

Filling That Which Is Filled

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, the need for revival and a return to the New Testament, and the role of the preacher in leading the congregation in prayer and worship.

Duration: 58:41

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 4:24, Acts 1:8, Acts 6:3, 1 Timothy 3:7, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Genuine Prayer", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of genuine prayer and the moral poverty he sees in pulpit prayers in America. He emphasizes that success in preaching should not be measured by the size of the crowd, but by the spiritual transformation and revival that takes place. The speaker also highlights the need for ministers to focus on raising people from spiritual deadness rather than just meeting their emotional needs. He shares a story of a minister who sacrificed financial security and comfort to spread the gospel, illustrating the dedication and selflessness required in serving God.

Transcript

After the meeting last night, a young man asked me a very simple, and yet I think a very profound question. He said, if you're filled with the Holy Spirit, can you be, can God fill what's already filled? Now that may not sound very intelligent, because if you have a glass filled with water, apparently you can't fill it with anything else. And physically, it's not quite true of the glass of water, if I can illustrate, but if you fill this room with sand, got a bulldozer and sand every area of every inch of it with sand, then obviously you couldn't fill it with soda.

It's already filled with sand, and so you've pushed every area out where there's any space, any vacuum. And yet, turning again to the glass of water, you can fill a glass of water, you couldn't fill it with whiskey, if it was filled with water. But if it was filled with water, you couldn't fill it yet.

By dropping a dye into it, you could fill it with color. And if it were, say, a glass, if it were a cup of tea, you could fill it with tea, and then you could put cream in it and change its color, and then you could put sugar in it and fill it with sweetness, so you can fill what's already filled. Now, we're trying to emphasize for me these days the disparity between the New Testament Church and, I use by choice the word thing, the thing that passes off for the Church of Jesus Christ today.

There's an awful abyss between the two. You cannot, in any measure at all, in my judgment, recognize the Church of Jesus today if you take your first picture from the New Testament itself. Now, there's a very simple pattern here that I want to suggest to you.

There are many patterns in the Word of God, many principles, but one that I have found very interesting is this, that as far as I'm concerned, the Acts of the Apostles, or the Book of Action of the Holy Ghost, is the Church of Jesus Christ doing what Jesus has already done in the four Gospels. They take up the ministry that he has laid down, and they're energized by the Holy Spirit of God in everything, almost everything, there are some exceptions I guess, but almost everything that Jesus did in the days of his life was done by the Church after he received the anointing of a fullness of a baptism, whatever you want to call it theologically, of the coming of the Holy Spirit of God. Now, you've got the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The fifth book is really a recapitulation of the first four books. So much of what happened in the first four books, apart of course from creation, is repeated in the first book. Now you've got five books of Psalms, not one book.

If you went to a seminary and they told you there were 66 books in the Bible, it again just reveals how ignorant they are in seminaries, because actually there are not 66 books in the Bible, there are 70. 66 is not a biblical number, 70 is. There were 70 elders in the Old Testament, he sent out the 70 in the New Testament.

And if you add five books, because the book of Psalms is five books, now if you added only one, then you're 66. If you add four more, you've got 70. The book of Psalms is very neatly divided, as anybody that knows any Hebrew will tell you, from the first Psalm into the 41st, and then the 42nd into the 72nd, and then the 73rd to the 89th, and then the 90th to the 106th, and then Psalm 107 to 150, which again is a recapitulation of what has happened in the other Psalms.

Now the fifth book of the first five is a recap on the first four, the fifth book of Psalms is a recap on the first four books of Psalms, and again the first five books in the New Testament, I nearly said Genesis, Exodus, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are followed by the Acts which is a recap again of all that Jesus began to do and to teach is now carried over by the Church of Jesus Christ, anointed in the Holy Spirit. Now I don't know, apart from revival, how in the world you could ever get the Church back on the track. After all, you don't need a B.Sc. degree in engineering to know that a train has left the track.

All you need is a pair of good eyes, and you can see the train has rolled over and she's no good. She may be hissing steam and blowing the whistle and a lot of commotion, but she's going no place. And I think it's as obvious to any man in the world, as I quoted last night, that young fellow, Ted Pike, he agrees with me every time I think of it, that a sinner says, I cannot agree that the Church as I see it today is the Church for which Jesus died.

I don't believe anybody ever went to sleep in the New Testament Church. They couldn't sleep. It was Ruskin who defined preaching as 30 minutes to raise the dead.

But that was in the Victorian days. Now it's 30 minutes to try and keep people awake. When people tell me they're suffering from insomnia and I can't sleep, I always say, go to church.

Because you can almost surely go to sleep in most churches anyhow. Now the Church of Jesus here, in the Acts of the Apostles, this is the Church which, in my judgment, the Church for which Jesus died. Vigorous, victorious, healthy, holy.

And as dear Dr. Shanksville-Russman used to say, it's not happiness first and holiness is possible, but holiness first and happiness is possible. Jesus died for a holy Church. We do have sects in your country, in our country, in England there, and they're labeled as holiness people.

Well Jesus didn't die to make some unholy Baptists, and just a few holiness folk down the street. He died for a holy Church. Now putting a label outside the Church doesn't do anything for it.

It's ridiculous to put holiness over the Church when you've got such a carnal bunch inside anyhow. It's like getting a jar full of pickles and putting a strawberry label on the outside. The only thing that's a strawberry is the label, not the pickles.

And this goes for Pentecostals to a great degree too. We keep up a name, we go through demotions. We like to compare ourselves with ourselves, and this is dangerous.

