

He Is Able (1 of 2) - 1955

by Leonard Ravenhill

Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him, because he is the unchangeable priest who continues forever and is able to make intercession for all.

Duration: 44:56

Scripture: John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Full Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power and significance of a particular text from the Word of God. He describes it as a text that transcends everything else and seems to leap out of the Bible. The preacher believes that this text reveals the wonder of Jesus Christ and his ability to rescue people from darkness. He also highlights the supremacy of Jesus and how everything has been committed into his hands by God. The sermon emphasizes the importance of inspiration and imagination when reading the Word of God.

Transcript

Because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto him, because he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Or, to condense the text further, he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him. If open confession is good for the soul, then I have to confess that a little more than two hours ago I didn't intend to preach from this text.

My thoughts had been in another direction, but while Dr. Hegry was giving his discourse this afternoon, my mind was directed into this channel. As I mentioned before, one of the great modern writers on preaching said, there are texts which leap out of the thicket and they seize hold of you. They take you by the hand.

They're texts that talk. They're texts that have about them something that, at least for that moment, transcending everything else. And somehow, as he was preaching this afternoon, it seemed to me that this text seemed to leap out of the word of God.

I didn't look for it, it was looking for me. I didn't talk to it, it talked to me. And it seemed immediately that in surveying this tremendous, this awful truth here in the word of God, for this text is as fathomless as the ocean.

This text is as high as heaven. This text is longer than time. It stretches right through an unbeginning and an unending eternity, because it brings out the wonder of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This text is the despair of devils, because Jesus Christ is able to rescue out of all the paths of darkness all who come unto him, to earth where he is bound. It's not only the despair of devils. I believe that this text is a very depthology of those wonderful beings we were thinking about.

The sky can fully bear that sight. And if you merely read the word of God without inspiration, something of the wonder of Jesus Christ is able to do, is the delight of men. It's the delight of men that has found the secret of life, the very purpose of this.

Some people say that we came from jelly. And the thought that a man said to dear old Bud Robinson one day, you know, he said, Uncle, dear old Bud had a lovely lisp, you know. And he said to the man, stand on one side a minute.

The man said, what for? He said, stand on one side. The man stood. What did you say a minute ago? Oh, he said, I don't believe the gospel.

I believe we come from monkeys. Uncle Bud said, say brother, he said, by the slant of your forehead and the set of your ears, I think you're right. The other with their hands over its ears, and the other with its hands If you can hear no evil and see no evil and speak no evil, you must be in a real good state anyhow.

I say that dismissing the idea of evolution, we believe that God created the race of men. Out of that race he selected a nation. Out of the nation he selected a tribe.

Out of the tribe he selected a family. Out of the family he selected an individual. And the wonder of the gospel is the Levitical priesthood, he supersedes you.

Think for a minute if your Bible is open here, as you read these verses, what they say tonight. And therefore it's by an oath of consecration. No other priest took an oath that here is the oath of consecration.

And then look again in the 21st, God has pledged himself. That's why you can believe the word of God. And in the 24th verse, he continues forever.

The other priests failed by reason of death. But he pledges his life for your life. He pledges his.

The gift of God is eternal life. And because of his mighty power, Samson lifted the gates of Gaza. Samson went to life.

He lifted the gates. He didn't lift the gates. Jesus Christ is able to save the dead the most by reason of death.

Before time began he was I don't know whether the angels were given a preview of the word of God. If they were able to hear a text like this read in eternity, that he is able to save to the uttermost, were the angels expecting. For instance, you might have a building like this.

And by somebody's negligence or something is destroyed and affected. I say the Bible doesn't lie. It means that my mind.

No wonder in one of the hymns. A verse I believe written by a Roman Catholic indeed but a very. It says, O wisest love, that flesh and blood which did in Adam fail should thrive afresh against the fall.

We didn't change the calendar of men simply because none. We have had different ages in the history of the world. I say by the coming of a little babe.

We say now before Christ. And we talk about after Christ. And there is a greatest loss of my miracle until that time, the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

And my new birth is guaranteed by his birth. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. By the first Adam there came death.

By the last Adam there came deliverance from death. By the first Adam there came a curse. By the last Adam.

It is our purpose to stay here except to pause for a moment. I've often thought of printing a Christmas card. I've never done it.

But I've often thought of making just a single sentence on a Christmas card and sending it to people. And I'd just put this in very beautiful writing. Not my own of course, but I'd get it printed.

