

# I Am Thy Strength and Shield - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the triumph of Christ over sin, the necessity of continuous praise, and the importance of God's protection in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:08:40

**Scripture:** Genesis 17:1, Genesis 18:1-2, Genesis 18:26-27, Genesis 19:1, Matthew 5:48

**Topics:** "Provision Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a scene of immorality and sin in the world, with prostitutes and drug users. However, he emphasizes that these things do not move or concern us as believers. He then references the story of Abraham and how God promised him the land and title deed, highlighting that God's promises are secure and cannot be taken away. The preacher also quotes a friend who expressed concern about the things he hadn't done for God, rather than the things he had done. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging listeners not to plead ignorance or laziness, but to have compassion and concern for others, even if they are our own relatives.

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## Transcript

Lord, we think we hardly have language to express our hearts, but when we think of the way you've handled the greatest calamity in history, an ideal man in an ideal circumstance, an ideal environment, and yet he managed to destroy the whole thing. We see the devastating power of one corrupt life. By one man's disobedience, sin entered into the world, and death because of sin.

And we thank you that just as the first Adam failed, the last Adam triumphed. O loving wisdom of our God, when all was sin and shame, another Adam to the fight, the last Adam to the fight and to the rescue came. O wisest love, that flesh and blood which did in Adam fail should strive afresh against the foe, should strive and should prevail.

We sang, Lord, earlier of your faithfulness, that day by day you're there when we need you. Lord, I say reverently, it would be horrid if you were only there on the first day and the third day of the week, and the fifth and the seventh. If something happened and you were off duty, as though the eternal offices were closed, as though the angels were not watching, what a calamitous situation it would be.

But we thank you for the one sacrifice that was made once in the end of the age to put sin. Nobody can add to it, nobody can take anything from it. We had a perfect Savior who was a perfect Lamb, the spotless

Lamb of God.

As the hymn says, lifted up was he to die, it is finished was his cry. Now in heaven exalted high, hallelujah, what a Savior. Lord, I thank you for the praise that was offered tonight, not just from our lips, as Bonner said, not for the lip of praise alone, nor in a praising heart, I ask, but for a life made up of praise in every part.

Praise in the common things of life, its goings out and in. Praise in each duty and each deed, however small and mean. So shall no part of day or night from sacredness be free, that my whole life in every step be fellowship with thee.

There is on earth no greater prize than this, to really sing with truth he walks with me and he talks with me. As the hymn writer says, oh blessed communion, fellowship divine, we feebly struggle, they in glory shine. Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine, hallelujah, what a Savior.

We thank you Lord that while men may wall us in, they cannot roof us in. They can cut us off from fellowship in their churches if they like, they can cut us off from social standing, but there's nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, except sin that we create ourselves. How we bless you for this.

Lord the glory that we have now is amazing, but Lord it's a down payment. Again if we could see the door in heaven open, as John saw it in Revelation 4, if we could peep into eternity, if we could just take one split second vision of the marriage supper of the Lamb, with all the redeeming of all the ages, saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, men who were burned at the stake, men who for Christ's sake were put to horrible deaths, they were torn apart. Even Hebrews, the writer there reminds them that their lot wasn't too bad, he takes them back to a group that we don't know a thing about, we don't know their names or who they were, that they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute and afflicted and tormented.

The world kicked them out because they weren't fit to sit at the banquets of the big people, they weren't fit for social appreciation. But you wrote the last word on that Lord Jesus, when you said of whom the world was not worthy. It's not that the world couldn't find those blessed people worthy, it's that they weren't, the world wasn't worthy to hold them, so you took them home.

Some torn to pieces with the jagged teeth of lions. Women with babies at their breasts, we're told, and the leaping monster grabbed the babe and ran off with the screaming babe and the screaming mother. Oh, we're so soft.

A little trial upsets us. Something forgets to form us, we almost die. Some trivial thing comes up.

Lord, what a horrid state we're in. The psalmist said, quicken me according to thy word. The apostle wrote, the word of God is quick and powerful, it is.

The world has yet to see what will happen, Lord, when the church recaptures the dynamite of Calvary and the blast of the upper room. Only then can we pull down principalities and powers and strongholds. We write little theological outlines.

We learn paraphrases of the word and of truth. But so seldom does it burn with a holy intense fire in our hearts. But make that real to us as it was with Jeremiah.

He said, your word was like a fire shut up in his bones. And this is what we need, this is what our generation needs. We need holy men, full of faith of the Holy Ghost, with that holy unquenchable fire, with that zeal that all the waters of doubt and all the waters of criticism and all the waters of opposition cannot quench the fire that you put in the hearts of men and women, if it's really the fire of God.

Because you tell us that you live in us and our God is a consuming fire. And you make your angels ministering spirits and your ministers a flame of fire. God, I say reverently, get us out of the ice house.

Most of our churches seem to be ice houses and the snowman in the pulpit. Oh, for the holy fire to come, that would descend to send people out dumb with the majesty of God, awed by their revelation of eternity. Tonight we come with our old request, teach us to pray.

