

# Beatitudes - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*Leonard Ravenhill explores the profound implications of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount as essential attitudes for Christian living.*

**Duration:** 1:17:01

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3

**Topics:** "Beatitudes", "Christian Living"

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## Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the transformative power of the Beatitudes as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, contrasting the last word of the Old Testament, 'curse', with the first word of Jesus, 'blessed'. He argues that the Beatitudes should be the attitudes of our lives, calling for a radical shift in how Christians live and interact with the world. Ravenhill stresses that true Christianity is not merely about belief but about embodying the teachings of Jesus, particularly in a world that often opposes such values. He challenges the church to live out these principles, suggesting that if every Christian truly lived the Sermon on the Mount, it would revolutionize society. Ultimately, he calls for a return to a focus on holiness and love, rather than mere happiness or external appearances.

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## Transcript

So I'll have the check ready and then I'll go. What I want us to do in these times that we do have together is study what is certainly very, very fundamental to our lives. The greatest sermon ever preached was obviously preached by the greatest man that ever lived, who was Jesus.

And it's called, for one reason only, it's called the Sermon on the Mount. Now, I don't think that's a very good title for it. That merely speaks of the place where Jesus spoke.

It doesn't give you any idea at all. It doesn't give you a clue at all as to the content of the sermon. Now, the Old Testament begins with the life in the Garden of Eden.

Now, without looking, tell me how the Old Testament finishes. Can you give me the last clause in the Old Testament without looking? Looking? Well, it began with life in the Garden of Eden and the last phrase in the Old Testament No, wait a minute. I'm thinking of Genesis actually.

Genesis begins with the amazing story of creation about life. The last statement in Genesis is a coffin in Egypt. So even in that one book you have a span from life to death.

Now, without looking, what is the last word in the Old Testament? Well, strange enough, the last word in the Old Testament is curse. And the first word in the ministry of Jesus in this sermon is blessed. So, there again is a great contrast.

The last word, the final word in the Old Testament is curse. The first word of Jesus is blessed. Now, in this version, in Matthew, it begins in the chapter 5, you remember, and it goes through 3 chapters, 5, 6 and 7. There are 110 verses of what we have called in the first part, it's called the Beatitudes.

And if people sometimes say, well, what are the Beatitudes? Well, I kind of like to play with words and I say, well, they're exactly what they are. They should not be attitudes. They should be the attitudes of our lives.

That's what they should be. You know, that wonderful chapter of Paul's in 1 Corinthians 13, it has 13 verses. And it's in the Authorized Version, in the sleepy Elizabethan English of the Authorized Version, you remember, it speaks there about the, a word that's used in a very different way today, charity suffereth long of this kind, charity endeth not, charity vaulteth not itself.

Well, all the modern versions, and they're not all good, but they've done one thing, they've taken that shabby word charity, which means disposing of your old clothes, you know, giving away your surplus cash or something, they've changed it to love. Now, that makes the reading entirely different. Now, there's another way you can read it, and maybe you'd like to do this afterwards, and that is to put yourself there.

And it's pretty close reading, you know. I suffer long, I'm kind, I envy nobody, I'm never rude, I'm never resentful, I'm never glad whenever anybody goes wrong. I'm always slow to expose, I'm always eager to believe the best.

I'm giving you Moffat's translation actually there. But that's what it says in essence, you see. Now, could you legitimately put yourself in there? Okay, well, read it this way.

Take out charity, take out love, take out yourself, and put Jesus there. Jesus suffered long, he was kind, you know, we talk about the fruit of the Spirit being love, joy, long-suffering, well, that's what it's talking about in 1 Corinthians 13, and it fits perfectly, 1 Corinthians 13 is a full-length portrait of Jesus Christ. It is a full-length portrait, or should be, of a Spirit-filled believer.

Now, what is the Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount, I think, is a full-length portrait of Jesus Christ. Now, you know, the Scripture says, and it's a very, very, I was going to say acid Scripture, that wouldn't be right, but it's a very, very testing Scripture. There's a Scripture that says, as he was, so are we, when we get to heaven, no, in this world.

In this world. We're supposed to be miniatures of Jesus Christ. Now, I'm convinced of this, that if every professing Christian in America or England or Australia, wherever you may be, if every professing Christian in the nation lived the Sermon on the Mount, one day, we'd turn the nation upside down.

Mrs. Wesley, as you know, I've said often enough, she had 19 children. She needed to be wise to manage that bunch. And she used to stress to her children, there are two things to do with the Scriptures.

Number one, believe them. And number two, what was the other? Behave them. Now, we've been very strong on believing, haven't we? But we've been very weak on, we've been strong on believing, but we're very weak on behaving.

And yet, that's exactly what, you see, the redemptive value of the cross is to get out of us all that they came in, whatever came in with the fall. You know, there's no knowledge, we've very skimpy knowledge of what Adam was like. I'm sure he was a beautiful creature.

I figure Adam was about six feet four, you know, muscular, colossal intellect, nice beard like my friend here and like Keith's trying to get. And because there was no shaving, you know. C.T. Studd used to say, don't bring me those men with effeminate faces that have to shave their whiskers off and look like women.

He thought that a man without whiskers was trying to look gentle and, you know, sweet and show his skin like a lady, give us a muscle man. Now, we have little idea of what Adam was like. But, you know, I personally feel that Jesus was like that too.

I think Jesus had a beautiful physique. Now, he wasn't physically beautiful, but I'm quite sure he wasn't hunchbacked and I don't think he slouched and I don't think he did anything that hadn't discipline in it. I think Jesus was a perfect example of manhood intellectually, emotionally, spiritually.

Now, when Adam came into the world, he had a perfect environment. You could pick a snake up, you know, cuddle it at night when you went to bed. You could have a lion on one side, a tiger on the other.

There's no curse. You wouldn't get a thorn in your foot if you ran through the trees. You wouldn't get stung by a bee because they had no sting.

There were no nettles to sting you. There was nothing that would hurt or defile or injure. Adam came down a perfect man in a perfect environment and he messed the whole lot up.

Because of his transgression, the curse came into the world. Now, Jesus did the very opposite. Jesus came into the world surely a perfect man, but to a very imperfect world.

I try to stress to people when they say oh, the world's falling apart. And I say, well, listen, let me get this clearly into your mind that Christianity was not served up to the world on a silver platter. Christianity was born in a sophisticated totalitarian society.

My dear wife and I used to live in the city of Bath in England. And if you haven't been, you should go. Everybody should go to England and complete their education.

But if you went to the city, you'd find there's a bath wider than this and twice the length and there are statues of the Caesar. You know, Caligula's there and Caesar Augustus and Julius Caesar. Did you see them when you went? Yes, Pody's been, so there's one educated lady here.

And those old things are still there. Now, that bath was created by the Romans in 55 BC, 55 years before Christ. It's the only hot spring in England.

It's still working there. Bath is a beautiful, what we would call a spa. It doesn't have any industry.

It's a beautiful city. And all the rest of us, I mean all the rest of them, live there. It's a beautiful, beautiful city.

