

Faith Series - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

The church needs to return to its apostolic roots and live out its faith, not just defend its theology.

Duration: 1:12:47

Scripture: Isaiah 51:2, Matthew 6:33, Acts 6:4, Romans 8:31, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:22

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a life dedicated to God. He reminds the audience that life is short and that only what is done for God will last. The preacher shares a personal experience of receiving a brochure about self-faken and being inspired by the life of David Brainwood. He also discusses the challenges of being a preacher and the responsibility they have in their role. The sermon concludes with a reminder that there will be a judgment for believers and preachers, and that it is important to live a life that brings glory to God.

Transcript

All that's expected is that people think that that's something else, but anyhow, the title makes a lot of difference in selling a book. And the Living Bible, everybody grasps for the Living Bible. And so we sing this lovely hymn that we sang this morning, Break Thou the Bread of Life, Beyond the sacred page I see Thee, Lord.

Because lots of people stop at the sacred page, and they get a system of theology, and they fight the other man's theology, and do you know what they do with it? With texts of scripture. They think the sword of the Spirit is their sword, to cut somebody else down, but it is still the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And so again, let me say this for those who just came in, that we're considering for the next few mornings this area of faith.

My, my, what a thing it is. If only the church had faith, as our brother prayed this morning. There's only one problem with it.

Reduce all the problems in the church to one. Sure, sure. To put it in a way, I've put it in one of my books.

One day, someday, somebody's going to read the Bible and believe it. And when they do, we'll all be embarrassed. That's all God asked us to do.

He didn't ask us to dissect it, and divide it dispensationally, and do all the other theological tricks. He just said, here's the word, believe it. And this is why a revival has come, very often to the simplest of people.

We had a revival in England in the 1930s, through a little coal miner about that height. And he couldn't get away from the Word of God. You see, if you start saying, this isn't for the day, and that isn't for the day, even if you're talking about gifts of the Spirit, as far as I'm concerned, I'll push you in the fold with the liberals, because that's what they do.

This isn't for the day, that isn't for the day. So where do you stand? It's like the old sturgeon said, the Bible suffers more from its exponents than its opponents. We think we have to defend God.

Some of these big shots are always asking for money on TV, they kind of think they're sponsoring God. Isn't it horrible? You know, and if you don't send for our program, I mean, you know, we're so far ahead of them. Do you know how many more stations are? And it's purely Madison Avenue stuff, most of it, anyhow.

As I said last night, you never have to advertise a fire. Whether it's physical or spiritual, you get your church on fire, they'll come from north, south, east, west to see the fire burn. That's what Moses did.

He'd been in the desert 40 years, but when the bush burned, I don't know, maybe it seen flowers on the bush, maybe it seen fruit on the bush, but one day it burned, and it continued burning, and so he came to see the bush that didn't quit. So, I'm deficient in this area of faith. Maybe you're not, so you can go to sleep, but don't snore.

Faith. I've lived without a pay packet since 1949, 49, 50, let's see, 70, 25 years, except for two years when a millionaire backed me, and I didn't do a, I didn't have any preaching at that time, I just did writing and praying, but all that time, I've been trying to learn something in this area of faith. You know, the Bibles are very difficult, but wasn't it Vance Havner that said it, what did he say, it comforts the afflicted and it afflicts the comfortable.

You know, when you're in distress, there's nothing like the Bible, it's a pillow you can rest your head on. And when you get sleepy, ooh, man, it's worse than that needle the old doctor who pushes in you now and again. It suddenly stabs you and you wake up.

Dr. Tozer, I'm always quoting Tozer because I've spent a lot of time with him, and if you haven't read him, you've missed some of the greatest writings of the past 50 years, and every preacher should have every book he wrote, which would be about 14, I think, and they're all in paperback. And if you want to study on the Holy Spirit, his Knowledge of the Holy, he has 21 studies of the Holy Spirit which are superb. But I remember more than once when I went in his office, he'd say, drop the latch and let your hair down.

I remember on this occasion, as I went in, he just said, Len, drop the latch, let's talk, just the two of us, let your hair down. And before I could sit down, he said this thing which has clung to me ever since. He said, Len, not many of us are going to stand or erect at the judgment seat of Christ.

Most of us will stand there with a bowed head, even with our great bus ministries and everything we've had, we're going to be pretty humiliated and humble when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Because it's one standard of judgment for sinners, it's another standard of judgment for believers, and a special judgment for preachers. James says, be not many teachers, my brethren, or preachers, knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation or a greater judgment.

That's going to be pretty grim. When I see people whooping it up and, you know, almost doing a war dance, when we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be, oh, that will be glory for me, for me. Why do I deserve any glory? Somebody ought to change that.

Oh, that will be glory for thee when he sees the reward of his sufferings, but you see we're so selfish. But when we stand there at the judgment seat of Christ and give an account, it's going to be pretty grim. There's not going to be much dancing and shouting.

We talk as though we're going to buddy-buddy when we see Jesus come and say, Hi, you know, boy, it's been great fun being a Christian. I saw a man the other day, he came to our meeting with a throne on his thigh, flashed in brilliant colors, it's fun to be a Christian. And notice he hadn't found fun to give up the weed that he was pulling on.

It's not fun to be a Christian. It has joy in being a Christian, surely enough. And Jesus thought about joy even going to the cross, because, of course, he did the complete will of his Father.