And I'd just have on my card this. Wise men came and worshipped him. And underneath I'd put, they still do.

Wise men came and worshipped him. A black man came and a white man came. They were there at his birth.

They were there at the cross. A black man carried the cross of Jesus. And I never see a black man, not what I think of that.

A black man came and knelt there at the side of the manger. And the unconscious Jesus didn't know they presented gifts of gold and of frankincense. You see his mother and father were going away down there into Egypt, his foster father, and they had to go hundreds of miles and back again.

And frankincense and myrrh. Have you ever tried to imagine the angels looking down over the edge of heaven and seeing Jesus born and lying in a manger? Jesus had another contempt for wealth. Jesus had another contempt for ease.

Jesus had another contempt for anything that was outside of manliness and character and virtue and glory. He came the hardest way of all. He died the hardest way of all.

He suffered the hardest way of all. He did the hardest job of all. He rose again from the dead.

But I like that hymn that says, the servant's form he wore. He didn't even come as a king, he came as a servant. A servant's form he wore.

And in our body bore our dreadful curse on Calvary. He comes slipping into the world, bridging the widest extremes of western affairs. He deigns in flesh to appear, widest extremes to join.

For the widest extremes are not as far as the east is from the west, nor as far as heaven is from hell, nor as far as the highest star to the bottomless pit. The farthest distances that I know of are between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. And Jesus never died to make a bridge out of heaven into hell.

He died to bridge the immaculate house of God away there in the middle of the desert. Jesus has made a woman who cried. He lived on earth a virtuous life.

He died on the cross a vicarious death. I say Jesus did far more than Samson. For Samson lifted the gate there of Gaza.

But Jesus Christ lifted that tremendous, but almost, well surely it is incalculable, weight of sin. We'll pause there for this great high priest of which we're reading here. He's making an atonement.

I say out of one nation God took one family, out of one family he took one tribe, out of one tribe he took a family, out of one family he took a man. That man went once, only once, once a year for one nation. The leper breeds without the law.

But Jesus gathers all the nations of the world into his arms. He trousers, he surveys in one vast glance the iniquity of us all. There's that transcendent song in the fifty-third of Isaiah.

Surely he has borne our grief, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That little babe now has become a mature man.

They want him to set up a kingdom, and he won't do that. He's come to be a libation. He's come to do what all the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer, as it says in the ninth chapter there in verse ten.

If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit of God, without but under God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And the law never did it. It had to be done over again.

They had to go the next year. They had to go to the same altar. They had to bring the same sacrifice.

They had to say the same prayer, but not for one nation, but at one altar. Not a beautiful altar, but his altar was a cross. No wonder the hymn writers, no wonder John Bowering, when he went out there to India, eventually he found a place where the Portuguese traders had been more than a century before he got there.

And according to custom they built a church where they could worship, and they built it there on a hill so everybody could see it. And they surmounted that great church with a wonderful cross. But one day there was a gale, there was a storm.

They built that church so that that storm beat down. It just caught the church at the wrong angle, and most of the church crumbled. And there was just the gable end of that building standing there, and on top of the gable a cross, and beneath it all the debris of the broken building.

And he took his pen, even though he didn't believe in the message of the blood as you and I do, but he belonged to a church that did not honor the blood of Jesus Christ. But he took his pen, and seeing that pile of rubble there, seeing those stones, seeing that twisted building, seeing the cross standing there erect,

battered by the winds, flattered by the fury of the storm, beaten as it had been now for a hundred years, and yet standing supreme, he took his pen and he wrote, In the cross of Christ thy glory towering all the wrecks of time. Oh, the wonder of it.

My dear friend, you may push that cross, you may do as you like, because he's able to save to the uttermost. And it reaches out. Jesus Christ died.

He says, surely. Standing here, I tell you, I never preach with anything like that should be preaching, unless I do scramble about it. But I'm so sure that very often when people hear us preachers they believe us, and I go home some nights and say when we preach they simply don't believe us.

I say a few minutes ago, I have more power, as it were, under God tonight. I have a greater privilege than going to every condemned boy in death row tonight, than going to the thousands of young men that may be in prison, and unlocking the gate and setting them free. For here is something which is eternal.

Death is a time sentence. Here is an eternal sentence. My friend, you've got the sentence of death in yourselves tonight, and unless you go to that wondrous cross, unless that blood by which you can enter into hell, or rather the inscribed right of death, he is able to save to the uttermost.