But it was established when the English were still, well, they weren't swinging from tree to tree, but they were certainly very uneducated and they were very backward. And you find cities like Chester and Manchester and Winchester and Colchester and every city that has the Chester behind it was at one time

a Roman settlement. And by the end of the world there was already a civilization, a greatest military machine in the world.

And Jesus came and the world was a slave empire. And yet he never said a word about slavery, did he? The Apostle Paul doesn't say a word about slavery. The only thing he says is be a good slave.

Well, that wouldn't go down very well with the AFL-CIO, would it? I mean, you have to rebel and kick over the traces. But I'm saying that Christianity is a silly clown. I mean, come on, he's going to preach a sermon on the mountain.

If a man compels you to go a mile, go a second mile. What do you mean? Well, if you're carrying your groceries down the street, put them down there and this Roman says, carry my load. You say, yes, sir, yes, sir.

And you can hardly carry the thing, you're tired, and then when you get to the end of the mile you say, oh, mercy. And I'm sure if it was like our day when he went back, his groceries had been stolen, they would our day anyhow. Who's going to leave groceries at the side of the road? You see, if you read the Scripture in this environment, thinking about, oh, there's a jet just gone over, oh, there, oh, oh, TV, oh, somebody else comes up with a computer, some other silly thing.

There's nothing more astonishing than Jesus coming. We forget the cultural shock. I thought, Matthew gives us this account.

Well, Matthew comes with a gap between Matthew and Malachi of 400 years. As far as we know, there have been no angelic voices, there have been no revelation, there have been no prophet. Isn't it amazing that in the most critical hour that what's called the Maccabean period, Judas Maccabean and all those guys are rebelling, that for 400 years, God hadn't said a word to those people.

Can you imagine what will happen supposing God cuts us off, supposing that the world is going to go on another 400 years, and God withdraws his spirit and the lights go out in the nation and there's no witness, and there's no prophet. How in the world will we get on? Why doesn't God come to, in this 400 years of total darkness give us any prophetic voice? And then suddenly, dramatically, instead of the Holy Ghost coming down on the great temple in the middle of Jerusalem, there's a rugged, ragged kind of guy up there yelling his head off and people say, hey, do you know what's happened? No, Elijah's come back to earth. Boy, that's a pretty complimentary thing.

Nobody's ever mistaken me for Elijah, but to say, how do you know it's Elijah? Oh, you've got to hear him. It's a different thing, but they sure knew he wasn't like the priest in the temple there. He was very, very different.

And again, you know, he didn't have any chairs for them to sit on and he didn't have an auditorium. He didn't have an overhead projector. He didn't have any handbills.

He didn't have a publicity man. He didn't even have a mailing list. Isn't that amazing that John the Baptist could manage without a mailing list? You know, none of the stuff, the gadgets and this is how we'll do it.

Tell us how you do it. Where did you get such a big crowd? Where did you get this? And we copied everybody's method where we're trying to help almighty God out, you know. Lord, you can bless this.

Lord, you can do that. John has nothing. And yet you find the Apostle Paul in acres of culture.

He's a scholar. He's a gentleman. He's the most amazing Jew in the world at that time and he says, I have nothing.

But I possess all things. Now the church has everything and possesses nothing. It's an amazing thing.

So for 400 years there had been stillness, stagnation. They'd gone through the performance. They'd shed the blood of bulls and goats.

They'd gone through their ritual and then suddenly out there a guy comes up and man, everybody goes. Jews, Gentiles, even the Romans went. The Romans with their breastplates and their plumed helmets and while John was preaching they cried out, what shall we do? Now we have to say, close your eyes.

We'll sing Just As I Am once more. Would you like to come down? Please, please, please. Oh, we beg and we scrape and we reduce Jesus to bargain basement salvation.

That's what you do in evangelism. You don't do that in revival. In revival people do the calling.

It says John began to preach. What did he preach? He preached repentance and it said the people cried out the publicans cried out not the republicans, the publicans. The republicans, you couldn't get republicans are too hard but the publicans cried out and then the Roman soldiers well, they hadn't gone out to hear the gospel they'd gone for the novelty.

They'd gone because they said well, we've seen that priest going all his strength and people bow down and say your excellence and he wore a golden crown with holiness on and he wore garments of glory and beauty and he wore a breastplate in the name of one of the tribes of Israel and he was next to God. Look at the difference in this little squirt of a fellow down here. I was preaching in a holiness conference some years ago, you know and they're very, very strong undressed.

If you wear shorts you're going to perdition and it was a hot afternoon and they were wilting and so I thought, boy, I'll make this congregation sit up and I said, you think of John the Baptist there in his leather shorts everybody jumped up immediately. The leader jumped on my, got my coat of pails and nearly broke my neck, he said you put the message of holiness back ten years with what you said, John the Baptist having shorts. I said they were shorter than that.

They weren't even shorts he was eleven girdle around his loins and a smelly old camel skin around his neck. But he had one thing you don't have with all your smart clothes he had the Holy Ghost upon him. And as I've said many times you never have to advertise a fire whether it's a physical fire or a spiritual fire you don't have to advertise it fire is the most attractive thing in the whole world.

But I'm saying think of the cultural shock after four hundred years and they just got over John the Baptist and then Jesus came. Oh man, this is worse than ever. John did no miracle Jesus didn't do anything else but miracles.

And they just got over Jesus and then up came the most brilliant man that I think ever lived Well we don't think of that do we? We just read it Paul went to Corinth, Paul went here, Paul went wait a minute, there's our own cultural shock again through John the Baptist the next one they have Jesus coming and there's an argument and it divides people. See people say well it would be wonderful if we had revival we'd all be

one. No, it wouldn't be fragmented.

Wherever Jesus comes he brings division before he could walk or talk about twenty at the very most maybe fifteen of them in Jerusalem and it says Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. But there's a little group here Hannah an old lady, an old prophetess and Elizabeth and Zechariah and Mary and Joseph and the old prophet there maybe not more than a dozen of them welcoming Jesus that's the only welcoming committee he had. Immediately he was born all Jerusalem was against him when he died on the cross he divided men one went to perdition, one went to heaven he went in the synagogue there was a division because of him wherever Jesus goes there's division I remember when we were in the city of Bath we had a church there and we had a lot of society people people who danced in Buckingham Palace they knew the royalty they knew the dukes and the lords and the ladies and they came as humble and sweet beautiful girls that studied music at the conservatoire over in Europe they'd studied painting with the modern masters in Belgium but they were the sweetest, loveliest bunch of folk and one day I remember a young lady came in the tent where we started the meetings and she knelt there, beautiful looking gorgeous clothes had a real Oxford accent you know, cultured English about a month after her mother came down and said oh, her mother was really hot what have you done to my daughter? did she meet you? no, she didn't meet me she did meet you? no, she met Jesus who? she met Jesus well, you know, when she came home she didn't want to take wine before dinner and she didn't want to take a cigarette and she didn't want to play cards afterwards she's become very unsociable since she became a Christian our home is divided I thought, there you are, you've got it Jesus comes in and divides this girl actually went to one of the poorest hospitals in London foot-slugging it there in the dirtiest part of London stayed there three years then she went, of all places she went to Afghanistan for some years one day I used her as an illustration in London in a conference a young lady came to me afterwards she says, was that young lady's name Mary Barton that you mentioned?

