

She called him Lord you know that was something. Do you think you really heard from the word? You know what the custom is around here that if you have no children you can take a choice of the servants and have a child by that. Girl.

Have you ever found that when you tried to help God out you got in a mess? Boy if he hadn't have done that we'd have been, we'd have had no Adams. It's not the trouble we get it's trouble we get bringing to other people that matters. Then later what did the Lord say? Take thy son, thine only son.

Well all the blessing in the Old Testament went to the eldest son. Who happened to be the child of the flesh. God won't touch flesh.

He cried to God. Oh that Ishmael might live before thee. God wasn't concerned with Ishmael.

As a matter of fact he wasn't concerned with Abraham either. Well didn't he want Abraham, didn't he want, pardon me, didn't he want his only son Isaac? No. What did he want? He wanted Abraham.

What good is a dead child to God or anybody else? God doesn't have to prove me to himself. He knows me better. He has to prove me to myself.

He has to show me how deep my faith is, how deep my love is, how deep my courage is, how deep my strength is. I need a revelation of myself as seen by God's eye. Not seen by my friends, they'll be generous to me.

I'll sure be generous to myself if I start searching my heart. Take thy son, thine only son. He goes three days up a mountain.

What do you think he felt about all the way he was going up? What happened? I remember preaching this in Australia and an old man came up to me afterwards. He said, you made a mistake while you were preaching. I said, I make a lot of mistakes when I'm preaching.

But he said, you know, you said about Abraham putting his hand on the boy and lifting the knife up, and he got the knife nearly down, and suddenly a voice in the, behind him said, stay thy hand. And I said, you know what most of us would say? That's the voice of the devil. It was just by the bend of the stream down there where the Lord told me to climb up that mountain and offer my child, and I'm going to obey God.

He stayed his hand. Why? Because God couldn't win. Doesn't the scripture say, he believed that if he killed a child, God would raise him up as good as dead.

He's as good as dead. So what? God is the God of resurrection. God is the God of life.

You go to a mission field and you've been there about two days, you'll think you've broken into hell. The climate's different, the food is different, the culture is different, the atmosphere is different. There's nothing like America or anywhere else when you get into a hellhole like that.

I remember going up into New Guinea, up into the highlands of New Guinea, where those men wear feathers three, four feet high. Big slams of concrete on their chest. Tomahawks in their hands.

They look very nice in National Geographic. But boy, when I was, I was near some grass as tall as this, and it rustled, and I looked and here's a guy. Now this is funny, but it's true.

What could I give him? I knew you're part of something. Do you know what I had? There were two men and myself. No, three men there were.

And you know, I just happened to have three lifesavers in my pocket. And I gave them one each and it saved my life. Now that's really true.

I just had, I got a packet when I was in Australia, and I just felt, I saw these guys, what can I do? And I gave one, you know, and what they did was, and it's just roo-roo-roo-roo-roo-roo. Felt real good. So they all wanted, just had three, and I got away with it.

But I tell you what, when you face a situation like that, you've got to know your way, where God wants you to be. And when that's an everyday occurrence, as it is for missionaries up there, you better be rooted, you better have something you can throw at the devil. Particularly if you're going to graduate in the school of God, where even devils have to say, we've given that man our congratulations.

He's just like Jesus Christ. He's a terror. It must be Jesus living inside of him.

Well, that's what it's supposed to be, isn't it? Christ in you, the hope of glory. Okay. God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Remember his other name, Jacob, vacillating, changeable. And God changed it to Israel, a prince with God. And then lest he get flattered, read the 41st chapter of Isaiah, he calls Jacob a worm.

Not very flattering. When my sister couldn't get the best of me, she'd say, you worm. Oh, I could have thrown the piano at her.

The only thing is, I couldn't lift it. But that got through to me more than anything she ever said. You, and I used to think of the worms in the garden that had to gather up sometimes.

Wesley has a hymn in which he says he calls a worm his friend. Jacob, the friend of God, like Abraham. But he's a worm in the sight of God, lest he gets exalted as a prince.

And he's turning all this over there in his private chapel there in that cave. Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Now notice his prayer.

Let it be known this day. He doesn't say, Lord, there are 7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal, and I want you to give me a chance to bring some of them out. No, the hundred special men, those men that really pray, that have been hidden by, was it who hid them? Obadiah took the prophets and hid them in a cave by fifties.

Well, Lord, I'm not bothered about the 7,000. I'm bothered about that hundred. Two pockets of 50 men.

I need them here to pray with me. I mean, Moses had Aaron and her. I heard recently, and this is true, of a young preacher up in the hills of Kentucky.

And he was going around the hills, you know, and there were these little mission churches all over. And he said, what about, who's the pastor there? And they said, Miss so-and-so. Miss so-and-so? A pastor? Yeah.

And he went up and he said, are you the pastor? She said, I sure is. You the pastor? I sure is. You can't have a lady pastor.

Well, Moses had them. Moses had them, yeah. He had Aaron and her.

And he said, if he had her there, I's the her here. So what? I teach the Baptists about that. When the Baptist women preach, they send them all to the foreign fields.

The Baptist pastors stay home and drive Lincolns. That's true of other denominations too, isn't it? Ship all the women. C.G. Stubbs used to say, women are the men for the job.

Let it be known this day that thou art a God in Israel, and I am thy servant. Why didn't he say that first? Lord, Lord, look, all these people gathered here, hundreds of them, thousands of them, all these priests, corrupt religion. Now, Lord, vindicate me as your, as your child, as your mouthpiece.

So much of my ministry has been secret. Helping that widow, praying up in the loft. Everybody needs a loft anyhow.

Okay.

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