We do not compare ourselves with the New Testament, we compare ourselves with the modern age. There's somebody down the road who is less spiritual than we are, and boy do we feel as tall as can be, when all the time we're dwarfs at the side of the New Testament men. Now Paul has a great concern for the Church.

He loved the Church. He knows the Lord Jesus Christ himself loved the Church. I'm interested in this word, filled, since this young man made this comment, I don't know whether he's here, but he made this comment last night.

Can what is filled already be filled continually? Not refilled, because if you talk about being refilled, a thing must have been emptied. But you see, if a thing is full, it might be filled to very little of the vessel, but there's no overflow. Now Paul's prayer was not that they might be merely filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5, 18, but be being filled with the Spirit.

And if you take a vessel and put it under a tap or a faucet and turn it on, wherever that vessel stays there, and you have the millions and billions of gallons of water in the reservoir, wherever that channel or that vehicle is there, it will not only be filled, but it will be filled to overflowing. And because there's an overflow, there's an outflow. Now one of the lovely things about a vessel being filled to overflowing is that you can't see the vessel, all you see is the overflow.

But in these days we see too much of the vessel, the man, the personality. Instead of seeing the overflow, the inner flow of divine life. I was thinking just sitting there this morning, as a man who came into an experience of the Holy Ghost.

I was preaching up in New York and an old, old lady came, shuffling along, and she said to me, did you ever meet A.B. Simpson in person? And I said, no. I know my good friend R.R. Brown of Omaha did, he said, I remember he embraced me and I can still feel his beard rubbing against my cheek. So one day A.B. Simpson had it out with God, if you like to put it that way.

And you know the great modern healing crusade in England under the Jeffery brothers started as a result of, let me see, Edward and George, Stephen was the pioneer, and Stephen read A.B. Simpson's book on

divine healing. If I remember right, the reader hadn't read it for 30 years I guess, but I think in that book he says this, that healing is not the whole gospel, it is not the main part of the gospel, but that it is a part of the gospel nobody with any spiritual intelligence can refute. It's there.

And this awakened a desire for this, shall we say, branch in the Church of the Living God to be as fruitful again. And A.B. Simpson had written out this. Now in the days when money was money, somebody asked me a little while ago, he said, have you seen the new, I don't even have one, but he said, have you seen the new LBJ dime? And I said, no I haven't.

He said, I'll show you one, and he showed me a dollar bill. Well, in the old days when dollars were dollars, I think the dollar now is worth about 46 cents, its actual value. But in the days when money was money, A.B. Simpson had \$5,000 a year.

That was money then. It would be worth maybe \$25,000 or \$30,000, but he had his own carriage and horses. He used to drive to his stately church in New York, that great practice here in church.

But when God the Holy Ghost met him, he discovered like so many others, because I'm convinced of this, that all over America today, and even in this audience, some of you guys know to preach better than you dare preach. But you're scared stiff of the one thing, of being thrown out of the synagogue, and the other thing, that God might let you down financially. And so you prefer to walk in the darkness, instead of in the light.

You'd rather go with a calmer bunch, and keep one or two of them sweet, because they get in their pockets, and particularly at Christmas, then you debate about the will of God. But there are a thousand listeners scattered over the world this morning, because one man dared to step out of that ornate, beautiful church, with all its financial security, and the little old lady said to me, the last time I heard him preach in New York, he had walked across the city in a rainstorm, he was sitting there with one leg crossed over the other, and his shoe was up, and the soul was right through, and before he went to preach, he took his socks off and wrung the water out, and put his wet sock on again, and then he put a piece of pasteboard in the bottom of his shoe, and he'd forgotten all about it, and he was there singing, blessed assurance like this, and showing everybody the base of his shoe, that was filled just with a piece of cardboard, a pasteboard. But I think you'll go a long way before you'll find anything to improve on Dr. Finster's two volumes on the Holy Spirit.

There may be scenarios where you can develop more thought. And if you don't have it, we've got a good preacher here, he should be preaching this morning, Tom Radmorell, and he has a book there, on the gifts of the Spirit, which is about the sanest thing I think I've ever read. I sent some copies to the ends of the earth, and they wrote back and said right away, this is the best thing we have ever read.

It's so balanced, it's intelligent, he isn't grinding just for tongues or something, like so many people are. He is concerned, as I am and you are. I trust that we see the Church come back to all the fullness of God.

Because otherwise we cannot have the blessing of God, we cannot limit the Holy Ghost and be blessed. And I'll say again, we're paying a lot of lip service to the Holy Spirit. But actually we're restraining the Holy Ghost in our modern churches, I'm totally convinced of it.

You say we had a great time last night, the Spirit was there. And more often than not, it's merely a psychic blessing in the meeting. It's psychic.

It's emotional. Oh, they sung to him, my mother used to sing, I haven't heard it since he put her in the grave. And I was so blessed last night.

One lady told me she'd joined a new church, and she said, in the old church, I never went, all the 25 years, 20 young years I was there. But every time I go to church now, the first half hour, I just cry until my clothes are wet. When I ask her what she's got, oh, oh I feel so, well, it doesn't mean good.

Now I believe that basically, that woman's whole experience was emotional. She was blessed in the realm of her emotions. Now, but we can be blessed there.

But I did not discover either in her or in that church, there was any real growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now for some reason or another, it seems that everybody uses good old Peter as a classic example of the post-Pentecost miracle of a man being so radically changed by the coming in of the Holy Spirit. Now you have a right to disagree with anything I say, and everything if you want, that's not my responsibility.