I said, yes she said, she was my roommate for nearly three years I never knew she came from one of the upper class families she never mentioned her family she was sweet and loving and so gracious she always made me feel so inferior not because of her scholarship and ability but the grace of God in her life was so beautiful made me feel sometimes am I really a Christian? she oozes out with love and she oozes out tenderness and she overflows with compassion and she goes out of her way to be kind well, I know it's a very filthy thing yes, but let me do it somebody comes in all mangled up there's some other mess and says, oh it turns my stomach alright dear, listen I'm going off duty but I'll gladly stay and do it going the second mile all the time again, this is what the world looks for it

isn't waiting for a new definition of Christianity it's waiting for a new demonstration of Christianity man, you can make definitions like turning sausages out of a machine definitions don't help us I don't know whether you believe this or not but when I go in the restaurant I never eat the menu do you? you see, oh we went to one recently they carved this lens and all the beautiful pictures are we said we'll take number one sorry, that's only Wednesdays we'll take number five oh we just ran out of that we'll take number four well, I think they just finished that you know the church is like that it's got the menu card here but it can't serve the meal you see, we've got our tall theology who in the world cares a hill of beans about our theology if Jesus said, by thy suit ye shall know them

it would be one thing, but he didn't say that if he said, by thy gifts ye shall know them that would have given a lot of people a big hand, but he didn't say by their gifts but rather, nine gifts of the spirit nine fruits of the spirit I could live without any gifts of the spirit I can't live without any fruits of the spirit I've only met one man in my life who said he had all the gifts of the spirit we were at a conference and he said to me

about the second day you know brother Avner there I'd like to hear you, but you know what he said, how many gifts of the spirit do you have I said, how many do you have he said, hmm the biggest one was humility but anyhow he said, you haven't met my wife have you I said, no he said, she's coming tomorrow, you'll see and he said, she has all the nine

gifts oh, I said, it must be wonderful are you a pastor no, we get about 90 people in our house on a Sunday morning I usually minister but you know, my wife's very envious of my oh, with all the gifts she's envious and right now we're considering separation not divorce, but separation any family, three boys well, why are you going to separate well, because she thinks she doesn't get enough time to minister Sunday mornings I take too much and she's very jealous I said, well, she sure doesn't have all the she may have gifts, but brother she lacks fruit you see, if your Christian life goes sour those fruits will dry up like you know, it's like going out to California there and you see all those grapes, you know and if you leave them too long they shrink and shrink and all you get is a bunch

of raisins you know, some people are like that they're hanging on to dried up old gifts that have lost all their juice and sweetness and beauty and they're hanging on a few gifts we don't need all the gifts of the spirit it'd be too much for us to most of us couldn't manage them all anyhow, we get too swell headed but I need every one of the fruits of the spirit of long suffering and gentleness and meekness and goodness and temperance and faith I need every one of them now again, Jesus comes in the fullness in the anointing, in the power of God back there in the Garden of Eden perfect environment, a perfect man comes mess the whole thing up Jesus comes into a world full of hostility it's so imperfect and crooked in that day and yet he comes in the midst of it and he isn't contaminated by

it you can't corrupt him there's no way you can destroy what he has his relationship with the father never varied his obedience never varied in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation he even declared he was a son of God and that's what got him into trouble he didn't get into trouble for doing miracles he got into trouble for saying he was a son of God now in this outline that we have in the 5th chapter of Matthew I think it was old Matthew Henry that said how did he put it? this is I'm trying to think come to me later I'm sure but what he's saying in essence is this it comes back to me now he said this is not the credenda by credenda he means this is not a list, a creed that we believe but it's the agenda the agenda when you go to some kind of meeting this is the agenda these are

the things we intend to do now actually here there are I guess really you can divide them different ways but at least there are 10 let me say this this book of Matthew it comes after the 400 years of stillness and quietness now there's a word used in Matthew it's used 15 times more than in any other place in the other gospels fulfilled now you know there are some people who will not touch the book of Matthew do you know why? they say because it's for the Jews God is speaking to the Jewish nation sure he is when we were out in the Bahamas some years ago I mentioned something about you don't say this to the Hebrews in our church I said you don't, no, no, no it's for the Jews and Matthew is for the Jews and so you don't read them or teach them because they are for the Jews anybody in your

church ever preach on you must be born again oh it's one of our key verses oh I said lady you're in error what do you mean in error?

I said because it's spoken to a Jew a certain man named Nicodemus a ruler of the Jews the same came to Jesus by now that's the most used chapter in the whole Bible John 3.16, John 3.10, John 3.30 he must increase, I must decrease it's the most used chapter in the whole Bible and it's directly spoken to a Jew it's

out of bounds to you oh no it isn't, no it isn't no I said neither is Matthew neither is Hebrews they were people who had come into a living faith in Jesus Christ now again that word fulfilled he's mentioned 15 times Jesus came to fulfill the law of the prophets he's mentioned 15 times in the gospels recorded by Matthew and then there are more quotations in Matthew from the Old Testament than there are in Mark, Luke and John put together that first gospel as you call it there are not four gospels we often refer to four gospels there are certainly not four gospels there's only one gospel told by four different men Matthew shows Jesus Christ as a king Mark shows Jesus Christ as a servant Luke shows Jesus Christ as the son of man and John shows him as being equal with God in my opinion the whole gospel of what 21 chapters in John are all condensed into that first simple beautiful first chapter and the first verse in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God again in the beginning was the word the word was with God and the word was God in the beginning eternity the word was with God equality the word was God deity so there you have it in the beginning was the word eternity, the word was with God equality, the word was God, deity and then the rest of the book is an exposition of all that's packed a king.

Mark shows him as a servant. Luke shows him as the son of man. John shows him as the son of God, because he was the son of man and he was the son of God.

Now if you want to read, if you want to study the prayer life of Jesus, you go to the gospel as recorded by Luke. Luke is emphasizing the humanity of Jesus that as a man he is totally dependent on the Father in everything. And so when you read, you read that John was baptizing in Jordan and Jesus came and the Spirit as a dove descended upon him, that Luke says that the Spirit descended upon him while he was praying in the Jordan.

The other evangelists say Jesus died on the cross. Luke says that even when he was dying he was praying. The other evangelists say that Jesus chose twelve disciples.

Luke says it was after he spent a night in prayer he chose twelve disciples. And usually when I'm in the church I say, hey, if you spent a whole night in prayer before you chose your deacons, how many would get in? We don't put deacons in office in a modern church because it's full of faith in the Holy Ghost. We put them in because they own two Texaco stations and a hot dog stand.

