

Audio Sermon: The Cross

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that honors God and prepares for the final judgment, and the need for a personal encounter with Jesus Christ to change one's life.

Duration: 1:17:24

Scripture: Deuteronomy 22:9-11, Romans 7:18, 1 Corinthians 3:1-7, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:16

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Maturity"

Description

This sermon by the preacher emphasizes the need for believers to move from a state of carnality to a Spirit-centered life, highlighting the struggle with selfishness, envy, and division within the church. The preacher challenges the congregation to seek a transformation where Christ lives in them, leading to a mature and impactful Christian walk. The message calls for a deep commitment to God, surrendering all aspects of life to Him for true spiritual growth and effectiveness in serving the Lord.

Transcript

I would like to read just 3 or 4 verses from the 1st Epistle of Paul to the 2nd and the 3rd chapter reading from verse 1 into verse 7. Now I don't know if you like to hear what the preacher is going to preach about. I think sometimes it's rather like giving a menu to people in a restaurant. And I have some messages I like to preach and I have some messages I certainly don't like to preach.

But I have one message that I would like to bring if I can get the all clear from the Lord on it. And it isn't a nice message at all. So far we've had very nice ones, but this one is a very rough one.

And it's on the judgment seat of Christ. It deals with the judgment of the sinner and then it deals with the judgment of the believer. And you know there are a lot of evangelists.

As a very famous doctor friend of mine says, there are evangelists who preach to the sinners and all the church members come. Because you shoot over their heads. But there are evangelists who preach to the believers and not many church members come.

Because they kind of think it's for other folk. There is a section of theology called eschatology that is dealing with things that still have to come. And I think the most neglected thing in preaching in the church of God today is preaching on the judgment seat of Christ.

Particularly for the believer. And so if you'll pray and tomorrow night you'll get me up at quarter to eight instead of eight. And I might get through in an hour or an hour and a half.

I preached on this text for two and a half hours. I don't promise to do that tomorrow night, but anyhow you're not going anywhere except to bed. And you may as well go broken hearted anyhow.

So maybe tomorrow night if the Lord gives us the all clear again we'll share our particular concept of judgment for the sinner and judgment for the believer. Let me just say this, I don't think many believers in the world today or in the past or in the future. I don't think many believers will stand very tall at the judgment seat of Christ.

Now, reading from 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 1. And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat for hitherto you were not able to bear it. Neither yet now are ye able for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions.

Are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith I am of Paul and another I am of Apollos. Are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul? And who is Apollos but ministers by whom ye believed even as the Lord gave to every man. I have planted Apollos watered but God gave the increase.

So then neither is he that planteth anything neither he that watereth but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. One of the most forgotten and the most unquoted preachers in America was a man by the name of Henry Varley.

He was a man who almost without exception when he preached could say the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because he hath anointed me. And I want to say to you again particularly to evangelists and preachers that I believe the most elusive thing in the world today is the anointing of the Spirit of God. We mistake eloquence for anointing.

We mistake very often the personality of the preacher. That there is a mysterious indefinable something which as a colored brother said I don't know what it is but I know when it isn't there. That we call the anointing of the Spirit and Henry Varley preached this way.

And he was preaching as only he could when one night he shot as evangelists often do he shot a God's adventure. And he gave birth to a phrase which has become a classic in the jargon of preachers because he said this The world has yet to see what God can do through one man who is totally committed to Jesus Christ. Sitting somewhere over here was a young man, he wasn't very important, he wasn't an executive all he did was put shoes on people's feet in Chicago.

But that young man said under his breath well if the world hasn't yet seen a man totally committed then by the grace of God I'll do that man and eventually you remember that he became D.L. Moody. Now until he died D.L. Moody was not a preacher of good English, he murdered his English. But he saw revival.

And you're better to know good English if you must than have revival on the eloquent and a Demosthenes or an Apollos and not get revival. You know it wasn't true when Henry Varley said that a hundred years ago and a hundred years still hasn't made it true and another thousand years will not make it true. It is not true that the world is yet to see what God can do through one man totally committed to Jesus Christ.

I think that the greatest brain the world has ever known outside of Jesus Christ was the Apostle Paul. This man had acres of culture. And this man had every prize that everybody else was grasping after.

Socially, intellectually, he says I'm of the tribe of Benjamin, well that was something, I'm of the seed of Abraham he was a member of the Sanhedrin, he had everything going his way. And then there came a day, you remember, he was going down by Damascus Road with salt coming out of his nostrils, bleeding out threatenings. And I always get a thrill when I think of that man going down with a volcano in his heart for just as soon as Jesus was born they were going to liquidate him and as soon as the infant Christ was born heaven wanted to kill him and as soon as the infant Jesus was born Saul wanted to kill him.

Kill it. And yet the man was breathing fire out of his nostrils and going to liquidate everybody that he found in this way. That man wrote the greatest poem on love that the world has ever known, 1 Corinthians 13.

What a transformation. When Paul went down by Damascus Road he thought that he had in his, under his toga there the death sentence of the early church. And he'd reckon on everybody except God.

And then on that Damascus Road he met Jesus Christ. I'm glad he didn't meet a preacher or hear a sermon, that might have been the end of him. But he didn't meet a preacher and he didn't hear a sermon, he met the Christ of God.

And the old preachers used to talk about people having a personal encounter with the Son of God. We don't do this too much these days, we've got a mass psychology. Somebody wrote a stupid book and you can buy it if you're silly enough on 64 different ways to make an altar call.

He's not putrid. There isn't an altar call in the New Testament. The altar call is a modern invention.