All I have to do is deliver the word the Lord has given me. But you know, I think sometimes that maybe the early church never, I don't think for a moment, they ever dreamed the Apostle Paul would become the leader and the pioneer. He was that arch enemy.

I would think they rather figured that either Peter was going to be the Archbishop of the Second, or a very charming, wonderful younger man by the name of Stephen. Now Christianity will only work one way, and that's God's way. And so we'd better get back to the norm, again get back to the New Testament.

I have said this repeatedly, and got into trouble for it. It doesn't worry me at all. A preacher only has two things to do according to the New Testament.

Now if you haven't read it, you could read a very stirring and challenging and humiliating book called *The Burden of the Lord* by Ian Macpherson, or Ian maybe you say, I-A-N Macpherson, *The Burden of the Lord*. It's published by Cokesbury. And in it he lays down the old-fashioned concept which I still think is the right one, of the duties, the offices, the ministry of the preacher.

He recites, or records again, the fact that in the Scottish Church, and it's true of some today, but it was more true a generation back, that the preacher used to have one day when he was not available to anybody, not even his wife. That one day he separated himself to find the mind of God for his sermons on the Lord's Day. Then Saturday he wasn't available.

He had prepared his heart, he had prepared the messages for on all day Tuesday, then Saturday he needed the whole day, not to play golf or fish, but he needed the whole day to prepare the man to deliver the prepared messages. Now Sunday he wasn't available because he was in and out of the pulpit delivering, so three days a week he wasn't available to his congregation. He recites this case of a young man or a minister being interviewed about taking a passport.

And one of the venerable old elders in the church, a bit shaky and leaning there on his stick, I was going to say, you say cane, and he said, pointing his finger to the minister, as they say, asking, says him, if you're preparing a sermon. And all of a sudden that person down the street is deeing. Let him dee! It's not your business to take care of the deeing, it's your business to take care of the living.

Well, you might get into trouble if you did that these days, but I'm showing you the emphasis, the awesomeness. You know, I've seen Dr. Campbell Morgan come out of the side room and walk on a platform and change the atmosphere like that when he walked out. Just with his fingers and his Bible torn and lies and he would come out and just put his Bible down like a prophet and just say, now we're going to sing break thou the bread of life.

And while I'm here with my gripes, I want to say this, that I find in America more than any other country I've been in an awful poverty in pulpit prayer. Nearly every church I go in Sunday morning they sing a hymn and then they say, now let us pray, Lord we thank you we're here this Sabbath again, bless us, bless the choir as they sing and Miss Jones as she does something and something else, amen, thank you. Now I have a set of books in a library that I have by Dr. Parker of London.

They used to be called, the set used to be called the people's Bible. Now it's published by Baker, preaching through the Bible. I read that set of books not because I enjoy his sermons or I think they're very brilliant, but I do enjoy the profundity of his prayer which is printed before the sermon.

His sermons are wonderful, but oh brother when he prays he lifts you to heaven. You see, you've got problems getting people, force you to get them in the church, that's one problem. Two, you've got to cut off their thinking from the world outside.

Number three, you've got to get them in the spirit so you can get the word of truth through to them. And this is not an easy thing. But you know they said of George Whitfield that when he preached on hell you'd think he'd been there for a week, he brought brimstone and fire with him into the pulpit.

But when he preached on heaven, you'd think he'd step right out of the room and come straight onto the platform. There was something of another world about we don't seem to convey this brethren somehow. We come slick and easy and smart and crack a few jokes.

There's not the sense of awesomeness. I was thinking this morning amongst my friends I think I can count ten millionaires. They don't give me anything usually but I like the guys and most of them are very spiritual men.

And sometimes they say to me you know, it's really an awesome thing to have all this money I'm responsible. Well this is true. But how much more responsible for you and for me who deal with the souls of men and women every day.

Every time I preach people ought to bet you worse when they go out of that door. I've either brought them nearer, have not I, or something dried up in them while I was preaching. You see.

Now amongst the other things that we've deteriorated in, surely, we don't have government in the church like they had it in the New Testament. I don't think we appoint elders in the church as they appointed them in the New Testament. And this brings us to two things.

It brings us to that fact and it brings us to this that there is more to being full of the spirit than being full of the spirit if that isn't too contradictory. For again, you read there in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles where they appointed these men to be elders in the church. Now again, our emphasis here it says the twelve called a multitude of disciples.

Now, how many disciples do you have? Oh, I'm not interested in your Sunday school attendance because that's the last thing in the world. Usually when teachers say, how many do you have in Sunday school? That shows how sick you are. What's Sunday school got to do with it if they drive off an hour afterwards and they're fishing the rest of the day at something else? Many of them like Sunday school early because we've Romanized our worship now.

The Catholics at least used to go to worship till twelve o'clock but boy, we get away with a dollar and the first hour in Sunday school and the rest of the day we do as we like. Now, why are the churches so sick? It says here there was a multitude of disciples. Now, the word disciple comes, it stems from the same root word as discipline.

But do you think really the believers of our day are we really disciplined people? Disciplined in the time that we get up? Disciplined in the time that we go to bed? Disciplined in watching TV if you like? Disciplined in our money? Are we disciplined? One thing I admire about the life of John Wesley was even before he was converted he was a very very disciplined man. I got problems with him. Why, before he was saved he used to get up at four o'clock in the morning to pray.

That's pretty good going for a man that isn't saved. We don't have too many people who are saved get up at that hour anymore. He fasted two days a week, Tuesdays and Fridays.