You never find any poor men on a diaconate. You don't find poor men on mission boards. We were in a place a few months ago and they gave me a sheet of their, you know, paper.

It had a nice masked head and down the side it had something. Then across the bottom all the members of the board. Ah, Mr. So-and-so, President of So-and-so, Mrs. So-and-so, the owner of a big industry, she's a millionaire.

Mr. So-and-so, the chief, and all the people that were quoted at the bottom were all somebodies. Not nobodies. Somebodies.

We'd fallen into the same trap as the world. You see? Well, it's alright. I mean, if you're going to have a good man, you may as well have a good man with money, maybe.

Just a man who's kind of sanctified and good, but he has no cash. So, why are you going to hitch him up? You know, this book is so devastating against worldly systems. That's why the world can't get on with it.

Well, I've got news for you. Even the church can't get on with the Sermon on the Mount, never mind the world. It's the most incisive teaching that there is.

It's the most beautiful thing that there is. Now, it says here in Matthew, seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain and when he was set, or sat down, his disciples came to him. Well, the teachers always sat down.

I'm not a good teacher because I'm standing up, but do you remember when the Holy Spirit came on them in the upper room? It came where they were what? Well, where they were sitting, it says. They were all sitting. Now, think of the first time.

Isn't it amazing that Jesus went to a hill and we don't know any name. Why didn't he go to the hill where Moses went? Ooh, no, he can't go there. Man, that 24th chapter of Exodus is devastating to me.

Moses has to leave millions of people and take seventy, three, plus himself. And then he leaves the seventy and there are four of them. And then he leaves three and takes what Joshua with him.

And then he leaves Joshua and he just goes up on the hill by himself. And he's wrapped in a cloud and the whole mountain shakes and God says at the beginning of the 24th chapter there, Moses shall come only and worship me. So there he is wrapped up in a cloud on that mountain.

Fire is there, the earth is shaking, it's terrifying. Jesus goes up on the mountain and a great multitude followed him. It's not a case of keeping away, it's coming near.

But he doesn't address the multitude. I don't believe he addresses the multitude because it says in the first verse of chapter 8, when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. Now I kind of figure that in this address that Jesus gave, that the disciples were immediately in front of him and the rest of the crowd were out there looking on and saying, oh, this amazing man, this amazing teacher.

There's no way, there's no way that calm men are going to digest the sermon on the mountain. It's totally impossible. There was no way the disciples were going to live it until eventually they were filled with the Holy Spirit of God, otherwise this is a total impossibility.

You see, men have always reached out for a utopia. One day we'll, what did Russia do? Russia said we're going to have a classless society. Russia doesn't have a classless society even today.

If you went to the opera house, when there's a big show on there in Moscow, if you went to the opera house at night, you'd see beautiful cars, Rolls Royces and other, just for a select company of people. All they've done, they've changed the bosses. In other words, it's a different hand that's in the tail.

They have not abolished a classless society. There's only one classless society, and that's the society of Jesus Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, born nor free, male nor female, all one in Christ Jesus.

Doesn't matter where you go, if the fellowship is there, if the Spirit is there, the Spirit bears witness with your spirit, this is a healthy group of spiritual people. I preached in some of the greatest churches in the world, and yet the outstanding meeting I was ever in was a crowd about as big as this, all lepers, way up in the northern part of Thailand. There's no medication, they stunk like a, well if you want Mayfield's word, a fox's guts, because when they kill a fox and cut it, it's worse than a skunk.

And it was the open air, it wasn't a building. And their arms were little points here, all scaly, and fingers were all matted and green with mould and pus, and some of them just had a string holding their eyeball, and you could see where their tongues were joined in their throat. Some were blind, leaning on others.

Some had half a leg and they were hopping, and they came and met in a place, a bamboo shed, and outside it said, oh fifty yards away, do not enter, leper colony. And the young lady that took me there, she's at Worldwide Evangelization Headquarters now with her husband, and she and her husband were out there, and she took me to the colony, we went into that colony. And she's Swedish, and she's a blonde, and she'd win a beauty competition anywhere, and she was about the most gracious girl that we had as a student at Bethany twenty years ago, twenty-five.

And she sat down in the midst of that bunch of lepers, I was moved to tears. It was like seeing a white lily on a bed of scum, you know. Or a white lily on a manure heap.

And I thought, that girl always looked beautiful, but today, surrounded with decayed and decomposed bodies and ugliness and bald heads with scabs on them, you couldn't describe the horror of it. And yet those folk who had, some had no fingers, they had a stump, and these fingers were bleeding, and they were tapping them together, singing like this, my Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine. And I thought, yes, and Jesus is looking down from heaven, and maybe getting more genuine praise out of this, and out of a congregation of folk with stained glass windows, and there's people in a rogue choir and all the rest of it.

We dress up our gospel, we try and make it presentable. Sunday morning, sickening on TV, you've got to give it a Hollywood presentation, and the world outside laughs at it. They say twelve and a half percent of the people of the nation only look at TV, and what percentage of that is Christian anyhow? I think nearly twelve percent of them.

Not maybe half of one percent look at the, unsaved people look at the show as they call it, the Christian shows. You see, again, Jesus was so simple in the way that he came. No ostentation, no show.

And he's trying to get through to these people that if you're going to have the life I have, it's a case of character. For after all, that's what it's all about. You would think after you read the first seven, seven is a perfect number, you know, and the first seven Beatitudes, which are to be the attitude, and he's built them up, you know, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the meek, and so forth.

And then you would think the whole world would sit down and say, hey, we want to watch this bunch. Man, this is like seeing a bunch of birds come from heaven, you know, with all snow white wings and big diamonds instead of eyes. This is a type of people you've never seen.

But when it comes to the last two, the last blessed there, 11, pardon me, verse 11, no, verse 10, blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say, oh man of evil.

Why in the world would they want to do that with people who have character like this? The people who are meek, people that don't retaliate, people that never never desire any vengeance, people who are pure in heart, so they're pure in their relationship to God, they're pure vertically, and they're pure horizontally. And yet, and yet, I remember going down the street in that same city of Bath one day, and there was a lady out of the upper story of the house, and she had a mop, and I thought, what in the world is she out of? She came through the window, out of the window, leaning out, and then I saw what she was after. She had left the window open, and she'd opened a birdcage, and a parakeet had come out.

And I saw she was pocking to try and make it move off the corner of the windowsill, you see, and it flew around like that, and then a bunch of sparrows saw it. Man, did they chase it. They got that thing, and they went round after it, and they just pecked it to death.

Finally, it fell off the windowsill of the next house, fell down to the ground. They pecked it to death. Why? I suppose, because it was so gorgeous, because it was saying things they couldn't understand, maybe, the way it chirped away, and they all descended on it, and I thought, well, there you are, there you are, you see.

Jesus says, don't marvel if the world hates you, you just praise the Lord. Lord, am I worthy of this opposition? Huh? Count it all joy when, what? You count it all joy when the world hates you, when your old aunt dies. You've been waiting for her to die for ten years, and you inherit all she has, a broken down car, and three thousand dollars, and a couple of faded furs, and a few other things.

