

# (Hebrews) 1-Overview-1

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*Leonard Ravenhill's sermon on Hebrews emphasizes the transformative power of faith amidst persecution and suffering for Christians today.*

**Duration:** 47:07

**Scripture:** Romans 1:16, Galatians 3:10, Hebrews 1:1-8, Hebrews 2:3, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 10:38

**Topics:** "Hebrews"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing the book of Revelation and its portrayal of the end times. He expresses sorrow over the degradation and perversion in society, emphasizing the need for a revival. The preacher acknowledges the sacrifices made by martyrs and urges the congregation to follow in their footsteps. The sermon then transitions to a discussion of the epistle to the Hebrews, particularly focusing on the importance of faith as demonstrated by the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11.

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## Transcript

...of our country, in England, when this book was banned and even when it was burned and banished. We thank you for the miracle of the creation of the Word of God, and not only its creation, but its preservation. We're here at the cost of the lives of martyrs and people who love not their lives unto the death.

I think of the old hymn that says, They climbed the steep ascent to heaven through peril, toil, and pain. O God, to us may grace be given to follow in their train. Open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

In Jesus' name, amen. Okay, we're going to the epistle to the Hebrews for a few weeks. This is one lecture that I used to listen to every time he came.

Every week that he came to lecture he began with the same thing. We need to recap, or recapitulate, or go over some of the things that we've already spoken of for the simple reason that tonight there's a videotape being made of this, an audio tape. Last night, last week, we didn't have that.

The epistle to the Hebrews is distinctly a book only for Christians. It has no message for the unsaved. It's true you heard a fiery evangelist, I'm sure, preaching from Hebrews, where is it now? In the first verse? Pardon me, in the first chapter.

No, it isn't at all. It's in... How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? It comes down very heavy on the responsibility of the hearer. Again, this book is not addressed to Romans, or Ephesians, or Thessalonians.

It is addressed to the Hebrews, but actually we're the Hebrews in the new dispensation. We're the children of Abraham. It's true that this was written to a people who were under tremendous persecution.

They were in danger of being totally disseminated. They'd lost friends, they'd lost their social standing, they'd lost their national standing, they'd lost their religious standing. They were castaways to the rest of the Jews.

What this book really says is that the old system under which the Jews worshipped is obsolete, and this is something entirely new. That didn't make them very, very welcome to the rest of the citizens. Again, they were severely persecuted.

They were under great hostility. That's why when you get into the 11th chapter, where I think the Apostle Paul wrote it, I'll refer to it as Paul's epistle, where he says, Now look, you may be under the weather, but remember there were people of old, and they wandered around in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. You know, we like to tell people about the blessings of salvation.

But one of the guarantees of Jesus is, if you follow him, in the world you shall have persecution. Forget all about the prosperity in mansions, wait till you get up there, you'll have a proper one. But there's so much concern in material things.

We need, at least I need, to read this book over and over and over again. The best-known chapter, obviously, is the 11th chapter, which is often called the Arena of Faith, or I like to call the men there the Heroes of Faith. Oh, yes, there's a blackboard here, OK, thanks, that's nice.

You'd never guess what that is, I guess in a dozen years. So I'll have to enlighten you. It's a copy, an original, of the Empire State Building.

Almost everybody in England wants to see two or three things when they come to America. Number one, the Statue of Liberty, number two, the Empire State Building, the greats. What's the other great thing here? You wouldn't guess what that is, it goes down like this.

Well, that's the Grand Canyon, that's the latest copy of it. They want to see the Empire State Building, the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls. Somebody tried to estimate how many millions of people have been to the top of that thing.

I used to want, in England, I wanted to go, and I didn't ever make it. Somebody said there's no way to estimate how many millions of pictures have been taken from the top of that marvelous building. If you face east, you get a wonderful panoramic view of, what do you call it, Martha's Vineyard and all the ships coming from all over the world.

You go a little this way, you take a picture of the Statue of Liberty and, I suppose, Staten Island. Each way you go, you get a different picture. So somebody said it's been viewed, the surrounding has been viewed so many millions of times, I'm not going to bother taking a picture of it.