You say, that works, works, works. Sure it is. If you're at the other side of the cross, but when you come to this side will you remember that the son of God fasted? Are you better than he was? You know when I hear people singing, oh to be like the blessed Redeemer, I kind of wonder what they're thinking of him.

Do you want to be like him really? Do you want to go for forty days on the backside of the desert it would do us all an awful amount of good if we did? Do you want to go through Gethsemane like he did? Do you want to spend nights alone on the mountain as he did? What do you mean oh to be like the, do you mean like that nice sentimental picture that Mr. Solomon painted of Jesus, he looks more effeminate than masculine? Do you mean somebody like gent of Jesus meek and mild as Charles Wesley wrote? Or do you mean the courageous strife that goes in the temple and licks them out? We're so unbalanced if you like. Sure there was a gentleness about Jesus there was a shamelessness about Jesus too. There was a loveliness about him there was something that made people afraid of him.

The woman said when he went into the court of the temple why don't you arrest him? You've been saying arrest him for the last six months get on with the job he's standing there go arrest him nobody's defending him nobody has a sword beating him why don't you go oh we don't go near to him why not? Because in my judgment they could feel the waves of moral strength and spiritual power in him and no man dares come to him. Now they had here after this amazing visitation of God this upper womb experience this they're so completely transformed their personalities but they're reminded daily it says oh what a marvellous marvellous church this early church was. Now I know as well as you know that it had trouble on the inside with hypocrisy and it had trouble on the outside with hostility.

I can't prove and you can't disprove that Ananias and Sapphira were in the upper womb. They possibly were. And if they were in the upper womb it says they were filled with the Holy Ghost.

But the apostles said to them right after this where has Satan filled our heart tonight? You see the almost measureless existence the heights are being filled with the Holy Ghost and now the descent are being filled with all the craftiness and guile and power of the spirit of evil. It says the high priest and all that were

with him when they saw and heard what the disciples were doing they were filled with indignation. They contested against the disciples you'll fill Jerusalem with your doctrine.

Now in the prayer of this amazing man the apostle Paul one of these prayers was that these men and these women might be filled with the knowledge of his will. They were already filled with the Holy Ghost but he prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will. In the fifteenth chapter of the epistles of the Romans he says in verse thirteen now the God of hope fill you with all joy and fill you with peace and fill you with hope through the power of the Holy Ghost and I myself also am persuaded of you my brethren that you also are full of goodness and filled with all knowledge.

You know I think sometimes that in our hopes to get people to be filled with the Holy Spirit we've offered so much of a package deal and they've come out to be filled with the Holy Ghost and told that now they're filled with the Spirit and it hasn't worked out in their lives and they're not going to come back because if I go back again I'm only going to get what I got last time anyhow and it just does not work. As though the initial experience, I don't care whether you call it sanctification like the Nazarenes or the baptism like one group or some other thing but coming into a crisis experience of the Holy Ghost even after you've been born of the Spirit and if you want a book that will really show you a lot of light in this area you can get Gilchrist Lawson's book on the deeper experiences of the great Christians. And he shows one after the other.

John Wesley came and after he was miraculously born again he admits he was filled with the Holy Ghost. The founder of the Salvation Army admits John, Billy, Bill, Bulls. You have to be a Billy you know these days.

So they had Billy Bulls in those days and he was filled with the Holy Ghost subsequent to being born again. He said I had a baptism. Maybe the greatest evangelist of all time certainly in American history was Charles G. Finney.

A man with a scintillating mind, a mind as sharp as a razor who was miraculously born again of the Spirit of God without any teaching at all. He said in a matter of hours I was baptized with the Holy Ghost walking over Boston Common and not only that but I had repeated baptisms of the Holy Ghost. And if you want to know why he had compassion revival he said I can't go three weeks without being broken up in confession before God.

I then have gone three weeks without brokenness at the feet of Jesus. Peter maybe you've gone three months no wonder you're as hard as you are. When did you last get down and weep over people inside your church never mind outside of it.

The Great Commission is going to all the world and preach the gospel but the church is so sick we have to preach the gospel inside of it now. Oh this New Testament church with all its vigor with all its power with all its energy because people were obedient to the heavenly vision. Now I think the classic case of a man being filled with the Holy Spirit again is here in the case of where they selected these men and the condition of being an elder in the church here it says look out among you seven men of honest rapport.

Now that's where you start before anyone else. And you could have some very dishonest deacons in your church. Are they honest? Do they stand tall morally? Are their business relationships clean? Before we elect these men do we stand them up publicly and say these men are going to be put into office in this church and if you know anything about them well here now say your peace and like in the marriage

service forever hold your peace.

Why shouldn't number one be elected an elder in this church? Somebody says because he did this shabby business deal with me. He owns a multi business down the road and everybody knows he's a shady deal. Well you'd rule him out.

If you couldn't stand up to the investigation surely under the light of the word of God. Then secondly if he's filled with the Holy Spirit of God. This is the credential for being an elder in the church of the living God.

He is filled with the Holy Spirit of God. But not only was this young man filled with the Holy Spirit. Choose out from you honest men.

Men honest and of good report. Full of the Holy Ghost and the wisdom. We are going to give ourselves continually to prayer and the word of God.

I think I can offer you a simple suggestion to revolutionize your church and your own life as a preacher. And one is that the next time you have a business meeting serve notice on the church. You're not doing any sick visiting or visiting old ladies and drinking coffee and other things.

You're going to give yourself for the next year to two things prayer and the word of God. Make a map of your area or your city like it here. And say to this elder look you visit everybody between the spokes of A and B in that red dress.

