

Hunger and Thirst

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, repentance, and a deep experience of the Holy Spirit in order to experience a transformed prayer life and assurance.

Duration: 1:10:04

Scripture: Psalm 42:1, Isaiah 22:23, Matthew 5:6

Topics: "Hunger", "Righteousness", "Spiritual Hunger"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the profound need for spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness, drawing from Isaiah 22 and the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. He highlights the detrimental effects of worldly distractions, such as television, on the spiritual development of children and the importance of seeking a deep, personal relationship with God. Ravenhill argues that true hunger for God leads to a transformative experience, filling believers with His righteousness and peace. He calls for repentance and a genuine desire for holiness, asserting that only through this pursuit can one experience the fullness of God. Ultimately, he reminds us that our spiritual hunger should drive us to seek God above all else, as true satisfaction is found in Him alone.

Transcript

In Isaiah 22, there's a figurative speech that I'm always interested in. It talks about the nail fastened in a short place. And since some of the folk are doing some building, we know that the only way to get a nail fastened in a short place is to keep hitting it on the head.

Keep knocking it in. And I want to knock a nail in a bit further. Last week we did mention about TV, and it's... I was going to use a long word, I won't.

It's a, shall we say, disastrous effect on children, but I noticed a review that had been taken quite recently. And I was very, very shocked, I'll tell you this, to discover that the average American school child that leaves school at the age of 18 in the average home has watched television for 22,000 hours while it's only had 12,000 hours of education. So it's had 10,000 extra hours of TV to what it's had in education.

And then there's a booklet that's published, taken mostly by teachers, I guess, on English and so forth, and they run a test asking children between the ages of, I think it was six and 11, what new words they'd learned on TV. What new words have you learned recently on TV? And the surprising answer was they'd learned 15 new names of brands of beer. They'd learned 13 new names of cigarettes.

They mentioned one detergent commercial 110 times. Well, what does that mean? Well, it means just this, that it shows the impact, the constant pounding of another nail on the head that gets a thing into the mind of your child. And of course, again, as we've said before, the intellectuals so-called argue that you get 80% of what you see you remember and 80% of what we hear we forget.

I sometimes think I forget more than that, but there it is. And so going, it's up to you, as I say to you younger folk, you younger children, that don't, for goodness sake, help to pollute their minds and get things into their minds that it will take years and years and years to get out. I was going to refer to something else, but right now I'll leave that.

Blessed, again, the Sermon on the Mount. This week it's verse 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. It seems that very often we read this as an alternative, blessed are they who hunger or thirst.

But it isn't hunger or thirst, it's blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness. The more I read of the Sermon on the Mount, which again I say is the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest man that ever lived, I see it more majestic, I see it more tremendous than ever I've seen it before. Again, this is the second Sermon on the Mount.

The first Sermon on the Mount was the one that Moses had and he brought the outline of the sermon in the Ten Commandments. I notice when somebody asked Jerry Ford recently if he intended to keep the Eleventh Commandment, he said it will do well if we keep the first ten. Well I wish they did, but there you are.

But the Lord Jesus here, it's so simple, it's so simple and it's so beautiful we pass it. At least I have. Seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain.

Where had he been? It's always reasonable and logical to ask that. Well right before that he'd been in the streets. Where had he been before he was in the streets? He'd been in the river and he'd received his baptism.

Not a baptism like you and I have. I was in a church recently and every time I turned there was a great big dove. And it says the Spirit as a dove.

It doesn't say that. Not one of the four Gospels says that. It says the Spirit like a dove.

You cannot liken God to any creature. It was likened because there was a flashing of light and to them it resembled as a dove. Again, we've said that the dove has nine feathers, nine main feathers on each wing.

Nine gifts of the Spirit, nine fruits of the Spirit. They ought to balance. You can't get round on one wing, not even in an energy crisis.

You've got to use both wings. And we're overboard in some areas on one wing. It must be gift, gift, gift, gift, gift.

But in writing to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 12, Paul says he gave this gift and to another this and to another and to another. One gift around. That doesn't mean no folk can't have two gifts.

But I'm telling you what this gift just says. He never said that about the fruits of the Spirit. It doesn't say he gave to one love and another joy and another peace and another long suffering.

You could get to heaven without any gifts of the Spirit. I'm convinced of that. That is in the sense that we stressed it.

I don't say you have to, you could do. I believe there have been millions of people on the streets of glory that partly because they were not taught about it through enough and little and short of responsibility to Jesus, that you can't get there without the fruits of the Spirit. I've never met a person yet who had all the gifts of the Spirit, but every believer ought to have all the fruits of the Spirit.

You see, even when you've done, and you can talk as much as you like about two natures, which I don't agree with, except with a spiritual nature and a human nature. But don't tell me that the Carmel nature lives till the end of time. If you do, then Calvary is no more effective than the Hamadan nature.

You're telling me that God is omnipotent, and you say sin must reign in the body. You're telling me that the blood is not totally powerful. You're telling me that whatever came in by the first transgression of Adam, the last Adam, not the second, but the last Adam, can't put out.

And I'm quite sure that the last Adam can put out. Whatever was brought in by the first Adam. The fact is that all the fruits of the Spirit are there for us.

And every fruit of the Spirit could be manifested again in every life. The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, temptance, praise, okay, there they are. And I believe again that God desires that every one of those fruits should be in every one of our lives.

So we're saying this again, Jesus had been there in the water, and the Spirit as a dove. God never promised to baptize like a dove. The symbol to us, the Church, was again, I say sometimes about the cross, the cross is pagan.