So instead of standing at the top and taking a picture of this, north, south, east and west, you know what he did? He laid down here on his back and he took a picture of the Empire State Building that way. And it seems as though it ends in eternity when you see the picture. It goes up and up and up and up and up.

But it makes such a difference from which end you view the Statue of Liberty. It made such a difference which way you look at the epistle to the Hebrews, and particularly the eleventh chapter. Again recapping, if I had been writing it, I certainly would not have put some of the characters in Hebrews 11 that are there.

I wouldn't have put Noah in there, he got drunk. I wouldn't have put Moses there, he committed murder. Do you think I would have put a harlot in like Rahab? Not on your life.

Or Jephthah with his foolishness. Or some of the other characters. But God put them there for a reason.

I think the main reason to show us that however twisted and deformed and carnal and corrupt human nature is, He can take it and transform it. And as I said Sunday morning, Shakespeare maybe wasn't right when he said, or was right when he said he can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. God can do more than that.

He can take a shapeless, character, deformed, twisted, corrupt, perverted, demon possessed, cleanse it, and sanctify it, and fill it, and use it. So this should be a tremendous chapter of encouragement to us. There are people in it I would not have put in it.

There are people not in it I would have put in it. I would have put in, for instance, the three Hebrew children. I think that took some courage to go into the fire.

But they're not mentioned. I would have put the name of Joshua in. He was the one who had faith and the walls fell down.

But he isn't mentioned. There's an inference because it says, by faith the walls of Jericho fell down. If I had been writing this I sure would have put other people in.

Look at the Hebrews 11 for a minute, the first chapter. The characters that are first mentioned are very fascinating. By faith able, offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.

There is faith worshipping. Verse 5, by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. There is faith walking.

A bit further down you have the story of Noah. You have faith working. I would have put one character in, in the Old Testament, that's one of the most fascinating characters, I think, in the whole of the Word of God.

I would have put Elijah there. He shut up heaven. He terrified governments.

Kings had to bow to him. He shut up heaven so there'd be no rain. He produced a famine to get the people to a starvation point and repentance.

And yet with all his amazing achievements he's not mentioned here. Well, I had been teaching years ago. Just one morning I spoke about the Hebrews 11, took a kind of a scan of the whole thing.

And I mentioned that Elijah was not mentioned in, that Elijah was not mentioned in Hebrews 11. And as I went out, a typical old lady, no, stop me, she said, do you know why Elijah isn't mentioned in Hebrews 11? I said, no, do you? Oh, yes, I know. So she told me so.

As I went out of the church she said, here's Mr. Ravenhill coming. I was able to teach him this morning. The pastor said, you were? Yes.

I told him why Elijah is not mentioned in Hebrews 11. He said, well, why isn't he? Well, because he was translated and he didn't see death. Good, thank you so much.

Then I said to her, excuse me, could you help me a bit further on these chapters? She said, maybe I could. I said, well, who was the third character in the chapter? Oh, I don't just remember. Oh, oh yes, Enoch.

What's he doing in the chapter? He didn't die. So that can't be the real answer, just Elijah was translated and he didn't see death in the way you say. I said, wait a minute.

But I said, Enoch was not, was not, Enoch was translated and he didn't have to go through the valley of the shadow of death. But she said, well, that shows you the Bible contradicts itself. I said, why? She said, because the law in the chapter, it says these all died in the faith.

And you mentioned two people who did not die in the faith. But it doesn't say all the people in the chapter died in the faith, it says all the people in that bracket. I think faith is the most abused word in the church of Jesus Christ today.

Name it and claim it. Confess it, possess it. Faith is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament.

It's mentioned over 30 times in the epistles of the Hebrews. It's mentioned more than 20 times in this chapter 11. Strangely enough, it is mentioned only twice in the whole of the Old Testament.

I think the difference between people in the Old Testament and people in our day is this, that they acted in faith, while we only sign articles of faith. You go and join a group and they give you their articles of faith and ask you to sign on the dotted line, come in, you can be one of us. You see, we don't want anybody to disagree.

You must never rock the boat if you come to our church. You must never find a verse that we haven't preached on or a scripture that we don't know or a situation we haven't handled. I believe there's room, indeed a great room in the world, in the church of Jesus Christ today for a revised estimate, if you like to put it that way, of the mighty work of faith.

