

Beatitudes - Part 8

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing one's poverty and need for God in order to enter the kingdom of heaven and experience God's blessings.

Duration: 1:14:33

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-9

Topics: "Beatitudes"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prioritizing one's relationship with God above all else. He shares his commitment to being a love slave of Jesus Christ and his desire to not disappoint God. The preacher highlights the story of the prodigal son as an example of someone who initially focused on taking from his father, but later humbled himself and asked to be made into a servant. He also references Jesus' sermon on the mount, where Jesus begins by pronouncing blessings instead of curses, contrasting with the last word of the Old Testament being 'cursed.' The preacher concludes by discussing the concept of equality among people, acknowledging physical similarities but recognizing differences in intelligence.

Transcript

The version in the Gospel recorded by Matthew in chapter 5, which we call the long version because the other version of Luke is the short version. And the essential thing again is to remember that this is the Master, the Lord Jesus, delivering the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest man who ever lived. Without looking, can you tell me the last word in the Old Testament? What's the last word? Cursed.

Cursed is the last word. And it's significant that Jesus begins his sermon by saying, blessed. Remember in the Old Testament there was a time when Moses went on a mountain and all the mountain trembled and if a beast went near to the mountain it died.

So great was the majesty and power of God. Here we have the very opposite. We have a gentle, you know, something atmosphere, something like the mountains there.

I don't like the title. It says the Sermon on the Mount and it kind of fixes the mountain in your thinking more than the substance. It's the substance that matters, not the mountain.

And I think again it's correct to say that Jesus was speaking only to his disciples because as you read the first verse in the 8th chapter it says, when he was come down from the mountain great multitudes followed him. So apparently those multitudes had not been with him on the mountain. I think old Bishop Vaughan, he must have been white, he was an Englishman, and Bishop Vaughan said that he figured that the disciples were immediately around Jesus and then, you know, they were eavesdropping.

They were kind of getting the message as the wind blew it in their direction. The Sermon on the Mount is a total impossibility for the world. Men have tried to make a social gospel.

They've substantiated their arguments, you know, you to feed the poor, you to do this, do that. That's true. That periphery though, what he's talking about here, he's talking precisely to his disciples and he's talking about entering into the kingdom of heaven.

Now some people think the kingdom of heaven is far off. Millions of people in thousands of churches have said hundreds of times, thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Or they've said thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

And if you ask them, well try it some Sunday when you're going past the church, say did you say what is called the Lord's Prayer, which isn't the Lord's Prayer, it's the disciples' prayer. The Lord's Prayer is John 17. The disciples could not pray John 17 and Jesus could not pray what we call the Lord's Prayer.

But they say thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Now if you ask them what is the kingdom of God, they say well, you know, like the old song, there is a happy land far, far away. But Jesus says the kingdom of God is within you.

And he says that if you're going to get your priorities straight in the Christian life, that what we have to do is look at that, which verse is it? Verse 33 of chapter 6. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these other things, these things that, you know, we get worried about, your clothes and other things. You know, I've never seen a sparrow with a nervous breakdown, have you? Sparrows don't get worried. It's just human beings that get worried.

The birds in the air, they don't sow, but they get their food alright. And yet we get so concerned, we get caught up with trivia. Some of you, anybody here from Christian Missionary Alliance? No, well, they're known more in the North, but their great founder was Dr. A. B. Simpson, who was a Presbyterian minister, then he saw the light.

But anyhow, he wrote many lovely things. And in his great writings, he spoke about the temporal, transient things round about us, and he called them perishing things of clay, born but for one brief day. And it's amazing how anxious the government people are, and that's a prohibition, be anxious for nothing.

But in everything by prayer and thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God. Worry is not legal in the Christian life. My dear mother was very smart.

I take after my father, but anyhow, my mother was very smart. And you know, she had a lot of wonderful axioms and smart sayings. And she would say to us as children, now if you trust, you do not worry.

And if you worry, you do not trust. You can't have faith and fear. They don't mix, they don't go together.

We have no need to be afraid of anything or anybody if we're really walking in the light that God has given to us, and have the strength of the spirit to do it. We've argued a bit earlier, before some of you came, that here it said in the second verse of this chapter, he opened his mouth. Well, they say he couldn't talk through his ears, could he? Nobody, Jesus had to open his mouth, but it doesn't mean he just articulated clearly, or that he had eloquence as we think of it.

It means that when he opened his mouth, he spoke with authority and not like the scribes. You remember they sent the temple guards to arrest him on one occasion, and they came back without Jesus. And the big chief said, well, why didn't you bring him? And they said, never man spake like this man.

In other words, they went to arrest him with their hands and their clubs and whatever else they had, bows and arrows or something. But he arrested them with his words. They stopped dead in their tracks.

Oh, he doesn't like, talk like these commercial evangelists, these scribes and Pharisees. They say more dry shibboleths, they call them out. But when he speaks, like he did in the garden.

Who seek he? He seek Jesus. Well, I am he. It must have been very wonderful to hear Jesus preach.

I think more wonderful to hear Jesus pray. And then he says, blessed are the poor in spirit. Just to recap for a minute or two.

And most of the modern translations have taken that word blessed and they've changed it to happy. Happy are the poor in spirit. I don't know anybody ever happy about being poor.

Happy are they that mourn. Happy are the meek. But there's no way you can take that Greek word which is explained here as blessed.

There's no way you can change it to happiness. You know, the psalmist, as he says more than once, I've got an itch, do you have some bugs around here or something? The psalmist repeatedly says, bless the Lord, O my soul. Now, how in the world can you bless God? What have you got to bless God with? He doesn't need your wisdom.

You can hardly get through on your own. I mean, you don't have enough to get through yourself. So, he's not looking for your wisdom.