The cross is not Christian, it's Roman, it's cruel. The symbol of the Church, though we wear it round our necks, and put it over our graves, and so forth, but the symbol of the Church is not a cross, the symbol of the Church is a tongue of fire. On the birthday of the tongue, on the birthday of the Church, the tongue, the Spirit as a tongue of fire settled on each of them.

That reminds me, I'm getting old, but I remember we had a night of prayer down outside of London one night, and there was a dear old lady there, about 82 or 83 years of age, with snow white hair. And she looked like somebody that I couldn't quite figure out. Then when she told me, I recognized she was a very duplicate of John Wesley.

She traced her ancestors back to Wesley. Now, we were praying in that meeting, and I'll confess, we were desperate men, we were in a desperate situation. And when we prayed, we used to take our coats off, you know, and we used to fight when we were praying, hit the tables, and really try to God, shed our tears, who cared anyhow.

Somebody once said to one of the men, you know, God isn't deaf, don't he just shout, lie down, he's not deaf. And he said, no, he's not nervous either. If you can clap your hands and shout and sing, why can't you shout and weep and groan and do anything else you like, if you're traveling in spirit.

But the lady said this, do you remember a certain thing happening about half past one this morning? And I said, yes, that's in a wheelchair. And she said, do you know what happened? A tongue of fire came at the beginning of... And she said, do you know what happened? A tongue of fire came at the beginning of that

communion rail where you were kneeling, and it went from head to head to head to head like that, and all the sudden men were kneeling there, then it went away. I didn't see that, I felt something, but I certainly didn't feel it.

But the spirit came on the believers in that upper room, as a tongue of fire. The least emphasized teaching on the Holy Spirit today is on purity. It's all power, it's all miracles.

But when it came to describing what happened there in the upper room, Peter, reporting in the house of Cornelius, said in Acts 15, 8 and 9, and God, who knows the heart, nobody else knows it but God. I don't know my precious brother's heart, he doesn't know mine. My wife doesn't know it.

Nobody knows it, you don't know it. Only God knows the heart. But God, who knows the heart, there then, that is in the upper room, there then witnessed, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, says Peter, and put no difference between us and them.

And immediately we say, well there you are, they got the gift of tongues, because he said no difference between us and them. That's not where he finished. Purifying their hearts by faith.

The Peter who went in the upper room was one Peter, the man that came out was a different Peter. The man before the upper room was the man who pointed, when a girl pointed a finger, ran away. Do you know what he did after he'd been in the upper room? He pointed his finger at all the great preachers and archbishops and said, you crucify the Lord of glory.

Why? Because God purified his heart. And God had taken away the weakness, God had taken away the fear of man, God had taken away his own ambition and desires. There's a lovely hymn written by, was it Theo Mommerd that wrote the hymn, All the bitter shame and sorrow that a time could ever be, when I said all of self and none of thee.

And in the next stanza he says, less of self and more of thee. And in the final stanza he says, none of self and all of thee. Now I don't know where you are in that hymn, you do, I don't.

But until we get to that place, all of self and none of thee. We're not where he wants us to be. Now I say Jesus has come with the anointing upon him, and immediately after he was anointed, he was led of the spirit, not led of the devil.

And this again hit me forcibly last week, I'd never thought of it, you could have thought of it twenty years ago, I'm too slow. But it was after David was anointed to be king over Israel, that Saul persecuted him. I don't know how much Jesus was tempted before that anointing, but I know after he was tempted, he was shut up for forty days there.

And tempted in all points from A to Z. Tempted physically, tempted sexually, tempted to take a shortcut, tempted in every way, why? Because Satan knew something. Of what Jesus Christ was going to accomplish. So Jesus has been there in the water, the anointing is upon him.

He went into the street, and he began where John Baptist began to preach. He began to preach where Peter began on the day of Pentecost. There's not much of it done anymore.

Repent. As in a meeting not too long ago, where everybody wanted a baptism come forth. No questions were asked.

You want the baptism lined up. There must have been two hundred people lined up. They were asked to raise their hands, and people held their hands up, and they were to say, blah, blah, blah, blah, which to me is just blasphemy, in any case.

And on top of that, they were never asked if they'd repented of sin. If they were in a condition to receive the Holy Ghost. I can't lay conditions down.

God has laid them down. And one condition is that we repent of all known sin. And not only repent of the sin we've committed, but not want to sin anymore.

That's a great thing. I can remember once when we were teenagers, somebody dropped a bomb on us. We were used to preaching.

We knew all the answers, you know, like kids do. You sit in the pew, and then somebody said, look, it's not a case of whether you say you're saved, and you've had your sins forgiven. If you thought you could get away with sin today, would you do it? Pretty rough one, isn't it? Supposing you're away from home, from your husband, from your wife, or where anybody knows you, and a certain be taking sin you out, you could do it and get away, would you do it? The bishop who finally got King Edward thrown off his throne was Bishop Blunt of Bradford, England.

And he was in a slum area one day, asking children questions about the Bible, and he mentioned the word saint, and then he said, what is a saint? What is a saint? The boys were about 12 or 13 years of age, and finally the ragged boy at the back put his hand up, he was claiming redhead, and he said, well, redhead, what do you say? And he said in his dialect, a saint is a bloke that's good when there's nobody looking. That's a pretty good definition. You know, you can do a lot of things because you get applause for it.

But in your inmost heart, shrine of your heart, am I 100% loyal to him when there's nobody there? You can manifest a gift just because it puts a halo on you. People clap and shout, great! But do you do as much clapping and shouting in the secret place? You see, that's where I'm known. I don't think God rates me according to my preaching.

If he does, I'm in bad shape. I don't think he rates me according to what people think about my writing. God rates me according to my secret devotion with him, my love Christ with him.