And I say he's able to save us by reason of its timelessness. It's a wonderful thing that when you have fought away time, and you've fought away space, and you've tried to think away angels, and you think away every blade of grass, and you think away the world, so that there could be no grass, and no animal life, and no vegetable life, and no any other life. And you think away angels, because it says that Jesus in the beginning was the Word, and he was there before any angel, or archangel, or any other thing.

He was there with God the Father in eternity. He's endless. I like to think there, it's in that unbeginning thing that just tatters my mind and rots my understanding.

Oh, I can think that I'm never going to end, and God will never end, and you will never end. If you live a billion years in hell, you'll never end. Or if you live a billion billion years in heaven, you'll never end.

God has made us. Your body will go to dust from which it came. Your blood will go to water from which it came.

Your breath will go to air from which it came. And other parts of you will just disintegrate, and they'll go back to chemical substance. There's a part in you that will live, and that's your spirit.

There's a part in you that will live, that's your conscience. There's a part in you that will live, that's your memory. And Jesus Christ knew that, and therefore he took our sins.

And I say he did it there. The manifestation is there. The sacrifice was there.

He's the lamp flame from the very foundation of the world. God sees the program going wrong, and there he is, blood making atonement, and the regeneration of Abraham and others. Think, aren't you? It's loving unlovely people that's the job.

I don't believe Jesus liked lepers. He didn't like them, but he loved them. It's a wonderful thing that God can come to me, and he can come to you.

Of course, you may persuade yourself you're lovely. Well, that's all right. I've never persuaded myself of that.

I persuade myself that, as an old preacher said, that when God found me, self-righteous Methodist, that took communion, and said my prayers, and did all the other things, that I was as bad as a thief that died on the cross. You see, Jesus never thought about others. He thought about himself.

They said to him there on the cross, if you're the son of God, if you're as clever as you say you are, well come down and save yourself. He saved others himself. No, he cannot save it.

I read a little book during the early part of this year. It's written by an Englishman, admittedly, but that doesn't make him any better, or any worse. It's written by a Plymouth brother, bless your heart, that won't hurt, that won't, you may not like that.

But it's the Seven Sayings of the Cross by A. W. Pink, and you should read it. You can buy a copy over there. I don't think you should buy it on Sunday, but you can buy it.

And if you can't buy it, Mr. Hickory has a copy, and he says he'll loan anything he's got. I never read a book that moved me so much as those Seven Amazing Sayings of the Son of God. I read that book on the ship going home.

I read it when I got home. I gave it to somebody, I don't know who. But that man took it step by step, showed us the tenderness of Jesus on the cross, the word of tenderness, when he looked down at his mother.

Would you like to see your son on the cross? Would you like to see your son suffering from something he hasn't done? Would you like to see one who is spotless and undefiled and immaculate? He's able to save to the uttermost because he's the only person in God's creation, though they're like the stars of heaven's multitude and like the grass that stands by the seashore that cannot be numbered. That from the very moment he was born to the very moment he died, he did the will of God. He never broke a law.

He never polluted himself. He was spotless, body, soul, and spirit. And therefore he's a perfect lamb.

The boy said going up the hill, Daddy I've got the fire, but where is the lamb? And prophetically Abraham says, God will provide himself the lamb. And in the middle of the word of God, John the Baptist comes and says, behold the Lamb of God. And at the end of time, when God has rolled the earth up like a straw, when all the gold in Fort Knox is worth a dime, when all the nations of the earth have been cast away like grass, there in eternity we'll see the fulfillment of that word.

God will provide himself a lamb. We may be hearing John the Baptist standing there in his resurrected glorified body, pointing again and say, there behold the lamb. For the word of God said in the midst of the throng and in the midst of the poor and plenty others, there's a lamb, a lamb, a lamb that's taken away the sin of the world.

Think of him for a moment going to that cross. No wonder he's staggered under the cross. Oh he didn't stagger under the cross, he staggered under the sin of the cross.

I don't understand how Jesus Christ became man, neither do you as far as that goes. Don't you get too worshipful about the greatness of preachers. We're just about as dumb as you, or as clever as you on the

other hand, but we don't know much anyhow.

And unless we get inspiration, we've got nothing to give. And I don't care who your preacher is, what of you, of your own? The greatest preacher that ever lived said he'd not think of himself but what God gave him. Visualize, I say, the spotless son of God.