I mean, I think of the disciples, they didn't say teach us to sing or teach us to heal or teach us to preach. They said, Lord, teach us to pray. What an awesome thing to see our Lord, with his hands raised to heaven and his eyes to heaven, praying that amazing prayer in John 17.

And the most awesome prayer ever in the history of the world that was never recorded, just one or two fragments. If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Or borrowing the language of the psalmist as he did, all thy billows have gone over me.

Your holy anger on your holy sons, on an unholy people, really because of his birth pains to create a holy church. We're not a holy church. We're an unholy mess.

We don't wander in sheepskins and goatskins. We're not destitute and afflicted. We're full.

We're not hungry. We're full. We're not naked.

We're clothed. We're not naked in our spirits. Many of us are clothed with self-righteousness.

Our ego is bloated by our own ministry, our individual ministries. Lord, I think of the word of the Marashal. I thought so much of it today when she said, O Lamb of God, thou wonderful sin-bearer, hard after thee my soul would follow on, as plants the heart, for streams in desert dreary, so pounce my soul for thee, O thou life-giving One.

At thy feet I fall, yield thee at my all, to suffer, live, or die, for my Lord crucify. I mourn, I mourn the sin that drove me from thee, and blackest darkness brought into my soul. Now I renounce the accursed thing within me, and come once more to thee to be made fully whole.

Descend to heaven, thou whom my soul adoreth. Exchange thy throne for my prolonging heart. We would make room for you tonight, Lord.

If there's some furniture of our souls that needs casting out, Lord, tonight, cast it out. Burn it up. Again, put a holy fire within us.

As far as we can bear it, put even a holy anguish in us. Teach us the language. Lord, teach us the language that has no language.

The groanings which cannot be uttered. Not mutterings of our inner emotions, but the blessed spirit we read of in Romans 8. Lord, surely we live in a groaning creation tonight. The whole earth is groaning.

It's convulsed in its own wickedness. It's consumed by its own vileness. Our jails are crowded.

Our homes are broken. Our children are contaminated. Lust is eating up millions of people.

Others are crowding coats. They've forsaken thee, the fountain of living water, and they try to hew out systems that can hold no water. Seems to me, Lord, we can, as far as I'm concerned, we can fold up the organizations and the denominations and roll them up and put them on the shelf.

They've had their years and years and years. It's time for you to fulfill your word. You said, behold, I will do a new thing.

Do it. Do it in some heart tonight. Maybe there's one young man you want to brand.

As Paul said, I bury my body, the marks, the brands of the Jesus. As we brand in this state. So he wanted to bear in his hands, in his feet, on his mind, everywhere, the brand mark of Jesus.

That Jesus claimed his feet and claimed his hands and claimed his eyes and claimed his mind. I pray somebody tonight, Lord, it would be nice if we could say all. I'm sure we won't all.

But maybe one or two tonight are going to be married to the will of God, never to be divorced. They're going to sign a love pact quietly, or maybe in their tears in this crowded room. We thank you for your presence.

What is thy form? We cannot see, we know and feel that thou art here. O Savior Christ, thou too art man. Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried.

Thy kind, that searching glands can scan the very wounds that shame would hide. Touch that wounded heart tonight. Lift up that one who's crushed, oppressed.

Speak the word only. They will be delivered. Bless your word to our hearts, in Jesus name.

Be seated. Thank you. Let's look at Genesis chapter 13.

Turn back to, sorry, turn back to chapter 12 for a moment, please. Genesis 12 verse 1. Now the Lord hath said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house. That's quite a load, isn't it? Leave your country, leave the kinfolk, leave your own house.

Not much left. 13th chapter. Abraham went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, with all he had, and Lot went with him into the south.

Abraham was very rich in cattle, silver and in gold. I'm going to assume that you know most of this story anyhow. Remember Abraham went where? He went out of his country.

I think we've got some homemade halos we put around many of these people. Abraham, of course, is called the father of the faithful, and usually the pattern of faith. And we say, well, remember what he did.

You just read what he did. He left his country, left his kin, he left his family. And what? Went with who? Went with his father, didn't he? Or his brother? And his brother's son, Lot.

But in the 51st chapter of Isaiah, I was reading it today, God said, I called Abraham alone. Did he go alone? We say he stepped out in faith. He stepped out in disobedience, if not unbelief.

But again, God is merciful. Remember then, he became very prosperous. Abraham was very rich in silver and in gold, and the young man had his eyes on all his father's, uncle's prosperity.

Verse 4 of 13 says, he went to a place, an altar, which he had made there at first. And there Abraham called on the name of the Lord. I don't remember that Lot ever built one altar.

Abraham built them repeatedly. Verse 7, there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite then dwelt in the land.

Lot said, pardon me, Abraham said to Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, blessed are the peacemakers, between me and thee, between thy herdmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right.

Or if thou wilt depart to the right, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes. Notice that, verse 10, Lot lifted up his eyes and he beheld all the plains.