The time I feel like saying, with the woman who got his feet, or Charles Wesley says it, beautiful in his hem, oh, let me kiss thy bleeding feet and bathe and wash them with my tears. When I pour out my love to him, oh, you can do it. A while ago, a famous Englishman was preaching in Boston and the news reporter said he prayed a magnificent prayer.

It was possibly the greatest prayer ever offered to a Boston congregation. Isn't that something? He thought it was tailor-made not to go up, but go sideways. How impressive it would be to these people.

You pray in this dimension all the time. But again, as I've said previously, there's one sure thing about the coming of the Holy Ghost. If you didn't get your prayer life revolutionized, you better go and pray and get alone with God and find out why.

But I believe one of the most dramatic things, number one is, that he empties me of sinful self. I don't want self anymore. And the second thing is, I develop a prayer life.

I have never met a man who got a deep experience of the vacuum of the Spirit that didn't find his prayer life absolutely transformed. Oh right, Jesus had been there, the anointing had been upon him, from there he came and cried repentance. John said the same thing before him, Peter said the same thing after him.

All revival begins there. There is no revival, there never has been revival without repentance. John Wesley preached more on repentance amongst believers than he did on any other subject that he had.

He preached more on assurance to believers. Blessed assurance. If somebody asked you if you had assurance, how would you try to explain it? But he said, this is the greatest need amongst sinners, to present the fact they can have an assurance of sin for them.

After all, that was the thing that moved him. Remember when he was coming over the Atlantic with Peter Baller and the other Moravians and a storm blew up and it looked as though the ship would go down. They wouldn't let a ship like that go up a river these days.

The board of trade would be against it. It was a little boat. One of those same boats, George Whitfield, crossed the Atlantic I think 20 times.

I beat him on that. That's the only thing I beat him on. He crossed it about 25.

But he said, he crossed the boat and I got the best part of the ship. And he said, I was only wet through about three times. It was the best part of the ship.

No bugs. You just wrapped yourself in a cowhide. And look, oh these days, good night, what creature comforts we have.

I wake up some mornings and I say, Martha dear, I feel between us and Sammy's house there's a patch of frost there. And I remember John Wesley was preaching in Georgia and he wasn't even saved yet, bless him. I wish he hadn't lived like he lived.

He embarrasses me. He was more spiritual when he wasn't spiritual than I am when I am spiritual. I mean, he rose at four o'clock every morning to pray before he was saved.

He fasted twice a week before he was saved. He said he was sleeping in Georgia and he'd come to the poor Indians and he said, I woke up in the frost and couldn't move my head and he said, gradually, I'd pull an arm and he'd slept in the mud, in the wet and he got frozen to the ground. He wore his hair down to his shoulders, he'd been fashionable today amongst the men and he said, I got one arm free and then I pulled my hair painfully out of the mud and got it out and then I managed to pull my other arm free and I released one leg and then the other and he said, I was coated white with frost and I brushed it off and raised my arms and sang, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Most of us would have headed for Florida. We'd have needed six months to recover from it. I mean, you know, you could have written a book on that, My Sufferings for Jesus in the forest away there and he took it all in stride.

Why? Well, you see, he was in quest for the very thing we're talking about. He was really hungry and thirsting after righteousness and when that ship was nearly going over and Peter Bowler was as calm in the storm as anywhere else, he said, I don't understand it. Well, what makes it so calm? I've got assurance.

Assurance? Well, I stopped powdering my wig, he said. I don't powder my wig. I don't buy expensive wigs either and he said, I fast two days a week and I do get up early in the morning to pray but I have no assurance.

Then you remember he says, about a quarter to nine on the twenty-fourth of May, seventeen hundred and thirty-eight, I went somewhat unwillingly to Aldersgate Street and about a quarter to nine he had a flush. Was it was it Piet in Maximus? The Catholic theologian in Belgium said all he had was a fever. Well, I wish the Lord would send a plague of fever then to America.

That's what we need if it will change your heart like that but it wasn't a fever. They tried to explain but he said, about a quarter to nine and you know what I believe, I believe the world has been warmer ever since. Yes, a man of impeccable morality, a man of monumental theology, he's the greatest scholar around maybe in his day but he said as they were reading Luther's commentary, they hadn't even got into the commentary, they were reading the introduction.

He said, suddenly I realized justification by faith and I got assurance. They beat him with sticks and they threw bottles at him and they put threats on his life but it never shifted him. He got assurance.

He was steadfast and unmovable and always abounded. And often when I think about him, blessed assurance, I think, boy, Wesley would have enjoyed that. He got it, you know, there was no shifting him around.

He didn't let his feelings fill him, he didn't let other people fill him. I got it, I know in whom I have belief, I've got assurance, I've passed from death unto life. Well, then Jesus says the gateway to that is repentance.

Well, then he'd been in the water, out of the water, he walked the streets out of the water. He sat down on the mountain. There's nothing in it, is there? I think it's majestic, I think it's fabulous.

Why should he sit on the mountain? He had no right to sit on the mountain. Why? The rabbis sat. But the rabbis only sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them some of sat in a place, some of sat in a place, some of sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of in a place, some of sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of sat in a place, some of place, some of them in a some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a some of them sat in a place, some of some of some of them sat in a place, them sat in a place, some of in a place, some of sat in a place, some of some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of in a place, some of in a some of them sat in a place, some of them sat in a place, some of them some of some of some of them sat in a place, them sat in a place, some of in a place, some of sat in a place, some of some of them sat Jesus taught them.

Blessed. Blessedness is an abiding disposition given by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. As I said last week, and say again simply this, that it's like having a thermometer outside of your window and having a,

what do you call the thing inside? Thermostat.