No, it doesn't say that. It says, count it all joy when you fall into darkest temptations. If the world hate you, know it hated me before.

That's normal to the Christian life. We talk about the normal Christian life being victory over sin, and having a measure of joy, and all the rest. The normal Christian life is being buffeted by the world.

As dear Dr. Tozer said to me once, Len, ever since, ever since Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, the world's been in a state of emergency. It really has. It really has.

Do you remember that hymn that says, Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me unto God? Do you think anybody out there wants you to mature as a Christian? Not on your life. He wants to trip you up. He wants to poison your mind.

He wants to corrupt your way of life. And Jesus here is talking about people. Supposing it started with, Blessed are the pure in heart.

Oh, it'd all fold up. It doesn't start with, Blessed are the pure. It starts with, Blessed are the poor.

Now that doesn't mean that people who are poor, that live in a ghetto, or live in a slum area, that they're more spiritual than people who have wealth. That's not so. It's, Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Who gave us more, as it were, riches than, say, the Samis? He was a king. He was a great musician. He gave us some of the highest reaches of praise and adoration from the Samis.

And yet repeatedly he says, Bow down thine ear and hear me, for I am poor and needy. You know, the paradox of the Christian life is that Jesus is the bread of life, and he's also the hunger. The more you advance in the Christian life, the more hungry you get.

You see? You realize, oh God, there's such areas. You know, I thought when I came out of college, boy, only another month I'm out of college. Boy, two years from now there'll no Spurgeons risen from the dead.

I'm really going to make this whole nation sit up, you know. Well, somehow I didn't do it, but anyhow. And I thought, oh, a few years from now I'm going to reach so and so and so and so, and I'm going to absorb all that.

Well, here I am today. I haven't absorbed too much. I've sure absorbed a lot more than I had, but I've less confidence in myself, my abilities, anything else, than ever I'd been in my life.

You see, Jesus is our strength, but he only comes in our weakness. No man, I don't believe there's ever been a greater intellect. I don't think there's ever been a more spiritual man in all history than the Apostle Paul.

And yet, isn't it he who says, when I'm weak, then I'm strong? He says, the lame take the prey. No, no, no, no. We should go on legend and say, here, Jesus say, blessed are the peacemakers.

We say, blessed are the pacemakers. The guys who set the fashion, the guys who set the style, the guys who get to the moon, the guys who go ahead, they're the most blessed man that there is. No, no, no, that's what Jesus said.

He says, blessed are the peacemakers. We've got all these machines, we've got all these war machines, but what does Jesus say? Again, blessed are the peacemakers. Well, that's out of our reach.

Some years ago, I met a student, and this student said to me, well, Mr. Raymond, I want to ask you a simple question, isn't it? It's not so simple. She said, look, we're on the edge of another war. It was just before World War II, I guess.

Do all the young men have to be cut down like grass every 25 years? We take our most brilliant young men, they're going to be our next surgeons, they're going to be our next scholars, they're going to be our next painters, they're going to be our next lot of engineers. It's the new crop of men coming up, and how are we going to cut them down? Sacrifice them to the war machine. Is there no answer to it? I said, yes, there's an answer.

Sure there's an answer. Again, Christianity has not been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Christianity has been tried, found difficult, and rejected.

The answer to all our problems is here in the Sermon on the Mount. It's all condensed. But it demands humility.

It demands coming and saying, look, I'm poor and I'm helpless and I have great needs. Well, man's arrogance in himself is sufficient in himself. I mean, the world outside doesn't think that the Church of Jesus, and why should it? Why should it the way the mess that the Church is in today? Why should it think that the Church has the answers? They say the Church is full of quarrels anyhow.

People ring me continually and ask other people. I met a man two weeks ago, a young man who had been to one of the greatest seminars in Dallas. He said, Mr. Raymond, I've been here, I've been to this church, I've been to... It's what we understand fundamentally in the Scriptures.

Okay, you're going to join a church? Well, these are our conditions of membership. Would you take them home and read them and decide if you and your wife want to join? You know, we don't believe in water baptism. Well, we do and we don't, you know.

And it seems, you know, the Church is finding every conceivable point of doctrine on which to split. I don't know if it's key, but somebody told me about a church out in Oregon there. Do you know what they split over? One group said the water's too cold to baptize folk in.

We should put a few buckets of hot water in. The other said, no, that's not natural. And they split over hot and cold water to baptize people in.

Can you think of anything more outrageous and stupid? The whole world outside is lads. I don't think the dying thief had either hot or cold water, but he made it to heaven anyhow. But you see, when it comes down to this thing, God is going to start dealing with the innermost being that we have, the innermost part of our hearts.

I don't believe that today we're preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church just preaches forgiveness these days. You're a sinner.

You have a bad record. You come to the front and confess it. You bow down right here and confess your sins and you've got it made.

A young man came to see me yesterday. And he asked me some questions. I asked him some questions.

Very smart fellow had been to no less than four seminaries. I said, what's your spiritual background? Oh, he said, my spiritual background, when I was 14, I went to church and I walked down the front and I said, yes, I'm a sinner. Lord Jesus, forgive me.

And they baptized me that week. And he said, 14 years after I got saved. For 14 years, I went under the fact that one day I confessed my sin and I got baptized.

And then when I was 28 years of age, I suddenly woke up to the fact, I'm not really genuine born again of the spirit of God. I have no living relationship with God. Christ is not my meat and Christ is not my drink and prayer is not my vital breath.

But I accepted the dogma. I accepted the ritual. I decided the world's a stupid place.

I'm not going to get mixed up in drugs and all the filth out there. That's not common sense. And so I lived a kind of a Pharisaical life.

He lived like lots of people on the negations. I don't drink. I don't swear.

I don't smoke. I don't do this. I don't do the other.

And that's it. But how do you live in a vacuum like that? After all, the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 was that they may know thee, whom to know his life eternal. Not knowing about him, but knowing him in a living relationship.

We make shrines of places. Again, Jesus did not go on to the mountain where Moses received the tables of stone. He didn't go to the mountain where Elijah called down fire from heaven.

I believe he intentionally went to an ordinary place, because you remember afterwards when he was talking with that woman at the well and immediately she got into a theological argument, which people often do when they talk to them about sin. Oh well, listen, I've been brought up in a certain church. Now this is what we believe in the Roman church or this is what we believe in some other church.

They take defense in theology. And Jesus says, listen, you say in Jerusalem men ought to worship. We say in this place.

You see, there have been a revelation. The Virgin Mary appeared here or a lady of Fatima or Guadalupe or somebody. And Jesus says, look, neither in this mountain nor anywhere else.

God is a jealous God. That's why he buried Moses. Otherwise he'd have put a shrine up there and worshipped there forever.

Jesus goes to a common place where maybe the cattle had walked over, the sheep had walked over those hills hundreds of times. And he just sat down with their disciples. We used to, when we lived in Ireland, I used to go to prayer meetings and one of the common things that they used to quote almost every prayer meeting was quoted in Ireland.

