

Christ Magnified in My Body 2

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of living a life that magnifies Christ through spiritual maturity and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Romans 8:9

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "Living in the Will of God"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the necessity of living in the will of God to experience true victory, even amidst trials and battles. He reflects on the spiritual stagnation of many believers who have not matured in their faith despite years of salvation, urging them to seek a deeper relationship with Christ rather than relying solely on church activities. Ravenhill draws parallels between the early church's impact and the current state of believers, challenging them to let Christ be magnified in their lives through the Holy Spirit. He calls for a life of holiness and submission to God, highlighting that true Christianity is about allowing Christ to live through us. Ultimately, he encourages believers to redeem their time and opportunities for the glory of God.

Transcript

You can have a blast from Hell and not be moved, if you're in the will of God. They'll hurt. How can you get victory if there's no battle? He said "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. What are you conquering?"

Charles Wesley has a hymn in which he says,

Should all the hosts of death, and powers of hell unknown,

Put their most dreadful forms of rage and malice on,

I shall be safe; for Christ displays

Superior power and boundless grace.

Paul touched the powers of the world to come. To us, that's theology. It's something we're grasping after, almost in blindness. We're so happy to get rid of a lot of rotten sins, and thank God for where we are. But look at the territory there is yet for us to reach!

God's problem with Israel was getting them to leave Egypt behind. He could have got them out of Egypt and into Canaan in 11 days. But they didn't even make it 40 years (most of them). We've got people now who have been saved 20 or 30 years, and they're not a day older in their spiritual life.

They're no more mature.

They've no more spiritual strength.

They've no more spiritual understanding.

They've no more spiritual revelation.

Why? Because so often they've "lived on meetings" instead of "living on Christ."

I don't care where you go, what school you go to, and I thank God for schools. Remember: What do you do when the school is pulled away from you? You see, so many people get happy and blessed when they're in an association or fellowship. But then go, and stick them up in the Amazon or somewhere and they go to pieces!

Can you imagine a man going to pieces here in Romans 8:9, who says "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you?" And verse 10, "...if Christ is in you." And in verse 11, "...the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead."

The Holy Spirit of God is totally incapable of doing anything that is small. The world in which we live is beautiful, carpeted with flowers and everything. It was a ball of mud shut up in the womb of the universe.

The Holy Ghost brooded over it.

Out of chaos, he brought cosmos.

Out of wildness, he brought this marvelous system of the worlds.

He brooded over death and brought forth life.

He brooded over the virgin, a little girl that hardly anyone noticed, going up the street. I've often thought of the little virgin Mary going up the street pregnant. People were suspicious. "Did you know about her? Do you know with whom she's keeping company? Do you know how far along she is?" They didn't think that they were passing the Creator of the Universe in that little woman! So near to her, and yet they never recognized it. They never knew it. That's like a lot of people who go to church. They get within touching distance of Jesus and they never touch Him. They just go year after year, week after week, and never touch Him.

The Holy Ghost came and did that miracle in her. He brooded over her and brought forth the most amazing Creature that this world will ever know. Wesley says, "God was contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man." Here is the One that the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and He's shut up in the little womb of a woman. He made all the food in the world, and yet He has to sustain His life from his mother's breasts. He owns the world. He made it. Yet He never owned a stick in it. He owns all things, and yet He never had a dime.

But after He brooded over the universe, after He brooded over the virgin, He brooded over a bunch of men in an upper room. They weren't all geniuses by a long way. A lot of them were cowards. Yet now they went streaming forth in the power of the Holy Ghost.

I've puzzled over this again today. We're supposed to have about 50 million people in America today filled with the Holy Ghost, manifesting gifts. Yet nobody knows we're here! There were only 120 in the upper room, and they turned a nation upside down! What's the difference between their baptism and ours? Tell me!

But then after the creation, after the miracle of the birth of Jesus, after the men in the upper room, then you have this wonderful Word of God, "Holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

I heard of a local preacher saying not too long ago that the story of Jonah is a fish story. Well, sure it is! It isn't about a donkey, is it? But he meant that there's something a bit fishy about it. That's not true! Does he deny the word of Jesus? A man that denies scripture should renounce his job and go sell hamburgers. If he came in as a fundamental believer and becomes a liberal, he should get out through the back door! I'd fire him if I had any power over that guy.

But here we have the Holy Spirit of God creating through all kinds of men.

A man that climbs trees and gathers up sycamore fruit.

A man with a colossal intellect, like Paul, at the other end of the line.

A shepherd like David.

A wise man like Solomon.

And yet the wonder of this book is that it is so indestructible. Men have

Burned it

Banned it

Blamed it.

I believe it's Tennyson who has a poem that says, "Men may come. Men may go. But I go on forever." Well, the Word of God is like that.

One of the great contemporaries of John Wesley was a very powerful speaker in France by the name of Voltaire. He ridiculed the scriptures. One day he said in his little house, "One hundred years from now, Bibles will only be in museums. People will be so advanced that they won't bother with a Bible." Well, he didn't miss it by much, did he? By about a thousand million copies! (One of the nice things that World War II did was to blow his little house off the face of the earth. But a few years before that happened, the Geneva Bible Society bought that house and distributed Bibles all through Europe out of the very house from which he said that Bibles wouldn't be existing in a hundred years.)