But there's a lot of silly, sloppy, sentimental stuff these days in the Christian life that isn't valid anyhow. As Beethoven used to say, Len, don't worry about it. However grim the burden is between, you know, that little place you got saved and there where you die, it's nothing.

It's like being on a postage stamp in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. You jump off, and whichever way you jump, anyhow, you're in the vastness of the ocean. And by the same token, life is such a decimal point, such a fraction compared with a thousand billion trillion years in eternity, when, after all, Paul sums it up in, pardon me, at the end of 1 Corinthians 13, doesn't he? He says, knowledge of peace, wisdom, all these things, but there are things that are going to be permanent.

They're going to carry over into eternity. And there'll be no preaching in heaven, no healing meetings. It'll be rough on some of the boys, but there'll be no healing meetings.

There'll be an awful lot of things that look very wonderful now that won't be there. And it's like having your innings, you know. You only get one inning.

And there's a lot in the old beer advert that I don't like, but it's a lot of sense in it. You only go around once. I don't believe that all Christians die happy.

They don't. All preachers don't. They die miserable.

A lot of Christians die miserable. Why? Because suddenly they realize they're going to step into eternity and the game's up. No time to pray.

No time to labor. Fast, work for God. It's awful.

And so it's good to remember that little thing that you often see on the wall, these little slogans we have, you know, only one life, truth will soon be passed. And only what's done for God will last. And we quit there, but that's not what the poet wrote.

The poet said, only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for God will last. And when I am dying, how glad I shall be if the lamp of my life has been burned out for me.

The greatest challenge I ever had as a teenager, about 17, somebody gave me a little brochure about self-sacrifice. Nicely bound, sure enough. It was an abridgment of the life of David Brainerd.

And I kind of, I hadn't read much in those days and didn't know much about anything. I don't now, but I knew less then. And I read that book and it really shook me up.

It did something for me. I thought God had gone off production, you know, at the end of the New Testament. I didn't know he made men like that anymore.

And when I read the life of that amazing man, that he prayed himself to death, really, by the time he was, what, 28. And Wesley lived until he was 88. Now is Wesley going to get a bigger reward at 88 than this other man? Is it how long you live that matters, how effective your ministry is? Or is it that at 28 or at 88 you can say, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Where better to live 10 years under the anointing of God than live 10 and then backslide the rest of it and go fishing or hunting the rest of your life. And so the basis of this really is, again, coming down to what we're going to at least try and dip into, to some degree, is the 11th chapter of Hebrews. A chapter you know very well, I'm sure, is a faith chapter.

The word faith occurs in the chapter 24 times, 32 times in the epistle, and 340 odd times in the New Testament. Can you remember how many times in the Old Testament? Twice. Just twice in the whole of the Old Testament.

You know when you go to church these days, you want to join a church and say, these are all articles of faith. You agree with them? Yes, sign, you're in. But the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament in our day is this, they didn't sign articles of faith, they acted in faith.

And that makes a great deal of difference. I was thinking, we're eating at that nice restaurant down the road, Sambo's, you know. Man, they've got, do you ever see their menu card? It's gorgeous.

Photographs of luscious plates, you know, and it's polished and shiny. And supposing a pretty waitress came up and said, well there's a glass of water, there's a menu card, I hope you'll enjoy it. Say, enjoy what? Well, chewing the menu card.

Do what? That's no good. I don't want a picture of a steak, I want a steak, I don't want that fish in a... Oh, I'm sorry, we're out of business, we've no food, and all we expect you to do is just drink a glass of water and eat the menu card. You'd hit the ceiling.

Come and see, look, it's always had more than menu cards, but anyhow, that wouldn't do. You know, I have a suspicion that's about all we do in church, we give people the menu card, we don't provide the meal. We spend a lot of time defending a man who died two thousand years ago.

And we think we're very fundamental because we believe the virgin birth and the resurrection and a few other things. That's not what Jesus said. He said more than that.

Oh, I know in the next breath we'll say Jesus Christ was sent yesterday, today, and forever, and then we'll spend another ten minutes describing why certain things aren't for today. You're one of the kids who're confused. Huh? In my judgment, we either accept this book as it is, the total book, or we reject it.

You can't dissect it, you can't say this is for today, and that is, and you can dispensate in it as you like. We just about render lip service to the Holy Spirit, don't you think? As I said the other day, we, we're the most impudent children God has ever had to raise up. What's wrong with the church? Hmm, it's very easy to say what's wrong with the church.

We don't run it according to New Testament, that's all there is. We run it our way. A professor told us somewhere this is that, and we believe the poor fellow.

And he only got it because he believed his professor, anyhow. Some of those boys every, every semester, next, when they go, when they start Bible school next September, they'll have to take the notes and take the dust off. They've had them so many years, you know, they're dusty.

Some of those professors haven't had a new thought in the last ten years. Every kid that goes gets the same notes, the same notes. Do you wonder that's fair? If we really were as apostolic, as I said last night, if we're really as spiritual as we think we are, we'd be going to church these days in sackcloth and ashes to mourn for the departed glory.

There's nothing in the New Testament that says we should go to church twice on Sunday. Why do we do it? You can't prove from the New Testament that people went to church to get saved. They didn't.