Verse 14, the Lord said unto Abraham after Lot had separated from it, lift up now thine eyes. What a different thing. Lot lifted up his eyes, filled with covetousness, and he saw the mountains there so ragged and poor, the sheep would never get anything.

Over on this side, there's green pastures and living water, so he chooses the left-hand side of the valley. If he'd been a gentleman, he would have said, well, uncle, you're older than I am, you make the choice. But you see, he had trouble with his eyes.

Verse 10, Lot lifted up his eyes, beheld all the plain of Jordan, it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. And even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zor. And Lot chose him, you see, he chose him, he chose for himself, for me and mine.

He chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east, and they separated themselves one from the other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, Lot dwelt in the city of the plain, in the cities of the plain, and he pitched his tent.

Listen now, he pitched his tent, you see, if you'd seen his tent, you'd have seen a tent pole leaning right out towards Sodom. Why? Because he said it was like the land of Egypt. Well, who took him to Egypt? His uncle Abraham.

I'm not facetious or funny here, if you get any old maps or some, something like Encyclopedia Britannica, and look at the Egyptian dynasties, you notice there, and this may sound rude, but it's true, that the women were all topless. They had their belly dancers. And this young man feasted his eyes on everything that was there in Egypt.

Day after day he went round to peep shows, saw everything he could see. So when he came up to see Sodom and Gomorrah, he says, well, I'm not going up in that old tent where my uncle lives. Every time he'd go up, he's praying anyhow.

A man asked me today, call long distance to find out how much I prayed every day. I said, that's not your business. That's my business.

My prayer life is my devotion to Christ, is my business. And how much do you pray? As much as ever I can. You see, Abraham was a man of prayer.

Those twelve, Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain. And his tent, pitched his tent toward Sodom. The men of Sodom were wicked sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

The Lord said unto Abraham, after Lot was separated. Now isn't this wonderful? What did Lot do? Lot in verse 10 lifted up his eyes and he saw the well-watered plains where they were before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He saw everything.

Now look what God does. Abraham could have said, you know, my nephew is no manners, he's no culture, he's stolen everything. I won't have any crops, maybe my cattle will die.

There's not much water around here. I'm heading for destruction, materially. But here, you see, when the Lord has a thing in hand, it's different.

In verse 14 it says, the Lord said unto Abraham, after Lot was separated, lift up now thine eyes. Now he's doing this by divine command. His eyes are not bulging with grief.

He saw, and everything he saw is dangerous to see. The woman saw the fruit of the tree was good, so she took it. Achan saw a goodly Babylonish garment, so he scraped the floor and hid it in the ground.

More than ever I think today we need to talk about the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. You can hardly see an advert for ice cream or anything without some luscious woman on it. This man was led into temptation.

His uncle didn't watch him every moment, so again he was going down the streets, he was seeing half-naked women, he was seeing all the sensuality that Egypt was famous for, and it was saturating his brain. Brother David Wilkerson is writing another book. My dear wife and I have been reading some chapters of it this week.

And boy, I'll tell you, it really kicks the TV around. Don't you blame God if your children go to the devil if you can watch TV any time they want. See all the dirty stuff that comes on.

He saw. People say it must be nice to travel. Well, I don't travel much by choice.

But I've been in some countries like the upper areas, say of New Guinea, where we wanted to go over the mountains. That was 15 years ago and they said, you can't go over there. The last three white men that went over there didn't come back.

They were cannibals there. I saw the conditions in which they live. I sometimes wake up seeing that little woman that came out of the bush in front of me, stark naked, smell like a hog.

I'm not funny. They don't bathe. She was all withered, dried up.

Looked more like an animal than a human person. I've never carried a camera. I've been in many countries.

I've never yet taken a camera shot. I happen to have two lenses here that are pretty good and they take some pictures that I would like to erase. I can't erase them.

See, that's why vision is so necessary to us as believers. Where there's no vision, the people say, I'd like to go to one of those countries. Well, if you want to go to a hell hole, go down into Dallas.

You can go to corners where women are nearly naked to the waist. They show them in the newspaper recently. I thought it was terribly disgusting, but it showed the cops trying to round up these prostitutes lying out by the wall.

Round another corner, there's a bunch of kids shooting up, drugs, drinking, all the devilry you can imagine. It doesn't move us. The Lord said unto Abraham, verse 14, after Lot was separated, lift up thine eyes, look from the place where thou art, northward, southward, eastward, and westward, and all the land which thou seest.

He only lost it for a few hours. God gave him it back. Poor stupid boy thought, oh boy, I'm going to make a killing out of this, and didn't know that God had written it off already, and said the title deed belonged to Abraham.

And not only this, but every bit of land of this nation is going to be his one day. It's amazing how much little thing can cheat people of eternal life and spirituality. I say, I'm going to skip over here.

After these things, when there had already been a raid on Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham had had to move out. Verse 12 in chapter 14 says, they took Lot, Abraham's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. Wouldn't you think he'd have skipped out of the country after that? They already robbed his home, and took all the accoutrements that he had, and yet the stupid fellow goes back again.