He's not looking for your strength. He's not looking, what is he looking for? How can you bless the Lord? I'm not going to elaborate. There are two Greek words here.

There are two Greek words for blessedness. And unfortunately, they often get mixed up. The translators mix them up.

You see, when I bless the Lord, the Greek word means I eulogize God. Just as later we'll find out when he says, blessed are the merciful. I can't show mercy to God.

Does God want my mercy? Surely he doesn't. How can I bless God? He owns everything. I like the old hymn of Isaac Watts when he says about God.

He made the stars, those heavenly flames. He counts their numbers, calls their names. I like to have said that to Carl Sagan when he was on TV a few months ago, explaining the universe.

Saying there are not just millions, there are not just billions, there are not just trillions, there are sextillions. And why? There are some, you know, the Milky Way isn't just one great big twisted pathway of light in the sky. There are Milky Ways that make that Milky Way look like nothing, you know.

And he goes on eulogizing how vast the universe is. And I thought, that's great. That's great, I enjoy that.

Because my father made them all. And the scripture says he knows the name of every star. And if he knows the name of every star, surely he knows your name and my name.

And that ought to give us a cause for praise and adoration. But again, how can I bless God? As Isaac Watts says, his wisdom's vast and knows no bounds. What did they say the other week? That that thing they shot up into space, what do you call it? Explorer something? And it went round, where did it go? Mars? And it's gone on to another planet? And maybe it will be going on a hundred years from now? Oh, mercy.

Must be a lot of space out there. We live in a shrinking world. Every time we invent a new plane, you know, an English plane, they get over the Atlantic in three and a half hours.

It took Wesley three and a half months to come over. You can do the same thing in three... Every new thing is shrinking the world. Every new telescope is expanding the universe.

And when I listened one or two nights to Carl Sagan explaining the mysteries, trying to explain the mysteries of the universe, I felt like just standing up and shouting, My God, how great thou art! He was kind of suggesting you can't believe the theory of creation from the Bible. Why not? I remember the first time I heard an old preacher in America, about 1951, say that he found out that these men were right in their story of the creation of the world. He said, it's like this.

And they had a great big ponderous dictionary, you know, one of those things with about 3,000 pages, an enormous thing. He said, I would like to show you this. This is a modern miracle.

There was a big paint shop in Cincinnati, and they had an explosion. And after the explosion, they found this, it had blown this book together. And everybody gasped for a minute.

He said, well, that's just about the likeliest thing. There was once a big explosion in the world, and they put birds, you know, with one color, and you never find a crow singing like a nightingale. I remember going to Australia once, and suddenly, suddenly a boom like that, and there was red and blue and everything.

I said to the car driver, hey, hold it a minute. What was that? Parrot eats a sparrow, a parrot eats a, what do you call them, those colored birds? Peacocks? Peacocks, no. Well, they do fly, we eat some peacocks when we're at the other house, they used to fly to the tree top.

Parrots, parrots. You know, the more gorgeous a bird is, usually it can't sing. The plainest birds have the greatest sound.

Very often it's like that with people, the most simple people, very often unattractive, you know, just like most of you, and they have an inward beauty, and that's what matters. After all, the psalmist in Psalm 45 says, the king's daughter is all glorious where? Within. Within.

We had a fellow in England, not far from where I live, and he used to take that old saying, you know, that says beauty is only skin deep, and he says most of us need skinning. Well, if it's just skin deep, if you've

got the skin off, you might find the beauty, but anyhow, there it is. But you see, there's no way in which I can bless God.

How can I bless God? All I can do is eulogize God, and that's what the Greek word there really means. In Mary's Magnificat, she eulogized, she blessed the Lord, she magnified the Lord. I can put myself in line for his blessings by my obedience, by my submission and so forth, and so on.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Well, that's the way into the kingdom. I think some people think that God should take them on because there's so much ability.

They're so clever. I mean, God doesn't know what he's missing in not using me. You know, like Mercy, I hope before I've been here a few days at this ranch, they'll find out what inner ability I have.

I mean, I'm loaded with wisdom and skill and knowledge, and I hope I don't have to stay here three months before they discover it. I hope it'll come to the surface and they'll say, you know, that girl's a genius, that fellow's got everything. He's an Einstein, Einstein, Epstein, some other Stein.

There's nothing that commends any of us to God, really. And the sooner we realize our poverty, well, that gives us access to God. Jesus, I think he got a colossal intellect.

I think he had acres of culture. And yet he isn't hesitant to say that he was poor in order that he might make many rich. David the psalmist wrote those magnificent psalms and was a king and a ruler and he had everything going for him and yet what did he say? This poor man cried and the Lord heard him.

In fact, God resisted the cry. If you're going anywhere at all for God, you'd better get rid of your pride even if you're a straight-A student or some other kind of student. If your dad's a millionaire or he owns IBM or some other thing, forget it.

That doesn't give you any advantage to come to God. I haven't been like some of these girls who never prostituted, haven't been in a crazy movie, haven't been this, that, and the other. Well, thank God you weren't, but you're still lost.

If this was Nicodemus, we'd still be lost because it was self-righteousness. He had impeccable morality and yet to use a common phrase, he was lost as a goose. Worse than that, a geese aren't lost except up in the sky.

And so the first step to God, to the riches that are in God is to recognize my poverty. And Paul doesn't get inflated anywhere even when he's been the most successful of all men in spirituality. He still says, I'm not making many rich.

You see, the richest church in the New Testament got beaten up. Looked at herself in the mirror one day and said, well, I'd rather be a church like me. I'm rich, I'm increased in goods, plenty of money in the bank, very fundamental in my faith, nobody can put a finger on my life.

I've need of nothing. God said, just hold it a minute, I want to turn the mirror around. Look at you, crooked, perverted.