When the Holy Ghost departed men stepped in and made altar calls. Now I do it sometimes, sometimes I don't. Maybe because the psychology of people is they expect the gates to be open and you invite them to come in.

But then on that Damascus Road the apostle met Jesus Christ. And you know, again it wasn't a case of raising his hand, signing a decision card. He didn't come to the altar and make a down payment to the few hot peers and expect a mansion over the hilltop with music piped in from a thousand million angels, world without end and immunity from eternal judgment.

An estate from hell fire. There was no down payment to the few Jews. This was a case where if this is the very Son of God then he says what this Christ offers me must be everything of my thing.

And he summarizes his life. I kind of smile, I do smile occasionally. I smile sometimes when I hear preachers say, you know, I fashion my life after the apostle.

Well I admire your humility, but apart from that oh we like the apostle Paul, sure we like him. We like his power, he could raise the dead. We like his peace, he gloated in tribulation.

We like his poise, he says none of these things move me. We like his purpose, he says this one thing I do. We like his passion, he says for me to live his Christ.

But there are two things we wouldn't like. We wouldn't like his poverty and we wouldn't like his prison. On that Damascus road I say he had a confrontation with Jesus Christ.

And he gives you the whole story himself. Because you see this is what Christianity really is. Christianity is not getting rid of a lot of lousy sins at an altar.

That's part of it, but a decimal fraction of it. I can say again that we're living in a day of the cheapest evangelism that we've ever had in history. I read an article very recently to one of the leading evangelists in America and he was appealing for sons like people do.

And he said, now I want him to support me because I've moved into another area. But he said do you know in the last few years I have led personally through my ministry I have led 9 million people to Jesus Christ. Now if you take all the big evangelists in the last 20 years and all the local efforts in our churches and all the people who've been to the altar everybody in America has been converted and warmed up and rehashed and filled with the leftovers.

Everybody in the country has been dealt with somehow. Well I'm very simple as you know but you know I don't understand how you can have 9 million converts when it only took 120 to turn Jerusalem upside down. I was in a city not long ago where a man said to me you know in this city we only had one church 50 years ago we were very despised.

Now he said we have some of the finest churches in this city. As a matter of fact we have 120 churches of our denomination of our particular brand of theology we have 120 of those churches in greater hmm it was Houston greater Houston and he said we have 120 of those churches in this area. Wonderful churches members from 100, 200, 300, 500.

Well come on what are you thinking? I said well I'm wondering how it was 120 men could turn Jerusalem upside down and now you can have 120 churches in this city and nobody knows you're here. How do you figure that one out? One of the great reproaches of the church of God today is that the world doesn't know we're around. They can get on with us they couldn't get on with the early church because the world was going that way and the church was going that way they were always having collisions.

I saw Paul did one of two things wherever he went he either had a revival or a riot we have neither. We just have a relapse.

They're going round that Damascus road he says later do not happen to me and I don't care how you phrase your theology any second work of grace if you like call it a baptism with the Holy Ghost call it sanctification if you're a Nazarene call it something else if you're a salvationist but I tell you this this is my conviction that the greatest thing that can fall from human lips fell from the lips of the Apostle Paul when he said this Christ liveth in me on that Damascus road he didn't give Christ his sins he gave Christ his total personality and he says this in his own language he says I have an exchange life it is not I but it is Christ that liveth in me it was not only an exchange life it was an exciting life because he said he wrestled with wild beasts at Ephesus it was not only an

exciting life it was an expensive life oh sometimes I feel like putting my hand up and saying stop and I hear people singing were the whole realm of nature mine you wouldn't even give them a hundred dollars for the preacher tonight so why do you sing a lie most of us would like to give God what we don't have I heard of a young man going back to a city in the states he had been raised in this small town actually and he became a millionaire became very wealthy and when he had a homecoming they put a banquet on in the local city hall that wasn't too big and they said now tell us about your success and he said well really it all began in a missionary meeting one night and they were asking for money and he said I had in one pocket

a dime and I had in the other pocket a dollar and I thought I

can't afford to give the dollar I can only give the dime and then as they put pressure on I said alright I'll give the dollar and then as I was giving the dollar I thought well after all the dime doesn't matter much so I gave the dime and the dollar and he said the reason I'm a millionaire tonight is on that occasion I gave God everything that I have and look how he's blessed me and made me a millionaire you know sometimes little old ladies can be very awkward and a little old lady on the front pew said in a stage whisper I dare you to do it again my richest gain I count at last Paul takes all his accumulated advantages and he says this I count them but doubt that I may win Christ and be found in him so it was not only an exchange life it was an exciting life it was an expensive life it

cost him everything that he had it was an explicit life this one thing I do and it was an extensive life because his life still has an influence right down to the day in which we live I think he must have marked X on that Damascus road and he must have remembered it many times because you see the Lord revealed himself to him on that Damascus road but when the Lord had got him so far he took him in the back side of the desert where every preacher should go and the God who revealed himself to him on the Damascus road revealed himself in him when he got there Herodotus is being called the father of historians and he tells us that in the ancient days in the temple of Heracles the altar fire was kept burning 24 hours a day those were the days of slavery remember in the day of the New Testament

there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire and the Bible doesn't say anything about it if a man could escape from his master he would rush down into the temple maybe the priest would be asleep and he would nudge him and the priest would say what you want he would say brand me, brand me well they had branding irons like they have in Texas and the man could choose the branding iron and they would put it there in the furnace and heat it and then the slave who escaped would put out his hand and they would brand that hand with the brand of the God that he had chosen to serve he would lift up his foot and they would brand it instead he would slip the rags he was riding down and they would brand the back of his neck and after a few days he would go out into the bazaar his master might see

him and say to another slave get hold of him, bring him back see who's there?

