

# Apostle Paul's Preaching - Part 3

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*Leonard Ravenhill explores the depth of Apostle Paul's preaching, emphasizing passion, preparation, and the paradox of strength found in weakness.*

**Duration:** 15:04

**Scripture:** Romans 1:14, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 3:8, Philippians 4:6-8

**Topics:** "Effective Preaching", "Spiritual Leadership"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the passion and obsession required in preaching, highlighting the need for deep spiritual experiences and a heart that weeps for the congregation. It discusses the importance of enduring trials and weaknesses for the sake of Christ, finding pleasure in infirmities, and allowing the power of Christ to rest upon us. The sermon also touches on living a life that reflects the principles of the Gospel, being a role model for others, and finding peace in God amidst challenges.

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## Transcript

Do you wonder that he sweats and he toils and he works? There's nothing can move him. Boy, I love that statement he makes. Let's say, well, his purpose was, in the first chapter 20 to 21, he talks about dying.

Romans 1 14 is his passion. As I've said before, preaching is not a profession, God help us. Preaching is an obsession and a passion, and I love this passionate preacher.

How he preaches his heart out, he weeps. A preacher that doesn't weep should be fired. I have a little slip, I put it in letters.

If your preacher doesn't weep over the pew, organize something in the pew to weep over the preacher. Jesus wept, Paul wept. You see, we're so ready-made.

I fear to hear people have just sent it into a blessing, so they think that means you resign your job and go preaching. And they don't have no experience. I don't believe any man should enter the pulpit until 10 years after he's been saved, they're filled with the Spirit.

Somebody wrote to me, oh, I've got to get out, I'm young. I said, listen, Jesus is young, and God kept him brushing shavings off his legs at the end of every day for 30 years. The Son of God took 30 years training.

John Baptist was 30 years with the wild beasts. Moses, a colossal intellect, read Romans, read Acts chapter 7. He was mighty in word and in deed. Before ever God got hold of him, he was a statesman.

He made the laws of the country. And yet God takes him to the back side of the desert. James reminded me the other day, in with a friend, he said, well, you're 80 now.

He said, well, that's just the time Moses started preaching. Well, I'm hoping to get started soon. Most folk are hoping I'll stop.

No. 40 years. You can't preach out of the Bible merely to have experiences to get in your blood.

No man's a right to stand up and dictate unless he's gone through the trial. I can listen to this man, he's been in prison, in fasting, in weakness, in weariness. And yet there's nothing that's able to pull him down.

His purpose then was what? That Christ might be magnified. His passion was what? That he's a debtor. Again, I say preaching is an obsession and a passion.

If a thing doesn't burn in me, it won't burn in you. I'm not going to stand up and get... Most preachers don't preach anyhow. Some of you guys, how many of you want to be preachers, like to be preachers? Put up your hands, let me see you.

I'll tell you what to do. Eat as little as you can. Oh, good.

That's encouraging. Jacob put his hand up. I've been praying he'd want to become a preacher.

Here's my plan for you. Eat as little as you can. Sleep as little as you can.

Pray and fast. Pray and study as much as you can. I preached a sermon last Friday night.

I preached for 50 years, preached it all over the world. But it has to be reborn in me, otherwise it does no good. I've got to go in that with a fire in my, not in my belly, but in my heart.

If I don't burn, why should you burn? If I don't weep, why should you weep? If I'm not willing to pay the price, why should I ask you? The last thing I want to be is a hypocrite anyhow. But look at this strange man. We've talked about his purpose, we've talked about his passion.

Let's talk about his pleasure. In 2 Corinthians 12, where is that? Here somewhere. Did he get ahead of me? Is it 2 Corinthians 12, 9 and 10? Oh, I've got the wrong chapter, I must have.

We've talked about his, what, his purpose, his to preach. We've talked about his passion, being a debtor to everybody. We've talked about his pleasure.

Of course he had pleasure. See if you'd like it. In verse 9, 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9. He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in what? You know, when somebody asked that marvelous man that broke up in China, Hudson Taylor, why did God take you of all the people? There are thousands of people at Keswick Convention, other conventions in England.

Thousands of great Bible expositors, why did he take you? And he smiled, he said, friend, you know what? God had been looking years for a man weak enough to acknowledge his weakness and his nothingness and cast himself on God, and then he took me and used me. And he founded the empire of Jesus in China. Well, doesn't the scripture say it's the lame that take the prey? You see somebody limping, you

wouldn't think they were much good.

God says the lame take the prey, and to those who have no might, he increases strength. But the next part is my joy here. Most gladly therefore, he says, I will rather glory in my infirmities.

Come on, we go in the healing line. Some people would never have done the things they've done if God had healed them, they survived. I've been healed many times, I thank God for it.

I've been in the valley of the shadow of death two or three times God raised me up. They threw a white sheet over me in hospital and said it'll be gone in four minutes. I knocked the sheet away and said, oh, the doctor said, oh, oh, I didn't know you were listening.

I said, well, you happen to be talking about me, so I said, I'm not going to die. I jumped out of that burning hotel before I hit the ground. The Lord said, I shall not die but live.

Four o'clock in the morning, the doctor told us at the bottom of my bed scared and white, and I was all blood and smoke after the fire. And I said, I got another promise. What is it? First was, I shall not die but live.