They went to church because they were saved. They were saved through the excited witness that the church was so dreadful. Last night we had a wonderful hush of God after the meeting.

Tonight in New Zealand, I preached three nights in New Zealand when people stopped for fifteen to twenty minutes after the meeting and nobody would go home. When I went to the meeting they said, it's Christmas, holidays, vacation, the beaches will be filled. If you're prepared to speak to twelve people, well, drive down, it's four hundred miles from Auckland down to Wellington.

I said, well, that will be quite a crowd, twelve people. My master once preached to one. As a matter of fact, he preached his greatest sermons to individuals, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the woman at the well.

In the Louisiana State Convention, Southern Baptist State Convention, about three months ago, I went in and there was some fellow speaking, I forget who he was. He was telling about a friend of his who in recent years went to a church that was full of carnality and difficulty. And he pledged with a couple in his church, they pledged, he and his wife, to pray with this man and this woman for revival.

And he said, we had a great revival. I think there were about three hundred and fifty in the church. And he said, they went down and down and down and down and down and one Sunday morning my wife sat there and the other couple sat there and the church was empty.

Preached it empty. And then God started turning the thing the other way. Oh, we want revival, just add a few more, you know, those patchy empty seats there.

Do a little, save my reputation as a preacher. Do, do, help us a bit, you know. The other church up there is getting more activity than we have.

We want it that way. We want to be filled but not empty. We want to be clothed but not stripped.

We want resurrection power but we don't want to die. Except the corn of wheat fall into the grass. And the amazing thing is that God only uses dead men.

God, as I said last night, when, only when the church is drunk does she do anything. When she's sober she does nothing. You meet a man on the street he'll pass you by but when he gets drunk he says, hey, come on, stick him up there, you know.

And when the church is intoxicated with God she's aggressive. The, the, the spirit is insulted. Wasn't it? Yes, it was.

It was the great Puritan preacher. There were some fantastic men, you know, in England about 400 years ago we called them Puritans. And my good friend Dr. Sherwood Woodward who had this decision said we could do with some of their starch in our modern life.

And maybe the giant amongst the giants was John Owen and he summarized the history of mankind like this. He said in the Old Testament men they were against God or insulted God. In the New Testament men, in the Old Testament men rejected God, shall we say.

In the New Testament men rejected Jesus Christ. Today we reject the Holy Spirit. We pay lip service to him.

It's theologically correct to say Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And again we do it this way Father, Son and Holy Spirit but the Holy Ghost is not a junior partner in the garden head. It's equal with the Father with the Son.

Not this way but this way. And again all his works are full of majesty. He made the world.

He made this book. He made Jesus. He raised Jesus from the dead.

The most awesome thing for a person to say this side of eternity I think is that they're a Christian. It doesn't scare anybody it ought to. As I say sometimes we stand up and somebody says well praise the Lord I'm saved and I'm filled with the Spirit and everybody says well that's great.

Somebody else stands up and says I'm saved and um I'm sanctified. If you're a Nazarene or a wholeness people well that's nice. But as I say sometimes why don't you drop all that language and just stand up and say Christ lives in me.

Maybe when you sit down your wife will say George when did that happen? I didn't know that you never told me that. You know when I quit smoking and drinking and I joined the church. Yeah you became a Baptist but I didn't know Christ lived in you.

Huh? Christ lives in you. Boy that's great. Well if a man can't say that he isn't a Christian doesn't matter how many times he goes through the tank and how many times he pays or what unless Christ lives in him.

One great Chinese scholar not too long ago was asked what he thought about the New Testament he had the Koran he'd read the Vedas he'd read the sacred books of the East and this man said I believe you just read the New Testament he said read it for the fourth time. What's the most exciting thing in the New Testament? He thought it'd say oh I was I was just staggered when I read that somehow a woman brought to birth a son without the human conception that the spirit of your God came on her. He thought it'd say that or the resurrection of Jesus or the fact that one day Jesus is going to control the whole world.

Instead of that he said are you a Christian? He said yes. Man he said you're the most amazing person in the world. Well he said I was reading at the end of Ephesians chapter 2 where it says that that you are the

faith? The elders or the deacons did it.

The last church I pastored, they offered me this, that, and the other, you know, and I sat and listened to the old great dears and nice guys, and they said, well, now, will you take the church? We're going to get you a new man, we're going to do this, we're going to do that. And I said, yes, I'll accept. Great, thank you.

Well, you, wait a minute, I wonder if you'll meet my condition, your condition. Now, what do you think, you're ranting a donkey? I happen to be God's man, I've got God's mind. This is how we're going to run the church.

Go ahead. Well, first of all, I said all the deacons will have to meet me in the office, church office, 15 minutes before every service. If I have to be here every meeting, you have.

You see, one of the great failures of Protestantism is this, you know, if you have a tent, and you know the old tent you had with a pole in the middle, you pegged it round like that. Well, if you take that pole away, it collapses, doesn't it? But if you have a tent and you've got 12 poles round, and you take one out, it doesn't collapse. And many of our churches collapse after a certain type of preacher has been there, why? Because it was all right not round him.

If the deacons had been carrying the Lord, you could have pulled the pastor out, and the church would still stand. But we don't do that. Oh, I hope this pastor won't leave, he's done so much.