You say, I'm rich and increased in goods now I'm wretched, naked, blind, poor and miserable. That's about as polarized as you get, isn't it? And yet it's the same person. So we have to come in our poverty.

Nothing in my hands I bring but simply to thy cross I cling. I used to work in an area in England in the city of Bath where there were a lot of broken down dukes and wealthy people and during the World War II the staff of the British Admiralty was moved from London into Bath and we had some stunning girls and marvelous men there, fellows who'd been to Oxford, you know, and rowed in the boat or they played rugby and these girls had been, you know, studying music in the conservatoire at Milan or studying painting under one of the great modern masters in Belgium and some of them very humble, some of them very arrogant. And I remember one of the most beautiful women I ever saw, she just tumbled out to an altar one night and I never saw anyone completely desolate.

She was a communicant in the Church of England, she had impeccable morality, she'd never gone astray. The worst thing she'd done was drink cocktails and play cards with dukes and lords. I think she'd danced in Buckingham Palace, I don't know where she hadn't been.

But all that night, I remember that beautiful face was distorted. She said, I am so wretched, to commend us to God, except our needs. Let not conscience make you linger nor the fitness fondly dream.

All the fitness ye require us is to feel your need of him. And when we come there with absolute nothing, absolute emptiness, that's the only way God will start filling us. No good saying, Lord, I'm half full, would you put a topping on it, you know? He says, no, dear, completely empty.

I'm not really naked, I mean, I've a few good parts, and he says, no, I'll strip you before I clothe you, I'll empty you before I fill you. You have to die before you can live. And blessed are the poor, all right, blessed are they that mourn, mourn over their poverty, mourn over their inability, mourn that God is so high and holy and I'm so low and depraved there's not much of that done anymore.

People come to God as though they're coming on an equal level. They used to sing an old hymn in the Methodist church, blessed are the men of broken heart who mourn for sin with inward snuff. I think W.P. Nicholson was the greatest of modern evangelists, I knew him, I listened to him, and he listened to me, I had to preach one night when he was sitting under my nose, that was an almost terrifying experience.

But you know, when he made an altar call he'd say to the people that didn't come forward, off you go, get out, he's a very rough Irishman, go on, get out, don't talk in here, talk outside, go on, off you go, go on, go on. I'm nervous, he was a cattle driver or something. And when they all got out he'd say now, come on, we're right up on the front row, I've been a sinner, Lord save me, amen.

He'd say, come on now, get down, what have you done, what wrong have you done, can you put that wrong right, are you willing to make restitution, not only repentance, restitution. Repentance is to leave the sin I've done before and show that I in earnest grieve by doing it no more. But then what about somebody's life I've wrecked and now I can help to put it right.

I was in a certain area and there was a man there, he went out of business again and went fairly well and he went bankrupt again but he borrowed life savings from quite a few people. One man had five thousand dollars, another had seven, another had three, this was when the dollar wasn't as thick as it is now and he went bankrupt again. And then he got a friend to loan him some money and he built a beautiful house on a little estate and people thought he'd go around saying hey I owe you seven thousand, I owe you three thousand, no he didn't, no he didn't.

Oh legally, legally, no you don't legally but morally and spiritually you do. We're not talking about the legalism of the law of the land, we're talking about what is right again in the sight of God. And if you look back you'll have time of mourning, you have to do that, doesn't mean you stay in the valley but it's a healthy thing to have spiritual mourning.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Now let's come to this, time goes so quickly, something wrong with the clocks here. Verse six, blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

I've never quite understood that statement that's used so very often that we're all born equal. I don't know how they explain that, I don't think we're born equal at all. We may be born with equal rights but we're sure not born equal.

Some people are born pretty dumb and some people seem to be sharp almost but as soon as they get on the feet it seems oh he's going to be a philosopher, he's going to be a lawyer, he's going to be something, he sparkles, she sparkles. Somebody told me the other day about a child they have who is I think seven years of age, you can hardly drag him from the piano and now she doesn't have to go to school, she's excited because right after breakfast she's there at the piano and she wants to know about Chopin and Mendelssohn and all these others you know and she's excited about the piano. Her brother goes yes.

He joins the nation, the nation as you know is in mourning now for the baseball strike and it's the worst thing that's happened since the Vietnam War. One of the things again about people is that we're not born equal. We're born equal in the sense that we're all born like this you know, we've got heads and arms and eyes and we hopefully are born reasonably healthy.

It was an American who said we're all made in the same mould but some of us are mouldier than others. We're all made in the same mould physically but we don't all have the same degree of intelligence that's pretty obvious. We're not all born in the same social strata.

I miss that with girls that never even had to do their own hair in the morning when they got up they rang the bell and the maid came in and they sat there in the chair and they had their hair done for them and oh mercy what dress madame are you going to wear today so on to it laid out for you oh everything was done. Rode your horse and when he came back the groomsman took it and took all the sweat off it and polished it and you went and relaxed and after that hard work you needed a good big stiff glass of lemonade and something you know you needed to rest an hour and there you live it.

