

(Clip) the Miracle of the New Birth

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a living relationship with God, not just forgiveness of sins or a change in behavior, in order to truly experience the 'miracle of the new birth'.

Duration: 12:48

Scripture: John 10:10, Romans 6:6-7, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:3, James 4:14

Topics: "New Birth", "Salvation"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound question posed in the Epistle of James: 'For what is your life?' It challenges individuals to reflect on the brevity and significance of their own lives, emphasizing the transient nature of life compared to eternal truths. The speaker urges a deeper understanding of salvation beyond mere confession, highlighting the need for a transformative relationship with Christ that impacts every aspect of one's being. The message underscores the call to live a life hidden in Christ, seeking heavenly treasures and embodying a radical commitment to following Jesus.

Transcript

I have a text tonight which is a question, and it's a question that we cannot answer collectively. It's a question you have to answer individually. It's found in the very practical epistle, as it's usually called, the epistle of James in the fourth chapter.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then it vanisheth away. You will never face a more challenging question than this text. What is your life? And notice what it doesn't say.

It doesn't say what is life, because if it did, nobody has an answer. It doesn't say what is our life, otherwise we could fool all our thinking. It says, what is your life? And it replies, it gives a reply here in the text, it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time.

And you hear people say, well life isn't just, life isn't fair. One man said life is a feast, another wise man said life is a fast. One man said life is a paradise, another man said life is a prison.

You see, the question here is very pointed, and maybe it's very personal, it is impersonal, maybe it's very painful. Maybe you could answer the question, what is your life? You say it's a failure. What is your life? A success.

What is your life? It's a disappointment. But actually it's showing to us, by the very context, that life is like a vapour. It's like the steam that comes off the kettle, and you try and get a handful of it, and it's gone.

And in every case in the word of God, where life is referred to, that is this physical life, it's likened to something that's very swift. It's likened, for instance, to a weaver's shuttle. It's likened to a tent that men wrap up and move on in the night.

Isaiah likens our life to the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven. But the whole thing is about life. Every kind of life.

And supremely about eternal life. And there's one thing that life does, wherever it goes, life begets life. He explains it all, when he said, I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.

And yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live here in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. If I was to ask you tonight, are you saved? Would you say, yes, I'm saved.

When? Oh, so-and-so preached, I got baptized. What are you saved from? Hell? Are you saved from bitterness? Are you saved from lust? Are you saved from cheating? Are you saved from lying? Are you saved from bad manners? Are you saved from rebellion against your parents? Come on, what are you saved from? 90% of the people in the nation are not saved, they claim to be. When I went to an altar and I confessed my sins, fine, fine.

That's what the preacher said, you confess your sins, and you confess them. Do you know they did that in every Roman Catholic church in the country last Sunday? A man needs more than to be forgiven, he needs cleansing, he needs more than cleansing, he needs indwelling, he needs more than indwelling, he needs undoing. I'm not asking you tonight, did you one night kneel down and make confession, and after that your life was no change, your lifestyle was no different, your appetites were no different, your pair life was no different, come on.

Supposing we change the language, Paul says, Christ in you. If I were to start here tonight and go around the front row and everyone, and say to everyone, you stand up brother, and when you stood up I say, does Christ live in you, what would you say? Would you say, oh yes, he lives in me, he rules my life, he controls me. He pulls me back when I would go too quickly, he urges me on when I would hesitate.

If I say most people are half saved, do you know what I mean? I mean this, you go to the cross, but you never get on the cross. You go and get your sins forgiven and feel happy, and you go and do the same lousy thing again the next day, come on, what kind of a salvation is that? Isn't it offensive to say to people, listen, you may be a genius, you have a colossal intellect, if you fall out of bed you invent something, but do you know right in the center of you, you're dead, because you've no living relationship with God. Now there are two kinds of people in the world, only two kinds, not black and white, not rich and poor, there are those who are dead in sin, and there are those who are dead to sin.

You see, the miracle of the new birth is this, that when a man is really born, when he gets this life, he doesn't want that life. Oh, I don't think anybody gives it better than Paul. To wind this up, writing to the Colossians, he says, if ye then be risen with Christ, or as the literal translation is, if you've been raised with Christ, you seek those things which are not.

You say to people, are you saved? They say, well, I don't really know. Oh, supposing you're carrying a hundred pound sack on your back, and you're struggling up a hill, and your knees are going down, and

somebody whips the sack off your back, and you get to the top of the hill without the sack, and the man says, hey, have you lost your sack? You say, I don't really know. I kind of figured he'd know when somebody took a hundred pounds off his back.

And by the same token, a man knows, because the miracle of the birth isn't some intellectual somersault. Jesus says it is this, that we're dead in trespasses and in sin. And he brings us to life.