The first time faith is mentioned in the Old Testament is in Deuteronomy 32, 20, where it is mentioned negatively, that people had no faith. Now again, you hear people, I've heard two of the leading evangelists in the world, at least that's what they're titled as, both using the same illustration. You came in tonight, you sat on that chair, you didn't shake it to see if the legs were loose, you sat on it, that's faith.

Why can't you transfer that faith into the spiritual life? Because it's natural faith in natural things. I said Sunday morning, and didn't clear the thing up, that none of us, you can't prove your parents, to yourself you can't. You prove them because somebody else told you.

You didn't wake up one day and say, Hi mum. Boy, she would have been startled. First day you're alive if you said that.

You go on somebody else's evidence, you believe your father, your mother, your aunts, your uncles, your doctor, your birth certificate, which could all be forged anyhow. So we accept the opinion and authority of others in small things like that. But you see, when it comes down to this, we're talking about something entirely different.

I mentioned last week where Paul, that man of God, I think the most awesome character that ever lived outside of Jesus. They whip him, they lash him, his back is bleeding, his body's bruised, he starves some day, he doesn't get overfed, he's in weariness, he's in prisons, he's in every calamity you can imagine. And he bundles it all together and he says, I glory in tribute.

I guess that made the devil mad for a month. He'd been trying to kill him and kill his faith and kill his anticipation and he sums it all up and says, I glory in this. This is strawberries and cream to me.

What are you trying to give me? Poison? Listen, it's changed. Immediately I realize I'm filling up some of the sufferings of Christ. Am I counted worthy to follow in the train of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Is he honoring me with something he can't honor other people with? I ask God to do this.

You may think I'm crazy. You're only one of millions anyhow. The rest of the world thinks so.

Lord, don't give me burdens equal to my strength. Give me strength equal to the burdens today. If God only gives me burdens according to my strength, I'll be a pygmy all my life.

I need to be faced with things I have never faced. I need to enter into sufferings I've never entered into, burdens I've never known a thing about. Brother Dave called me just a few minutes ago before I left.

He was preaching in a big church in Denver last week. And he said, Len, there were two or three thousand there Sunday night and I sat there and suddenly I was overcome with grief and sorrow. Instead of going to the pulpit, he just sat down in front of all the folk and broke into tears and wept.

And he said, there's a girl in this auditorium tonight who has been, I think he said raped or badly abused and somebody's going to jail for it. And the girl ran down the aisle and after her came her father. And then there was a whole string of teenage girls, young women came down there.

All of them being molested. All of them being abused. All of them.

Like this girl said, it's my daddy that's going to go to jail. David said, I sat there for 50 minutes and wept over that congregation. I didn't even get up and preach.

Till the whole congregation was convulsed with sorrow that this degradation is in a land that's called a Christian country. This perversion, this pollution, this devilry. As I said last week, what we have had in the last 25 years in the Church of Jesus Christ hasn't been enough to move this generation to God.

Sure we've got a few more choruses, we clap a bit more and dance a bit more and shout a bit more. We're happy but they still perish. Habakkuk, or Habakkuk if you want to call him that way, is the one who first uses that statement, the just shall live by faith.

Habakkuk or Habakkuk, minor prophet there in the second chapter. And verse 4, Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith. Now this man is living in a time when there's a prevalence of iniquity, vileness, wickedness, and pride.

He has some awesome things to say. But let's say this, he's the first one that makes this statement, the just are my righteous one, as it's literally translated, my righteous one shall live by his faith. Which is quoted again in Romans 1.16, in Galatians 3.10, and in Hebrews 10.38. The epistle to the Hebrews is specifically for one thing, not to describe all the marvelous furniture and things in the Old Testament, but actually the epistle to the Hebrews is a commentary on the first five books of the Bible, on the book of Psalms which is five books in the Hebrew.

It's just an illumination of the whole thing, showing above all the supremacy of Jesus. Look at verse 1 again, I remind you I'm reading from King James Version. Hebrews 1.1, God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the times past unto us by the fathers, by the prophet, hath in these last days.