The thermometer is kicked up and down with the weather. My thermometer one morning, one day it's thirty-five. These days, I think yesterday, oh it was cold yesterday, was it the day before, and it's about seventy.

Poor thing goes up and down, up and down like a yo-yo. But if I set my thermostat there, it doesn't go up and down. It fights.

It says you're not changing me, I'll change you. Now do circumstances change me or do I change them? Happiness depends on outside conditions. Blessedness does not depend on a condition, it depends on a person.

And the person has said I'll never leave the office safely. I, I, I try this, dear brother, I think deals with talk the other side of the iron curtain. I try to go behind the iron curtain every day of my life.

I sincerely do. I try to visualize, I've been reading Gulag Archipelago, I got the second edition of that the other day with Gulag Archipelago took us to their prisons and now this, this fellow takes us inside. Why good night, we don't even know what we're talking about in Christianity.

Theories, pretty theories. You can go to banquets till you burst and maybe get no vision. Excitement, yes.

Miracles, so what? You'll only see what you've seen 10 times over. Why don't we start boring holes down in the world of God? I think so often when people start, you know, they go over the lawn with a, with a lawnmower and then you're going over an oil well. There's a mountain in Australia and I remember it there because it's a very barren mountain.

The people that had it were Wilsons. My dear wife used to be a Wilson and I improved the name, but she used to be a Wilson. The Wilsons owned all that estate and the grass was so bad that the, the sheep couldn't live on it and finally they declared they were going to sell out and they sold out.

Somebody brought a geologist along. They checked it and found not too far under that ground, gold, gold, gold. Those people had been nibbling a few sheep there and raising a few eggs and walking around and they were treading on a king's ransom.

Do you ever wonder what kind of shock you'll get when you get to the judgment seat of Christ? So don't, haven't you grown up like that yet? Hmm? Hmm? When, when God solves the book and says, hey look, there's the same book Wesley had. There's the same book Finney had. There's the same book.

You read little bits of this and little bits of that and all the revelation is yours as much as anybody else living. I absolutely refuse to believe that God has closed down his production line. That the best man he ever produced in America was undoubtedly as an evangelist, I suppose, Charles G. Finney, the brilliant lawyer.

He had a better statistic for abiding fruit than any man that lived in this country. Oh, I don't know, Tennant maybe had as much. But anyhow, did God go off production? It's all right saying these are the most exciting days that ever lived but that the nations are closing up.

How are you going to get into Vietnam right now? How are you going to get into Laos? How are you going to get into Cambodia? Some people said more tear over a hay, a racehorse that died a few months ago.

Oh, beautiful racehorse worth three million dollars, broken leg. They haven't shed a tear over damned humanity for years.

Where do we live? You live in meetings. People say, oh that man's a hungry. You know it goes to meetings every night.

Well in my judgment means you don't know much about God. That's rough but I'm telling you the truth. I don't have to smooth you down.

Any other preacher will do that. I rough you up a bit mate. If you're hungering for knowledge, go to meetings every night.

If you're hungering for God, get alone with him. What did you do when you were courting? Oh, I'm going to so-and-so, that girl goes to that meeting, I'm going. But there came a time when there was more than going to the meeting, you wanted to see her by yourself.

Oh you're thrilled when she stood up and sang a solo maybe. But one day you got to know and got her in your arms, told her she's the loveliest creature in the world. Very different situation.

Well by the same token, I have to get alone with God and not only that, God has to get alone with me. I have to take time to be holy. Prayer isn't that I unload on God, prayer is that he unloads on me too.

How many burdens do you think God has on the shelf right now he can't give to anybody? Ever think of it that way? My yoke is easy, my burden is light. Who does God cast his burdens on? Cast them on some people, because he says his yoke is easy, his burden is light. And if I'm going to come into this kingdom, it isn't just to make me pretty, it isn't to make me acceptable, it's for heaven's sake it isn't to make me successful and get me on a lot of platforms.

Somebody said the dearest friend is one who knows the worst about you and loves you just the same. The dearest friend is the one that comes and searches you out when they're crushed under trouble and problems and they say look I've nobody else. I have had preachers cross England to come to my house and I preach in some of England's greatest churches, some of the world's greatest churches, but the greatest thrill I've had is when a man comes to me and said Raven I don't know no man I can trust with this situation, it's between my wife and myself or it's this situation and that, that to me is honor.

He trusts me as a man of God. He has a burden that God said you go and Raven will share it with you or you go and Herb will share it with somebody else. You see I've drifted a little off here as usual but listen to remember the word of the of Isaiah when he says the day is coming when a man shall be as a hiding place, a man shall be as a hiding place in a covert in a time of storm.

We're moving up into that area. Men are going to be searched out, why? Not because they knew a lot about theology or great miracle workers, not that because they know God. Now this is why again Jesus is teaching this in my in my judgment, blessedness.

If I can't carry my burdens do you think God's going to put his burdens on me? If I shrink over little things that shouldn't upset me at all do you think that God's going to say Raven I've got something breaking my heart do you want to share it? If I pattern my life this way I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that, do you think God's going to break in? He may, he doesn't have to. But you see if I'm coming into the kingdom of God immediately I swear my allegiance to him, he is my lord, he is my king, he is my master, I have no

rights to myself. All right where do we start? Blessed are the poor, well poverty, all right we get past blessed are the poor in spirit we got past that.

Blessed are they that mourn, why did we mourn? Because we discovered our poverty. What was the next thing? Blessed are the meek, why are we so meek? Because we realize we've got nothing of our own. We've mourned over our weakness, we've mourned over our poverty, so it must all be of God.