So now we love the things we didn't like, and we hate the things we used to love. Okay, you're saved. And yet I guess you talk all about baseball, and you talk about Jesus, is that right? Set your affection on things richer above, not things for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Can you think of anything more wonderful than that? Here is your life. It's hid in Christ, and it's hid in God. What are you going to do? Sneak out and drink a bit of the world's junk? Do you know how you need entertainment? You only need entertainment when you've lost the joy of the Lord.

You're dead, and your life is hid with Christ. Now he says if you're risen with him, that means with the past. You're dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Not when I die, but even now on this earth, I bid the world goodbye. Not tearfully, but cheerfully. All of its pleasures, its pomp, and its pride.

And Paul says, listen, I got branded there at the base of my head, because all my thinking is going to be about Jesus. This man being you, which was in Christ Jesus. Do you think he went to the Olympic Games because they had him in his day? Do you think he fooled around with the material things of the day? His head was branded, his hands, his feet.

So a hymn writer says, let my hands perform his bidding. Let my feet run in his ways. Let my eyes see Jesus only.

Let my lips speak for this praise. All for Jesus, all for Jesus. All my being's ransom powers.

All my thoughts and words and doings. All my days and all my hours. Listen, are you just a Sunday morning Christian? Do you live and move and have your being in Jesus Christ every waking moment of your life? Has he got your thinking? And Paul says, that's what the world is to me.

It's a system of corruption and rottenness and vileness. It's anti-Christ from the world, though. Is the world crucified to you tonight? Or does it fascinate you? But as dear Dr. Tozer used to say, Len, you knew one thing about a man that was carrying a crown out of the city.

You knew he wasn't coming back. Just come to a malter and we go back the next week and we're as fascinated. We haven't spent half an hour with Jesus, but we're staked two stinking hours in a movie house.

The past, he says, we're risen with Christ. The present, we're dead. But look to the future.

When Christ who is our life, there you've got it. There you've got it. What does John say in his epistle? He that hath the Son hath life, and he that does not have the Son has not life.

You can reform your life. You can give up your rotten sex life. You can give up your drugs without the help of God.

Good night. I've seen some men come out of the gutter and transform their own lives. That's on the social level, but they never made it upward to God.

They never living relationship with God. If Christ has been born in me, he wants to live in me. He wants to talk in me.

He wants to walk in me. He wants to work through me. It's not a struggle that I'm trying to be a Christian.

Life, life, life. Look, if you haven't got a hold of this, get a hold of it now. You can't impress God.

If I'm going to live, I'm going to eat. If I'm going to live, I'm going to eat this word because Jesus says what? I am the bread of life. Man cannot live by bread alone, the only earthly bread, but he can live by the bread which is Christ.

He says I am the water of life. That's essential to life. You can't live without water.

He says I am the light of life. And he says I'm not merely come, isn't it? John 10 and 10 in which he says I'm come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. You know, I hear people go to conferences, meetings, and they say, boy, that was good.

Boy, were we challenged. Every meeting we were challenged. And the question isn't were you challenged, the question is were you changed.

Paul runs his flag to the top of the mast. Oh, I like his statement there in what? Is it 1 Corinthians 5, 7 in which he says if any man be in Christ, any man, anywhere, at any time, if he be in Christ, he is a new creation. He isn't patched up.

He's made a new creation. He gets a new heart, a new spirit, new desires, new hopes, new longings that cannot be satisfied at the broken systems of the world. I said I want God to make Romans chapter 6, verse 7 real in my life.

He said, you mean Romans 6, 6? I said, I mean Romans 6, 7. He said, no, it's 6, 6. Maybe for you, 6, 7 for me. What's Romans 6, 7? He that is dead is freed from sin. I'm tired of bondage.

I'm tired of fear. I'm tired of weakness. I'm tired of vacillating.

I'm tired of being hot and then cold, strong and then weak. I want to get rid of the old self life. I want to die right here.

Let me tell you this. An experience of God that costs nothing, does nothing and it's worth nothing. For I stand over preachers, often with hundreds of preachers I have to preach to and I see them shrink and I see them fall on the ground and cry because they've no prayer life.

Because they're so busy. What the church has had in the last 25 years has not moved this nation or this world to God. It's time for something new.

And God wants some men who are really drunk, intoxicated with the spirit of God. Who have a love life with the Lord Jesus and He can ask anything of you and He'll do it. Though I'm coming down the line, I mean Jesus isn't looking for some sissies to serve Him.

He's looking for some men with guts and men with grace and men with determination. That world outside there is not waiting for a new definition of Christianity. It's waiting for a new demonstration of Christianity.

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