I say again, let me go, just turn your mind up there into Revelation chapter 1, how does it begin? Before that enormous stretch of Revelation, which shows the end time and beyond the end time, it lifts the curtain at the end of the journey. As I've said more than once, if I could do what the scripture says, was it the fourth chapter? I saw a door open in heaven. I remember as children we might be told, don't go to the front room now, don't look in the front room.

Sure enough I'd go. Mother thought it was a statement, I thought it was a challenge. I go and open, I see all these things, go to my sister, Annie, come and look in the front room.

Mother's got all kinds of things stacked up there. I didn't have to open the door wide, I'd have more sense, the door creaked, it would groan, my mother would hear the door. So I opened it about half an inch and looked in.

I saw everything that was there. If I could open that door, I wish to God I could. If I could open the door of eternity half an inch tonight for you and you could see through it to the indescribable glory, to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to the millions around the great white throne, to the multitude which, if we could see that, I don't think we'd ever backslide again.

But we don't see it. God who at sundry times in time past spake unto the fathers by the prophet, hath in these last days. Come on now, if this epistle with all that it says was written in the last days, if the things in Revelation 1 were shortly to come to pass 2,000 years ago, how near are we to them coming about now? Supposing God had a clock.

Here's a great clock. Just make it a clock like this. And this is 12 here, and 1, and 6, and 3, and 9. Here are the hands.

Here's the main hand, there's a little one underneath. I believe if you could see God's time clock, it's about 2 minutes to 12, before the judgments of God begin to fall. He hath in these last days, apart from those towering prophets that we call the major prophets and the minor prophets, he hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.

Unto us. Unto who? Unto us. Who's the us? That occurs time and time and time again in this marvelous epistle.

I'll tell you how many times. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There's a whole study on let us.

Here's to whom the epistle is addressed. Chapter 3, verse 1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. So this is to whom the epistle is written.

To the holy brethren. Skip over now to chapter 10 and verse 19. What does it say in that third chapter? Wherefore, holy brethren.

Now look in this verse. Hebrews 10 and verse 19. Having therefore brethren, this same bunch of holy brethren, having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Does that make you catch your breath? In the old dispensation, well, from the beginning of the world, God took out one nation out of the nations. Out of the one nation he took one tribe. Out of the one tribe he took one family.

Out of the one family he took one man. That's a process of elimination, isn't it? That one man only was allowed to go into the holy of holies, and he could only go once in a year for one nation. Did that bore you over when you prayed today to say, well, that high priest, only he could do after he'd gone through his ablutions and put on his robes and all the other distinguishing features of the high priest, which the scripture says were garments of glory and of beauty, that you can come out of the yard, as my dear friend there does often, or dear Dale sometimes, I see him on the tractor, he can get off the tractor and go straight into his room, he just washes his hands I guess, and he meets the Holy One, the holiest of all, without any special anointing, without any special garments, without any special place.

He doesn't have to tiptoe through the outer court and then into the holy place and then into the holy of holies with fear and trembling. As I said to the class, I think, was it last Friday? Maybe the Friday before. Do you realize when you pray that when you call, the God who listens to you is the God who listened to Jonah down in the depths of the Mediterranean Sea when he said, from the belly of hell I cried? Did it really strike your simple mind or profound mind today when you pray that the God who heard the prayer of Elijah heard your prayer? You think we're just talking to somebody up there in the clouds and if you're fortunate he kind of grabs your prayer as it goes past.

I've been in heathen countries where they put flags up outside their house, they blow in the wind and say, those are our prayers, all ascended to heaven. Is our praying like that? Are we praying not just to the super-intelligence of the universe but the King of kings and the Lord of lords? Do I realize when I pray that the one who prayed in Gethsemane was praying to the same person I pray to here in Tyler today? The awesomeness of our privilege has passed by us, I think. Having therefore, brethren, boldness.

The priest was terrified when he went in, unless he should not be accepted. He could have died on the spot. I don't think he came because, let me go back.

In the outer court there was what? Daylight. In the inner court, in the holy place, there was candlelight, seven-branch candlestick. In the holy of holies there was no light.

It was solid black. No windows. No lamps.

If God didn't come in his shekinah glory, that priest stumbled out again. But when he did come, you remember the cherubim were there and we're told that their wings almost met together like this. Here is

the glory of God, brighter than the noonday sun and he descends into that place and the glory flashes back from those golden wings.