After these things, chapter 15, verse 1, after these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, fear not Abraham. What do you think Abraham felt for the next word? What did God say? Read it, tell me. I am.

Moses said, whom shall I say has sent me? Say I am. He's in direct line from Moses to get a thought of it. I want to tell you this, God says, I am thy shield.

Notice that. He doesn't say, I'll put a shield in front of you. He says, I am the shield in front of you.

You remember when little Goliath, little Goliath, sorry, that's a revised, a reverse version, uh, little David went out to shoot Goliath, and Goliath was about nine feet high, and he had a shield bearer, and David didn't. I remember our David speaking about that years ago in Saginmartha, and there's a preacher sitting there. David gave a marvelous exposition, as you would expect, but anyhow, he gave a marvelous exposition, and I'm not biased at all.

A very populous Southern Baptist preacher was there, and he said at the end of the meeting, Brother Ramey, I got 13 sermons out of what your son said today. And the thing he said that impressed me, he said, well, when little David went out, there's Goliath about nine feet high in front of him, a shield bearer, holding the thing up to defend the man. What did David do? Totally ignored the shield bearer.

Shield was no good, it may as well have been made of tissue paper. David took that stone, what a wonderful, I preached on that once out in the West, and at that time, I could whistle, I can't whistle too well since I had that stroke, and I said, here's a stone in the sling, and the boy went, like this, and the boy in the congregation and everybody laughed. I said, well, he got the stone, you know, I mean, the man was covered everywhere else, like here, and the stone hit him there, you know, and such a thing never entered his head before, but anyhow.

In the place where you don't make protection, the devil's going to get in there. I am thy shield. Do you step out of your office or out of your home every day and say, the Lord is my shield today? Not Gabriel.

Not the promises I love to quote, they're not my shield, in one sense, he is my shield. Well, if deity is between me and my enemy or my circumstances, how in God's name can I be cast down? It's not impossible to be cast down, but you remember what the psalmist says, why art thou cast down, O my soul? He talked to himself. I talked to myself.

You've got to talk to somebody intelligent now and again. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? What reason have you? What excuse have you? To be cast down is, in one sense, inexcusable, and Jesus going into Gethsemane, you remember, began to be very heavy. But I want us to get hold of this again tonight.

I better be right when I get up in the morning, going out into an unknown day, and you have the same thing to say, the Lord is my shield. Not just the forces of heaven, but God himself. In a mysterious presence is my shield, he's going before me.

Verse 17 is, pardon me, chapter 17 is interesting. I've taken most of the first verses. Abraham was 90 years old, and the Lord appeared to him and said, I am the Almighty God.

Walk before me and be thou perfect. You can't be perfect in this world. Well, is God a tyrant? What do you do with the seventh chapter of Matthew? The greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest man or anybody else that ever lived.

Now what does it say? Doesn't it say, be perfect? Perfect, what, like Gabriel? No, perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect. And we can't be perfect. Well, you better put your house in order again, says you have to be.

We're not perfect intellectually. We can be perfect morally, I'm sure, we can be perfect. If we can't, cut the hymn book up.

How many times have you sung, perfect submission, all is at rest? And right after that, there's another perfect in that, in that same verse, same hymn. I can be perfect in my obedience. I can be perfect up to all the light I have.

I was in a meeting the other week, one Saturday night, I think it was, and looking at a preacher at the back, he watched me very closely. And you know, the scripture says, it's a very beautiful thing. Oh, well, let me ask you this.

We've got to sin every day in thought, word and deed, we say. Well, the devil couldn't do better than that, could he? I mean, he's going to haul hogs of sin every day in thought, word and deed. How many times did Adam sin before he got kicked out of the garden? Once.

And yet we can sin with impunity every day. What about the woman that came to Jesus? And she was a pretty dirty rascal. And what did Jesus say? Go and sin less, no more.

You've got a King James, good English book. Go and sin no more. You see, what we've done now, we've Romanized our Protestantism.

I went to the front and confessed your sin. You could have gone to Catholic church and done that. We had a good time last Sunday morning.

Some of you were there. That was a good meeting, God was gracious. And I marked out the fact again, that in the six chapters of Isaiah, Isaiah didn't say, uh, I need help, I've made my mistakes.

He didn't even say I need forgiveness. You see, God doesn't deal thoroughly with us, because we don't repent properly. What did that man say? He was already a prophet.

Read the first chapter in Isaiah, and he has a complete analysis of the nation, with all its corruption, its total corruption. And yet he falls before God, as the prophet to the nation. What does he say? I'm undone, I'm unclean.

Now, people come to the other, Lord, Lord, help me, I'm not living as well as I should, I'm not reading my Bible. But what do you think, Gabriel's going to read it to you every morning? Read it, you've got eyes. I didn't have much time today.

He had as much time as I had, and anybody else. Some of us surely have a different schedule, a schedule, whatever you want to call it. Abraham was 90 years old, and nine, 99 years old, the Lord said walk before me, and he's in his 100th year.