Oh Paul fills me to death. Pop Boone's on the Shear show tonight, I hope you know that. He was in the full gospel business men's banquet the other night as an emcee and I unless I'm misread it he's, I can't go with junk like that that's on one side of the fence one night and one night the other and I've no apologies for saying that.

But I'll tell you what Paul thrills me when he said I have nothing and I possess all things. He had no prestige, he had no name, his name was cast out of an evil thing. He stood taller than any living man, he spent more times in prison, homeless, penniless, wifeless, childless, positionless, possessionless man and yet God says listen I'll put all Asia Minor on your back.

You can carry that great rotten corrupt city of Ephesus where it was a big banking system or you can go down to Corinth the lousiest place in the whole world. God could share things with that man why? Well for one thing again he wasn't tied up with material comfort. He wasn't tied up with creature comforts.

They half starved him to death and when they didn't starve him he fasted just to show them he couldn't do it either way anyhow. He won't let the body get dominion over him. I keep my body under and he didn't mean under the table, he didn't mean under the bedclothes when he ought to be praying either.

Keep, he got everything under control and the greatest possession in the world is self-possession in God. Not I'm what you own. Again I remind you in the Beatitudes Jesus never blessed the material thing did he? We say blessed are the haves, Jesus said nothing of the kind.

Blessed are the powerful, blessed are the meat Jesus says. It's just totally reverse logic to everything that men dream after who are so-called educated men and philosophers and scientists and all the rest. It's one kingdom's going that way, the other's going that way.

Now the church and the world go that way and there's not much effect. All right we discovered our poverty, blessed are the poor in spirit and then we mourn because of our poverty. Then we discover that God was just getting us to a place of total meanness and after you've got through those negatives you get into something a bit more positive.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst. Isn't it amazing that kings and commoners have hunger? Saints and sinners have hunger. There isn't a place in the world where men don't hunger.

Animals have hunger, plants have hunger, that's why you feed them with fertilizers and whatnot. Hunger it's a very simple thing. We talk about these days of course when everything's sex, sex, sex.

The bible didn't say the number of men was six, six, six. I think it was sex, sex, sex these days. But the greatest hunger and thirst the bible says.

I'm blessed are they who hunger and thirst. Not hunger or thirst. Hunger is bad.

But you get an empty stomach aggravated by a burning throat, you're in trouble. Your values are different. There's a story about a man that used to go seeking goodly pearls like the man in the new testament.

Somebody told him one day at the other side of the Sahara there was a man that had the most gorgeous pearl that had ever been seen. He set out after it. He got caught in a storm.

He got caught in a second storm. He missed the oasis and his water was running out. And his dates ran out and his rice ran out.

And finally his camel died under him. Finally typical of the pictures you see, he was on his hands and knees until they were raw with the sand. And his eyes, he had no glasses.

And I have often wondered how they caught the deserts like that. And the sand's blowing up in his eyes and he's sore and his hands are bleeding and his rice has gone, his water's gone, his dates have gone. And in front of him he saw a bag and he panted and he reached for it.

He tore it open frantically. It was full of those things he'd always given his life for. Full of pearls.

He picked it up and dashed them to the ground with a curse. What's good of pearls if you're hungry and you're thirsty? But you see in a situation like that you've got more than an appetite. You know I think maybe the simplest illustration is the best.

And you remember the simple illustration of Prodigal. What did he do when he was hungry? He went to the hogs and ate some of their junk. What did he do when he was starving? When he was hungry he went to the hogs.

When he was starving he went home to his father. Do you think God would be kind enough to starve us as a nation? After all we sold our wheat to Russia and we're told it wouldn't make much difference now. We're told maybe there'll be five cents on the loaf before too long by next year because things aren't quite working out.

Well they never do work out. If we hadn't sold wheat to Russia communism would have been bankrupt this year but we've taken them off the hook for the third time. Are we going to let two or three million people perish? Why not? They killed about 14, 15 million and there'll be less people perished if there's an overthrow of communism anyhow.

But again hunger and thirst. Do I hunger after God or do I just have an appetite? It's amazing how it leads your hunger isn't it? When we went to live down in Baton Rouge I didn't know too much about catfish. In England they always throw it back in the sea.

Down there everybody wants catfish. They'd like to take you out to dinner. Ever had catfish? Good night, that's all you hear about.

Catfish, catfish, catfish. I'd rather have fish and chips. I'd rather have Colonel Sanders but anyhow today hungry men have satisfied their hunger.

How? I remember a rich man on board the Queen Elizabeth one day and they brought him a menu which was literally this size and oh no, what would you like? Let me think, let me think, let me think. Finally he came up with something. He said now bring this, this, this, this, this, this, this, yes sir I'll mix it.

No don't mix them, I'll mix my own sauce. We'd finished dinner by the time they served him up with his gourmet lunch, his fabulous exotic dinner. He couldn't eat anything.

There were about 50 things on the menu but he couldn't eat one of them. You know maybe this afternoon somebody at the end of those jungles I went through down in Papua there where there's still some cannibalism, maybe they're eating somebody. Somebody else is satisfied with a loaf of bread.

Somebody else wants caviar. You can get a very delicate appetite. The things you used to love, oh no of course that was when we didn't have much money but now this is where we live.

I mean you know like so what? You're satisfying hunger. Whether you satisfy it with a raw bone or you satisfy it with a piece of bread or you satisfy it with caviar or you satisfy it with you're fighting that thing inside. But you see hunger, true hunger, real hunger has pain.

We've never been hungry till we have pain. Do you, do you remember what the psalmist says? He says as the heart pants after, why does it pant? Because it's pursued by an enemy. You know why sometimes we don't pant after God? Because the devil hasn't bothered to kick us around too much that day, that's why.