I didn't know the church had to run on the pastor. As I say, I could go to a church where nobody walked the aisle for ten years, it wouldn't worry me that much. Why? Because a pastor isn't supposed to bring, well, let me tell you, I said this to the folk in New Zealand when we were talking, I said, does the shepherd here bring the sheep, the lambs to birth? And they laughed at me.

What do you mean, does a shepherd give birth to the lambs? I said, just what I said, does a shepherd give birth to the lambs? Where do you lay? I said America. Oh, now we understand. Who gives birth to the lambs? The sheep.

Well, aren't the folk in the pew the sheep of this pasture? Isn't the pastor the only shepherd? Isn't his job to bring people to birth? The reason that the state church in Korea is the state, pardon me, the state church in Korea is Presbyterian, is that when the Presbyterians had a revival there about 1904, after the Welsh revival, that the condition of membership was not that you agreed A, B, C, D, E, F, G, twelve articles of faith, it was, have you reproduced the times? Because everything in Genesis brought forth its kind. Now, have you brought to birth a lamb? Not did you pray with somebody who came forward, not did you run around and see somebody sick when the pastor asked you, but have you personally brought somebody to birth? That's the law of life. And if you had, you were accepted as a church member, and then they limited church attendance to maybe three, three hundred in a church, and after that the church had to bring to birth another church.

Would you go shopping down the road at Sears Roberts with, oh boy, they have a big stock of stuff, haven't they? Would you go if there'd only one man waiting on at the counter, and people were standing three thousand down the road waiting to get some, whatever you were trying to get? Oh, why do you say that's not the way to run a business, have a place like that? Well, you think that one, one pastor can look after a thousand folks, he sure can't. Will you go to hospital if the, if the hospital only had one doctor that was there to operate, you say, well, we, we hope to get to you by about December the 14th, I hope you

can hang on. You say, man, this thing's been killing me for the last 14 hours, I have to wait three more months, oh well, we've only one doctor, this is very modern.

By the same insanity, is there anything more precious in the whole world than church property? We use it one hour Sunday morning, one hour Sunday night, and one hour Wednesday night, and we put millions of dollars in some of our new things for about three hours a week, apart from, of course, from the fun and all the stupid stuff that belongs to the world anyhow. Supposing that you phoned this afternoon and said, my house is on fire, and the guy at the other end says, what do you mean? Don't be stupid. It is Tuesday.

You know the fire department does nothing except Wednesday night, seven to eight, Sunday morning, 11 to 12, and Sunday night, seven to eight. Oh, we laugh a bit, is it more stupid than the church being, why do we lock the churches out of heaven? Only the Catholics read them off, and strangely enough, you can run in, I've run in many a Catholic church and prayed. When I've been in a strange city, or I've been held up, I, I've, I've gone in a Catholic church and prayed.

Well, he doesn't know what else to pray anyhow, and that's a bus station with all the buzzing and hammering going on. No, you wouldn't go to a hospital with only one doctor for a thousand people. You wouldn't go to see a robot with only one man waiting on ten thousand people.

You, you, you'd say the fire department's stupid because it's only open, all the hospitals. Please come, my wife, send an ambulance, my wife's sick and dying, say, sorry, you just, we'll get it there tomorrow night, seven o'clock, around ten o'clock. Well, it's probably logical and reasonable.

Yeah, you see, in, in the, uh, we've got things done, as I say, we, we insult the Holy Ghost. I go to church and say, Brother Reagan, you just feel free. In this church, we obey the Spirit, you, you, you know.

And as I go in the pulpit, they give me something that they mimeographed for the Holy Ghost last Wednesday. You know, everything that's going to happen, stand up, sit down, stand up, sit down, just before the, the music, just before the preacher. And now the message, don't go out.

They want to get home this afternoon. The rams are playing the goats and, uh, and, uh, if they don't get home, oh, they can't, they, you can't listen, you can't preach more than half an hour. They can watch a ball game.

Oh, look at him, look, oh, boy, fumble the ball. They ought to put him on the bench, you know. Oh, they can get very excited about a little big pigsty night.

Even deacons can do that, you know. They can't get excited about folk going to hell. They can't get excited about the church, uh, never having a prayer meeting all night for the last one hour.

Sure, we believe in the Holy Ghost. We tell him to come eleven o'clock Sunday morning, go home at twelve, come back at seven, go away at eight, and come back Wednesday night. Well, who are you fooling? Only yourself.

There's one thing when revival comes, the lights stay on month after month. There's no locking up the church. Our idea of revival is so pathetic that we say we're going to have a revival Sunday, finish the following Sunday.

In other words, just come and warm us up Holy Ghost for a little bit, you know, we're getting jaded inside. And then we'll have a meeting later. Like the two ladies were arguing about what's happening around the corner, they're excavating.

They're going to put a new Baptist church up. We don't want a new Baptist church. We just built a beautiful church to Our Lady.

Oh, don't worry about the Baptists, this lady said. I don't know what she meant. She said they're harmless enough.

And she said, well, I don't like that because I'll tell you what they'll do. They'll come out giving little bills and our kids will be going to daily vacation Bible school and singing choruses. Which, the other lady said, now look, don't bother about the Baptists.

Our problem in America is not Baptists, it's Communists. And in any case, the Baptists, they're all right. And what do we bother about? There's not, there's no difference between Protestants and Catholics anyhow.