Aristarchus, bring him back and Aristarchus would go back to his master and the master would start pouring implications on him and tell him how he would nearly slog him to death and what have you got and then suddenly the young man would open his hand and raise his foot and show the back of his neck and then the previous owner would get very angry and he would say so you got branded with the mark of your God I have no further claim on you I have no rights to you as long as you bear branded in your body the owner's mark of the God and a slave bids adieu to the world he isn't always mourning like some of these, you know I might have been a great television star but the Lord called me you might have been black in boots on State Street too I'm tired of these bankrupt half-worn out Hollywood

stars that go strutting around as though they've done a God almighty something because they have a guitar and they sing one or two songs for him God pity us Paul doesn't wave any salute to the world here he is, the greatest intellect of the day he mouths about Galileo, Galilean but one day he capitulated to Jesus Christ and you know what he did? he says as he says goodbye to the Galatians henceforth let no man trouble me I bear in my body the owner's marks of Jesus or as Weymouth translates it I bear the brands of the Christ of God if hands were branded he would do nothing but what would please God if feet were branded he would only walk where it would please God the base of his neck because his intellect

was branded for God he says at the end of that same epistle God forbid that I should

gloriously be on the cross by which the world is crucified to me and I am crucified to the world you see we are living in a day when people will go to the cross but they won't get on the cross they want the benefits of his death but they don't want to die they're too ambitious ambitious and carnal very often even on ministry you see we folk maybe fortunately have never seen a crucifixion when a man was crucified and he carried his cross outside of the city you could be sure about one thing he wasn't coming back and brother if you take up your cross tonight and you only carry a cross to the place where you're willing to die on it you don't need to carry it an inch further but if you carry a cross it's a one way ticket and the man carrying his cross wasn't coming back if you doubt yourself

tonight if you doubt your own ambition tonight if you doubt your pride tonight if you doubt your lust whatever it may be the lust of the flesh or the lust of fame or the lust of your distinguished personality if you doubt your selfishness or some other thing you can take the cross and you can die on that thing and you can stay dead by the grace of God if you want to but that thing can come back too I know that but you see the man that brought a cross once he got on that cross he had no rights you could take a bucket of garbage if you like and throw it on him this man could say I'll take a rock let me try and knock out his right eye and you try and knock out his left eye you take a bigger rock and crush his ribs you take something that will lacerate his body once he's on that cross he has

no rights the son of God had no rights, had he?

Paul had no rights and everybody went particularly if you were going to crucify a man like the rabbis oh come on let's take a rock let's take filth let's make this man put him in hell that's all he gets there and they would ridicule and taunt and cast everything they had in the teeth of the man on the cross but as soon as the sun went down they began to rush back to the gates of the city nobody wanted to be out of the city when the sun went down and if they went to see a crucifixion at six o'clock at night they never went to see a crucifixion at six o'clock in the morning there's a cross as soon as the sun begins to rise while the skies are still dark the vultures would come and rest on the arm of the cross and they begin to pick at that body pick out the eyes that hadn't been destroyed

pick on the body tear at it until the entrails were out and blood was running down it was this despicable horrible revolting and sickening sight it was sudden to see the man dying it was heavenly to see him in the morning when he was all torn apart for most of them had the birds left in them the dogs would come out and leap up and tear his feet or begin to lap up the blood and they would be barking and snarling now that's no pretty picture but that is the picture that the apostle Paul gives us here when he says the world is crucified to me to many of us the world isn't as ugly and rotten and sinful and wicked and dirty as that it still has some fascination I was in a church not too long ago where the pastor said to me you like my new church haven't you it's very admirable notice all my

elders standing at the back of the church Sunday morning very handsome men I give them all a nice white flower and they escort people there to their pews and we have a wonderful system here and I said you're very favoured he said the only thing is this on a Wednesday night when it's the prayer meeting night I can't find my elders at all do you know where they are they're in the bowling alley so I said oh I see they were all sold with the Holy Ghost and went to a bowling alley well he said I wouldn't say that but you say that the members of your church have to be filled with the Holy Spirit they can't be members and yet there they are in a bowling alley I think it's pretty stupid to paint the front porch when the house is on fire I think it's

equally stupid to be playing balls that after

all you'll get no reward for balls when after all you could be in a place of intercession because today the wall is on fire and the reason that millions of people are going to hell fire tonight is because the church of God has lost Holy Ghost fire Paul says the world is crucified it has no fascination for me and what's more he says I am crucified to the world they don't find anything attractive in me anymore they think I'm strange and I'm perverted and twisted in my ideas you think of the scope of the life of this amazing man he began his life in Tarsus the historical capital of the world he ended his life in Rome the military capital of the world in between he went to Jerusalem the religious capital of the world in Acts 17 he went to Athens the intellectual capital of the world in

Corinthians here chapter 3 he goes to Corinth the immoral capital of the world oh I pray from my heart that somehow in these few days we're here that God might get one or two men at least with a baptism of passion like this man the apostle Paul had because he was restless he's a God intoxicated man he has no joy except people are coming to Christ you can't give this man any honors he has all the honor in the world he's established as a prophet of the most high God the Spirit of the Lord is upon him he can pray and call the Holy Ghost to bear witness and he can pray with tears and passion we don't pray like this anymore maybe in your church well if you do, thank God for it but I said sometimes almost facetiously that over the door of the prayer meeting over the door of the prayer room in

the church we should put a sign just three words we wrestle not in its original setting you remember it is we wrestle not against principalities against powers but against the rulers of the darkness of this world and prayer is the hardest work in the world my good friend who has just retired from Westminster there Dr.