And we can rest in our own peace and rest in our own comfort and rest in our own ease. But brother once the devil gives you a whipping or he comes after you in situations, they do one of two things, either drive us to despair or they drive us to prayer. Which? Prayer or despair.

I've tried to carry the burden of this little fellowship and I love it. If you find me next week I'll still, I'll, I'll still love you the same. But I think each day when these little fellows pray goes out and occasionally little kiddies go out, well mother uh you're turning them out on the world, okay.

You turn them out with one of two things, either fear or prayer. You're either afraid that they're going out. They passed a law in England recently.

It's on the statute book in England and it's been read into the congressional record here that a child, if it does not want to carry out the garbage, does not have to do what mother and daddy say in the house. In England? That if a child doesn't want to listen to prayer and other things in the home it doesn't have to do it. In England? Well we gave the world the bible.

We gave the world more missionary societies originally than any other country I guess and look where we've gone to. Your children go out every day to a world that's a jungle, to schools. I've got a list of how many, was it over a hundred people were murdered in their schools in America last year? Was it 140,000 people were injured? I got pictures of a school teacher that stopped some boy's breaking window and they took out the cigarette lighter or something they had and doused him with, with, with fuel and set him on fire.

Brother we're, we're living in a junk lake. Do you remember what Job said? He got up early in the morning and he prayed for his children before they moved lest they should run into a situation. I tell you it's becoming an awful thing to have a family.

People say you've got to be on your toes. I wouldn't bother about that as long as you stay on your knees. That's what matters.

I wish you'd put the bible back in school so do I but I wish you'd get it back in the home. I wish we'd say well I don't care if the kids go fall asleep but we're going to read the word before they go. Thy word of thy head in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

It's a tremendous day we're living in but you see my action and and reaction will work on my family. My daddy wasn't a great guy in the sense of being successful in business or uh a great thinker but I'll tell you what he was a man of God. One day he got a burden for a lost world.

You know I used to wonder every time my daddy prayed in family prayers he wept. I never heard my father get through family prayers without weeping and then one night I heard him testify and he testified to that bunch of people and he said you know a few years ago as I saw the world lost he said I said Lord would you make me a Jeremiah would you give me tears for lost men. I knew why he wept.

He used to kneel down and pray with us before we went to school before we went to business. As I've told you he took me to a half night of prayer when I was 14. I think it's the greatest favor he ever did me.

I learned something of how men pray. Didn't need to. Friday night they could have gone to bed and said well tomorrow Saturday we can stay in bed a few hours longer.

Instead of that they said we don't have to work tomorrow so let's go pray. So off we went at night 10 o'clock at night prayed till two or three in the morning just a small bunch of fellows. It opened a new world to me.

What I'd just read in books became real. When I was 17 somebody gave me a book about a man who hungered and thirsted after God. He died in this country at the ripe old age of 29 David Brainerd.

He used to lay in the snow too. All he had for a coat was a was a skin that he'd had beaten off a cow and made it soft and he says I tied it with a rope around my neck and around my waist and the wind ate at my face and I drove through the snow and I hadn't really we we think it's wonderful if we drive a hot automobile through five inches of snow. These days we're heroes.

But he he rode he rode horses. He rode through the Indian camp. Why? He said I does it matter where I live or how I live so long as they find the bread of life.

You know right at the beginning man what did man do at the beginning? He ate of the tree. What did he do at the end of Revelation? He eats of another tree. And between the paradise where man fell and the paradise restored there there's another garden it says the place where they crucified him there was a garden.

And all that was lost in the first garden is recovered by that middle garden so I can get to the end garden. It was a man who lost all the blessings. It was a man Christ Jesus who restored all the blessings.

And it's the man Christ Jesus at the right hand up there in glory that I'm going to see in all his wonder and all his majesty. But hunger and thirst after God. You remember one of the blessings of that country finally? They shall hunger no more nor thirst anymore.

We have an alarm. Would to God I was more sensitive to it. That more people may die in North Africa in the next few months than have died in any given period of time.

Why? Because there's no rain. The most devastating famine in history that we know of. It's estimated 10 million will die of hunger.

And sometimes we're so finicky about what we eat aren't we? But then transfer this again quickly into blessed they who hunger and thirst. But wait until the qualification. Blessed they who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

For they shall be filled. Righteousness. I think it was Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said you know if you reduce this to the final analysis it's blessed they who hunger and thirst after the holiness of God.

You see through my sins being forgiven I'm justified in his presence. But I need more than justification I need sanctification. Justification is something he does for me.

Sanctification is something he does in me. He purified their hearts by faith. Then the God the vessel that God purifies he occupies.

God isn't satisfied with negatives. You remember that they cast out some demons out of a house. Wait a minute if you don't occupy that spirit seven demons rushed into that area that had been cleansed.

And they were worse off than when they began. So the heart that God cleanses he fills. The heart that he fills he uses.

So he says blessed are they who hunger and thirst after that. Really what it means is that same relationship with God that Adam had before he transgressed. You get the same thing again in that lovely hymn written by Isaac Watts.

In him in Christ the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their fathers last. What's the order of this? Well you go further down into the into this same study and it says what? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. We dream of the kingdom of God as a final estate a millennial estate some say and so forth.

But wait a minute Jesus says the kingdom of God is within you. The apostle says he's brought us out of the kingdom of darkness. And in that kingdom of darkness we did evil things because men love darkness rather than that.

But he's brought us into the kingdom of light. And he says if we walk in the light as he is in the light it's a related light. As he which hath called you is holy so you be ye holy.

Look in the second epistle pardon me second chapter first epistle of Peter what does it say? It says as he was so are we in this world. Well no no that no that's wrong it must be as he was so we'll be in heaven. No that's not what it says.