Do you think he went out and talked about cattle? That's a lot of nonsense. Don't you think his soul was bathed in the majesty of God for the rest of the day? Do you think there were other enticements for him to do less than seek God? Certainly not. And because of Jesus Christ having made a way for us, we are allowed to go in as high priests ourselves.

That was the privilege of the high priest, where he is our super high priest. Again you see these poor people were in trouble because folk would say, hey Isaac, I just heard the news you started worshipping with those people at that back road there. Yeah, yeah.

Don't you feel embarrassed? Why? Well, you have no... Look, there's a great high priest just going in the temple with his garments of glory and beauty. You don't have a high priest. Well, that's where you're wrong, we do.

You have a high priest? Yeah, your high priest can die. Mine can never die. Your high priest has to shed blood every time he goes in.

My priest shed his own blood. My priest is both the sacrifice and the blood and the altar and he can never die. He doesn't have to be replaced.

He entered not with the blood of bulls and goats but with his own priceless precious blood. And because of that we have access. Look in that first chapter again there.

God who at so many times in divers manner spake unto the fathers by the prophets, I think these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things by whom also he made the worlds. Now step back a minute. We went too quickly there.

Look at the titles of Jesus. He's spoken to us by his son. He's the son of God.

Next line, he's the heir of all things. And the next line, by whom also he made the worlds. See what the epistle to the Hebrews really does.

It shows us the supremacy of Jesus as we put here. There are better things in Hebrews 11. Christ is better than angels better than Moses, better than Aaron.

We have a better hope, a better testament, a better promises. These are all outlined here you can read when you go home. And because of him we are partakers.

You notice that in chapter 3 and verse 1 we're partakers of the heavenly calling. In Hebrews 6, 4 we're partakers of the gift. And he goes on showing us how many times 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times in Hebrews because of Christ we're made partakers.

We're made partakers of the gospel. We're made partakers of the Holy Ghost. We're made partakers of heavenly things.

The epistle to the Hebrews shows us Jesus Christ is the center and the circumference, the first and the last, the beginning, the ending, the light and the life of the gospel. It's all in him. I said last week, let me repeat again that I read this epistle to the Hebrews, it kind of slays me.

If you ever feel you're getting somewhere and being somebody, read it. If you're honest it will knock you flat. What do these men and women in Hebrews 11 do? They subdue kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions.

Women, unnamed, receive their dead race to life again and so forth and so on. And you read this vast panorama of achievements from a woman receiving a dead race to life again to people subduing whole kingdoms to people stopping the mouths of lions and terrifying communities with the power of God. And here's the bottom line if you want to put it that way.

The amazing thing every time I read this is this, that nobody in Hebrews 11 ever had a Bible. Come on. How much they did without it, how little we do with it all.

If the world were to last another thousand years, God has nothing to add to the book of the revelation. It's all been said. God has no afterthoughts.

He doesn't say, oh, I should have said this to John or said that to the apostle Paul. He has no afterthoughts. The whole revelation of God's mind, God's will, God's heart is revealed to us here in the word of God.

Don't you think we're going to rather be inexcusable when we get to the judgment seat? I like the old hymn, Our firmer foundation, ye saints of the Lord. One line there says, What more can he say than to you he hath said? That should be written right across the epistle to the Hebrews or right across the New Testament. What more can he say than to you he hath said? He's revealed himself in his glory and his majesty and his holiness.

He showed us the perfect offering of Jesus because in verse 3 it says he had by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. What were they doing when the Holy Ghost fell on them in the upper room? Sitting. That's what it says.

They laid aside everything on one side and they were there in the stage of preparation. Jesus is here sitting at the right hand of the father and the majesty on high. You remember that when that young man Stephen the first martyr in the church was, when he was martyred declared he could see Jesus standing.

Well that's not scriptural, it is, it's in the same scripture. Now this may seem a little out of balance somebody said Jesus was so excited to see a young man that would take up his cross and following to the death that Jesus got up from his seat and welcomed him. Anyhow there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

It's all done, it's all completed. When he had by himself he doesn't need help from the Virgin Mary, he doesn't need help from the saints or apostles or prophets or martyrs or cherubim or seraphim. He had by himself satisfied the heart of God.