Oh, the lady said, I thought there was. Nah, it's the same thing. Okay.

Well, the Catholic lady said, I didn't know that. Well, she said, look, I go to, I go to confession on a Saturday night and I go to Mass on Sunday morning. Every six days I, when I've, I've, you know, I remember some of the sins and I go to confession.

And the priest says, absolvo deus, and I'm free. And, well, of course, I start off Monday morning and I go through the same ritual again. The Baptists don't do that, do they? Um, no, not quite like that.

They do the same thing though. They do? Yeah. Did you ever see a notice outside of a Baptist church or a Pentecostal church that says I'm revival? Yeah.

Well, they get some new man to come in and they sing and shout and carry on. And then he says, come on, you come up to the front and repent of your sins. You see, whereas you go every six days, the Baptists and Methodists only go every six months.

They go up to the altar and they holler and confess their sins and get straightened out. And then they go back and do them all over again. And they get a repair job when the next evangelist comes in.

You know, that's just about it with many people, isn't it? And we're just warming up a lot of the old folks. Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes. And that big lost world that's doomed and damned doesn't feel the impact.

You know what Dr. Tozer said, and he's right as, as, as testy as this thing may be. You can tell when you've had revival because it changes the moral climate in the locality. Brother, you've had a revival when the tavern shuts down and the dance hall shuts down and some of those lousy things happen and the pornographic literature goes off the shelf and the man at the corner there.

You've had revival. Otherwise you've had a little stirring and a warm-up, but not revival. And until we pay the real respect to the person of the Holy Spirit, we're not going to have revival.

Maybe you don't want it. Maybe as long as you've numbered one or two new buses, that's about the limit. But that hasn't shaken America for God in the last 25 years, and what we've had hasn't moved America for

God in the last 25 years.

And the only hope is that we get right back down to basics and we come and believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And so I remind you again that these people in Hebrews 11, with all the miracles they did, they never had a Bible. How much they did without it, and how little we do with it.

And it is the final revelation. God has nothing to add. God doesn't say, oh I wish I'd said that to John on the Isle of Wight.

God has no afterthought. God has nothing to correct. He's perfect in all his ways.

He gave us this word, faith. The good book says it cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And I get a little nervous because the churches I go to, so very often they say, well I'll try and get you up by 20 minutes to 12.

You know, we have this, and we've a choir number, and we've got a new choir man, and he likes two anthems. And you know, Satan doesn't matter how much singing we have, and how much other trainings we have, just so long as the word doesn't get there. Because it's what, as this good book says, it's quick, and it's powerful, and it's sharper than any two-edged sword.

And it's going to heal somebody there, and it's going to cut somebody else up there. Because God's so diverse, and he's working by his spirit. Faith.

This good verse here says that faith is substance. It's the substance of things hoped for. We've got very strange ideas about faith, haven't we? You hear people say dramatically, almost romantically, you know faith can do anything.

Well faith can't do anything. Faith can only do what's consistent with the will of God. If faith could do anything, you wouldn't need the second half of Hebrews 11, where they died.

They'd have prayed them all out of jail. There'd be no martyrs in the church. We prayed them out of the lion's mouth and everything else.

But some of them died in the faith, and they had the same type of faith as those people who believed and saw the miraculous light. Because they have faith to endure. One of the key words in this epistle is, they endured seeing him who is invisible.

You hear people say, well of course faith is a leap in the dark. Faith's nothing of the kind. Because it says in Hebrews 11, what did Moses do? And somebody else, they could see.

Jesus said, your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it. Oh yes, in the natural it's walking in the dark. It's a leap in the dark very often.

But in the true spiritual sense, this man sees, he sees what God is. That God is never going to back down on his word. As I've said again, we're far more interested to explain it than to believe it.

This is all God asks us, to take him at his word and believe it. And these people, remember he's talking to Hebrews here, and they were getting nervous and shaky. They strengthened the weak hands, confirmed the feeble knees.

Why? Because people were approaching them saying, you know very well that that man that died not long ago, he never rose from the dead. How come he never appeared to anybody? You ever think God could have done something in a better way than he did? I sometimes wish that when Jesus was resurrected, he talked to the disciples and he got straight into the bedroom of Pontius Pilate and tapped him on the jaw and said, hey I'm here, what are you going to do about it? I wish he'd gone to Caiaphas the high priest who had a beard because he wasn't allowed to shave anyhow, and just pulled his beard and said, Caiaphas, now what will you do? Since he could go the way he did, I wish he'd gone over to Rome when they were sitting there and Tiberius Caesar, some other Caesar was sitting there with all his warlords explaining how they conquered the world. And Jesus suddenly appeared at the banquet and said, here I am the son of God, I'm risen from the dead.

He didn't do a thing. So God's ways are not our ways. As I say sometimes to these enthusiasts who think, all you have to do is work from morning till night.

You know the church is working itself to death and doing nothing comparatively. The first thing is not going knocking on doors and everything else. The first requirement of God is that we worship him.

And as I said yesterday, the pastor of the First Baptist Church, in a very large First Baptist Church not long ago, when I talked about worship, stood with tears in his eyes and said, I never heard the word worship in Bible school, I never heard it in seminary, and I don't know a thing how to do it. You can do all the activity and write your score up without worshipping God, but if you worship you'll serve him. But you can serve him without worshipping him.