Martin Lloyd-Jones says I find anything easier in my life than prayer for Satan will drive you from your knees everything goes wrong if you decide to have a day of prayer and fasting everything comes up that day there is nothing in this world Satan says he doesn't fear our preaching I noticed one witty American said not long ago he found a new proof to the inspiration of the Bible because it has survived so much bad preaching well that's a rather dismal view of the thing anyhow, but the thing is you see that we are living in a day when Satan knows he doesn't need to be nervous too much about our preaching but all Satan really fears men and men really know not how to pray and Paul could pray and pray in the Holy Ghost he says in the 8th of Romans there he talks about the groaning of the world and he talks about the groaning of the spirit and he talks about us groaning within ourselves because the highest form of prayer has no language at all Hannah prayed she never said a word but she got a baby in answer to prayer Moses prayed but he stammered he wasn't eloquent but he saved the nation a little civil man I mentioned last night or the night before weighed about 110 pounds and died at the ripe old age of 28 and left us one of the most fabulous records of praying David Brainerd you know America has produced some of the greatest praying men in the history David Paton the praying patient of Portland Dr.

D. M.

Bowers as a young man rose at 4 o'clock every morning and when he got older and was nearly 80 he rose at 3 his daughter wrote to me after I compiled a book of his prayers and you should buy it because it's wonderful I didn't write it I merely compiled it it's 7 of his books put together in a book we call the Treasury of Prayer and his daughter wrote to me and said I'm glad you've done this work on my daddy's books and she said you know as he got older the older he got the earlier he got up to pray he knew how to pray in the Holy Ghost oh I wish somehow we could we could get some little groups of folk in our church and teach

young men and women to pray we teach them to play baseball man alive you'd hardly believe I was in a big college just a few months ago and it had a very high saluting

title and I said if your forefathers or your fathers 50 years ago knew that in this college where you have an emphasis on the fullness of the spirit you're engaged in competitive football and competitive baseball and they said never perish the whole thing so they spend more time praying now than praying one way to lose your vision is go to Bible school you'll lose it alright unless you're very careful because the program is so tight and there's so much accent on this and that and the other that there isn't too much concern about having the anointing of the spirit Paul sets off with his seven lead boots if you like very wonderful man he had nobody to finance him he had no committee he had no circular letters but he was in constant communication with the Most High God and God directed his

steps and in the course of the way that he went you remember again he came in Acts 17 to the intellectual capital of the world and they discovered that this little undersized Jew that wasn't too attractive according to tradition which is uncertain I know but when he got with the intellectuals and they began to reason they found that he knew as much philosophy as they knew he knew as much history as they knew he knew as much of their poets as they knew and they were amazed at his brilliance but he didn't establish a church it happens there is no epistle of Paul to the Athenians I say this man on the Damascus road when God met him God revealed himself to him and there in the wilderness God revealed himself in him I'm going to ask him one day what happened he went to God's Bible school and

you can go there it doesn't cost you a thing except obedience it's a rough school he took Moses there for 40 years he took John Baptist there for 20 he took Paul the reddish bread in the wall there for about three and a half it's called the university of silence and God revealed himself in him now I don't know what happened all together but this I do know he came out of that experience filled with the Holy Ghost and for all his amazing life afterwards you cannot find five moments of his life that he backslid indeed as he gets nearer to the goal you find he quickens his pace and his passion everything that Jesus did Paul did Jesus raised the dead Paul raised the dead Jesus healed the sick Paul healed the sick Jesus in violent opposition to the status quo or as the kids would say today the

establishment and so was the apostle Paul and yet after this most amazing ministry of his after 30 years of supernatural and like the good pastor he didn't have a penny to his name he didn't have a house he had no creature comfort he was more often in prison than in palaces and yet after this most amazing anointing of the Spirit of God miracle and establishing churches against tremendous odds and pulling down the strongholds of Satan and yet as he gets nearer and nearer he says I'm still longing that I may know him and the power of his resurrection you'd rather think he didn't know him when he'd done all those miracles you'd rather think that he'd established churches in Asia Minor against all the vast monoliths of the day against the superstition and the false religion that he would be

printing his service and say well of course I'm very glad to come your way I can't stay many days I'm booked solid for the next 5 years how evangelists get booked solid for the next 5 years I wouldn't know boy I don't know God's rule for tomorrow never mind the next 5 years also we should my dear wife and I should have gone away Switzerland England Ireland Australia New Zealand Africa India even Brazil Argentina and you know we've cancelled every invitation we had this year except this one now why we came here I wouldn't know I am going to talk on faith the next 3 mornings and maybe the Lord brought me to teach Brother Jimmy I don't know but why why we should come to this conference I just wouldn't know but the Lord must have something in it anyhow that I may know him and the power of his

resurrection do you know what I believe disagree if you like I believe it's possible for the group of people in your church 3, 4, 5 or 6 I believe it's possible for God to get a nucleus that I would call a body and the Holy Ghost to make that body spiritually pregnant when Paul came out of Asia Minor he was spiritually pregnant and all these epistles have been conceived in him the epistle to the Romans the epistle to the Philippians the epistle to the Colossians and what have you got 14 if you count Hebrews they were all conceived in him by the Holy Ghost because he got time to be alone with God and listen the dew never falls when there's any wind about now I don't disagree with the evangelist God bless him he may disagree with me too but you know I never like people to break up a meeting

and shake hands heavens it's taken about 6 months to get them all settled down and when you break them up and out of love they shake hands and they start looking and saying I'll see you after the meeting and their minds are disengaged I think when these are the difficulties you have in preaching first of all you have to get people here physically secondly you have to get them here mentally and thirdly you've got to get them in the spirit and Paul had conceived in the Holy Ghost he was pregnant spiritually not only pregnant because of these epistles he was going to give birth to these churches there and some of them were in the very womb of the devil and he knew when he got the mind of God on them and then you remember what else happened as a bonus the Lord took him to heaven I was in a