It's unbelievable how some people live a man came to see me Sunday he was going to come in the afternoon and then he was coming in the evening and his car broke down he arrived about ten o'clock at night but he's working oh I don't know how many miles south of Monterey is it Monterey there in Mexico he's working down there anyhow and he said you know in that town all over the place the little churches here there and everywhere when you get further down in the country where he's working he said there's not so much show of the churches and further down still there's a canyon he said it's like a miniature Grand Canyon just like a big gas it's all some giant you know scoop the dirt out and in there there's a pocket where there are Indians that can't speak a word of Spanish and they can't

speaking a word of English they're distinctive by their features they're distinctive by their clothes they wear a kind of baggy pants around they don't know if the language they don't have a word of the gospel and yet you get on a plane if you could get one there and just drop off in Mexico City one of the largest cities in the

world by the year 2000 it will have 30 million people in the city imagine that it will be bigger than some countries I remember going through Australia and we got through a lonely part on the north west where there were some aborigines and I remember flying over one night from where did we fly from Sydney going up into New Guinea and I looked down that's a few years since before the jets were there and the planes didn't fly more than 14,000 15,000 feet and all

over the ground there were great big pockets of fire why? because the folk don't wear any clothes and in the daytime it's scorching and at night it's freezing so what do they do? they make a fire there they make a fire here and they lie in between and I have a picture of an old man who rolled over in his sleep rolled into the fire burned his beard up burned his hair made a terrible mess of him but Sydney, Australia my goodness that's a gorgeous city it has maybe the most modern most beautiful opera house in the world it has all wonderful delight and you get this horrible antithesis all over the world and then you get degradation not far off and a young fellow said to me I'm going to be a missionary I thought oh good good I know he's going up to one of the seven great big sections of

Aborigines oh where are you going? he said America oh you're going to be a missionary in America? yeah have you heard of a certain tribe so and so? do you know there's a tribe of Indians maybe most of you couldn't recite the name of ten tribes of Indians in America tonight and it's not easy and exciting to say oh I'm going down to the Philippines I'm going in the jungle up in the Philippines I'm going up where the men wear bones through their nose and feathers four feet high and paint their chests up in New Guinea well I've been up there it's pretty frightening too to see them I wanted to go over a range of mountains three men have gone over never come back there's cannibals over there they eat you I have grieved honestly this last week particularly over the fact that 95% of the gospel of

the grace of God is taught to 5% of the world's population so that 5% of the preaching goes to 95% of the world's population now come on how are you going to work that out? what do you say God never called me to the missions he didn't have to call you he told you to go you should have a call to stay at home he said go into all the world and preach the gospel well that was to the disciples well the word to the disciples you should be baptized with the Holy Ghost but you claim that are you choosing? you claim what you want and neglect what you want and live as you want remember old Bonhoeffer by me he would have lived if the Americans had got to his I don't know where it was Buchenwald, the Dachau, the camp he was in and the Americans got there about four days after he'd been put to death

but one of his statements that he loved to give was this when God calls a man he calls him to die doesn't mean say you're going to be martyred somewhere he calls you to die die to all your ambitions die to your own plans die to what you want to do and start living see we live in a mad world totally mad gets more insane every hour we're spending billions of dollars on how to burn other countries up and they're spending billions on how to burn us up I don't think it's very sane blessed are they who what? hunger well it doesn't matter whether we're black or white or red or any other colour whether you're rich whether you live in Buckingham Palace or you live in a hovel everybody gets hungry there's a level on which we're all born equal now have you ever been to one of these swell banquets

banquets banquets where you know the table's groaning and you're looking I remember once I'd been preaching I want you to come to my home tomorrow I didn't know a thing about him he came up in a Cadillac that was when rich people had them I have one now but mine costs ten dollars in case it troubles you so don't worry about it I have a Cadillac this guy drove me to his home and when I got in I didn't want to show him how I was amazed the house was loaded he was a millionaire and this was supper Saturday

night and a lady came in in her uniform she had a turkey on a dish like this she took the turkey and put it at the end of the table then brought a whole ham and put it at the other end of the table brother did we have food I thought this guy's got mixed up he thinks he's feeding the five

thousand the table was just about bending with every delicacy you could think and now I hope you're going to enjoy yourself you know the Lord loves us to enjoy ourselves yeah he does why that was something you know somehow I thought if I ate as much as I could there I might be hungry before the week was out you know that song's very smart I'm pressing on the upward way some people think that sometime I'm going to get to a place of finality some people represent if you're the holiness group you get entirely sanctified if you're Pentecostal you get filled with the spirit and that's the plateau and you live on it that's the end of everything yes it is the beginning end hunger is normal somebody says how do you feel I'm hungry oh that's right a bit of stomach trouble a bit of this it's only

when we're off colour that we lose our appetite normally we're made to eat and we're made to drink and almost everybody that comes to America for the first time goes down the street says hey what's that taco bell oh that's where you get some Mexican oh Wendy what does Wendy do is she a sewing class no Wendy makes kind of a sloppy hamburger but what's a sloppy joe and what's a torpedo 12 inch torpedo what's a torpedo and then a bit further you know it's Mr.

Burger and then it's Whopper Burger or somebody mercy every go down the street oh you see going down the street as soon as one fang goes up the other boy has a bit of maybe a bit better class than the other and all you see going down any main street when you've been in one modern city you've been in them all you've been in them all there are no hills in modern streets we the city we level the whole ground out with bulldozers no curves in the road north south east west can't get lost you know go down maybe some of you could you go down the average new city I'm talking about and I'm talking about New York or Frisco up hills and you know break your neck and kind of thing I'm talking about these new cities the next time new cities they're all north south east and west no hills it's all level

go down main street there's Kresge there's Kmart there's so and so there's so and so there's some killers everybody's got in it's beneficial but most people that have come to America that I've seen and I've seen them in a number of countries and they say you know when I got to America I was overwhelmed with how much they eat everybody's eating you go in a shopping mall and a guy he's chewing away and then he dumps his dirty wet little thing in a you know coke on it or something man alive people love days like this everybody gets so thirsty men on the building site they'll drink 5 or 6 literally 5 or 6 cokes in a day what did they say on a good day in America something like 500 million cokes or sodas a drunk in a day so obviously we should be the healthiest nation but you know we're one of