When did you last get alone with the Lord Jesus Christ and without saying a word of prayer, and without saying a word of praise, gaze on his holiness, his majesty, his purity, his faithfulness? Tozer told me he did that three, four, five hours at a stretch one morning. Left his loaded table, left a deadline, demanded for the magazine, he edited it so well, and he said, I get down and worship Len, and I didn't say a word of prayer, I didn't say a word of praise, I worshipped, I adored, I just got lifted into the heavenly places. For four or five hours, never said a word of prayer, never said a word of praise.

I got intoxicated with his beauty, with his majesty, with his holiness. Even John, when he saw him in his resurrection glory, and John knew him better than anyone else, said he fell at his feet as dead. There's one great, dirty little worm in the apple, if you like, there's one thing that hinders us from getting back to apostolic Christianity, and sometimes it's very polished, and sometimes it's dressed up in degrees, and sometimes it isn't.

And it's the thing that kills everything, it's called unbelief. You see the people to whom he has written, he's talking about people that never entered into rest. They could have got out of Egypt into the promised land in 11 days, and it took them 40 years.

And they didn't get there, the older ones, unless they were under 20 years of age, they never even made it after that. And he says the reason they did not enter was because of unbelief. Now these people, you know well enough what Hebrews do, it shows the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ the whole way, right from the beginning to end.

It shows that Jesus is the sum and the substance, the center and the circumference, the life and the life of Christianity. The supremacy of Jesus over the, well, let's say here's a man going into the synagogue, and he sees another man on the temple, and he says, hey, are you still worshipping with that bunch of folk of

that? Oh, come on, come on, you know it's pure nonsense. You know there's nothing in this Christianity, it's going to just go away like that.

I mean, look at the religion that we have of the Jews. After all, we've a monopoly on God. Who are the greatest people in the world? I mean, you don't have a temple? Just a minute, just a minute, you don't have a temple like we have? Look at the high priest in his garments of glory and beauty.

I often think God has a lot of jokes. If you've gone down the street and see the high priest in his glory, with his marvelous robes on, and his bells, and his pomegranates, and his precious stones, and you've seen him going in there to worship, my, he'd cause you to stand with awe. And then you go down the road to see a Baptist preacher with a leather girdle around his loin.

Quite a bit of difference, eh? Of course, we're going back to the priest now, only it's double knits and alligator shoes and swanky calves. We do with a few gun battles to them. You don't mean to say that you're content, I bet you, Mr. Temple, with all its worship and its sacrifice, and when you see the high priest and these other things, and the Christian waits patiently, he says, are you through? What have you got to say? Well, I've just got to say that you're totally wrong.

What do you mean? I'm right, you couldn't answer me. I waited. Listen, you say that we don't have a temple that God dwells in, but we do.

Well, I didn't see any new building in Jerusalem. Where is it? He said, you're looking at it. I'm the temple of God.

You're the temple of God. Well, again, I say, unless your members, and boy, wouldn't it be good next time you have a members meeting, you just say to them, you stand up if you can say Christ liveth in me. I guarantee that not ten percent of your congregation would stand up.

Would you like to try it? Could it be anything worse than you think you've got sheep and you've got goats? Could it be anything worse than at the judgment seat that they're going to charge you with their spiritual death when you thought they were alive because they made some kind of confession and were baptized, and you thought that was it? Test them. I challenge you to do it. Not many preachers have the courage to do it.

It will break your heart. You'll die under the impact of it. Why not start with the deacons, next deacons meeting and say, now we're going to have a testimony meeting, brethren, before we talk about finance.

I want each of you who, you feel really in your heart the witness of the Spirit, and Wesley preached on the witness of the Spirit more than anything else. And when people sing in their thousands, blessed assurance, I, I, I, nearly usually say in my mind, most of you are lying anyhow. When it comes right down to the issue, you say we've no temple.

I'm the temple. God lives in me. Well, I don't know whether he does or not, but anyhow you've, you've no priest.

And he said, just a minute, your priest died. My priest doesn't die. Your priest has to bring a continual offering.

My priest is there at the right hand of the Father. You might run into the temple one day and he isn't there. And I go and, and if I wake up in the night, I need him, and then there he is.

He ever lives to make an intercession for me. You have to bring a sacrifice. He made one atonement to sin.

And every time, well anyhow, uh, Moses is greater. No, no, no. In any case, Moses brought you out of Egypt.

He couldn't bring you into the promised land. Well, no, that's true, but Joshua took up where Moses left and Joshua brought us into the promised land. Right, but he couldn't bring you into rest.

Yeah, we preach the first half of Matthew 11, 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest. That's it.

What about crossing the bridge? Take my yoke upon you and learn of me and ye shall find rest. What was it saying the second chapter there? There remaineth a rest for the people of God. Why we've got as many Christians on tranquilizers as the sinners.

We've got people going to psychiatry. Rest? You see, there are three things, I'll quit, there are three things basically that faith does. First, it reckons.

It reckons God is. Secondly, it risks. And thirdly, it rests.

You know, you can read Hebrews 11 in different ways. If you enter on the level here, it's like going to the Empire State Building. Did you ever see it? It's some building, because it's not the tallest building now, there are two twins at the side of it, much taller.