He was perfect. The lamb in the Old Testament. If you were making an offering you couldn't take a lamb that was limping or a lamb that had it's eye knocked out.

The priest would examine it if it wasn't as perfect as it could be, take it back. Oh I wonder how often we serve God like that. How often do you write? How often do you give God the leftovers at the end of the day? You know when you're busy and I read a little just before I go to bed and I fell asleep again.

God deserves the best. He not only deserves the best, he demands the best. Hebrews 2 verse 1 Therefore we Do you know that little word we is mentioned 51 times in this epistle? Do you know? All it is, it's to we, to us.

Remember the 12th chapter? Let us lay aside every weight. Let us run with patience. I got that listed for you here to save you some time.

I hope you'll use it. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 12 times let us is mentioned there. Let us.

Who can, with justification because of God's mercy we can say that we are those to whom this epistle is directed. Therefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, let us what? We ought to give the more earnest things to the things which we have heard less of any time. We should let them slip.

For if the words spoken by angels were steadfast. Can you write now without turning over your Bible? Can you think of a place in the Bible where an angel told a lie? But if the words spoken by angels is steadfast, how much more is the word of the Lord, the word of the Holy Ghost, steadfast and unmovable? If the words spoken by angels were steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape? Come on, don't push that on the drunkard, the sinner is sitting in the pew and you terrify him with judgment. How shall we escape? What are you going to offer as an excuse at the judgment bar for your lack of diligence, your lack of prayer, your lack of zeal, your lack of vision, your lack of love? How shall we escape? Paul may have a bleeding back, he may be half-starved, but you remember he says, I'm a debtor.

Every day he lived, he said, I'm a debtor to that lost world outside, I've got a message for lost men. It's a bankrupt world, I've got a message of blessings to that bankrupt world. How shall we escape if we neglect? Notice what it says? It doesn't say if we despise, it doesn't say if we reject, it doesn't say if we oppose.

How shall we escape if we neglect? Again, not if we oppose, not if we disregard it. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? To neglect is not to deny, to neglect is not to oppose. Do you know what it really means? It means just to postpone.

Do you remember the story there in, where is it, Matthew 22 and verse 5, where the king sent out and told people to come to the feast? They didn't come, so he sent them out again, he said, go tell them they must come, the meal is ready, we're prepared to start the wedding right now. What does it say? They made light of it. They didn't thumb their noses to the invitation, to the men that came, they didn't curse them, they made light of it.

That's exactly the same word here, that she was saying, we make light of the gospel. Oh, mercy. I said to David, I'm glad you obey God in that big church, 3,000 plus seats, I preached in it myself, it's an awesome church.

He said, Len, all I could do was sit there, I just sat on the floor and wept and groaned. All the people there that were being abused by the devil, the girls that were being molested even by their own parents. Oh, Dave, I love you, I said, I'm glad you obeyed God.

Most preachers would say, well, I'm feeling a little disturbed that somebody here has a need. If you have a need, would you raise your hand, I'll pray for you, because I've got a message. I mean, I've had it burning on my heart for 2 weeks.

I mean, God didn't bring me all this way, I came through a snowstorm. I didn't come all this way not to deliver my message. It's important.

He was born in heaven, I've got it from the heart of God to my heart here. No, he sat there with brokenness and compassion. The whole church broke up.

I think every church in the nation would break up if we got away from our stiff theology. Our beautiful outlines. Oh, we've got everything rotated, we know everything that's going to happen like this.

You come to our church, you won't find it anywhere else. We've got a monopoly on wisdom, you know, a monopoly on God, a monopoly on blessing. We're the new kids on the block theologically.

How shall we escape? Just before your neighbours go to perdition, do you think the last thing we'll do is point at you and say, if you'd been more faithful, I wouldn't have been lost? You say you love me, and I'm your brother-in-law, and I'm without God and without hope, and I'm going to everlasting burnings. Just because you postponed, you didn't abuse your privilege, you didn't deny the gospel. How shall we escape? Do you remember that precious old man that people think had a gravel-torn voice and a face like a sphinx stone? Jonathan Edwards, do you think he wept in vain? When he said, Oh God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs? People criticised him, ridiculed him.