Here it is: God's Word. It will last forever! "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." "Heaven and earth may pass away. My word shall not pass away." Here it is. It has all the power of God behind it.

So, the Holy Spirit of God who invaded the lives of those men in the upper room, according to Romans 8, is the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, and is the same spirit that abides in us and has raised us from the dead spiritually! We can think and move and have our being in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lowery, an old Nazarene, wrote a marvelous book that's out of print. It's called "The Possibilities of Grace." I've never read it. I just peeped into it. I have an old, old copy. But I think of that so often. It stretches out the "possibilities of grace." What does the Good Book say? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But he has revealed it unto us." Not to the world! They stagger at it. Impossible.

How amazing that a human being, corrupted, defiled, doomed, and damned
can be forgiven, cleansed, and indwelt by the Spirit of God
and become a living vessel of God.

God is yet to produce the greatest men ever. I don't believe that God went off production with Wesley, Finney, and George Whitfield. All the great men who built the old spiritual empires like Hudson Taylor and others who went to China, Gilmore to Mongolia, Judson to Burma, Carey to India, and Henry Martin.

I wish some of you folk would wake up and use your brains while you're young enough to use them. There was a young lady singing on TV born in a little shack somewhere up in the Mississippi area. Somebody took her into a home and heard her play with the piano. Then they discovered that she had a voice. I think she went to the conservatory in Milan and various other places. Now she can sing in about 5 different languages. Did somebody suddenly suspect that in that girl was all this talent and all this ability? No. They just gave her a chance in one direction, and she took off in another.

The Roman church is pretty smart. There's a great college in Ireland, called Maynooth. You can send a plowboy into that school that can hardly do his mathematics or anything. They'll turn him out in 5 years and he can recite the whole Mass in Latin. They have other convents where they take young ladies. They'd be average farmers daughters. They'll talk with them. Show them maps of the world. Tell them the need in the world: lack of education, lack of Christianity, and so forth. Those girls will say, "Oh, I think I'd like to go to South America...Brazil. Portuguese, all right." "Argentina? ...Spanish." Every time they sent a missionary out, the missionary knew the language before they got there. What did they do? They went into the school system and taught. Therefore, the churches didn't have to support them because they were earning their money. They didn't have to wait for them to stammer out a new language in a few years. Immediately when they got off the boat they could speak the language. Immediately they were put into operation to teach in the schools and to teach religion. In other words, when they went, they were already accomplished in languages, and because of that they could sign up in government jobs. There was no support needed from home.

Now, here very often, we have people who say, "Oh, yes, we'll take you on, but you have to go around to churches begging. Ask them to support you. Ask them to give you so much a month -- so much a month -- so much a month." I think God must be embarrassed by the Church these days. What beggars we are! Why can't you use your brains now?

- Learn a language.

- Get awakened.
- Get stirred in your spirit.
- Find out where God wants you.

There are lots of hell-holes that need the light of the gospel. If you think you have the courage, why not pray about going to Russia. Get behind that Curtain.

I don't think there are 5 missionaries in the whole of Albania. They purged Albania sometime in the last century. I think they put Christians in barrels, sealed up the barrels, and pushed the barrels out to the tide as it was receding out to the ocean. And there they were, cooped up in those horrible things. The sun coming in and roasting them. They exterminated the Church to that degree there. So there's a challenge. There's nobody in Albania. Why not be the first to go?

What about getting behind the Iron Curtain? Czechoslovakia or some of the other countries? What about the 800 million people in China? This week they said there were 700 million people in India! It has about 400 languages or dialects. The world population is now the greatest it's ever been in history. There are more lost people tonight than there's ever been in history. Yet, I think there's more indifference. Sure, we give a little bit to support a missionary. We do this, we do that, we do the other. But that great dominion of Satan is almost unchallenged in the day in which we live.

It's in this same epistle where Paul says, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." Well, actually that's literally translated "let the love which dominated the life of Jesus, the disposition of Jesus, be yours." His was a disposition of love and concern. Wherever he went, he went about doing good. Well, if that mind is in me, I'm going to have some restless minutes or restless hours. I'm going to have to struggle with my own conscience. I'm going to have to struggle with the light I have. I'm going to have to struggle with the challenge that comes to me from a dozen different countries to get the message of Jesus Christ there while it is yet day.

"...that Christ may be magnified in my body." He was magnified through his brain, I'm sure. God couldn't have shared some of the things he shared with any other person, except with Paul. Magnified with his spirit, his hands: he wrote these epistles. He didn't type them. Every part of his being was coordinated to the service of God "...that Christ may be magnified."

Before long, we'll have some lovely flowers around here called dandelions. Nobody cuts them and puts them on the table in the house. You may have 20/20 vision, but you haven't seen the beauty of the dandelion. Not until you take a magnifying glass and see that it's maybe the most exquisite flower that God ever made. When you see it through a magnifying glass, that thing comes alive. That's what Paul says. When people look at my life, Jesus Christ is clearer, and nearer, and more wonderful. Is that true with us? Do you think your children would say that about you? "Oh, my Daddy and Mommy...I've never seen Jesus, but I know who Jesus is like. He's like my Daddy."