Marvelous he could walk at all, but to walk before the Lord is wonderful. Verse two, I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply the exceeding of you. And Abraham fell backwards.

No? What does it say? He fell on his face. Verse 17, Abraham fell upon his face. I'll never forget one day talking with Dr. Tozer, he said, Len, let other people do as they like.

You and I will worship God face downward. If you worship God face downward, you don't get distracted with other things round about you. Not much charming in a rug, when you've been there a few minutes, forget it.

Verse again, first verse in chapter 18, and the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lift up his eyes, and lo, three men stood by him. Skip over now to the 19th chapter.

There came two angels to Sodom at evening, and Lot sat in the gate. So there, those that are for us are more than going to be against us. To Lot there's only two angels.

Back in the 18th chapter to Abraham, sitting in the door of his tent, in the heat of the day, he lift up his eyes, and behold, there were three men standing there. What did we say about the tent? Have you remembered it? We said the slant of his, you know, he had one of these bell tent things, I guess, and the post of the tent was leaning towards Sodom. That's the first move you get of that man, towards Sodom.

Look in this 18th chapter, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men stood there. The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre. No, pardon me, let's see the chapter I want.

Chapter 19, there were two angels of Sodom, and Lot sat in the gate. Now he's moved from his tent, he's sitting in the gate. You know, I used to wonder why the scripture says, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

Why in the world, what do the gates do? They get up and push the enemy back. The gate was the government. Lot had moved up in the social register.

He was the mayor of the city now. He sat with the wise men at the gate. They did all the planning.

But now he's moved from his tent, you see. He's no longer like Abraham. He's respectable.

He has a nice building. People salute him and give him the, all that he wants to take, regard adulation. Let me go back a minute here, I skipped something.

In the 13th chapter in verse 10, Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld the well-watered plains of Jordan. That's the first thing he sees. Number one, he saw the well-watered plains.

Number two, he chose, in verse 11. Number three, he journeyed east. Number four, they separated themselves.

Number five, Abraham dwelt in the land, and Lot dwelt in the cities. And he pitched his tent towards Sodom. And then we move over to the chapter we've just read.

Here's a man of God that sacrificed every conceivable thing and is still a liar. God has mercy on him. His wife says, why don't you have a child by that girl then? This is not facetious.

God didn't speak to Abraham for 19 years after he listened to his wife. That's got nothing to do with you and your wife. There's more than one case in the scripture where a man has not listened to the voice of God.

He's taken the counsel from his wife and got into trouble. What happened? Well, it's an impossible situation. Abraham, dear, don't be foolish.

You know that normally we cannot have a child. I mean, all hope has gone for it. I can't have a child.

Take that gorgeous girl. You know, she's a beautiful girl, this village and everything. She would produce a wonderful child for you.

Let me tell you something, friend. However good it seems, if you try to get God out of a corner, you're in trouble. It may be as black as hell.

It may be you're up against a stone wall a hundred feet high and a hundred feet thick, but God has said it. He has forgotten that God said to him, I am thy shield and thy reward. He took an Egyptian, a worldly girl.

If you don't think we've problems, what are all the Arabs doing around tonight? They're all from Israel. We talk about Adam's sin. We don't talk too much about Abraham's sin.

You know, that boy must have been a lovely boy. He's at least 18 years of age and he lets his dad gag him and bind him. He wouldn't get away with that in America.

He'd punch his dad on the nose. What are you doing? Tying you up? Yes, I see that. For what? Well, you said there was no lamb.

You're going to be the lamb. Me? Am I the sacrifice? You're the sacrifice. I forget who it is.

Dore, I think, has a picture of Abraham with a dagger in his hand and his hand over the eyes of his son lying there. His big, fine, healthy son. Boy, an open, boy always lived in the open air.

Athalating. And there's a man with a knife. He's bringing down the... Boy, that's a test.

They've got the fire. They've got the altar. Well, you're going to be the sacrifice.

And he gets the knife and he's just bringing the knife down. Gets it halfway down and the artist has it there where it's about a few inches just from the man's chest or heart. And a voice says, stay thy hand.

Do you know what the average Christian would say today? That's the voice of the devil. I can tell you, right at the bend of the river. You look back, you see where the river bends there? Those rocks, those trees? It was there where God said, take... And I'm going to take my son.

Why did God give in to him? Abraham says, I'll kill him. I don't mind. But I'll tell you this.

As soon as I kill him in your name, I'm going to raise him up from the dead. God says, I can't win. Stay thy hand.

I preached over this in Australia a dozen years ago. They have 50 million sheep. So I was in trouble.

An old man came. He said, oh, well, you missed something very vital this morning. I said, I guess I missed more than one thing.

Well, he said, you said as soon as he raised his hand and a voice said, stay thy hand. There's a rustling in the trees. And he looks and there's a ram caught in the thicket.

I said, well, that's what the Bible says. Well, he said, Mr. Raimond, when they started building that altar, that ram wasn't there. I said, no.

When they started binding the boy up, the ram wasn't there. No. Well, I said, how do you know? I said, that's not in my Bible.