If anybody gets saved on Sunday night I'll give you the address. And if it's a man you go along and if it's a woman you take your wife and get someone else and you visit everybody in that section. Now anybody in that section in hospital you've got to visit them.

You see I use a simple argument and it seems to me it's a good one. If you have the old fashioned tent you know the bell tent we used to use and if you have a central prop there in that tent like that that's the tent pole. Now if you take the tent pole away obviously the whole thing's going to come out.

But if you have a tent with twelve tent poles round and you take one pole from the side the tent won't collapse. Now too often when a man has given his life in ministry for a church when he goes the church takes a nosedive. Why? Because it was all centred round his personality.

But you've got the elders ministering according to the word of God and you can remove the pastor and the congregation still stands. You see I don't for a minute believe that a pastor should do all the preaching in a church either. If you're going to be a scripture you should have at least two pastors.

Jesus sent the seventy out two by two and you have Peter and Paul. Of course maybe a lot of you are better preachers than Paul by a long shot but Peter needed, Paul needed Peter with him or Paul and Barnabas or Paul and Silas. He didn't go alone.

Just suddenly he didn't go alone. I heard Campbell Morgan preach very often but you know the reason that Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones has just retired or not the reason but he has just retired from his great pulpit in Westminster Walls was many years ago over thirty years ago maybe forty. Campbell Morgan said sure I'll preach in this great church but I need an assistant.

Campbell Morgan. I heard him say one day I've written nearly fifty books on the Bible but I don't know much about it. Most of the boys that come out of the seminary now with a trumpet under one arm and a

diploma on the other they've exhausted the Bible.

They can only stay in a pastorate three years because of nothing left to preach. As the boys said they preached it from generations to revolutions and they don't know where to turn now. But oh brother when you've got these great personalities.

Hockinger has just finished in his church up there. I preached in that church. I asked the young doctor why do you come to this church? He said because I need two things when I come to church on the Lord's Day.

My Bible and my brains. In any church you only need your Bible. I said I'm going to preach and you sit with your mouth open and get stone fed.

But the word of God is the most profound book in the whole world and you'll never exhaust it. It doesn't mean we shouldn't try. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't get to know more of the revelation of God.

You give yourself, divide your city up, tell the elders they're going to do the work now you've carried it long enough and they're going to visit the sick and they're going to look after these kind of people and you're going to just do two things preach and live on your faith before God and I guarantee both your personal life and your church will be changed at the end of 12 months. The last church I went to I fasted England. They had two ministers before I went and I went because financially they were down and it was a very rough area.

We prayed, my wife and I, and felt we should go. It wasn't a nice area at all. It was almost, well it was a poverty stricken area.

And after I sat with the elders and they laid down certain conditions then they said well you'll come. I said alright I'll come. On my condition.

Oh have you got conditions? It's amazing how much the church wants to know about you. Everybody in the church knows your salary. I said one day I'm going to have you all stand up and tell me your salary.

Oh brother that upset them. I said well let's start with the elders now brother how much do you, that's not your business. Oh but it's your business to know how much I make every year.

Huh? There's a strange imbalance there too isn't there? Now I said look I'll come and be your pastor on the conditions you've laid down if you meet my conditions. I don't do the visiting. I don't go to hospital.

We have a half night of prayer every Friday night from nine o'clock till midnight. We abolish all offering. We what? Well we're not going to ask people to come from this poor community and as soon as they come in put a bag under their nose and say here come on the kingdom is falling apart please give us a shilling, do help us.

The Lord's going to die if you don't do please give us a oh oh please come on help us. Well in all the reasons in the world why we shouldn't why we should really have another offering and not drop them. Now I said these are conditions if you don't want them thank you for the invitation I'm not being the pastor.

Well we'll go along with you we'll visit. Yes we'll have a half night of prayer. Yes but this offering business.

Well I said I'll tell you what we'll do. Since we have to pay they were still paying off a mortgage on the building. You pay the rent if you want to call it that.

Pay for the fuel, pay for the lighting, pay for everything and if there's anything left pay me my wage. Oh well that wouldn't be right. Now I said that's my condition.

Oh then the treasurer expanded his chest and felt a little easy and he said alright now if you're going to take the responsibility I said right. Well we got some boxes made. They stood on legs we put them at either side of the exits of the church just left them there they had a slot in and I just said you'll find the offering boxes at the door if you wish to give.

And that's all was ever mentioned about money. The fourth Sunday night after this experiment the treasurer came rushing in my office he said Brother Abner Brother Abner about the offering. I said what about it? He said it's doubled and we never had a financial problem in the church.

We shared the responsibility. I wouldn't feel stupid if I were an elder in a church just have a nice flower in my buttoned in my coat each Sunday morning and all I did was go up once a month and serve communion and take one or two little old ladies to their seats and go around begging money twice Sunday morning and I think that's ridiculous. You may not that's alright.

Go ahead and do what you've done before. But I'm talking about coming back to the New Testament basis of men being appointed in the church because they are filled full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Now Stephen was not only full of faith and of the Holy Ghost he was filled with wisdom.

They could not resist the wisdom with which he spake. Of course you may not need it in your church but boy most churches will do a bit of wisdom around these days. Particularly spiritual wisdom.

The wisdom which comes from above that illumination. You know people kind of back off and say you know this is rather eccentric. You know that just belonged to the early church.