conference a while ago and a fellow came to me and he said I've read some of your books and I said well that's nice and he said did you ever read my wife's book I said no what is it on, cooking? oh no no no my wife's the woman that died and was in heaven for seven days I said where is she now he said she's at home I said she must be the most stupid woman in the world what do you mean? my wife was in heaven for seven days I said look once I get inside those telegates Gabriel won't send me back to this dump brother once I've got to that place where we're going to sit down with Abraham and with Isaac and with all the saints who from their labors rest and I can see silly and moody and all the others brother you're not getting me back here not if you give me Cliff Barrows to lead my meetings

and Billy Graham to write my notes I'm not coming back to this dump I'm just going to stay right up there in the glory and you know this war went to heaven and there's a book about it the apostle Paul actually went to heaven and the Lord said keep your mouth shut that's a thing you'll never talk about you're not to share it with anybody did God roll out a plan of the ages I think he might have done he might have shown that the apostle the time when Jesus came at the incarnation and saw him the consummation and maybe the apostle saw when all the clouds had rolled away and as we see when the trumpet of the Lord just and he showed him Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and all the nations bowing down to him and everything under his feet and Christ could reign forever and ever

and therefore Paul had the light in his eye and the passion in his soul and I say he comes out of Asia Minor spiritually pregnant charged with the Holy Ghost and no man was ever able to discourage him man we talk about the things the Lord does for us and we lean on the Lord and all you need if you get a headache you've got to get an aspirin but the apostle remember was lashed 195 times one side a stone thrice I suffered shipwreck a night and a day in the deep in wilderness in fastings in painfulness in perils of the deep in perils of mine own countenance and he stacks all these things to high heaven and you think he has no sense of humor I think he has because when he got all those tribulations and distresses and adversities and the tearing of his spirit and the troubling of his mind and

demons forsake him and the revival thought he broke up because he was going too fast and then he says my life affliction which is but for a moment now what do you think of that if that isn't humor what is this man

had something you put him in prison and you can't starve it out of him he was pickled in the Mediterranean for 36 hours and the waves couldn't wash it out of him they put him to a post and they tried to lash it and they couldn't lash it out of him why because God put it in him some years ago at Harvard University there was a very brilliant professor he wrote a book on varieties of religious experience which until recently cost \$10 you can get it in paperback now for about \$1.50 when professor James who had earned four doctorates here and when they were not given to him he was a

doctor of a doctor of philosophy he was a medical doctor he was a doctor of psychology and I forget the fourth but he had four doctorates and in the very middle of his life in the prime of life his body began to sail his shoulders began to stoop his feet wouldn't go as he wanted them and he shuffled along as a young man people like to ask obvious questions and somebody said one day would you like to be cured and he said sure I would well then what you should do you should go to a certain doctor in Vienna and he took the slow boat just as they had 70 more years ago and he went to Vienna and when he got there the professor said I'm sorry I don't have the answer you came too far just go back to Berlin he got to Berlin they said you came too far go to Paris he went to Paris they said you're

on the wrong side of the channel go to London he went to London to Harley Street and the professor said you're at the wrong place take a train 400 miles to Edinburgh and meet a specialist and he met him and the specialist said I'm sorry but there's no cure for the disease you have and so he took a boat back to the States he was tempted to jump overboard but he made it back to Boston he was going down the street and a man turned and looked at him and said excuse me I believe you're Professor James and he said that's right and he said would you are you feeling better no would you like to be healed well certainly well he said just go down this street into the next block and knock on the door at number so and so and tell the man I sent you is he a doctor no is he a psychologist no is he a

scientist no is he a very learned man no well why do I go to him because he has the answer he went and knocked at the door a little laboring man came a man whose hands were rough yet tall he looked at the professor and said I've seen your picture in the paper you're a professor I think at the university that's right he said well why do you come to me well because he said I understand you've got the cure come in professor there's a man very mature but wasn't very pretty and he said look I don't know who sent you here I have no skill I have no medical knowledge but sometimes when I've prayed for people who are sick God has healed them and if you'd like to kneel down there or that chair I'll anoint your head with oil and I'll pray for you oh professor James said my medical experience said

don't be stupid what can a few drops of oil on your head do and my psychology said this is unreasonable and my pride said get out of the door but he said my crippled condition said why don't you risk it and so he said I got my woody bones and I knelt down at that chair and he said the man hadn't very polished English and he was so nervous because I was a famous man and he was nobody and I could feel his hands shaking on my head and he said afterwards look I don't have any answers I can't explain it medically psychologically intellectually I don't know the answer but this I do know that when that man put his hands on me and he just said in simple language that Jesus Christ the son of God is able to deliver you and it's the spirit of him that rose up Jesus from the dead quicken your mortal

body you'll be delivered and he said it was just as though he turned about a hundred thousand volts of electricity and something went through my body and I jumped up and said I'm healed I'm healed I don't know why I don't know how how did he do it I didn't do it who did it God did it his son was risen from the dead with all power he touched you it wasn't my hands he touched you and the professor said you think

I've been going around the world spending a fortune I went over to Europe I went to Vienna I went to Berlin I went to Paris I went to London I went away there in Scotland to Edinburgh and the answer is just one blow walk away from where I'm living you know that's pretty true the world this sick world that we're living in after two world wars after world war one we built a palace at