the richest perhaps the richest nation on the international scale of health we're about number 12 children in school are somewhere around about 15 education so bad all that we can show is chrome in Finnish stuff and that kind of stuff why? we don't eat right we don't drink right but Jesus says here blessed are they what? are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness well I'll tell you this could be classified we can put this in various areas you can be hungry mentally and it's a shame that many of us are not I've got a son he has an earned PhD I've got 3 sons 2 missionaries one working as a doctor in a university in West Africa all the boys have been avid readers ever since they could read none of them could read before they went to school I think 2 of them went to school when

they were 3 and a half and they're tremendous readers I've crossed the Atlantic about 20 times on the United States Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth what have you got and I used to like to go into a recess in the lounge of the Queen Mary because not that I was one of them but there was a group of intellectuals usually gathered in that area remember there was one man one week and he had one day as we crossed and just a few days before he left for the boat in Southampton he had been to see Winston Churchill at the Chequers as the residence is called of the Prime Minister and he'd been down to the Chequers and he'd eaten in the home and discussed some things with Winston Churchill there were other men there, scientists there was the leading preacher of the world at that time sitting there and I

sort of, kind of a crossfire they were talking about moral things and intellectual things and sometimes spiritual things but scientific things and about the war and various other things and it made me think again my, what an amazing capacity the human mind has what we can absorb you know they say that the most, the biggest part of learning has happened in a child by the age of five it's a pity we don't let children go to school when they're three they learn an awful lot most countries, Europe they have to go before they're five we try to drag it out to the other end you know and when they're too interested in girls or too interested in sports or something to even bother to about study or getting down to serious thinking but again the mind is capable you have a tremendous hunger you get

fellows who have a hunger for fame in one sense that's natural you get a man who's hungry for the highest peak in his profession I worked in a tailor's factory until I was about 19 and I used to cut suits and I was in a special section where we cut suits for deformed people that was an intricate, difficult very fascinating work and there was one man there and I worked right opposite him I had a table three and a half yards long he had a table there you know you need three and a half yards of cloth for a suit that man could always cut it for instance somebody wanted an opera cloak well you don't usually find those in goodwill stores do you or some other place you have to go in a hundred shops and say excuse me do you have an opera cloak what? opera cloak one of those big swirling things

with buttons round your neck and oh no no I know what you mean like Dracula wears no we don't have any you know they brought that man a great length of cloth cloth is usually 30 inches wide with a double edge and we opened it to 60 and then we folded it this way and he designed on that cloth an opera cloak, why? because for about four years he never went to a movie house he never went to any sports place every night after he'd been working in the factory he'd have his supper bathe and go upstairs and he would work and design and get his mind fixed on all these riding breeches he's got stylish gentlemen's tail coats all kinds of odd things that hardly ever come up that guy was on the ball he carried a little notebook about four inches by two and a half and he had little notes in and he'd

turn that thing in and guys would say hey can I see that no you can't see it that was his Encyclopedia Britannica kind of thing he had his little German thoughts there but what did he do the heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight but they while their companions slept were toiling upward in the night see you get nothing free in this world except failing and the more you pay the better thing you expect if you buy a Toyota you don't expect it to be at all noise if you do it won't be don't let me warn you in case you think of buying one you don't expect to buy a Rolls Royce at the price of a Toyota there's a price to pay for everything there's a price in the spiritual life we'll never build a Bible school with an assembly line that everybody takes the same

studies and drops off with the same degree even of Bible knowledge never mind spiritual development now notice what it says blessed are they who hunger and thirst after what gifts of the spirit no ministries no

knowledge no they all have their part but first the primary thing is blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness if you go to England you should do complete your education but go to London and go up what's the street called oh anyhow Westminster Chapel is up there City Road, go up City Road and you'll see Westminster Chapel when I was a young fellow there was a prince of a preacher there by the name of Mossack Gawtree he had a man, an elastic vocabulary you'd think he'd swallowed a dictionary he was a great preacher too he filled that pulpit with distinction and he

used to say this the person who only wants his sins forgiven is toying with Christianity you see many of us want the image we want to get rid of guilt, fear I don't want to go to hell I want to go to heaven I want to find a nice guy to marry a nice girl or something that's it blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness what did he say he's saying blessed are those who hunger and thirst after God-likeness or holiness I was reading some stuff about H.G.

Wells today and it reminded me of a statement H.G. Wells said he said there's a God-shaped blank in every one of us I don't know if it's round or square or diamond-shaped you know what I mean there's a God-shaped blank that only God can fill or if you remember Augustine said God made us for himself and without him we're not complete and we're not satisfied now we've translated the word or somebody's translated the word in most of the modern translations happy isn't that happy oh no no I thought that out happy, happy, happy happy depends on happening if everything happens oh you know what I got this morning I got a letter my aunt sent me \$25, boy I feel great when can we go shopping well we'd better hurry because it takes \$25 worth of gas to get to Thailand back before long \$25 is not much but how we go up and down you know with these terrible things we call emotions that either we conquer them or they conquer us moods that either you get under your feet or they get you down no no no happiness depends on happening the root is hap or chance but this blessedness we're talking about which can also be translated joy in the Lord is totally independent of well I'm trying to think who it was I'm not sure whether it was Madam Guillaume or F.W.