Well you must have a different Bible from mine because I want to tell you that all those gifts of the Spirit were operating in the Old Testament before ever they came in the New Testament. Hmm? Look here's a man standing before the king and the king says I understand you're a pretty smart fellow and you have a lot of wisdom but now I've got a real problem. I was going to ask you to interpret the dream but brother I can't even remember the dream and he says it's all right I know the dream and the act.

You what? That sounds like wisdom or what is it a word of knowledge? Huh? Well king you're looking a bit sick this morning. Sick! They've just been raising problems here in the government about tapping wires and putting secret microphones around debugging they call it. Can you accept this evidence that they tap the wires? Oh science we've got nothing on the bible.

Did you read that book? What's the book on diseases? Martha you remember it. None of these diseases. How many read it? Oh that's a fantastic book.

Boy it makes you feel about three feet taller when you've read it. One of the laws that God ordained in the Old Testament was that a male child should be circumcised on the eighth day. Why not the seventh? Why not the ninth? Because the eighth day is the most perfect day in the life of a babe when the blood will congeal and immediately you don't have the difficulties you would have if you circumcised on the seventh or the other ninth.

Took science hundreds of thousands of years to find it. The bible had it. They had a plague in Europe because people would come out of one section of the hospital and deliver out to operating and go deliver

babies in another section and the mortality rate was something about 90 percent or something.

And one day a doctor said look there's something wrong here. And before ever any babies are delivered now you must go in another room and change your clothes and scrub your hands. And once they scrubbed their hands and changed their clothes the mortality rate went up.

They were not carrying germs out of one section of the hospital to the newborn baby. But if you go back to the Old Testament it tells you to do the same thing. The midwife has to change her clothes and wash her hands.

But it took science four thousand years to... The bible isn't behind times. Don't fool yourself. Oh it's amazing what you'll find if you do a little bit of digging.

And a lot of our kids are embarrassed in high school these days because they think the bible is old fashioned. It's more up to the Bible than to modern newspaper. Or you say you caught a case of bugging in the Old Testament.

Sure. Somebody says to the king you're looking nervous. He said you know that prophet that lives hundreds of miles away he knows what I say in my bedroom.

That's pretty good bugging isn't it? Hmm? The gifts of the spirit are offering and operating in the Old Testament. Don't you think that brother Muriel? Isn't that true? I think every one of them. one of them if you trace them out.

Wisdom, knowledge, power. You think a fellow doesn't have power and he says watch your troubles. He says well I've been giving you looking after you as a preacher and now my baby died while you were out.

These are not good wages. Oh he said lady I didn't tell you before but I have the greatest healer in the world right now. Have you seen my program? I mean have you ever heard about me? I'm the greatest healer.

Give me the baby you just watched this. He took the corpse out of the hand of the woman and he went up into an upper room. It says he went up into a secret chamber.

He went upstairs and he prayed and he came back and the little baby was gurgling and I like he paints a picture of a little kiddie with his fingers in his beard and he was laughing and he says here you are. And he says by this I know the heart of man as God. By what? By the Sabbath he brought life where there is death.

We think success in preaching is getting a crowd and tickling their ears and they think we're the nicest guys. Look brother your spiritual life, your ministry is decided on how many people you raise from the dead not how big your crowd is. And if you're not raising people who are morally and spiritually dead I don't care if you Do you see in the Old Testament they have these gifts.

In such vital relationship with God a man can go and command life where there is death. And he said by this I know the heart of man as God. Not by this meal in the barrel.

Not by this oil that's running in the jug down here. Those were all right but you know other things have happened like that. But when it comes to life and death ah that's a different issue.

That's a different issue. You know Mr. Finney used to go in an area and he wouldn't move out of that area until the heavens broke and the Holy Ghost came down. And there was revival.

We don't do this anymore. I don't think too many preachers have six months of sermons left. They'd have to preach Moody and Finney and everybody at the end of three weeks.

But ah he could go into an area and remember when he went he didn't preach the mercy of God he preached the wrath of God. He didn't preach heaven he preached hell. He didn't teach mercy he preached judgment.

He didn't say your dear little helpless people you know. Like one of the top evangelists who was always saying on the radio you know God made laws and he knew you couldn't keep them and so he said that's a lie. Can you punish an imbecile child because if you had a fruit tree out there full of oranges and you say to the children now you're not going to touch them we've got friends coming at the weekend and I counted them there's a hundred and fifty on there and you're not going to touch those oranges.

And when you come home you'll find dozens on the floor and the oranges peel their skin here and there and you come in and say now come on line up you kids. Did you do it? No. Did you? No.

No. No. Daddy I looked out of the window and little Jackie he was shaking the tree and he was pulling them up.

Oh well Jackie's my retarded child. I can't punish him and not be a just father. Are you going to suggest that you're more just than God is? I'm not trying to upset your theology but you know somebody said not long ago there'll always be room in a world like this for a religion that doesn't agitate the mind and doesn't demand purity of living.

And Christianity demands both. It agitates the mind. I think the most stupid thing in the world is to stand up in church and recite a creed that says that we sin every day in thought, word and deed and then you beat the kids to death for committing sin.

They're only doing what you've told them anyhow. You've told them they sin every day in thought, word and deed and when they go out and listen they can believe that. Why on earth don't you write a catalogue of sins they can commit? You'll make it much easier for the kids they're confused enough without you adding to the confusion.

You add a list of sins there and say kids you'll be alright if you commit this sin and this and this and this. These are sins you can commit and get by with. There isn't a sin anybody can commit and get by with.

And we need to sound from the housetop today that Christianity is N-O-T not a sinning religion. Every other religion in the world is. Christianity is not.