And the second was, as for God, his ways are perfect. So the greatest preachers in America came to see me, precious guys. I'm going through this town.

I wanted to see you. Amazing how many of them. One of the most outstanding broadcasting preachers in America that day looked at me.

I preached in his tabernacle some months before. He said, Brother Raymond, you know what? God couldn't trust me with this. Did you ever think when you're going through the hottest, toughest spot in your life, he's trusting you? He's not trying to find out what's in you.

He knows. You don't know what's in you. You make your vows.

I'll do this. I'll do that. I'll do the other.

How many of us have gone to conferences? And from this day, I'm going to pray two hours a day. From this day, I'm going to do that. From this day, I'm going to do that.

Good Lord, the highway of Christian living is covered with a wreckage of vows that have never been kept. But it gets better. He says, I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Again, he's not asking for miracles. He's asking for the indwelling spirit of God to become more intense, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure.

Come on now. What do you take pleasure in, dominoes or golf or what? I take pleasure. I drink of the cup he passed.

And I never ask why. I don't think Paul in his life ever asked why. When he was smitten down on the Damascus Road, he didn't say why.

He said what. What's it all about, Lord? Tell me. Lay the price down.

Tell me. He says, therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, necessities and persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake. For when I'm weak, then am I strong.

Isn't that a paradox? Well, the whole Christian truth is a paradox. He says, if you want to go up, go down. If you go up, he'll humble you.

If you go down, he'll exalt you. If you want something, be nothing. Exchange your weakness for his strength, your emptiness for his fullness, that Christ may be magnified.

I love that. Look at verse 27 in the first chapter. This is a pattern he offers to the Philippians, a pattern.

We're staying with that letter P. We talked about this, all the other things anyhow. Verse 27, only let your conversation, but that is not speaking. The word there is citizenship.

Remember elsewhere, he says our citizenship is in heaven, but it says in the authorized version, our conversation is in heaven. I like what Paul's been saying. I don't know how much you've heard of what he said.

But what he said, we ought to live on earth as though we're already in heaven. The principles of a holy kingdom should be operating in us now in this flesh. I read today of a missionary to the Buddhists, and a lovely little boy came.

I remember seeing some of them in some country, well, Bangkok. Little boys in yellow robes, their hair all shaved off. This little fellow came up to the new missionary.

He said, you're a new missionary? He said, yes. You're going to talk about that lovely man, Jesus, that healed people, and he was kind. And he said, you're not to do evil things.

And he said, you're to be pure in heart. And he said, do you love your enemies and so on? Yes, yes. He said, well, sir, that's very nice, but there've been lots of missionaries here that talk about him, but I've never seen anybody like him.

It rocked the missionary back on his heels. Am I just here to tell him, go that way, don't do this, don't do that, fear this, fear the other? He said, immediately I realized I'm there to be a role model for that child. He's going to watch me, and I don't want to betray my Lord by some stupid thing.

My flesh getting in, my desires getting in. So in verse 27, I say, this is a pattern. Only let your style of life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

Whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in the Spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. And then he says, and this is our privilege, unto it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his namesake. Let's go to chapter 4, verses 6 and 8. This is pretty tough stuff, isn't it? As I've said so often, one day somebody's going to read the Bible and believe it, and when they do, we'll all be embarrassed.

And yet Paul says, we're to be living epistles, read and known of all men. There's a modern song that says they're not reading the Bible, they're reading your life and mine. But in chapter 4, he says in verse 5, let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand.

Now look at this, this is something, isn't it? Be careful for nothing, but be thankful for everything. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep or garrison your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Notice he begins chapter 3 with, finally, my brethren.

Notice in chapter 4, verse 8, he says, finally, my brethren, so don't you come chasing me because I keep saying finally, I've gone a bit longer. I borrowed that from Paul, that's my excuse. Let me look here a minute.

Let me say here, this is, keep it in the letter P, this is the pursuit of the apostle in chapter 3. There'd been a sellout in his life because he said in verse 8, I count all things for loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord to whom I've suffered the loss of all things, not some things, all things. He'd lost the rights in his family, he'd lost the rights in the synagogue, he'd lost the rights in the school where he sat under Gamaliel, the most brilliant scholar ever. And then he says again in verse 24, our conversation, our lifestyle is in heaven also we look for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this is what, what he's pursuing. This is the prize. This is what you get for your war.

This is what you get for your sacrifice. This is what you get because you're persuaded that Christ is the only one who is able to save and deliver. And he says he shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.

According as he is able to subdue all, all things. Now let's go to verse 8 in this same chapter. Finally my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Now when you go through his life story, you see his travel and his travail. He's tortured, he's tried, he's tempted, he's put in jail with a minimum of creature comfort and he comes out on top. And people in the palace are hearing about this man.

They whip him and he won't whine. They lash him and he doesn't complain. They starve him almost and yet he's no murmuring in him at all.

He takes the very disposition of Jesus Christ and end the adversity and calamity and tragedy in his life. And he comes out more than conqueror. You know, we think he's a kind of a superstar.

No, this is the normal Christian life, the normal Christian life.

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