Wherever we seek thee thou art found and every place is hallowed ground. And you needed that because often it was in a hut about from that wall here. If you put two cows in it, they'd be squashed together.

It was a tiny place and sometimes even with a mud floor and no fire and the wind howling round, boy, you got to believe God was there. Otherwise you're an idiot for being there anyhow. And yet sometimes the glory of God was there more than churches I've been in.

Wherever we seek thee, it is not a place, it is not dress, it is not correct vocabulary. Some people suggest, you see, all God is waiting for us till we get accurate theology. And once our theology is in a straight line, the Holy Ghost is going to come.

Oh no, no, no. You know, when William Booth founded the Salvation Army in 1865, I guess, oh man, they, they, the fires of hell were burning in England and the fire of God came down and sometimes you have to fight fire with fire, don't you? And, and when, when, when people began to get stirred and they weren't bothered about the Church of England so much and our great cathedrals weren't being patronized and the lovely services were often, the whole sanctuary was empty and they were crowding to see what God was doing in the Salvation Army. So the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, he said, your work won't last, Mr. Booth, your work won't last.

Why not? Well, because William Booth never served sacrament to anybody. They still do not serve sacrament today in the, in the Salvation Army. They never had the Lord's Supper.

And he never baptized anybody well in the Church of England, nor did he sprinkle them anyhow. They didn't baptize adults except that way with a drop of water. And he says, Mr. Booth, you're, you're, you're not on a firm foundation.

You don't baptize believers, you don't give them the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. So William Booth wrote back to them and said, Mr., dear Bishop, Archbishop, thank you for your letter and your consideration and you say that my work won't stand because I don't give people the Lord's Supper and I don't baptize people. He says, and your word won't abide either.

Your work won't abide. Maybe that's why it's dead now. Because the same scripture says that you're to serve the Lord's Supper, that same scripture says wash one another's feet and you don't do that.

You see? Is it just accurate theology? Sure, sure, sure. We want to be as close to the Word of God as we can, but to say that the hindrance to revival is that we don't wash one another's feet or the hindrance, that's not true. God has always worked where he has found purity of heart and purity of purpose and no desire to build your own little kingdom.

John Wesley had as good theology as anybody, but the Church of England didn't think so. You see, if you're going to really stand for God and for holiness, you're going to be rejected not by the world, but by some other people who profess his name as well. You know, the last 600 sermons that John Wesley preached, he preached only six of them inside of a building.

Only six out of 600. So that was 594 sermons he preached in the streets or anywhere. He even preached from his father's tombstone.

Now the holier you become, it's not a case of being holier than thou, but you see that while there's a beautiful attraction about it, there's also something that repels. After all, look, come on, face it. The holiest man that ever lived was Jesus.

What did he get from this world? A crown of thorns. Huh? Kicked around, pushed out. Why didn't they say, here he comes, the prince of peace? They'd been waiting for that forever.

They'd been reciting week after week, year after year, Isaiah 35. When he is come, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame shall leap as a harp, the tongue of the dumb shall sing. And isn't it paradoxical that the very weekend that they were celebrating Passover, they crucified the true Lamb of God? By the world outside, oh, they'll accept Jesus, sure, as a teacher.

No, they won't. I've heard men say to me when I used to hold street meetings, I'll accept Jesus as a teacher. I say, okay, okay, hold it, hold it right there.

Accept his teaching. I'll accept his teaching. Well, this is his teaching.

You must be born again. Are you born again? Although I wasn't thinking of it like that. I was thinking that you've got to be honest and straight and good.

No, no, no, that's what Jesus said. That's the outcropping. You have to be born again.

You see, this is, as we get into it, this is preliminary this week, but as we get into it, we'll see here that this is the only true way to maturity. This is the only standard that God has, a pure light, a pure heart. A pure outflow from our lives.

He's not content that we give our tithes or we do this or do that or do the other for him. It's an inward work. It's a grace of God.

The mercy of God working in us. See, it seems to me today that the whole stress even in the church, the stress today is you've got a congregation and the stress is happiness, not holiness. Keep the church happy.

Give the young people a sleigh ride in winter, a hayride in summer and we're going off to so-and-so. We have a church bowling league and we have a church something else, baloney. People say, you know, I think they're going to tax churches.

They should tax them. They should. If they're competing with Kentucky Fried Chicken, they should have to have a license.

If you're going to serve suppers in the church, make them pay a fee for a, what do you call it, a restaurant license. If they're going to have concerts, let them pay a fee for an entertainment license. Render to

Caesar the things of the Caesars.

Render to God the things of the gods. You see, a hundred years, over a hundred years ago, I don't know which boner it was. There was Andrew Boner and I've forgotten his brother, three boners, B-O-N-E-R.

They didn't pull boners, boners we should call them, boners, B-O-N-E-R. And one of them said, I looked for the church and I found it in the world. And I looked for the world and I found it in the church.

That was a hundred years ago. Somebody told me recently they went to a conference, it was for women, sure enough, a Bible conference, and they said this afternoon we're going to have a fashion show. I'd have slipped a note and said couldn't we have a passion show? The average church is more fashion than passion anyhow.

You see people going in Sunday morning and think it was a competition for who's got the best dress or the best hat or the best something else. Jesus is against all ostentation, all the external strutting. Psalm 45, I want to preach on that some day.

The king's daughter is all glorious within. Then you see some women going in church, you wonder if her husband's a painter and decorator. She couldn't have made that up by herself unless she'd been up all night.

Got her face all caked up and her hair's all this and the stylist and everything. You'd think the scripture was the other way about, whereas God looketh not on the outward appearance but upon the heart. You'd think it was God looketh on the outward appearance but not on the heart.

And this is what Jesus is going to get right down to, right down to the center spring of our personality. For out of the heart, out of your heart are the issues of life. The heart of the problem today is the heart of men.

That's where it all is. And you can have all the psychological training you like. I noticed somebody the other day saying we're having a gathering, a meeting and we're going to have a clinical psychologist.

And I thought poor old Paul, he was at a disadvantage, he didn't even have a clinical psychologist going round with him. Isn't it amazing what the church is trying to do to help people? Everything except the deep spiritual things of God. And Jesus comes and starts right off with those disciples.

I think it's, it must have been pretty shocking to them to say come on now boys, you just sit down, I'm going to talk to you a little while. I don't know how long it took him. You see what he's talking about this is, this is really not just the Sermon on the Mount, that's where he sat.

Actually that describes where he sat. What it really is, is the manifesto of his kingdom. This is the way Christians live.

This is the standard for Christian living. It's the manifesto of the kingdom. It's not a credento again, just what we believe, it's the agenda.

It's what's going to be worked out of our lives, not by self-effort, not by discipline, not by psychology, but through the blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, God is going to make it possible for us to live pure in an impure world. To be uncorrupted by the world outside. And that's why you find an exposition like Romans goes on and develops this whole theme as far as that goes.