Perfect, a perfect lamb, no blemish in Jesus, no iniquity was found in his mouth. He was the darling from the very heart of God. If angels ever wept, they wept when Jesus came down to earth.

If angels wept, they wept by the way that mankind caused him to suffer. If ever they wept, they watched him there on his way to the cross. There's a great, wonderful teacher.

I have one of his books, though I don't read Hebrew, but I have one of the books of a very famous teacher in the University of Edinburgh. He was there a few years ago, he's not there now. This little old bent man with a long beard, a great master of Hebrew.

Though he was a Scotsman, they called him Rabbi Duncan. He used to teach Hebrew grammar from the word of God. And one Monday morning he went and he read very carefully in his own Scots way, with his lovely long hours and dialect.

He read the 53rd of Isaiah to that crowd of brilliant students. As he stood there, he began to read. Surely he hath borne our grief.

He hath carried our sorrows. And I say, if you stay a minute and think about it, if he hasn't, then we're fools. And we're not only fools, but we're damned.

He hath borne our grief, said he. He hath carried our sorrows. And yet we have seen him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Now gentlemen, said he, follow this in the Hebrew, that he was wounded for our transgressions. He was wounded for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace, the chastising.

That's why they whipped him. That's why they pressed thorns upon his brow. That's why the point sets five bleeding wounds he bears with seeds on calvary, in each hand, in each foot, and the gash in his side.

That's why they whipped him and laid stripes upon him. Someone has calculated, I don't know how, that Jesus Christ had 29 stripes, according to the law of the Romans, not according to the law of the Hebrews. And there are 28 major diseases in the world, and so they say that he took a stroke for every one of those diseases.

But those diseases are the outcome of a disease. The disease of sin, and the 29th stroke was for the stroke of sin. Not everybody's disease, thank God, but everybody's got sin.

And then the old rabbi said, he's borne our sins and carried our sorrows. We have seen him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. Then as he began to read, he said, let me read this verse to you.

And he began to read, and they observed that he couldn't read. The tears were clotting down his face and running down his beard. The great, brilliant professor took off his old thick glasses and rubbed his eyes.

He said, gentlemen, listen to this, listen to this. Thou hast made his soul an offering for sin. We get very sentimental about Jesus.

We get a bit of feeling when we sing George Bernard's lovely hymn, that great American writer, I'll cherish the old rugged cross. We see Jesus baking in the sun, exposed in his nakedness. We see the vulgar crowd round about him.

We see that dirty rebel that spit a clot of rotten phlegm in his face. And somebody smothered him, and somebody dragged the hair of his beard out of his face. You can get sentimental about it.

My dear friend, we're not saved by the physical death of Jesus Christ. The blood doesn't merely mean the blood that flows from his body. It means that, but it means infinitely more.

There's a crowd of people, there's a manufacturer railing upon him and saying, if you're the son of God, save us. Jesus didn't want to save him, not there. He was going to do more than save one man and slip on the cross.

He was going to save the whole human race. Then a man says, recognizing, seeing something, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. He recognized he was a king and he recognized he had a kingdom.

And all the sporting crowd that were there making carnival that day, they looked at Jesus hanging on a cross and they laughed him to the risen and star. Jesus dying on the cross and everybody saw him. My friend, let me cut that out of your mind.

Nobody saw Jesus die. There wasn't an eye on God's earth that thought even God didn't see Jesus die. For there came a moment that just as I say you don't understand, nor do I, the mystery of the incarnation, how God was contracted to a span, how eternity and deity became humanity.

How can you condense the famine into a flashlight battery? How can you gather the ocean into a bucket? How can you gather the wind in your arms? How can you stride over the world in one stride? You could do the whole lot of them infinitely easier than this. How can you try and comprehend with a finite mind something which is infinite? How can you try and grasp into human reasoning something which is beyond the intelligence of archangels and idols? The Son of God, away from the beginning of time, away for an endless eternity and a duration of a kingdom that shall never end. I don't understand how he jumped down between those two immensities and filled the body of a virgin and crept into the world handicapped in one sense.

I don't understand how. And if I don't understand it, and I certainly don't, I'm lost in wonder and love and praise to think a rebel like me gets in on mercy like that. But if I don't understand that, how he became man, much less do I understand how the Word of God says how he became sin.