His little daughter, I have a pamphlet that she wrote in 1742, I think it is, on my desk now. It's not the original, it's a copy. She says, My daddy, people think this of my daddy, but I live with my daddy.

He's the holiest man on earth. And my mummy, she goes in her closet in the morning and prays, and when she comes out, her face is radiant as Moses' face, because she's been talking with God so long. And my daddy will lay on his face and weep and groan and pray.

There's more to it than demonstration of eloquence and fine illustrations and personality. God knows we've got the best bunch of preachers around as far as loquaciousness is. They can talk, but the man down there can produce a marvellous, or the print shop here, produce a marvellous menu for you.

I remember 20 years ago, Martha and I went to a supper, a dinner, in a fine hotel in New York. It was Gwen's birthday and Dave said, Come and celebrate. Boy, I'd never seen a menu like that.

You felt you could eat the menu, you know. The pictures are so gorgeous of the steaks and everything else, but boy, I'm glad we got past that. You know what we do in church on a Sunday? We offer people the menu.

This is what God can do. We can't display it, we can't show you. Do you know why the church is bankrupt today? Because 90% of our preaching on Sunday is about a man who lived 2,000 years ago.

Of the other 10%, 9% is about a man who's coming before very long in the glory. 1% if that is touching the throne and bringing the glory of God down now, and that's what we want. That damned, doomed world out there is not N.O.T. waiting for a new definition of Christianity.

It's waiting for a new demonstration of Christianity. But brother, unless you and I steal into the holy place and get blinded with the chicane of glory, the majesty of God, the holiness of God, how shall we escape? Again, it's not to neglect or deny or oppose, but just to postpone. We're going to do it, you know, before very long.

Read this epistle carefully, and I'll tell you what, I think I put them down here somewhere. Oh, maybe I didn't. But I think eight times in this epistle there is this statement, today We're all living in yesterday or tomorrow but today if you will hear his voice I think three times it says, today if you will hear his voice harden not your heart, but it's today, today, today If I live another hundred years I wouldn't mind doing that if I get anointed from God but if I live another hundred years, today won't come back People say about faith, faith can do anything that's rubbish, it can't If we all fast this week and pray and believe God for the salvation of the devil, do you think you'll get saved? If I kneel down here and you men of God come, I say, I've only one request I'm in my 78th year now, I would like to be 28, and I've faith in your faith, will you all lay hands on me so when I get up I say, Martha, here I am dear, I'm 28 don't I look nice now? All the faith in the world won't turn the clock back for me There are some things that faith and prayer will never bring back Oh, you intend to be more zealous for God you intend to give less time to business and more to God and less of this, but you said that three, four, five years ago, you mean in other words, you're mocking God Now maybe the class will get less and less, I don't worry If some people go deeper and deeper and vision gets broader and broader, and passion gets deeper and deeper and love gets stronger and stronger, and faith gets more determined to lay hold of a precious promise that's all that matters One of Billy Graham's very close friends came to see me a while back and he said, well brother Len, you know, we consider Billy is the most prayed for man in history I said, well that's great He said, we estimate, since we have 12 different nations publishing Decision Magazine that 2 million people pray for Billy every day Wouldn't you like that? I said, no He said, are you serious? I said, sure You wouldn't like 2 or 3 million people to pray for him? 2 or 3 million? I said, no.

Why not? Well there are many versions and perversions but I don't remember one that says if 2 or 3 million are gathered together in my name One of the embarrassments at the judgment seat will be all the riches God had stored up for us that we never touched Maybe we were almost at the end of our fingers but we didn't move take that other step forward We got settled down because we settled for mediocrity How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard him God also bearing them, listen, this is the gospel Nothing less is the gospel This is God's record, not mine God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will, not what you tell him you want You tell him you want tongues or you want healing, forget it It's his right to dispose of the gifts as he will I preached in a big Pentecostal church just before I left England In the middle of the service which was very beautiful a lady, she was a lady, she went off in tongues and she was saying, oh boy, boy, boy, she did go a long way Well, I was to preach, I sat and waited, nothing happened They sang a hymn and after we finished another lady went off and said her piece Nothing happened I waited a bit longer and somebody else spoke in tongues

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