What has God set the church in the world for? To be an example of holiness, to show people that while we live in everything that's twisted and degenerate and unclean and vile and impure, that we, by the grace of God, can have a pure heart, pure affections, in a world of hatred we can have love, in a world that's so miserable we can have joy, in a world that's so short-tempered we can have long-suffering, in a world that's at war we can have peace, in a world where everybody's asserting themselves we have meekness. It's so illogical to say that the lame take the prey, isn't it? In the battle to the strong didn't Napoleon say God is always on the side of big armies? In other words, the bigger the army the more sure of victory. No, that's not true.

At least David didn't believe it when he went out to Goliath. It's the very reverse which is the opposite. We're so dependent, we so love our own strength, we so love our own abilities.

So, next week, we'll start Jesus opened his mouth and taught them. Well, he couldn't teach without doing that. It doesn't mean that.

It means that he began to open his mouth with wisdom and with revelation. He began to say things that nobody else has said. After all, he is the supreme teacher.

He opened his mouth and taught them saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Okay. How many millions of people have gone to church? Millions of people have gone to church thousands of times.

And they've said over and over thousands of times, quite thoughtlessly like we say so many things in church. Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. Thy what? Supposing you stop them coming out of church and say, excuse me, did you say the Lord's Prayer? Oh, yeah, we said the Lord's Prayer this morning.

Could you please remind me what it is? Oh, yes, it's our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. Just stop there. When is this kingdom coming? Oh, I think that means when we get to heaven.

Oh. Somebody more enlightened says, I think the kingdom comes in the millennium. Paul has to say, listen, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink.

The Pharisees loved that. It's not meat and drink. It's not say, well, I, you know, like the devout Catholics for years, they went to hell if they ate fish on Fridays.

Then suddenly the Roman church decided that didn't matter. So everybody that's lived in terror for centuries, they could have lived without that fear. And they had little plastic images of, what was it? Saint Christopher.

And about 10 years ago, the Pope said, no, Saint Christopher had no power. And so they used to have, you remember what they used to have on the dashboards of the car? They used to have little plastic things of Saint Christopher, you know. And then they found that obsolete.

They thrown that out. Oh, mercy, what things will do? Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. No, no, no.

All the millennial age will be wonderful. Sure, it will be the Garden of Eden all over again. There'll be no serpent.

There'll be serpents with no, no, no poison. There'll be lions that don't devour you. There'll be bees that don't sting.

There'll be thorns. There won't be thorns. There won't be anything.

The curse will have been removed for a thousand years. And then, of course, in eternity forever. No, no, that's what it's talking about.

The scripture is very explicit. It says the kingdom of God is within you. Within you.

The king that rules there presently is king self. That king has to be overthrown, thrown out. And the stable of the heart has to be cleansed.

And the king of kings has to come and live and reign in the heart now. This is the manifesto of the kingdom. This is what Jesus wants us to live day by day.

Oh, it may mean suffering. It may mean, it may mean being put down. It may be that people take advantage of you.

They did that with Jesus. They did it with the apostles. Dr. Sangster of Westminster used to tell a story he loved very much about a man that lived in the New Testament days, in the latter part.

A man by the name of Phocus, P-H-O-C-U-S, Phocus. And he became known very, very widely in the Roman Empire as an outstanding Christian. He lived by the sea in a little house.

And he could see down to the coast down the hill. And he could see boats come in. He could watch them load and unload.

And he had a beautiful house. And he had two spare beds. And he had clean sheets.

And he had a lovely well in his garden. And he had fruits. And he had everything that was needed for seasick travelers.

And it became known that he didn't do like that famous woman, you know, that put them in bed and chop their heads off once he got them there. Instead of that, he'd have breakfast in the morning. And he would minister the things of God.

And he began to spread the message. He got through the Roman Empire. One day, one of the Caesars said that man has to be extinguished.

He was leaning over his gate one night, looking at the sunset, seeing a boat in the distance and saying, they'll make it by morning. I can greet them. Excuse me.

He got a fly or something. And as he leaned over the gate, he heard a tramp of feet. And he looked and there was a Roman centurion and another soldier.

Good evening, gentlemen. The sun is setting over the horizon. Yes.

Would you like to receive my hospitality? No, we're in a hurry tonight. But sir, the sun is going down and there's no other home. You can't get shelter for the night.

Would you accept my hospitality? I have good food. I have the best well of water. I have the best fruits here.

I have lovely vines. No, no, we're after a man by the name of Phocas. You know who Phocas is? He said, yes.

And he said, if you accept my hospitality, I give you a meal and I have comfortable beds. And in the morning, I'll take you by the hand. I'll put your hand in the hand of Phocas in the morning.

The centurion said, we can't do better than this. Save us a lot of trouble. So Phocas took them in.

He washed their feet. He gave them a meal. He took them to their beds.

In the night, he could have run away. He could have run through the trees. But they never have found him.

In the morning, he served up breakfast for them. They were going down the garden path and the soldier said, he said, he put our hands in the hand of Phocas. He said, come this way, gentlemen.

He went down the garden path and turned them round. In the night time, he didn't run away. He dug his own grave.

And he stood at the side of the grave and he put his hand out and he said to the centurion, your excellency, I am Phocas. The man stood back and said, you, you aren't really Phocas? Yes, yes, I'm Phocas. I am the Christian.

I love the Lord Jesus. The centurion said, cut his head off. The soldier said, do it yourself.

And Phocas just said, Lord Jesus, I love you. And the next thing, they slashed his head and his body fell in the grave. He died.

And the soldier that left, it said, that's what Christians do. They're not afraid to die because they go to their king. They're not afraid to die because they've already been living like heaven before they went there.

They're not afraid, this is what their master said, love your enemies and do good to them that hate you. And yet you find people who fall over a straw, don't they? They seem to be looking for the first chance to divide with you and get you out of the church or spread some story about you. Oh my, if only every church in the country lived the Sermon on the Mount, forget the taverns and the discos and all the other hell clubs.

Don't you think if the church was so morally healthy, so spiritually pure, so overflowing with love and tenderness and gentleness that you say, well, OK, I know you're going to take my cloak. Well, listen, you may as well have my cloak because you won't be warm enough without it. That's what the book said.

If they take your cloak, give them your cloak also. If they say you go and marry them, you say, well, excuse me, if you don't mind, I'll go a second time. That's not the way of the world.

It's not the way of religion. What are you doing it? To show off? No, no, no, no, no, no. By this shall all men... What is the badge of discipleship? Tithing? No.

Preaching? No. Doing miracles? No. Well, what is it? Well, there's one thing that blind people can see and there's one thing that deaf people can hear.

And there is an Esperanto, you know, I remember as a boy they were talking about Esperanto having a universal language, getting rid of all the languages and having one language through the world. And there's one language everybody understands, it's the language of love. And Jesus says, by this shall all men know that you're my disciples.

Not because you're a brilliant theologian, not because you can explain the middle toe on the left foot of Daniel's image. By this, it's the only true sign. We've tried to say it's gifts of the Spirit.