It says we should follow in his steps and it gives you the steps. He did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth when he was revived. And there it goes right down the list.

You see people say well there's going to be righteousness one day Jesus is going to reign and Isaiah says his scepter is a scepter of righteousness and he's going to be the greatest dictator the world has ever seen. That's all right to a degree. But what virtue is there in being righteous if there's compulsory righteousness? They've got to be righteous then and when the when the restriction is taken off Satan's going to be loosed again to show what a devil he is anyhow and men will do the same thing.

They're going to be right just because it's a kind of act of parliament that God is going to enforce upon all mankind. They must be righteous. But what about when he comes in this corrupt world in which we live and he takes the corruption out of us and he puts this purity within us.

Men hunger your body hungers. What do you do? You satisfy it with food. Your mind hungers.

What do you do? You satisfy it with knowledge. Your emotions hunger. What do you do? Well someone loves you.

Children find a satisfaction for their emotional life in the love that they find in their parents. You find satisfaction for your intellectual hunger by by gaining more knowledge. Men satisfy their craving for for wealth by by getting more wealth.

There are areas in which I have I have uh life within my life. There's a God-shaped blank. That's the smartest thing I think that H.G. Wells ever said.

You know in his own outline of history of crooks and soft anything you like. He says there's a God-shaped blank in every man that unless God fills it there is no possibility of it being filled or any satisfaction coming. There's a God-shaped blank in it.

God can fill it no one else can. God can enlarge it no one else can except as we walk in the light as he is in the light. Now first of all I have to desire that.

First of all I have to desire and get it in its right place. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the other things are taken care of. Not in the way I want them taking care of.

Not at the time maybe but God has it all in line. All right then uh as I said last week the the fruits of the spirit are like garments you can put on for every day. The different situation you have draw that garment.

I need this garment of patience. I need this garment today of meekness. I need this garment today of power more than I need them in other days.

Let's be let's have on as the to change the figure the whole armor of God. There's no part of me that needs to be exposed to Satan that I can't fight against. The helmet of salvation the shield of faith your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and so on and so forth.

Now I said last week we can form habits good ones and bad ones. As someone said if you saw a thought you reap an act. If you saw an act you reap a habit.

If you saw a habit you reap a character. If you saw a character you reap a destiny. You keep doing a habit over and over and it'll get stronger and stronger on you.

All right. It's equally true in the spiritual life. You form habits in your spiritual life you'll help to strengthen yourself in the things of God.

It's not all of God. If it is why do we put on the whole armor? Why do we lay aside every why do we put off the old man? Why do we put on? It tells us to do it. Again I say when I and I don't know how to explain this except I think a lot of this hullabaloo that we've sung about all that will be glory for me is a lot of nonsense in one sense.

There's going to be a lot of embarrassment and shame at the judgment seat. After all it says in revelation there are no more tears. It also says in the revelation God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Why does he wipe away the tears? Well I think at the judgment seat. I don't have any trouble. I don't think I do anyhow with humility.

Heaven knows I've, I find if I stand up in the dust it's too high for me. People say well you need a little bit of sin to keep you humble. Well then have a lot and be real humble.

That's all there is to it. But I don't need sin to keep me humble. All I do is read the life of a Wesley or a Luther or some of these outstanding men of God and I wonder if I started even playing the game yet.

I feel I haven't even carried the ball yet. And one day God's going to put the book to me and say well here this is all the provision I made for you. Do I hunger and thirst after God? I'm reading in Ruth earlier today I looked it up there where in the second chapter I think verse 19 the mother-in-law says a beautiful beautiful thing.

I think we ought to have it up in the house maybe you know on the mirror somewhere where you see it every day. Where has thou gleaned today? Where do you spend most of your time? You say in the office. Well that's all right but I mean outside of that where do you do? Where do you eat? Where do you feast? Who are your people? What levels do you think on? What levels do you eat on? Somebody said the other day Mr. Ford says he reads the sports page the first.

I kind of figured that too the way politics are going but he says as soon as he opens the newspaper he has to read the sports page right through first. Well that's where his interest is then. If he said oh at the end of the day somebody a preacher once asked me Dr. Tolson do you think preachers should read the newspaper? He said yes every preacher should read it standing up.

You know what he meant? Well as soon as you're tired you won't read it too long standing up. As soon as you're you're tired standing throw the thing away that's the time to get over it. It's a good thought in that sense.

All right I want to feed myself. I want to feed myself on the things of God. I don't want to sing lovely emotional hymns my Jesus I love thee.

I don't want to sing well the whole realm of nature mine. I don't want to take Charles Wesley's you know like David took Saul's arm it wouldn't fit him. I don't want to start singing Charles Wesley's Jesus thou oh Christ art all I want when I gave him the hangover of yesterday.

I gave him the remainder because you see I had an appointment with somebody and I had something else and something else at the end of the day I said oh Lord you've been so good today good night. Try it on your wife or your girlfriend see how it works. I hear people say I can worship the Lord at the kitchen.

Well the kitchen sings so could I. Sometimes I go up behind Martha and say hi sweetie I give her a sing I say I'll be in my office if you know you didn't know whether I'm in or out. I give her a kiss and I'm good but if that's all I did she thinks something else. We sit and talk we exchange views we do this that and the other.

Well how much more in a in a holier nobler sense. How much time does God get alone with you and do you get alone with God. And I want an appetite to get stronger for the things of God.

And you wrap it up in two things. What did Jesus say one day when they said well Lord why didn't you do that. He says boys I want to tell you something you haven't cottoned on yet.

I've meat to eat that you know not of. Isn't that something. Or as we sing in a hymn sometimes I'm drinking of the springs of living water.

