

Elijah - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a true prophet and preacher, who trembles at the Word of God and weeps for the sins of their congregation, as a condition of revival.

Duration: 8:57

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:21, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 66:2, Joel 2:17, Malachi 4:5-6, Luke 4:18, John 15:16, Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:2

Topics: "Revival Ministry", "Prophetic Preaching"

Description

This sermon focuses on the theme of revival and the role of prophets like Elijah in bringing about spiritual awakening. It emphasizes the need for a return to God's ways and the importance of trembling at His Word when preaching. The speaker challenges preachers to approach their ministry with a sense of urgency and reverence, highlighting the impact of individuals like Richard Baxter in leading revival at a family level.

Transcript

This is one of the best-known Old Testament chapters, I'm sure, particularly when we think of revival, which is one of our, maybe it's our number one theme around here, at least it should be. I just finished a book, Revival God's Way, because we tried everybody else's way, I thought it might be decent to go back and try God's way. We've tried organizing instead of agonizing, and superficial instead of the supernatural, and the electronic church instead of the electrifying church, it's about time we had a change.

And no man is able to bring that change, only God. And you know, I'm sure, that this is a chapter on Elijah. Elijah is in the category of what I think were the greatest men that ever walked the earth, or walked the moon, if you like, in this day.

He was a prophet. Prophets are God's emergency men for crisis hours. Let's say this, it's primary, and then it's true of all of them, the prophets walk alone.

Prophets are antagonized by the declension and apostasy round about them. They refuse to bow to it, they stand up against it. In fact, God only raises prophets in days of declension and apostasy.

You never find a prophet sponsored by men, and you never find a prophet begging for money over TV. Usually the message of a prophet is accepted only by a minority. No prophet, however great or successful he was, ever became the man of the year.

I get a little disturbed when I get letters, and I get them almost every week. Sometimes it's the same, they come every day, either letters or phone, God's called me to be a prophet, or God has called me to be a John the Baptist. When a man says that, I say, are you insured? And he says, what do I need insurance for? Because you're only going to live six months.

That's all John the Baptist, I don't know whether he was insured, but that's all he lived for six months and lost his head over the business. But there's the law, he that loseth his life for thy sake shall find it, and he that preserves his life shall lose it. I thought of some very simple words to say about this man.

First of all, his position. Again he's an isolated character. I forget the exact date, but somewhere in the 1500s there was a man in England in the town of Kidderminster.

I've been through that town many times, it has a great cathedral, and its stone isn't like the usually drab grey stone in England, it's almost red, and it has two great steeples instead of one. And when Baxter went to Kidderminster, he said there were not four families in the whole city that had devotions. And about 15 years after when he died, they said there were not four families in the city that didn't have them.

He had revival on the family level, which is the most needed thing in the country today. I get a bit hot about deacons and pastors always deploring the Bibles thrown out of the school, but I go in deacons' homes and never see the Bible brought out once all week. And some of you come from pastors' homes and your daddy never took the Bible out every day and read it round the table anyhow, so why throw stones at the Russians or somebody else? Judgment must begin at the house of God, it begins, as the old song says, it's not my brother nor my sister, it's me, O God, standing in the need of prayer.

But it was Richard Baxter who gave us that great phrase that I try to push over when I'm talking to preachers. He said, I preached as though I would never preach again, and as a dying man to dying men. There is no office on this earth, and you can include the President of the United States or the King of England, there is no office in the world higher than that of preaching.

I have a friend who is a very brilliant open heart surgeon, I hope I never have to meet him except round the dinner table. But I have great respect for a man that can go in here and do, as a man had the other day, a five, what do you call it, a five-part bypass, I'd rather pass them all. I have a great admiration for a man who can drill a hole in your skull and go in and sort, maybe that's what I mean, I hope I don't have to have that.

But a brain surgeon, man, do you think he goes joking into the room and says, hey, what's the ball score? I've got to get in this guy's skull and put some things, I don't think so, they're very sober men. But most preachers are idiots almost today. They can tell jokes just before they go on to preach.

I'll tell you the secret of preaching, not that I found it, I rediscovered it from the Word of God. Isaiah 66, God says to this, none will I look, to him that trembleth at my word. And that doesn't mean that the first time you stand up and you find your knees are very friendly, knocking together.

It doesn't mean that kind of nervous, not that kind of trembling, but trembling at the awesome task of representing a holy God in an unholy world. And then is it Peter that talks about them preaching with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Jesus was the Son of God from the moment he left his mother's womb, but he didn't preach until he was anointed.

He stood up and read the scriptures when he was 12 years of age in the synagogue, but he never preached. Well how do these guys dare to preach because they have a piece of paper stuck on the wall about 10 inches by 18, saying they were ordained. There's no man on earth can ordain another man to the ministry.

There's only one ordination. People say sometimes, you know, those guys in the upper room were not ordained men, well that's where you're wrong, they were all ordained. Because it says in John 15, I have ordained you, that's the only ordination, the ordination of the pierced hands, not the ordination of the well-manicured hand of a bishop or somebody.

The preacher's job is as, I don't know how many biographies there are of George Whitfield, I used to have about a dozen, I think a friend of mine maybe has 150 different biographies of Whitfield, but they said if Whitfield was going to preach on heaven, by the time he walked to the desk and gave out his text, you'd think he'd been living in heaven for the last seven days. And that was marvelous, but if you happened to go the night he preached on hell, you'd think he'd lived there for seven days and you'd wish you'd never got to the meeting. Why should people tremble at the Word of God if the preacher hasn't already trembled at it? Why should people weep for their sins if the preacher hasn't already wept for them? It's a scarce, rare thing to find a preacher ever weeping in the pulpit anymore, isn't it? And yet it's a condition of revival, in Joel 2, let the priest weep, it says let the priest howl.

You know, those preachers used to howl during the night, now we've got night owls amongst the preachers, they're watching TV all night, but they don't howl.

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