Now this New Testament church was a pure church and when it wasn't pure they had judgment and they sat in judgment over the people and they exercised authority and they stood still in every church. In my judgment me a court of judgment which of course operates in love and gentleness. In the language of Galatians 6 1 let him which is spiritual let him that is if a man be overtaken in a fault let him which is spiritual come and sit in judgment and consider him left also the position to reverse one day and he's on the bench and you're down here and found out guilty.

Why if we did that we'd have a different kind of church. Now I say I think we've offered a package deal. We've suggested you get filled with the Holy Ghost and that's the end of it.

Look supposing today you're an ignorant man you're being brought up in ignorance which is not your fault and you get really cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Now you may be as right with God as a man who's walked with God for fifty years and obeyed every prompting of the Holy Spirit. That's only put your heart right it doesn't put your head right.

After all after Jesus Christ himself was anointed with the Holy Ghost even after that he learned obedience through the things that he suffered or he had to be in subjection to. Now Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost and he laid an emphasis where we don't get the whole emphasis now in almost in teaching that there is a blessing or an endowment carry what you like and I don't care if you get it all in one experience but if you get a radical experience that gets you right with God and you're filled with the Holy Ghost and the fruit of the Spirit is evidence and gifts of the Spirit of evidence I'm the last man in the world to say anything about it. I don't care if you get it in one stage or two or twenty two as long as you get there.

But Peter remembered what happened in the upper room because in Acts 15, 8 and 9 he's giving a report there in Jerusalem and he says concerning the experience that came to the house of this other fellow he says God which knows the heart bear them witness in the house of the house of the oil in the lights, it wasn't oil, it was pure olive oil. When the priest wore a garment of linen, it wasn't linen, it was pure linen. The emphasis is on purity everywhere.

And Peter says in the upper room that God churned aside their hearts by faith, and the Spirit of God indwelt them. So that didn't square Peter up altogether, that put his heart right, it didn't put his head right, because he was praying not long after and the curtain came up and he says, Lord, now look, none of this business with me. Oh, no, sir, no, Lord, I'm not going to, oh, no, no, no, I'm not going to, and the Lord says, you just wait a minute, you've got some lessons to learn.

Now his heart was right, but his head wasn't right yet. And a bit later down the road he had trouble with Paul and Peter, and Paul said, didn't he, I withstood Peter because he was to be blamed. There was some kind of error.

He doesn't mean it's moral error. But because we're filled with the Holy Ghost, it doesn't necessarily fill us with all wisdom at the same moment. No, I say you can fill what's already full.

This room is filled in a number of ways right now, isn't it? It isn't quite filled with people, it could be, and I trust it will be. But you couldn't fill the room with people unless it was filled with oxygen, otherwise they couldn't breathe. And if it was night time and we had no lights, it would be filled with darkness.

But if you put the switch on, it's filled with light. The heater was on there. I want those heaters turning off.

I like to be quiet for one thing, and they need mistletoes up by the eskimos, and if some of you get cold, you might have more sympathy to get up there. But apart from that, you can fill the heat room with light, you can fill it with heat. Some lady might come through, walk through with a very pungent perfume on, and you say, hmm, boy that smells good.

And so the atmosphere is changed, perfume will change the atmosphere. You can fill the atmosphere with heat, you can fill it with light, you can fill it with oxygen, you can fill it with people, you can fill it with music. It's the same thing, it's filled in some of the ways.

You can take each of those things up and still leave the room full of air. But I would like to preach to a room full of air. No sir, the room is full of air, full of people, full of light, full of sound, full of perfume, full of warmth.

All these fillings are here at the same time, now by the same token, in my judgment. The life which has been filled with God, the apostle says that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. And then he prays that you might be filled with all the knowledge of his will.

And then he prays that you might be filled with joy. And he prays that you might be filled with peace. Because you see, these can all vary.

Even though my relationship with God is absolutely a hundred percent right, there are variations in other areas of my strange personality. Because I am a combination, a new hour of emotion and all kinds of things. And sometimes you feel more up than down, and more down than up.

And there are times when days of darkness still come on us. I never forget sitting on the platform away there in England with a man who I consider maybe the greatest preacher in Scotland today. And that would be contradicting my friend Sherwood Worth, who at Christmas you may remember in Decision magazine put a sermon by Dr. J.S. Stewart.

Not the Jimmy Stewart that comes here and other places, but the great Scottish preacher. Professor of New Testament Greek in New College Edinburgh. Fantastic preacher.

But I consider Arthur Fawcett a greater preacher. Eloquent, brilliant, spiritual. We were in a meeting one day and they were singing, I'm living on the mountain underneath a cloudless sky.

You know about him don't you? Right. And he nudged me and he said, Len I wish I was there. He said, I think I'd rather sing, days of darkness still come on me, and sorrows part I often tread.

But the Savior still is with me. I'm not always under a cloudless sky. Sometimes because of my nerves.

Sometimes because of circumstances. Sometimes because maybe of bereavement. Sometimes because of sadness.

Sometimes because of tragedy. And I fluctuate in these areas. But basically I can still be filled with the knowledge of his will.

I can still have all joy and peace in believing. The ship may rock, but my anchor is cast within the veil. Yes, there are many areas in which we can be fooled.

And I think it's good for us to keep hold of the word of the apostle when he said we're not to cast away our confidence because Satan loves us to do that. I think one of the worst diseases in the world, maybe the most, the worst amongst Christians is when we get into an area of self-pity. That's worse than cancer I think.