But he said, I know sheep. Let me tell you something, he said. If a ram goes in the thicket and gets his horns fastened like that, it does one of two things.

He pulls until he approaches the trees or he pulls until he pulls his horns out. But he won't stay there. You know, sometimes God was going to deliver you at the last second or the last minute that you needed it.

And at that moment, you doubted him. That moment, you backed off. He's under no obligation to deliver you because you say, Lord, I mean, I need something here.

Forget it. He's developing your character. He's planning something in your life you're going to have for eternity.

God help us. We go to church Sunday morning like parrots and stand up and sing and sit down and of course the offering bag has to come and one or two other trimmings. Poor old choir has to croak away.

How often do we really meet God with any intelligence? How often do you tiptoe out of the sanctuary and say, surely God is in this place? God has to use dumb people like me. But I hope that through my voice, somehow you hear an eternal voice. That you realize that when God takes you to the nth degree, what

does he do? Well, the scripture says he does not afflict willingly.

The Lord says, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It's easy to stand here and sing sweetly, my faith looks up to thee, thou lameth Calvary, and all the other things we sing. They're very beautiful.

Abraham was up there. He said to his servants, you stay around here till I come back. Right by the river then, sit on those rocks and I'll be back.

If God had said to me, take thy son, thine only son, I would have said to them, gentlemen, you're the best herdsman in this country. And I'm still going to keep you on my employment, but I'm going up here. I hardly like to tell you, I'm going over this mountain to sacrifice.

Did he say that? What did he say? Pardon? Yes, but what did he say he was going to do? Worship. Worship, bloody. Worship, straining your back to try and lift a rock.

Worship to get to the top of the hill where you're staggering, you're just tired out. And then on top of that, you start using your little remnant of energy to build an altar. And then when you've got up, struggled up there, you're emotionally exhausted.

You're seeing a blank future without my darling son. I've trained him all these years. I've got to go back to Sarah and say, I gave your child back to God.

I murdered him. I started a bloody sacrifice on that hill. See, we read the story without any emotion.

We read it without any imagination. Imagination get us out, I know, out of line, but that's true. The ram was got, you know, that old man said to me, Mr. Raveny of that ram, just went in that hedge at the very moment when the Lord said, stay thy hand.

Because as he said, a ram in the thicket will not strain the thicket. Once he knows he's trapped, he puts those stiff legs out like that, and off goes the tree over his head, or off go his horns. But he will not be a captive.

You see, when God backed you up to the wall, all he was trying to do was toss your horns away. Because the horns, it's only means of defense. Because its strength is in its horns.

Get rid of your strength, get rid of your self-sufficiency. Get rid of that thing that you rely on every time. And then when you do, God comes down with a new anointing.

But we want God to do it while we sing a nice hymn, or we listen to a scripture that, a preacher that couldn't move a fly off the wall. He's such a nice man. I don't need to tell you it's a long while since I was a nice man.

Certain man came to see me this week, and he said, Len, most preachers don't want you in the country. I was going to a famous Bible college, still going to go. The president said, I want you, Mr. Ravenhill to come.

He said, he's my neighbor. I want to tell you something. When Ravenhill come, he thunders.

If you don't want to hear thunder and fire and power, don't have Ravenhill around. He's a horrible man. That's the greatest compliment in the world.

I don't think, if they say, well, he's, there's not much to him, he's got a pimple on his nose, he's about as attractive as a rhinoceros. What do I care about the strength of a rhinoceros? He got rid of some of these pretty preacher boys. I think I put in my last book that the, the mantle of the prophet, the sweaty mantle is left behind the door when the preacher goes on the platform.

He has to be, the last thing he does is, Deacon say you look charming, as though a deacon ever knew. Why don't the deacon say, brother, are you anointed? Have you been on your face this way? Abraham fell on his face before God. I'll tell you the secret of preaching, two simple things, very simple, yet very profound.

To me, I fixed this years ago in my mind. The secret of preaching is this, that you master your subject after the subject has mastered, mastered you, until you're consumed with it. I'll go back here and read this.

I got through the introduction, so now I should get somewhere. I'm going to get through this without crying again. Somebody said to me, why do you cry so much? I said, because you cry so little, that's why.

Take your share, and I may get out of it a bit. I'm not worried about that at all. One time I used to be so embarrassed if I broke down, I'm not embarrassed anymore.

If this is the day to cry, well, in God's name, when will it be? A paralyzed church. The greatest tragedy in the world tonight is a sick church in a dying world. Go back to chapter 18, verse 26.

The Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is grievous, what did we read in Peter there? They were a wicked, wicked, vile bunch of people. There was no abomination. They didn't know, and they didn't practice.

They delighted in their corruption. David Wilkerson sent some of his men down to the Metropolitan Church in Dallas. Maybe you know about it.

There's one in Houston, too, I believe. The pastor is a homosexual. When they went in, they gave them a brochure and said, look, open it on the inside, and there's a list of gay bars.