But you go up and look at the Empire State Building and, you know, sometimes when the clouds are low in New York, you can't see the top. It disappears as though the building finishes up at the pearly gate somewhere. If you look from the ground upward, it's one thing, but if you get up there and look down, it's something else.

If you go into Hebrews 11 with a sense of awe, it will bawl you over. Abraham, I mean, you're talking about faith. You don't expect me ever to be like Abraham and all the people in Hebrews 11.

You don't expect me to be like that, do you? No, sirree, I expect you to be ten times better. Why? For the simple reason you and I have the complete revelation of the Word of God, and Abraham never had a Bible anyhow. And those people in Hebrews 11 never had a Bible, you and I have the total revelation.

But aren't they amazing? Abraham, Noah, David, Moses. Oh, come on, who? Oh, what are you doing, trying to tease me? Men of faith? Well, Abraham, doesn't it say he was justified by faith? Yes, it does if you read the Apostle Paul. No, it doesn't if you read James.

Paul says that Abraham, our father, was justified by faith. What does James say? That he was justified by works. Because if your faith doesn't work, it's no good.

It's not a theological concept. It ought to work on every level. Signs, wonders, miracles, divers, gifts, when did they cease? Can you give me the day? Well, I have a Bible with footnotes.

I don't care, would you please, I never read a Bible with footnotes. You know why? Because most people don't know where, I never mentioned the name, where somebody stops, where the Holy Ghost stops and the man begins. They think it's on the printed page, it's the Bible.

Don't believe it for a minute. Abraham, set out from Herod the Chaldean, left his multimillionaire ranch and set out in faith. Are you sure? Did you ever read the second verse of Isaiah 51 that says that God called Abraham alone? Did he go alone? Oh no, no, they took Tira with him, the old man, he took the young man with him.

What happened? He got stuck up the road with the old man. And he didn't move till the old man died. When your old man dies, you'll move too, your old self.

The old man got him in bondage for 15 years and then he moved and he had problems with the young man. You see, a lot of us have problems when we're even regenerate, new creatures, we get so satisfied, we lounge and think, well, this is all the rage, I mean, I've got an evangelist told me when I got married, he said, son, you're all right, miracles will take place tonight, you've got your name in heaven, you've got a mansion reserved on Main Street, you're going to get a five-decker crown, a free ticket to the Marriott Club of the Lamb, and rule over five tickets. That's an awful lot, isn't it, for five minutes at the altar, shedding your tears.

Except it's not true. But that's another digression we'd have to make. Abraham, yeah, he was a great man, all right.

He set off in unbelief and when he got down the road, what did he do? Well, some of you admired his wife and said, this, this your wife? No, no, she's not my wife, she's my sister, she travels along with me. Oh, you wouldn't think he'd lie after all the sacrifice he made, would you? And then after he'd lied, the Lord said, I'm going to do a super miracle for you now, you'll believe me so many times, your wife is going to bear a son. She's 80 years of age.

I mean, this really takes a bit of believing. She's 80 years of age. And as I said last night, of course he took advice.

The Lord doesn't mean that, you know. I mean, not used to be, but it isn't like that anymore. So what did he do? Well, in modern language, he got a girl into trouble to help God out of a situation.

Did you ever get this time to help God out of a situation because the thing looked too big, and your faith shrunk, and so you had to try and help God out, and made such a mess of it. And as I say, if you didn't think he made a mess of it, you, you thought for kissing him when he gets home in a couple of days. He's had a few headaches, and a few million dollars over it.

Abraham, Abraham the liar, Abraham deceitful, Abraham that couldn't believe God, and yet he's done in Hebrews 11. No, no, no, it's not the Westman's problem here, it's the Romans problem. Samson is there.

Well, look at the problem he has. Oh, they're a bad lot in Hebrews 11. It's an FBI gallery of wanted men.

What's it there for? It's there to show you that this, even if we stumble and we stagger, there's a very merciful God, and he's prepared to take the vessel that's being fouled up, and make it again a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use. I don't think anybody looks back on a perfect record from the day they were killed. Tell me you've seen the mercy of God, and hot every Sunday morning.

I'll let them know there's anointing of God. Maybe sometimes some dead men's brains, and read them, and sign them up. There's been too much surging now, and some lady says, oh pastor that was great this morning, surging couldn't have been better.

Well, how could he? You stole it from him. You'd be amazed how many men have said, look I, I'm on a country radio station, I'm on some other station, I preach right through your book, Our Revival Chalice. Is that all right? And I'm working on meet for many, that's fine.

Go ahead, you, you go ahead. Lay up treasure in heaven for me. For you? Why, do you think God's going to reward you for preaching my sermon? Do you think God's going to reward you for preaching surging? Not on your life, he's going to give surging it up.

You didn't sweat over it, you didn't weep over it, you didn't groan over it, you borrowed it. God's faithful judge. That's why when we get there, and he tries all our work for the priesthood, how long it'll be me beating asses.

But oh, when we get in the air of his face. Again I say, no man had ever lived, Virgin, Phiney, Wesley, Arthur King, anybody, nobody ever had a bigger Bible than you have. You go home, and the preacher, if only he was shooting to give yourself continually to prayer, and to the word of God.

It's their job to visit the sick, it's their job to visit the poor, it's their job to minister, anything. If you're going to be a New Testament priest, and that's all Hudson Taylor was right, if we do God's work in God's way at God's time, we get God's blessing. We're pleading with God to bless and anoint this when it can't be done, because it doesn't fit into the, into the pattern of his word.