Guilty, violent, helpless, weak, spotless, Son of God was he. And there came a moment that had been approaching now for an eternity and eternity and eternity. I reminded you there of Abraham, heading off one day to Mount Moriah, three days journey, turning over in his sleep and saying, that poor little boy, I'll have to tie him up and put a knife through him and make him an offering for sin.

And the heart of the father was tortured. The heart of the son had no consciousness of his mission. And what happened for three years in the life of Abraham, seeing as he saw three days moving with his son and saying, this boy is going to be the sin bearer at this time, he's going to be an offering.

And I say the boy was unconscious. It took Abraham only three days to journey from there to Mount Moriah. It took Jesus Christ thirty-three long years, and every step he made was toward the cross.

And there may have been days and years in his life when he never knew the intent of the father, maybe until he was twelve or later in his years. But there from eternity, God had seen his son going step by step to the cross, bleeding and suffering and bearing the sin of the world. And there came a moment of appropriation.

They came nearer and nearer. And there came a moment when God laid on him the sin, not the sin that was laid on the goat, the scapegoat that went into the wilderness, not the sin of a nation, but the rotten sin of your life, the sin of that harlot that stole her body last night, the sin of that liar that said that mean thing the other day, the sin of nations, the sin of the nations of the past, the curse that was over the old Roman empire, the devilry that ran through the cities of Babylon, the corruption of the world of Noah, open sin and secret sin, sin of men, sin of nations, sins of churches. God took that sin and laid it on his spotless son there upon the cross.

And it was too sacred. The reason you and I can meet God is this. There was a moment when God left his son, and Jesus could understand why Peter ran away and why John ran away and why others ran away.

But there came a moment when he bore our sin in his body, and he stole not his body. The pains of hell got hold of him. I told you before of the woman in an air raid shelter in England during the war, down there 90 feet below ground, and a shell came, and it burst the sewers at the side of the building, and it put out the light, and then she walked down in the darkness of that dungeon with a crowd of other people.

She was nursing a babe a month old. And as they stood there, I said, don't panic, don't panic, you'll be all right. And then they heard down those steps coming a waterfall of water.

The sewers had burst, the impurity had come in, and it started seeping down into the building. Felt a vile, offensive, repugnant filth out of the sewers of London. And it crept up their bodies up little by little to the knees and to the loins and up to the breasts and over the shoulders of the woman.

And she put her heels against the wall, and then she held up a little darling baby that she had a month old, and she held it there an hour, two hours, three hours, three and a half hours. She held it there until her body was stiff. And when finally they broke in and found these women standing there, they had to take the babe off the hands of the mother.

They had to gently bring those hands down and rub life into them. And she was standing there talking to the general of the Salvation Army. I was with him on the platform there as he told the story, how when he said to that woman, it's been an awful raid.

Oh no, she said, the worst raid was a month ago. That's the raid I'm telling you about just now. And he said, we were in the darkness, we were in the filth and all the horrible smell, all the coldness of that water, all the horror of the darkness.

And what was the smell? And what was the darkness? And what was the coldness? She said, I was just terrified. And I had my baby a month old, a victim of the war. There it is.

And I held him up. He said with a faint smile on her face, with a little wrinkle in the side of her mouth, she said, sir, it was like hell itself. But she said, you know, though my body was pained, and I thought I'd die, I thought I'd just drop holding the babe there until my arm would fit.

He said, I saved him. I was able to save him, she said. And here he is, here he is.

And she told that to that audience of 2,000 people. My mind wasn't there, I was 2,000 years back. I was 2,000 miles away from England.

I wasn't seeing the sewers of London bursting there and coming down into the darkness, and the lights going out, and the offensive smell. I was witnessing Jesus on the cross, an oil that soothed everybody's heart, that would make the sewers of the violet, sewers that run through the city, smell like a deodorant compared to the impurity of our heart. And your sin and mine was there on the cross.

It was there submerging the Son of God. And God says, this is the most sacred moment in history. In time or eternity there'll never be anything like this again.

And God put a blind over the self. God wouldn't look on him. He turned his face and Jesus said, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And the answer is so obvious, that Jesus Christ tasted separation from his Father for a moment, that you and I should not have separation from God for eternity.

He reconciled God to us by the body of his death, and by his soul being made an offering for sin. It's a wonderful thing tonight to say, that because of that life, and because of that death, and not only by his death, we're not saved by his death merely.

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