Faber that said could I be cast where thou art not that were indeed a dreadful spot but with thee my Lord to guide the way it is equal joy to go or stay when she was shut up in prison she's very philosophical about it a little bird am I shut off from fields of air content within this cage to lie since God has placed me here well pleased a prisoner to be because my God it pleased a thief a lady phoned me oh mercy she's phoned me for about 3 weeks she comes up with every twisted thought about her spiritual life and she said yesterday I think God's forsaken me he's left me I said oh you shouldn't worry about that you shouldn't worry about it give gratitude to him praise him rejoice because he's left me no because he's been with you so often and now when you miss him he's gone you feel he's

gone I said I doubt that he has but remember Madam Guillaume was in a prison with walls 30 feet thick which is maybe about the width of this room or a little thicker and she'd lost her home her family, her children, her husband her wealth and she's shut up in a stinking prison and she said it's beautiful living here and then she said when my priest couldn't come to me my preacher couldn't come to me my husband couldn't come he was dead the children couldn't come they were gone my fortune had gone my servants had gone everything had gone and then she said for some reason I don't quite understand it pleased the Lord to leave me too and she said he didn't speak to me for 5 years but I loved him just as much I said Lord I don't know what you're doing but I know what I'm going to do I'm not

responsible for your attitude to me I'm responsible for my attitude to you and so she wrote some of the best poetry when she was in the most horrible situation well that's the time when you prove your Christian

experience it's a time when you prove whether it's just about that depth in your mind or whether it's got down here into your heart and into your will and into the seed of your affections blessed are they who hunger ooh I used to go in some day my mother would say hey you're ravenous aren't you I'd say yes well can I eat now no you can't you know my hands were never really dirty what little boy had dirty hands you go and wash your hands but my wife you go and wash your hands oh was I dying to as we say to get to that food do you remember the psalmist when he said my heart and my

flesh cry out for the living God see we don't convince God by our theology we don't convince God by how hard we work we don't convince God by how many tracts we give out how many people get saved no no no no I don't know who wrote it I didn't have time to check it we've been in a whirl this last few days but I remember one writer who said my goal is God himself not joy, not peace not even blessing but thee my God and tomorrow some of these guys you know they're on top of the musical chart my goodness for a few weeks they're on top and then whoop and then you don't hear of them and you find they're discouraged and they've taken to dope or suicide there's another thing oh they lived on the euphoria and the excitement of being on the charts and well known and all this kind of business you

see when we're talking about the righteous blessed are they who hunger and thirst after God not the service of God but God himself after all is there again anything more wonderful on earth than I, I, I, you poor lost sinner can lose our own self-righteousness and that's exactly what Jesus did he took our righteousness and he became unrighteous in the sense that he became sin for us he who know no sin would make sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him see that's why it says the kingdom of God is within you I don't have to go to heaven I live in heaven as Spurgeon said a little bit of faith will take you to heaven a bit more will bring heaven to you now where do you live do you live on this ranch or do you live in heavenly places I mean you get some rotten stinking

job to do on the farm one night sit up with a cow that's in labor and get messed up with all the stuff that comes away and all the rest of it and you come home at 3 o'clock in the morning and say my goodness I'd rather hear a message on sanctification than this you know after all it's working it out working it in is one thing but as good as that work out your own salvation with fear and with trembling there's no such thing as having one meal that's going to satisfy you for the rest of your life it would be nice if it would in this state of economy there's no such thing as coming to a plateau where I've no more heights to gain Paul prays for people who are filled with God that also they might be filled with the knowledge of his will there are many areas in which we can be filled after

we're filled blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness after gifts though they're good too blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness and that's just not first class morality or impeccable morality that's good you can have impeccable morality nobody lay a finger on you and yet still be unrighteous in the sight of God he's talking about another righteousness and that's the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ again quoting the psalmist he says my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God is that your normal Christian life or do you just hit the peaks when you come to a fellowship meeting like this I mean whether you're chasing cows or cutting wood or doing some other thing or getting your fingers in the machine where they shouldn't be and you get

them trapped or messed up with printer's die or something else and so I think Moses Moses in the 33rd of Exodus says show me thy way and about three verses after that he says show me thy glory well if I'd been through everything Moses has been through I would have thought I'd seen the Lord wouldn't you I mean if you'd stood on a peak overlooking a sea and just taken a rod like that and said divide in the name of the

Lord and divided true another day you commanded rock to split and water to come out if you saw a God close the sea up behind you and all your enemies floating around the next day all the bodies were there if you'd been on a mountain with God as he'd been in the 24th chapter alone with God nobody else there wouldn't you think he'd just about seen everything in the book I'll

come again to the amazing apostle Paul writing to the Philippians he says oh my earthly life now here he was he's an aristocrat remember he was born in the ancient city of where where was he born Tarsus that's where he started where did he finish he finished in the greatest city in the world at that time Rome the capital city of the great Roman Empire so he's born in Tarsus that's where he starts the capital of the old world he finishes up in the capital of military power in between he went to the capital of religion which was Jerusalem he went to the capital of intellectualism Athens he went to the capital of religion Jerusalem this man is riding from prison to the Philippians market and he's in a stinking lousy horrible smelly prison getting the rottenest food you can imagine and you

know what he says he says I pressed toward the market hey come on you're writing fairy stories you mean to say that deep down in this stinking prison maybe nobody's prayed for you today the jailer cursed you when he went out and they're going to chop your head off tomorrow you're still pressing on the upward way what about all your achievements I mean look nobody's written as many epistles as you have nobody else ever will what about all your scholarships what about your social standing remember once he got arrested and they were scared to death when they found he was a Roman and not only a Roman he says I was free born oh you were free born yeah my father was a freedom I had the freedom of the city and I was free all the Roman centurions says I obtained my freedom with a great price

everything was going to God it wasn't a thing that he needed in his natural life you talk about revelation and yet he says I'm still pressing toward the prize for the mark I'm pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ and I count everything but dung that's pretty offensive isn't it you don't read that kind of thing in the modern you say he counted everything with 40 letters dung's a pretty rough word and yet that's what he says I'm still thirsting I've had every experience you can imagine I've cast out demons I've healed the sick I've been in jail I've confronted some of the greatest kings of the earth I've been every rung of the ladder socially and seen everybody been in prisons and palaces and in shipwrecks and seen God done miraculous things but