Geneva and the one thing that you mustn't let people do is think that's why we have radio programs 24 hours a day to brainwash us so you won't think somebody asked Albert Schweitzer just before he died what's wrong with modern man and he said he can't think I don't think that's his problem it isn't that he can't think he won't think we have the United have the League of Nations nothing happened we have the United Nations we're in as big a mess as ever we've tried psychology we've tried education we've tried new philosophies we've tried to revise God's program we've tried to change God's word and yet just as just as a few places from where he was in his sickness going around the world looking for the answer there was the answer just a block away and the poor sick world tonight needs what

it needs the thing you and I sang about at the beginning of this meeting it needs the all rugged cross so despised by the world and so when Paul comes here to the Corinthians he says look I'm not coming to you with enticing words of man's wisdom I'm not going to do a theological juggling act I'm not going to silence you in the profound ramifications of theology though he could be desperately profound at times but he said I've come to you and Corinthians you have what need I'm going to put the flag of Jesus Christ down in the debris down in the wreckage down in the slavery down in the immorality down in the devilry and God breathed there in that area of Corinth and he established the church of Jesus Christ and the old German commentator Meyer Meyer says this blessed and sublime miracle of

God that in all the corruption of Corinth you could lay the foundation of the empire of Jesus Paul did it he did it because he knew how to travel in birth I don't believe any preacher living Graham or you or me or anybody else I don't believe any right to preach on you must be born again unless you've traveled that people can be born again and Paul traveled in birth he said you've got ten thousand instructors in Christ but he said you've only one father I haven't forgotten you he establishes this church he writes this epistle when they have been converted I guess for about two years and he makes a tremendous diagnosis diagnosis he claims in this chapter that he's a wise master builder he claims in this chapter he's a good husbandman I make a third claim he's a good diagnostician I thought

what is beautiful more beautiful than a baby I was preaching in the great Methodist church in Dublin opposite the Abbey Theatre there there was a preacher at that conference his name by the name of Leonard Evans a licensed Methodist preacher and I'll never forget how he startled the congregation one night he said I'm thirty-five years of age I went to school high school college I had a low number of trophies as a sportsman and he said thirty-five years ago in a little Welsh town called if I remember right the strange name of Sir Nessie thirty-five years ago my mother was walking over the square going to hospital another lady crossed the square and they turned and looked at each other and the other one said hi oh Mrs Evans and Mrs Evans says very nice you're going to have a baby say which

hospital and she said which hospital and she said look when your baby is born send me a note tell me whether it's a boy or a girl and what colour hair it has and all the rest of it you know all the things they say about babies half of it's guess work but anyhow it sounds alright I think sometimes women get away with it too much you know I remember when our baby first little boy was born he's a missionary in Brazil now you know you see a little baby there it has no teeth it has no hair it has no sense and somebody says isn't it like it's father if you said isn't it like it's grandfather I wouldn't be too bad but I happen to be a

grandfather right now too but here you've got two little strands of human life and nobody knows what's going to happen with this wonderful little child it's

beautiful and Leonard Evans said I was in born and my mother sent him out to the hospital I got a little boy I'm going to call him Leonard and this is the color of his hair and these are the color of his eyes and he weighs so much and he's so long he's a marvelous little baby she got a note back about four days after I have a little boy and he's so long and he's this and he's that and the other now said Leonard Evans I'm preaching to you in this fine Methodist church the boy that was born four days after I was born is still lying on the bed where his mother took him thirty five years ago it's true that he's six foot two in length but she does the things for him today she did the day she brought him from hospital he's grossly retarded his mother has been a slave he's never been an asset

he's a liability now Paul says to these people I came to you I am and I come I find that you're dead for two years you've been staying in this protracted infancy he expected to find people in God's infantry fighting the psychosis they weren't in the infantry they were in the infantry most of our churches today are not armories where people put on the whole armour of God they're not armories they're nurseries the pastor is a babysitter he has to feed you with milk and not with meat he has to be very careful because if you offend that lady you know she wouldn't give five dollars a week to the church and if you offend that man up there he's a deacon he's not full of the Holy Ghost he's full of money and his own opinion but he's a good guy in the church anyhow and so you've got to keep him

and look after him don't offend him you know oh brother wouldn't that be awful if we offended a man like that now that's not a deacon walking out he's a preacher so don't be thinking he's a deacon but the thing is we've got a nurse in our hand he makes a diagnosis he says what's the reason that you haven't grown in growth you should have on the whole arm of God now you should be resisting the devil instead of that he kicks you this way and he kicks you the other and he makes a diagnosis he says here's the trouble this is why you're not mature and grown up you know what he says in the middle of his wonderful 14th chapter to the trinity of the same epistle he says when I became a man there was a conscious movement out of infancy into maturity it wasn't some legal or Jewish transaction there

was a day when he knew he'd come into the fullness of the blessing and God had anointed him and after that he needed no more amusement God pity us our churches need so much amusement as I said last night in the early church they were all amazed in our church they were all amused you see there were things in the church calendar there come next Friday night we're going to have a wiener roast well boy you need the Holy Ghost for a wiener roast or it falls flat you imagine the apostle Paul saying I was coming to you people at Carthus for a wiener roast I'm sorry I couldn't make it you wonder the kids in church don't want our religion we pray at it we have to be amused come for food and fun and fellowship so we have a lot of silly things and we sprinkle it with a bit of prayer and thank you

for it and when you've done it it's still calm anyhow he makes a diagnosis and he says the reason that you're not mature is because you're timeless and he says there is among you envy and strife and division envy is internal strife is external and division is internal envy Marcus Aurelius you remember him the famous author says that he read 167 books in Greek and Hebrew I read it 167 scholars trying to find the answer to this monster that is within me called envy but there is no answer well there is but it's crucifixion how many of our churches today are divided by envy and jealousy and bickering and you pray to your children and then you sit around the table and criticize the pastor and everybody else and the kids go to bed and say hey boy I don't like that religion anyhow there is among

I reckon and I'm persuaded. You see in Romans 7 it's sin-centered, self-centered and in Romans chapter 8 it's Christ-centered. Oh now, now, what does Paul say at the end of Romans 7? Paul says at the end of Romans 7, after he has talked about his experience which in my judgment is before ever he was converted, and he says woefully, he says oh wretched man that I am.