We hope you'll go after the service is over. Guys were there hugging their boyfriends. A guy walks down the aisle and asks to be married to this girl who was a man dressed as a woman.

The preacher said, go home and enjoy your gifts. Speak in tongues and enjoy the Holy Ghost, and have a good night tonight, meaning living in impurity. I wrote an article.

I'm going to not revise it or recall it. I'm going to write the other side of the coin. Sodom had no Bibles.

These men used the Word of God and perverted it. How long is God going to hold his patience? Verse 20. The Lord said, because Sodom and Gomorrah, their cry is great, because their sin is grievous, I will go down and see.

Verse 22. The men turned their faces from fence and went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood before the Lord while Lot is fooling around in the gate, while he's talking about, he's running to the bank with his money, while he's talking about his acceptance into one of these very private clubs. Abraham is getting

further and further into the heart of God, and God is getting further into the heart of Abraham.

Abraham drew near and said, well, pardon me, verse 22. The men turned, went from fence and went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood before the Lord. Abraham drew near and said, will thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? For adventure there be fifty righteous within the city.

Will thou also destroy and spare not for the fifty righteous? That be it far from thee to do, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be that far from thee. Shall not the judge of all this do right? Do you know about 20 years of age, which is about 55 years ago, or a bit more than God burned that in my heart one night. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? It's the only thing that keeps me sane.

Kennedy wants to run for presidency again. He forgets little Joe that he murdered. No question he drowned her.

The world's insane. There is no justice, on any level, that won't the judge of all the earth do right? I read an astounding thing the other day. I forget where, because I don't take a newspaper, and I can't remember what somebody sent a tract of it.

They have a scale at the Smithsonian Museum, which is so fine that you can take a sheet of paper and weigh it, and then take a pencil and scroll your pencil across and weigh it, and it shows a difference. Just the graphite, is it graphite you call it on pencils? The graphite, which is one stroke on a sheet of paper, changes the balance. The scripture says our God is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

Again, quoting my beloved friend Dr. Chaucer, he said one day, Len, Len, you know what? I'm not so sure, I don't think I'm really afraid to go to the judgment seat for the things I've done. It's the things I haven't done that trouble me. What I could have done if I'd listened more to God.

And he said, Len, remember this. He is not going to judge us just for what we've done, but he's going to judge us for why we did it. Why did you give that sum of money? So you'll be on the top list in the church offering when they say the offerings have come in, or gifts for so-and-so missionaries.

Why did you do it? That's the thing that he's going to be concerned with when we get to the judgment seat. Not how I did it, not when I did it, but why I did it. I started a new book.

I'm hopeful. My darling wife keeps saying, well, Len, get on with that judgment seat book. So, well, I'm going to try and do that, because I think it's the most awesome thing.

Noah Webster, who gave us the first big dictionary, was asked, what is the most awesome thought that has ever crossed over your mind? He said, my personal accountability to my creator. I think the scholars have forgotten that. For adventure, let's go through this.

Verse 24, there'll be 50 righteous within the two colossal cities. Will thou also destroy and not spare the place for the 50 righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this matter, to slay the righteous with the wicked. The righteous should be as the wicked.

That be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? The Lord said, if I find in Sodom 50 righteous within the city, I will spare all the place for their sake. Abram answered and said, behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which I am but dust and ashes.

For adventure, thou shalt lack five of the 50. Will thou for the lack of five destroy the city? And he said, if there be 45, I will not destroy the city. And he spake unto him yet again and said, per adventure there shall be found 40.

And he said, I will not do it for 40's sake. He said unto him, O Lord, do not be angry. And I will speak, per adventure there shall be 30 found there.

And he said, I will not do it if I find 30 there. And he said, behold, now I've taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, per adventure there shall be 20 found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for 20's sake.

And he said, O Lord, let not the Lord be angry. And I will speak only this once, per adventure, 10 shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for 10's sake.

And the Lord went his way. Not Abraham went his way. The Lord went his way.

That's enough. You've driven me to the corner with your bargaining. But look at the disgusting thing.

You've got Abraham in the city, say. You've got lots. And you've got his wife.

And their 2 daughters. And their 2 husbands. You only need about 3 to make the 10.

There were not 3 outside of his family. What an unfruitful life. He could have shown you all his possessions.

I came into this country broke. You know, it's rags to riches. I own all those thousands of cattle.

I own all this land. And he could show everything. He could not show 10 righteous for all his living in that city.

He hadn't been able to turn his testimony. It was absolutely useless. We're the salt of the earth.

Here is a man pleading. As soon as I stop, the heavens are going to open. Not to send rain.

They're going to send fire. And burn up the night clubs. Burn up all this rotten country.

Burn up maybe millions of people. Are you going to try to persuade me he said that with dry eyes? Are you going to tell me he prayed without any passion and fervor? Are you going to try to tell me he didn't say, I'm willing to be a sacrifice if needs be? God says, listen, the day of mercy is gone. If I found 10 in the city, I will not for 10's sake.