he says I'm thirsting I want to know him don't people just want to know their bible Wesley has a hymn and he describes Mary and he makes Mary say all that I could forever sit like Mary at the masters feet be this my only joy my pure delight my inward bliss my joy my heaven on earth is this to sit at Jesus feet and old Samuel Rutherford was in a rock off the coast of Scotland if you go you can still see that big tower standing in the water it's been beaten with a storm for three or four hundred years and he's in that stinking prison and it was there that at least from what he wrote there that they extracted sections and wrote that hymn the sands of time are sinking and in it he says the bride eyes not her garments but her dear bridegroom's face I will not gaze on glory but on the king of

grace not at the crown he gifteth but on his pierced hand when thrown where glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land with mercy and with judgment my web of time he wove and I the dew of sorrow was lusted by his lover I bless the hand that guided I bless the heart that planned when thrown where glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land for some reason I don't quite know why yesterday I started thinking about a man who was born in 1700 and he died in 1760 he became very famous because later he became a friend of Wesley's and his name was Baron Ludwig Baron Ludwig von Zinzendorf I was having to write that at the

bottom of every time they said sign his name wouldn't that be something social security, go to the bank whatever it was Baron Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf when he was a young man he lived on a

big estate he was very wealthy and they a sect of brethren out there in the other side of Germany had been almost wiped out in a massacre they were hated by the government and so this rich glorious man he brought them all down to his estate and he fixed up shacks for them and he fixed up homes for them he travelled a bit he came to America he went to a place called Pennsylvania and if you go there now there are little towns called Nazareth and Bethlehem and Hebron those were all the towns he lived in and established little churches way back in the 1700s later he met Wesley went to England met Wesley and they struck up a friendship but he wrote a beautiful hymn as a matter of fact he wrote quite a few hymns I think it was Zinzendorf who was in an art gallery in Sweden and there's a picture

of Christ on the cross in that usual languid position his head down on his shoulders and underneath it was written this have I done for thee what hast thou done for me and he put his head down began to think well that's all he did for me thank goodness what have I done for him another day he was having a kind of a surge in his spirit and he wrote this Jesus thy blood and righteousness my beauty art my glorious dress midst flaming worlds in these arrayed with joy shall I lift up my head bold shall I stand in that great day for who ought to my charge shall lay fully absolved from these I am from fear and sin and guilt and death when from the dust of death I rise to claim my mansion in the skies this then the all my joy and plea Jesus has lived and died for me my beauteous dress having got

rid of my own filthy self righteousness through the blood of the cross having the spirit of God come and selfish thrown off the altar and Christ comes so I am no longer self seeking self interested self picking self glorying in that great old hymn that I haven't heard sung for years that A.B.

Simpson wrote not I but Christ be honoured and loved and exalted we are never going to persuade the world by theology we are going to persuade it by the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit most of you know Joe Porto I was talking with him this morning and Joe had been up to where had he been he had been up to Canada Winnipeg just to a church not one of the super churches and he took a team with him and they went on the streets they went to the seven you know seven eleven shops and the hangouts of all the kids and he invited them all to church and they came and they got through to a lot of the kids and a lot of them got saved and they went home and told the parents parents came to church and on the Sunday morning the pastor stood up and said look I want to make a

statement before the service this morning I have never seen Christian I have been preaching 17 years and this is the purest interpretation of the gospel I have ever seen these men are filled with love and compassion and gentleness and he said before the service starts I want to come out of the pulpit and come down to the altar and I want to publicly acknowledge my failure and I want to publicly repent and if any of you deacons would like to join me would you please come forward and they got up and they came and then he said if anybody in the church would like to come and the whole church came and they all knelt there and it was a time of weeping and confession not because they heard a brilliant sermon but because people have been met on a one to one basis kids have been told there is

something better than goofing up and fooling around in sex or fooling around with drugs or fooling around with other things you see there is one thing that the pursuit of what what does the constitution of the United States say we are guaranteed what the pursuit of what life liberty and the pursuit of happiness well just as we finish can you think of anything that is pursued more than happiness tonight my goodness these

Atari games and heaven knows what there is one company now selling I don't know how much it is how many different games they have you can stick in your TV and they are great they are wonderful if you want to destroy hours if you want to waste your Bible study time if you don't want to pray I mean if your little mind just needs amusement you want to shoot imaginary

airplanes up and press a button and shoot it down and think that will put a star in your crown well you are going to be in trouble because it won't the pursuit of happiness you go to bed tonight you wake up at one o'clock in the morning and say oh it is one o'clock six more hours to sleep and folk will still be jabbing around in discos half naked and they will be drunk and they will be fooling around oh my the God of this world gets a lot of money a lot of time a lot of pleasure the pursuit of happiness and you know what a lot of Christians they have to find something to make them happy and I tell you again as I said before new to some of you anyhow the more joy you have in the Lord the less entertainment you need if he is your center and your circumference other things can go I remember

as a youngster and I am through with this being told about a man who was travelling over the Sahara Desert I have never been to the Sahara Desert and to be honest I don't want to go either it's that great stretch from just about central Africa way up to the north there do you know across the north section of the Sahara Desert there are hundreds of churches buried that used to flame with the gospel and they were destroyed by Islam a man said he would cross a certain part of the desert and so he did like every traveller he got the best camel he could and he got a bag of rice and he got a bag of dates and he got a bag of leather skin of water and like so many others he got lost and finally his camel died under him because he wouldn't give the water to the camel and he got less and less of

his dates and less and less of his rice and drank less and less of his water but soon the rice had gone and the dates had gone and finally the water had gone and he had enough strength to walk and he kept seeing mirages you know but he struggled on until his hands were all sore with the sand and his paws were torn and he was in a mess and then suddenly he spied a bag a pouch ah there it is some man trying to make his camel go quickly and the pouch fell off it's water or dates or rice when he got up to it with his nervous hands in the sunstock he got over it and opened it and it was full of pearls and he cursed into it now what good are pearls to a starving man a dying man now when you go home read how often in the 6th chapter when you go home i mean when you go to home read how often in

the go home how often in you go home read in the go home read how often in you go home how often you go often in you go home go home read how often in go home read how often in go home how often in you go home read how often in you go home read how often in you go home read in home read how often in go home read how you go home read how often in you go home how often in you go home read how often you go home read in go home read often go go read how to get by with 10 minutes reading my Bible and 5 minutes prayer and now I spend 2 hours in prayer and Bible reading, my goodness I just wish I could spend 4 more hours.