He says woe is me, I am done, I'm done. He says it is not I. This battle is not I, it's him that has dominion over me. All right.

But I heard Campbell Morgan preach a most eloquent, moving sermon once on the holiness aspect of the Christian life and he took us up to heaven and then at the end he said that remember, even to his dying day Paul was saying oh wretched man. That's a lie, he wasn't saying it to his dying day. It's a lie beyond the cross of Jesus Christ.

If the cross of Jesus Christ has not dealt with our past sins and can deal with the sin in us, then Christianity is bankrupt. All right, hold on with it, hold on with one hand. It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Now let me take you here. I rush into Paul's room, they're going to chop his head off tomorrow and he's very happy about it, he isn't crying on everybody's shoulder. He says boy it's going to be a great day tomorrow, they're going to chop my head off.

I'm going to see the one I've wanted to see for about 35 years, I'm going to see Christ. And I say just before you go, on behalf of all the Christians that ever lived or ever will live, Paul I want to thank you for your amazing dedication to Christ, for all the epistles you've written, for your example of suffering, your fortitude, your faith, your fight. None after Jesus Christ or the greatest person that ever lived, he says please, please don't say that anymore.

Some of you in the church you just partake of mine, look at all the thousands of letters you've written, words you've written. By the way Paul, are you still nursing carnality and bitterness and failure and weakness? Are you still saying, it is not I, it's sin that dwelleth in me. Do you know what he says? He doesn't say it's not I that sin that dwelleth in me, he says it's not I, it's Christ that liveth in me.

You can't have both. You can have one or the other but not both. Let me suggest this and read the 32nd chapter in the book of Deuteronomy sometime when you're quiet.

And there you'll discover the Lord says that he despises two things that have contracting nature. It says that you can't plough a field with an ox and an ass. Why? Well because you can't get a yoke, they'll tear each other's necks when they're walking.

No, no, no, no, that's not it. You can't plough with an ox and an ass for the simple reason that one is a clean animal and the other is an unclean animal. It says a couple of stanzas, verses further down, that you can't sow two kinds of seeds in the field because one will strangle the other.

And then he says the priest of the Most High God ministering at the temple, at the altar, he cannot wear a garment that doesn't have any wool in it. He must wear a kosher garment. He must wear a garment that is all linen, right from his neck right to his toes.

Why? Why do you wear wool? Well you wear wool so you'll be warm. And if you get too warm what happens? Oh, you perspire. You perspire.

Sure. But there's another old-fashioned word that's a bit easier on us. It says you sweat.

So if you don't sweat after you've been to college you say you perspire. But you go to Penrith tomorrow and say, and the lady says what do you want? You say I want two perspiration shirts for my husband. And she'll look at you very crazy.

Say I want two sweatshirts. But man never sweat until the curse came upon him and when the priest was ministering holy things he must not perspire. He must not sweat.

He cannot have a garment that has a mixture of wool and linen. It must be pure linen. They lit the tabernacle of oil, the temple of the tabernacle, the temple of it, with lamps that had what in them? They had oil.

What kind of oil? You say olive oil. No, they said pure olive oil. The vest was overlaid with gold.

It wasn't. It was overlaid with pure gold. You live in a day when you can get by with almost anything these days in the church of the living God, but God is still a God of purity.

In that amazing psalm, where the psalmist says, where brethren draw together in unity where the Lord commandeth the blessing. And it's like the oil that was put upon the head of the priest, and notice what it says? The oil was put upon his head and it came down his face. No, no, no, no it didn't.

What did he come down? It came down his beard. And then from his beard, where did he go? It came onto his garments. And where did he go from the garments? It went onto the floor.

The sanctifying oil never touched the flesh, the corruption. God never sanctified corruption. You say, Lord, I'd like you to clean me up a bit.

And Lord, help me with my temper. He won't help you with your temper. He can put it to death.

He can put your pride to death. He can put your prowessness to death. But he doesn't do a retired job.

It is not I, it's sin that dwelleth in me. No, no, no, it is not I, it's Christ that liveth in me. You know why? Because he says in Galatians 2.20, that marvelous, marvelous, much quoted verse of the apostle.

He remembers the day when Paul the apostle went to the cross. And he says in Galatians 2.20, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, and yet not I, it is Christ.

His will have been swallowed up like two streams coming down the side of a mountain, and then they become one. I like the hymn written by Edwin Hatch, the old English hymn writer. Breathe on me breath of God.

Breathe on me breath of God. And then at the end of one stanza he says, until with thee I will one day. You see, some of us want God to help us on certain levels, but not others.

And I emphasize again by saying what God is wanting in 1969 is the complete takeover of human personalities. And listen, you better be careful. Because God might interfere with your fishing program and your hunting program.

And you might discover when you get to the judgment seat you have spent more days hunting than you have spent hours playing. And God doesn't give you rewards for shooting deer, or catching fish, or playing

golf. You've got to make up your mind, this one thing I do.

I would rather burn out for God, or quit and let somebody else do the job. I was preaching, and let me finish with this, preaching with a very fine preacher in a conference a few years ago. There used to be a great preacher in America by the name of Pettengill.