Secret places that God has. The word of God says then shall we follow on to know the Lord. You know it's a paradox you'll never explain it all but Jesus is the hunger and he's the bread.

If the Holy Ghost is in me he longs for fellowship with the Father. And first of all our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ and then with one another. But don't let's make fellowship with one another as substitute for fellowship with him.

And finally the Paul of Paul says right into the Philippians that lovely verse you know finally brethren whatsoever things are true whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are just whatsoever things are pure whatsoever things are lovely whatsoever things of love good report. Why do men feed their lust. Because they take these girly magazines Playboy and things now that make Playboy look almost like a Sunday school magazine.

You can see the vile things on some of it. Sometimes you go in the store. I went in one at the airport the other day to look for a booklet that I wanted and they were lined up all these nude magazines and fellows were devouring them.

Why did they feed their lust. Because they feed on that. Another guy snatches for a sports magazine.

Why. Because he's feeding his appetite constantly and his knowledge for such things. Another man reaches for a popular mechanic.

He has things he wants to make. Another fellow says I go for the for science. Another fellow says well I'm taking one of these rather remote magazines that it's private subscription fifty dollars a year.

I've had two or three sent to me heaven knows why. Because I've no money invested anywhere. But I've had two or three recently that said we can send you this letter on on world finance.

How to invest your gold. It's only three hundred and fifty dollars a year. And that's a lot isn't it.

Three hundred and fifty dollars on how to save money. Well give me the three hundred and fifty dollars I'll save that and forget the magazine. But you see what the men do.

This man wants more knowledge on money so he says boy that's cheap. You know you can get the inside run on this. I think it was Sammy told me the other day these little boys over in Texas of course.

They'd been buying so much silver that they flew plane loads of it to London to sell it at a profit of five cents an ounce. I wouldn't have thought it was worth taking all that way. But they live for gold.

The hunt boys you know you take the source. Make millionaires out of them. We're going to have to go.

We got too much silver. We're going to have to go. Why? They're panting after it.

They thirst for it. They long for it. And if you feed yourself with those magazines you'll create more desire.

If you feed yourself with this magazine you'll. If you feed yourself on the word of God. If you feed yourself on in the secret place of the most high.

If you go into his presence even if you're alone. And have a love Christ with him. Put the book down.

And say you know you brought me into your banqueting house and your banner over me is love. Oh I can sing it with a crowd. Yes sir.

I've done the whole round. I've been to banquets. I've been to this.

I've breakfast and all the other things. I had a letter the other day from a very lovely lady who for over 25 years has run a conference center up north. You can't tell me one type of spirit for your people that haven't been there.

From people that had every gift to people have got so far they don't even use the Bible anymore. They get direct revelation. They've had conferences there too.

And a letter was just this. Brother Ravenhill I'm so tired of it all. I'm so tired of it all.

There's so much excess. There's so much false emphasis. There's so much glory in the flesh.

There's so much this. I'd like to take the rest of my years. She's not very old.

Just, just worshiping him and adoring him and magnifying him and finding some of the secrets of God. I think, disagree if you like, but I think God has still a lot of undiscovered secrets. I think there's a lot of revelation God wants to give and usually we don't get it in crowds either.

We get it alone. The secret of the Lord. Do you ever shout a secret from the housetop? Wouldn't be a secret very long, would it? And you know what? If he gives you a secret, don't stand up and testify about it.

You'll spoil the whole deal. You say, well I remember the Lord once spoke to me and I told him. You know he hasn't spoken to me for five years.

Why should he if you gossiped everything he told you? If he wanted them to know he'd have told them. If you've got a secret, be like Mary, keep it in your heart till it comes to birth. Don't try and get a halo because he told you something you haven't told anybody else.

Keep it. Nourish it. Cherish it.

And day by day feed on him. Make friends of God's children. Feed on his word.

Say as this lovely hymn says, beyond the sacred page. You know we can get so satisfied with intellectual knowledge. So satisfied with experiences.

Experiences don't stand up in themselves. Revelation does. What God communicates does.

And I for one have made up my mind I'm going to pursue this. Day after day I want to drink a fresh of the streams. I want to eat of God's word.

I want to feed on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he says we'll be filled if we do. Filled with what? Well we'll be filled with peace where we had agitation.

We'll be filled with joy don't we know. And there'll be bubbly you know effervescent stuff that rolls out and everybody thinks you're such a happy person. May not be that.

What if Peter says there's a joy that's unspeakable. Did you ever have that? You can't even express it. It's so profound.

Beyond words it's like love. Beyond words. I'll be filled as I hunger after him.

He'll fill me with joy. He'll fill me with the knowledge of his will. That's what he says.

He'll fill you with joy and peace in believing. He'll fill you with hope. What is the less? It's no good being filled everywhere else.

If we're empty right deep down in the inner man. And if we're filled there it doesn't too much matter about the other things anyhow. And Paul says my desire is that.

It's a strange paradox. That you might be filled one with the knowledge of his will. And he says that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

And John Wesley's closest friend John Fletcher said to me it is comparatively a small thing that I can be cleansed from sin. But he said it's an amazing thing I can't grasp that I can be filled with all the fullness of God. He'll fill me and the more filled I am the more I thirst and I yearn to come to the ultimate in the spiritual.

And it will be this when I get to the other side. And he says you don't need to hunger anymore or thirst anymore. For the good book says when we see him we should be like him.

And until that day we're going to continually know what it is to hunger and thirst. That there we'll hunger no more we'll thirst no more. There'll be no prayer meetings in heaven.

There'll be no talking about victories we've just won. All the battle will be over and it will be glory forever and ever. And we shall be in his presence.

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