It would be a revolution, wouldn't it, to go tell some of these boys what we're going to do. As I say, we want revival. How many of us will preach at your temple? We'd be scared.

How many of us lay the conditions down? We're going to really be, you know, love one another. Can I take one minute, tell you what this guy said in the, this pastor said in the, in the convention in Louisiana just a few months ago. He talked about it somewhere up in Carolinas, I think it was, and the pastor preached on practical love, you know, loving your neighbor, helping the distressed, doing the thing that hurts.

He's some very nice people, you know, a lot of retired people, middle class people with lovely homes. And he said, what about really, you know, rescuing the perishing and, and bringing in the lame and the poor, and that's good for the talks about when you make a feast, don't call your friends, because they'll just call you back, that's all, and we'll have to do it, the Smiths called us, we'll have them in next Saturday. Call somebody in the church you don't like, call somebody that's distressed.

And he got a call from the local jail asking, we've got a man coming out of jail, and he's a pretty sordid history, and he's nowhere to go. The family of folk in the church are very loving, and they help people. Do you think you could find a home for him? So he announced one Sunday morning, we have a request from the local jail, there's a man coming out, and he's no home, he's no relatives, and we're wondering if somebody would open their home, give him a bedroom and feed him until he can find a place.

If you could do this, would you see the pastor after the meeting? And to his amazement, quite a lot of people came up. So he contacted the chaplain in the jail, he said, I had a tremendous response, I was very happy. And they kept, each time there was somebody coming out of jail, the chaplain thought, I've got another man coming, until all over the church you'd see people coming in saying, oh that's the man who

was in a double murder, that was man's own son.

Isn't it great, he's got faith, and he's living with them, and they're going to keep him, they're kind of adopting him, they've been lonely, and they're so happy to have this man. And one man came, and he stayed in the family for a long, then one night he went, he stole everything in the house, and he murdered the old couple, left them in a back room, bloodied, messed up, he'd taken their money, he'd taken some silverware, he'd shot the church. The pastor had the awful task of seeing the caskets there, and the church jammed out.

Lots of unsaved people came, because there'd been such compassion in the church, and they said, you see, it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out. You get these lousy people, you can't change those people, you may as well leave them all in jail. They didn't talk about the others who'd made it, they talked about the one bad character.

And he said, I never saw such a moved, disturbed congregation. We laid those caskets in the grave, and that was it. And when I went to church Sunday morning, there was a gloom over the church.

You don't see those two white heads there anymore. And the gloom stayed. And after about three weeks, he got a call from the chaplain saying, well, I know what happened, but I thought I'd risk this.

He said, do you think there's anybody whose love would just stretch a little bit further? I mean, all the others were good cases. Now, one bad one. Has this cut off your compassion and your love? Well, I can't speak for the church, but he said, I'll ask on Sunday morning.

And after quite a good meeting, he said, there's just one thing before we dismiss. I had a call from the chaplain of the jail, and he said, you could almost feel the reaction in the church, you know. What's he going to say now? There's a man coming out that really needs a chance.

Well, there's a big history, but this is the thing. Does anyone have love that can go just a second mile, and would anybody take this man in and give him a home? Now, if you would, any of you couples, would you, would you kindly stand? And he said, to his amazement, almost the whole church stood. Just choked one up.

Hm? My God's been very patient with us, hasn't he? And we can get so impatient with others. His mercy is so long and we cut short. That sick world outside would be shaken to its very foundations, if we really got into an area of active faith.

I'm not signing articles of faith, as we do, but acting in faith. We have the exceeding, why did they do all the things that they did in Hebrews 11? Well, it gives you the secret there. It says, they saw the promises afar off, that they embraced them, they believed them, they took them, and they said, God is.

And you know what we need is not more money. Heavens, we've been begging money forever. We don't impress the world or anybody.

All we need is faith to be activated, for things to start happening that you can't explain. Most, most things happen in our church, you can't explain them. Everything that happens Sunday morning or Sunday night, you can rationalize the whole thing.

But when God starts moving mysteriously, when faith is kindled, and we only need faith, we say, is a grain of mustard seed. And faith is the gift of God. And there are measures of faith, according to Romans 14.

There are measures of faith. And faith can grow. For Paul said, he prayed for the Thessalonians, praying night and day, not for a lost world, praying that I may see your faith and supply that which is lacking in your faith.

It was a deficient faith, and as a preacher, it was his job to cultivate their faith. And in the second epistle, in the first chapter, verse 3, it says, that your faith groweth exceedingly. That must have been a great excitement.

You see, he prayed night and day, fasting, weeping, praying, not for a lost world, but for the church to get into the condition that she could go out and tackle the situations in the world and be an effective witness. Again, I say, I read Hebrews 11, I'm humbled to the death. What they did without the Bible, how little I do with the Bible.

And I've not only the Bible, I've got 2,000 years of Christian history, and the history of the church, and history of revival, to let me see that that God is exactly the same, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that God is. I sometimes think we should have that in a sign in our churches, God is, leave it there, he is able to save, he is able to keep you falling, he is able to make all grace abound, he is, that's a great study, that God is able, as we seek and we obey him.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19691.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/leonard-ravenhill/faith-series-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net