Old Jonathan Edwards gets ridiculed. He took his stack of notes. He read through them. He had a candle... a big frowning face and his gravel voice. Then he reads through his sermon, the greatest, most famous sermon outside of the Bible: "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God." People all remember, because he thundered. They said when people fell off their seats, instead of showing mercy, he kind of thrust the thing into them deeper: the truth of God. People hung onto pillars that were supporting the

gallery because they were afraid they'd fall into the abyss. He didn't spare them. Sure he groaned. Sure he prayed. But his daughter said, "People say my daddy is a severe man. A man that poured out judgment. But in the home, he lives just like Jesus... And every day my Mommy comes out of the closet and her face shines like the face of Moses shone. Because she spends at least two hours in prayer with God every morning. Oh, when she comes through the house, there's something so different, so fragrant." Well, that's what God wants, isn't it?

Brother Dave was in my house the other day. Last Sunday he preached in maybe the largest church in Denver, Colorado. He said, "Len, as we sat there, I was ready to preach. Suddenly I was overcome with grief. I just walked forward and sat on the floor. I didn't go to the pulpit. I began to weep. God just gave me such a burden." It was a congregation of about 3000. He said to them, "There's a girl in here who's being sexually molested by a man. The man is going to go to jail." As he said it, a girl about 16 years old ran down the aisle. She cried, "Mr. Wilkerson, I'm the girl who's being molested! My daddy did it! He has to go to jail!" Dave said he just groaned. There must have been 15 or 16 other women who also came and said my father, or brother, or somebody is sexually assaulting me every week. His spirit just groaned. He stayed there 50 minutes weeping. I said, "Dave, bless you." The average preacher would have said, "I just had a kind of a little upset in my spirit. I feel that there's somebody in trouble. I'd like a few of you to pray. Raise your hands. We're going to pray for this girl. She's in trouble, I know she is." Instead of that, Dave swept aside all of his theology and sermon. He obeyed the Holy Ghost and the whole church broke up in weeping and brokenness, seeking God. It happened without him ever having to open his mouth preaching.

I'm sure that's the kind of spirit the apostle had because the spirit of Christ indwelt him. It's the spirit of God dwelling in him. The fruit of the spirit. As I've said before, if Jesus had said one word differently, it would have killed ten million arguments since Pentecost. If he'd said "by their gifts ye shall know them," it would have killed a million arguments. But he didn't say that. He said, "by their fruits." And the number one fruit of the spirit is LOVE. The spirit of Christ is LOVE. God so LOVED the world.

I go to the Greeks.

I go to the intellectuals on Mars Hill.

I go in prison.

Wherever I go, I want Christ to be magnified.

I don't want somebody to say, "If that's Christianity, then I don't want it." I don't want somebody to say, "You know, the way you live, you blur the image of Christ." I want those people to look through my life and say, "I see Jesus Christ." Well, that's what Paul dared to say.

He says, "Christ lives in me."

He doesn't say, "I'm saved."

He doesn't say, "I have the baptism."

He says, "Christ lives in me."

It's much easier to say, "I'm saved." It's much easier to say, "I have the baptism." We're accepted on "par" with the rest of the people in the church. But suppose you stand up and testify that "Christ lives in me!"

He wants sin to have no dominion over us. The Greeks used to say, "Man, know thyself." The Lord says, "Control yourself -- in the Spirit." Paul says, "I keep my body under. I control it. I control my passions. I control my appetite. He was never an excessive eater, I'm sure of that. I don't think he was an excessive sleeper. You know, it looks a bit chronic when you put it this way. We live 24 hours a day. Supposedly,

We work 8 hours.

We sleep 8 hours.

We have 8 hours free.

Put that into 60 years.

You sleep 20 years.

You work 20 years.

You're free 20 years.

It doesn't look too much when you take it in the day but when you put into terms of years, it's a very, very different thing.

Now here's the man who eats up the time. He says "redeeming the time," which from the Greek literally means "buying up the opportunity." This opportunity will not come tomorrow; it comes today. So I "buy it up. I eat it up." I don't want to waste time, money, or opportunity. It's not difficult. It's not a case of living inside a steel shell. It's a case of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit governing my life. He constrains me when I'm too slow and he restrains me when I'm too quick. IT'S A JOY TO BE IN SUBMISSION TO HIM!

Paul says he's the bondsman of Jesus Christ, a happy slavery.

It's a joy to serve a Master like that.

"That Christ may be magnified by my body," he says, "whether by life or by death!"

It doesn't matter which way.

Well, there's no other way to live, surely. Having the body under control by the power of the Spirit, presenting my body

A LIVING SACRIFICE,

HOLY,

ACCEPTABLE,

all packed up in that first verse of Romans 12.

This is really only the normal Christian life. There is only one kind of Christian life:

THE LIFE OF HOLINESS.

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