I went down to Waco this weekend talking with a lady in the house, she said well Brother Ray, this word you know, I find out she gets up every morning at half past 4 and she's middle aged, she's 50 odd, I'm sure, maybe 60. I need 2 or 3 hours every morning before breakfast. I even take the telephone off the hook so nobody can interrupt me and I get still with God.

And then she said maybe 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock, I put the phone on the hook and it's on 50 seconds before buzz, buzz, buzz, can I come and see you, buzz, buzz, buzz, can I tell you what to do, buzz, buzz, buzz,

sure. Okay let's wrap it up, what does John say? If we're really born of God, if we have a new nature, our fellowship is with the Father, with his Son Jesus Christ and we have fellowship one with another. You know what we've done? We've turned it all over and we enjoy fellowship with each other a lot more than we enjoy fellowship with Christ.

Our fellowship is with the Father first of all, to thank him for his unspeakable gift, to thank him that he didn't cut us off when we were in a hell hole somewhere, or stinking with pride. Our fellowship is with the Father, well I had a wonderful father and I like to talk to my father. And then we have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ for his redemptive work and then we have fellowship one with another, but let's keep them in the right order.

And let's remember that the anomalous situation is this, that if I'm healthy, my appetite for God and the Word and prayer and so forth is not going to shrink, it's going to extend. And a little guy that sits down in the morning and he takes his whatever he takes, post toasted, whatever he takes, you get him a little cup and he spills much of the milk and he's not looking what he's doing and he maybe only eats half of it. And then when he gets to sixteen you say only one bowl, so he gets one about this size, as big as he can and he fills it with all the stuff he can and as he gets stronger then he becomes an athlete.

I was in a home not long ago and I said to the lady, how old is your boy? He's not fifteen yet, good night. Well I said he eats enough for three men. He's an athlete, sturdy legs, big muscles, swimming champion, oh man what a body he's got on him.

And naturally you expect that because he has that big frame to keep up, what not, he's going to have a big healthy strong appetite. Well God delights us, delights in us when we spend time with him. Take time to be holy, speak often with thy Lord, spend much time in secret.

Who wrote that silly hymn, a little talk with Jesus makes it right, alright, that's pure nonsense. If you love somebody you like to be in company with them. You make excuses to see them, even if you fall in love here you go around a tree or somewhere and you know the girl's coming the other way and you go around the other way just to meet her, you know, you suddenly fill your horizon or something, whether it's anywhere else.

You want to see the person you love, you want to talk with the person you love, you want to express your love to the person you love. And it's easy to sit in church and say my Jesus I love thee, and then we start him of our fellowship. Will a man rob God? Well I think that's a good check point at the end of every day, say Lord how much time have I given to you today? Well how much work have I done? First and foremost I'm a love slave of Jesus Christ.

I hate to disappoint people. People say, will you come and preach for us in 1984? Nineteen what? We're having a rally in 1984. I may be in glory looking at you.

I won't promise, I'll say maybe I'll come because I hate to break a promise. I hate to disappoint people. Most of all I hate to disappoint God.

I don't want him to say look that son of mine is always taking, taking, taking. Again finish with the prodigal. What did the prodigal say? He goes up to his father and he says hey you've done your work well, now come on divide it.

Give me, give me, give me, give me. What did he say when he came home? Make me. Make me.

Well isn't that what Jesus said to the disciples? Come on follow me and I will make you. And I got saved when I was fourteen. And that's just over sixty years ago.

And I thought you know when I'd been serving the Lord about twenty, oh and when I, oh mercy, I was pastor of the largest holiness church in England, Nazarene church. And then I joined the Nazarenes afterwards but you know I used to think after this, I'm sure there'll be no more school of suffering, trial, difficulty. I mean I've got all the answers.

I've got the theology, I've got all my, I'm still learning. There's still much land ahead to be possessed. And we get there by obedience.

We get there by submission. We get there by being meek. Blessed are the meek.

They shall inherit the earth. You can't remember it. I can remember as a young man and Hitler had his hand out and he was shrieking with a terrible voice of his, the third Reich he said.

It'll last a thousand years. It'll last a thousand weeks. Don't be bothered about Hitler today, his name stinks.

The righteous shall inherit the earth. And we need to know about righteousness. Through the cleansing of the blood, through the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and by constant submission to God, and constantly reading the word, and constant prayer, the possibilities of grace are limitless.

The paradox is that Christ is the hunger and He's the bread. He's satisfying and if He draws us on to more satisfaction. Father, we thank you tonight for this break, this time of quietness, this change.

We pray Lord that you teach us by your Spirit what we need to know and we pray that we may have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. We never get caught in the trap of thinking we have righteousness of our own, it's all of yourself, it's all of your mercy that we're not consumed. If we're cleansed it's because of your blood, if we're victorious it's because of your power within us, not anything of our own.

And Lord we pray that we may be so indwelt with your Spirit that we radiate the love of God. You said we should be filled, and I guess we can't fathom the mystery of that, but I'm sure it means we'll be filled with purity. Because you can satisfy that one thing that nothing material can ever satisfy, the spiritual center of our being which can only be adequately satisfied by the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

We thank you for your mercy, we thank you for your love, and we pray that we may lift your glory continually in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you.

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