You remember Dr. Pettengill? He wrote a number of books. This good man bought a lot of books that dear old Pettengill had left behind when he died. And Pettengill said, way out in Arkansas, some people here in Arkansas I guess.

And he said, when he was a young man, I was somewhere in the last century, some people lived out there homesteading away in the wild. A young couple got quite a big acreage and they had quite a ranch. And one day suddenly the young man died and his wife was terrified.

Here she was out on the back of the ranch, this was going to cause a lot of complications, but well that's all she could do about it. She asked the fellow who was passing to call up the undertakers and the undertaker came along. And he said to the undertaker, now look, I'm not short of money and I don't care what it costs.

We have only been married about three or four years and I love George very much. He's dead. But I want you to embalm him.

And we're going to put his best suit on him and I want you to prop him in a chair in the front room there, in the dining room. And I want you to come every month and attend to his body so there's no smell or any sense of decay. And now I'll pay you, you just do this.

And he said, all right. And then she remembered she got another problem. She had to admit her husband was dead and she had to deal with the estate.

And so she sent for a lawyer. But by this time she had dug a hole at the back of the house and put a mound of dirt and a cross on it and some old flowers. And she said maybe you'd like to see where George is buried and he said he would and she took him out.

The lawyer came coming back. It was a big estate and he had been coming for about nine months and he began to feel quite an interest in this lovely widow. And one day he asked her for a paper and she said she didn't have it.

Oh yes, maybe I do. And she went in the room there and she was quite a while and he went and he looked through the crack in the door and he said, no. Can't be.

He's buried. I saw his grave. But that looks awfully like him sitting at the end of the dining room table.

But I better not say anything. He went two or three other times and finally one day he popped the question to her and said, you know I'm very interested in you and I believe I love you and I'd like to marry you. I have plenty of money and so forth and so on.

And she said, well I've got interest in you and I would accept your proposal. I think we could, you'd be happy to live out here I suppose on this ranch he said I would. And he said, well now there's just one thing.

When you went in the room about three months ago I went up behind you and I looked through the crack in the door and it seems to me that sitting at the end of your dining room table your former husband is there. George is sitting there isn't he? And she went very wide and she said yes. Yeah that's my husband.

Well darling he said my proposal for marriage stands but I want to tell you something. As you know my name is George too but I want to tell you something. Before the new George comes in this house the old man has to go out.

Unreasonable? I don't think so. You see Paul says these people are immature they're babes. What's a babe's main interest? It's self.

Children are easily offended aren't they? They're very touchy. They've no sense of values and none in any other thing. Isn't this true of so many people in the spiritual realm? You know what Dr. Arthur Pink the great expositor of New Testament books said before he died? He said I believe the greatest weapon that Satan ever made in this world to destroy the power of the Christian is what? You'd never guess.

The automobile. Because he said when we were children if you wanted to go see Aunt Mary up the road she lived thirty miles away and you had to get in a buggy and it took you a day to get there and then you stayed a day or two and it took a day to come back but now you get on the highway you're there in twenty-five minutes and you can stay here for two or three hours and talk and come back. And it's destroyed so much Bible meditation so much prayer.

We're so childish. We want to be interested. We're so selfish.

The child is filled with its own opinions. It's concerned about itself and it won't play with you today and it's upset about something else. It has no value of money.

And this chronic condition ruins the church of a living God I believe in the day in which we're living. And the only answer is this. That I come as Paul came.

Not merely through the cross to get an answer for the problem of my sins. But to come with this thing that again we call theologically maybe carnality. Put it in a simple word if you like, selfishness.

Wanting my own way in this. Preferring a newspaper to my Bible. Preferring a sporting event to a half day to a half night of prayer.

Being upset because I don't get my right place in the church. If Paul came tonight would he say the same thing? Does the Spirit say that to you tonight that you're carnal, you've got enmity, you've got pride, you've got jealousy, you're touchy, you're easily upset. You don't fight the battles of the Lord.

Babies don't fight battles, they want bottles. You don't carry any burden. You don't put a burden on the back of the day.

Maybe when you preach or when I preach you say well I don't understand what you mean by having a burden of the Lord. I don't understand what you mean by maybe taking two or three days off in prayer and fasting. I don't know what you mean about wrestling against principalities and powers.

But you will when you grow up. You will when God removes that carnality and the Spirit of the living God takes entire possession of your personality. And instead of living a self-centered life, you live a Spirit-centered life.

And I'll tell you this, and I finish with this word as Tilda said, no man ever got through with the Holy Ghost and didn't know it. No sir. Once you go to that cross and get put to death, whatever aspect means to be put to death, once that thing is put to death and the Holy Ghost takes the monopoly of your life, you'll be a totally transformed personality.

And you'll be able to say with Paul, it is not I, it's Christ that liveth in me. Shall we pray? Father we thank you tonight for this privilege of fellowship together. I guess there are many of us here tonight Lord who are tired of watching a sick church in a dying world.

And yet many of us would have to confess our own spiritual life is sick tonight, we're so feeble. We have no strength to carry the burden of the Lord. We have no strength to fight the fight of faith.

We want others to carry the burden and we want to bear no marks in our body. We don't want to be branded spirit, soul and body or our hands and our feet and our minds for the living God. Oh God I pray tonight that some will be so desperate to get liberation from bondage of carnality, that whatever it may cost they'll say yes to thee.

And believe me for cleansing tonight and for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I'm going to ask you to keep your heads bowed a moment and ask Brother Jim Robertson to close the meeting.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/_J7IKzHvmSo.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/leonard-ravenhill/audio-sermon-the-cross/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net