Oh brother once you get sympathizing with yourself and feeling what a raw deal you're having and looking at this and looking at the other. But when you come right back to the word of God and you look up into the face of the Lord and realize that it does not make one bit of difference what the external things really are in my life. If you were to pin a jewel on my coat worth a million dollars today, it wouldn't alter my value before God once having.

If you became the most unpopular man in the world because for righteousness sake, it wouldn't understand your relationship with God. You see when it comes down to the last analysis, the only person in the world who can alter my relationship with God is me. Not the else cat.

If you took a popularity vote and I came on the top of the list as the most popular preacher in America, the most popular Christian in America, the Lord wouldn't say, well I've been so busy running the universe I didn't even notice. I've got Ravenhill down here I better cross his name out and put it at the top like the rest of the crowd. And then next year because I preach something they don't like, they say, I think he's the worst preacher, I think he's the worst Christian.

And the Lord said, my I hadn't noticed that, I'll cross him out and put him at the, you can't alter God's opinion of me, I can but not the else can. And nobody can alter God's opinion of you. It's according to our relationship, it's according to our walk with him.

And you know when you live there you don't get too troubled about things, except that you obey the promptings again of the Holy Spirit. Last two weeks ago, I listened to a lady minister, very acceptably, and she said, and it rather startled me at the moment, she said, eight years ago Brother Ravenhill was in New Zealand preaching. And I came into this conference late and I had to sit on the back seat and she said, I sat about ten minutes and he pointed right there and said, look you are just as spiritual as you want to be, the throttle's in your own hand.

And she said, it went like an arrow into my heart and said, you're right brother, you're right, I am as spiritual as I want to be. And I'm going to make it my business now to be spiritual. I'm not going to be pushed around by the church of other people.

And as I said then, I say to you, Mr. Finney didn't have a bigger Bible than you have, he used it better maybe. Mr. Spurgeon didn't have a special backdoor to God, but he really got down to that one business of declaring the whole counsel of God and giving himself continually to the word of God and to prayer. As a result of that, look at his ministry.

You know God is still in the business of making many if he can get them. But you've got to take time to be holy. My old granny used to sit in the chimney corner there and rock away in a rocking chair and only two songs she knew, Blessed Assurance and the other side of the record was Take Time to Be Holy.

And she used to get an apron and throw it over her head and somehow get her arms in there and rock away. And I can hear her now singing, take time to be holy, speak of with thy Lord, take time to be holy. And she'd turn around and say, Len, people don't do this, take time to be holy, the world rushes on.

She thought when the automobile came, it was an agent of the devil. Can I tell you one thing? I was preaching in that marvelous Baptist church up there in Grand Rapids, very wonderful church of Dr. Fuller's. He's a fellow that writes so much he doesn't write, he compiles and searches out all the stuff of Spurgeons.

He has a very, very wonderful library. I noticed a book there by Arthur Pink and I said, oh I see you've got a book by Arthur Pink. Did you ever hear him preach? He said, hear him, he not only heard him, he stayed in my home.

What do you think about him? Marvelous man. He was up by six o'clock every morning and he didn't quit reading his Bible until six at night. He spent 12 hours a day with his Bible.

And he said when he was in my church I said to him, well Brother Pink the service will begin at 7.30. It's only about four blocks down the road. I'll pick you up and in my automobile say course after seven. No, no, no thank you, no thank you.

But why not? Well he said I never ride in automobiles. He said I think the automobile has been the greatest destroyer of the devotional life of the Christian and anything the devil ever invented. Do you think the next time you switch the key of your Continental or your Cadillac? Hmm.

Or when after the service? I'll bring it. No, I never ride in a, I never ride in a, in a, in a, in an automobile. Because I re-preach my sermon going home and I, I, I say Lord what did I miss out or what did I, I, I re-preach my sermon.

I meditate on it again. He said you know in the old days, if your Aunt Mary lived up the road there, children Saturday, Friday night you go to bed early, you have your bath, Saturday morning you get up, we're going to load up the buggy, going to take some sandwiches, and to go to bed. But that's the best job.

You didn't always come home the same day. The old man couldn't make it always. It was a day's trip to see Aunt Mary.

But now he said you come home and say well honey how do you feel? You want to go see Aunt Mary? It's only up the turnpike you know. You can be there in 15 minutes. And so you go up.

You sit under the old apple tree and you talk about old things and you're going to go and they say no, no, just, just stay. You're only 20 minutes home. You can stay and have coffee and doughnuts can't you? And you sit under the old tree and have doughnuts you don't need and coffee you could do without.

And you talk and you spent the whole night and you've got nothing for it. And he said you know I think that this automobile has ruined the devotion of that. Now I'm not saying he did.

You turn it over and you come to your own conclusion. But I think he's got a grain of truth in it. In fact maybe more than that.

Oh my here we've got a book. I was thinking the other day as I began to read in the Psalms, I could spend the rest of my life going through the book of Psalms and not exhaust it. How vast, how profound.

I pray it won't be said of you as it was said of one famous preacher, wasn't it? I'd forgotten who it was. Was it Charles Lamb that went to church and heard a dry sermon? And he said the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed. If we put our house in order, preachers first of all, give ourselves continually to prayer and the Word of God.

Tell the deacons they've got to straighten up and come to Bible standard. Tell the church we've got to take the solemn obligation of being a witness in Jerusalem before we start in Judea and Samaria. And speaking in the anointing of the Holy Ghost, I'm absolutely sure we can have revival in our day.

Because God is the same. And if we trust Him wholly, W-H-O-W-I, if we trust Him wholly, we'll find Him wholly true. Thank you.

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