Oh my, you'd make a crown of your own out of those. It's by being a great preacher, an outstanding person. No, no, no, no, Jesus says that's not it.

By this shall all men know that you're my disciples if you have love. Again, that one Corinthians love, that beareth all things, believeth all things. If it said beareth things, we'd get by.

It says beareth all things. Hopeth all things, endureth all things. Let me just look at that one word as I close.

I'm trying to think of it and it won't come, I'm getting old and forgetful. 1 Corinthians 13, I could recite it but I can't pick up the word at the moment. Okay, where is it? I said I could and I'm not sure I can.

Oh, yes, yes, verse 5. This divine love is not easily provoked. Ah, there you are, there you are, you see. It's not easily provoked but there comes a point, you know, when, I mean, an endorsement.

As I say sometimes, you know, that man says, well Jesus, I like what you're teaching, that sermon on the Mount Super but, oh, I've got a brother, he's a headache, I've forgiven him three or four times. Now, what do I do? Do I forgive him seven times? Jesus says, no. Oh, well, what do I do? He said, forgive him seventy times then.

Four hundred and ninety times. So, he goes on his way home, he buys a piece of plywood and eight by four, you know, and he measures it off into four hundred and ninety squares. And every time his brother upsets him or does something nasty, he marks his square off and he, you know, four hundred and ninety and he gets to four hundred and eighty-five and his brother does a raw deal, he says, I want to tell you something.

You know that famous preacher, he told me I have to forgive you four hundred and ninety times. Listen, brother, you've got to four hundred and eighty-five and boy, you've got it coming. What? What is Jesus saying? No, no, no, love endures.

It's not easily provoked but, you see, in the Greek easel isn't there. It says it is not provoked. Man, those disciples, those idiots that brutalized Jesus didn't know they were playing with fire.

If he could turn water into wine, he could have turned those men into stone. The devil's no fool, he says, command those stones become bread. He knew Jesus could do it.

He didn't do it. And, you know, we need power not to use power. Sometimes we think when we've power, I can use it, it's my authority, it's my right.

No, no, no, no. You need power not to use power. And the shortest thing in the whole world, I don't care what community, I've challenged them up, I'm not saying it behind their backs, I've said more than once up at Agape Force, I told Tony privately, I've told them publicly, I say you put the most daring thing in the

world outside your building there.

Love is the greatest force in the world. In other words, instead of having a Statue of Liberty saying bring in me a hulk and you're lame and you're blind and everybody will take care of it, you're saying at Agape, look, if you've any derelicts no girls can handle, if you've got people that are all spines and they've no love and they're all bitterness and hatred and they're edgy and sharp like razors, bring them all in here, we've got love that never wears out. Come on, bring them in.

I don't know what would happen if they took a busload of them in. Or brought a busload of them here. Or in any church.

I hadn't, you may have thought of this, I'm slow, but you know, just about three months ago I thought, dear, god what idiots we are. Martha, my dear wife and I were going into Birmingham City a few, four or five years ago and it was Friday night. We came off the highway, you know, the main drag and as we turned up there were a line of yellow buses, you could see them going up that hill I guess for two miles.

I said, Martha, those are church buses. And we went past, you know, First Baptist Church, Mount Moriah Baptist Church, John the Baptist Baptist Church, somebody else's Baptist Church. All up the road.

I said, Martha, dear, do you know what it is? I suddenly realised it was Billy Graham having a city-wide crusade. What were we doing? Did they send the bus to the taverns and the houses of prostitution and the kids down the street going to hell fire and gather up drunk with it? We were taking church members to get them saved at a crusade. What a sad reflection on two things that the preaching couldn't get them saved so you had to take people from churches to a church rather to get them saved.

And the hell bound were left still in the gutter. They didn't go to some prostitute and say, come on, dear, you'll forget your dirty business tonight. We want to take you to a church meeting, we really love you.

Go to some criminal, go to some guy that's a pimp, go to some guy that's selling drugs, go to somebody else and say, this is our mission on earth. I decided one day in a church I was in, in an area in Manchester that wasn't too rich that I would spend one afternoon every week on the doorbell. And I didn't even have doorbells, I had to knock on the door.

I knock on the door and I say, well, hello, you don't know me but I'm the pastor. And nearly every answer I got was this, I'm sorry I can't come, I've nothing to give to the church. That's all they thought you wanted them in for, to pass them back, to pass an offering plate and get something.

So I got to the church and right away I said, listen, call the elders. There's going to be a prayer meeting in this church every Friday night. You've got to come, you elders.

Whether anybody else comes or not, you've got to come. Second thing is, you're going to visit the hospitals, that's not my job, you go visit them. Thirdly, we're going to abolish offerings.

Boy, they were all, got an impediment in the speech. Did I hear you, we're going to what? I said we're going to put collection boxes at the door on tall legs like this with an inverted roof and just on the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. We're never going to mention money in this church again.

I don't want to go to poor people and they say I'd like to come but I couldn't put anything in the offering. It was a depression period, sure enough. So I got one of the good men in the church, he was a good

carpenter and he made the boxes, you know.

And I remember that Sunday night four people came to the front for prayer and I took them in a side room to pray with them. I came out maybe an hour after and the church treasurer was walking up and down like this, walking up and down. I thought, uh-huh, uh-huh, I know what he's waiting for, I know what he's waiting for.

He says, Mr. Raymier, what about the offering today? I said, what about it? He said, it's double. It's double. We never had a problem with offerings after that.

Everybody thinks we're in this business and I honestly, I believe that every Christian, you've got to face it. Are you a Christian for what you're getting out of it, what you can put into it? Are you a Christian because you'll escape hellfire and have an easier time at the judgment seat? Or are you a Christian because you say, I love God with all my heart, soul and mind and strength. And you gave your life for me, I give my life to you.

But after all, that's the first and I'm through with it. The first and greatest commandment is not that we fast and weep and pray as good as that may be of time, but the first and greatest commandment is I shall love the Lord my God with all my heart and soul and mind and strength and then yourself, no, and thy neighbor as thyself. And if we could get a revival of living the Sermon on the Mount, we'd turn this world upside down.

People say it's not for today. Oh, so what you're saying is we're not the salt of the earth. We're not the light of the world.

We won't need salt in the millennium. We won't need light in the millennium. We are the salt of the earth right now.

We are the light of the world and we better face up to it. And by the grace of God, I trust we'll learn some lessons out of this study and next week we'll start again with the blessed of the poor. Father, we thank you for your word.

Lord, it has a cleansing effect on us. It has a stimulating effect upon us. It lifts us up.

It casts us down. It clothes us and it strips us and then it clothes us. It empties us, then it fills us.

Oh Lord, this is our weapon. This is the slingshot, as it were, that David had in his hand when he slew Goliath and we can slay our doubts and fears and put our enemies down in the right sense of the word. God, make us to desire this inward purity and peace and power and to live as you would live if you were living inside of our hearts.

That's the only way to live as though with your indwelling and your peace and your joy and your love. We give you our thanks in Jesus name. Amen.

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