One wonders what would happen today if he came to Tyler. I'll tell you what, folk who say Jesus may come at any moment, they're lying if they're filling bowling alleys tonight. I don't care if it's the pastor, the deacons.

If they believed Jesus was coming at any moment, would they be fooling around in bowling alleys? Would they be doing the stupid things that are done in churches? Say, Abraham believed God. He didn't believe the circumstances. Sure, there were cloudy periods in his life, but he goes down as a friend of God.

And he believed God. I've wondered often, because I've no answer to this, what would have happened if he said, peradventure there lies two of the five, or five of the ten, and then three of the five? What would have happened? I find this as a supreme example of intercession. He's not concerned about the stock

market.

His son, his nephew's taking gold to put in his coffers every day. His nephew is breeding the best kind of cattle, making the best kind of friends. Everything's going his way on the broad way, that crowded with people and tinkling bells, but it happens to end in hell, and that's the only tragedy about it.

The broad way, that's so fascinating and leads to destruction. Isn't it amazing that the best known street in America is Broadway, New York? I remember the first time I went down, I was awed. It sure is a Broadway.

Of course, it has its counterpart in London, its counterpart in Gay-Paris, and anybody else, you ought to go. Shall I hide from Abraham? No, no, no, no, no. I'm a good friend of his.

I'll tell him what my program is, and Abraham, this is my program. Listen now, it's hard to bear. I want to tell you what it is, but if you can't find those righteous people there, I'm going to open heaven.

I'm going to, I'm a consuming fire. I'm going to consume that people. Those two great wealthy cities, playgrounds, playboys are there, nightclubs are there, lust struts around, just like the hellishness of our cities.

I'm going to come down and destroy it. You say, I wish God would give me the program of what's going to happen in the next five years. Well, you got it.

Read the scriptures. There's a man came from Hungary years ago. Do you remember his name, Martha, that man that made those marvelous castings and ceramics? Impey? Something like Impey.

We were going through a town. There was a shop window, and here's a marvelous figure, ceramic, china actually, beautiful, of Moses with the Ten Commandments. The next time he went past there, well, the man offered to me.

I went in. I said, I'm a preacher. I'd love that.

He said, well, buy it. He said, I'll wrap it carefully for you, and it's only \$400. We went back a year after, going back to a vacation the same way.

A man had been in and paid \$75 down payment and hadn't gotten it. He said, oh, you're the man that asked me about the Moses figure. I said, yes.

He says, it's there in that box. I said, for \$400? He said, no, it's \$1,200. He had another picture of Abraham interceding, such an expression, a face full of expression, the sinews on his arms, or his veins were standing out, his face was drawn, his eyes and head is gazing into eternity.

And he's crying, peradventure, peradventure, peradventure. I'd like to pray like that. God could not stand that occasion.

I looked for a man to stand in the gap, because there was a man standing in the gap. What had he done? He'd forsaken his country. He'd forsaken his kindred.

He'd forsaken his house. There's nothing else to say. The glory of the world has passed away.

He's consumed with God. And until we get there, we'll never pray. We pray our petitions.

Most things in a stupid church is, Lord, send money, we need to alter the, what is it, the place where people go play and the family centre. I don't understand why Dr. Dobson goes around telling people how to keep their families together, then they have a family centre at church, so they'll never be at home. It's ridiculous.

I love our family. Sometimes I crave to have them back just one day. I'm glad they're not there, for sure.

But the family life is so beautiful, it's so holy. God's established the family before he established the church. Our families are broken.

Our deacon's families are broken. Our Sunday school teachers are broken. Why should children, people, sit down and teach somebody's children where their own children are going to hell? It makes sense.

Why should a man be appointed a deacon when he knows there's a lot of question marks in his life, and he can't live right with his wife, and he can't live right with his children? You say that's pretty severe. Sure it's severe. I said to someone the other day, when the Lord was on earth before, what did he do? He cleansed the temple.

If he came back now, I think he'd start cleansing pulpits. And then after cleansing pulpits, he cleansed the church. We think we're going to get it God's way.

If we paid up with our tithes, we're not behind with our tithes. Listen, God happens to own the world, the universe. The silver and the gold are his.

You're not helping God out. You may be helping your bankrupt church. He owns the whole universe, the whole world, every created thing, every uncreated thing.

The veins of silver and the nuggets of gold in the earth, they're all his. But you know what? We need to rediscover the wealth of the church in Christ. Oh, if I knew what was going to happen.

Come on, don't be hypocritical or foolish. You know what's going to happen. Read your newspaper.

Billy Graham said the other day, I saw a flash on TV news, Billy Graham said, I'm in cognizance of things that we have hidden away in our war chests in America and Russia that make the atom bomb look like a, what do you say, Chinese cracker or something. If you knew the cruelty that's been engineered by science, we can cast a plane over a city and corrupt the whole city with disease germs. We're geniuses at devilry.

We gave, what, 20 billion dollars away last year to countries that waste it and our farmers are starving. They couldn't use that money. But politics is politics.

Don't tell me you don't know what's coming up. If you read the newspaper, this is what science says is coming up. The greatest holocaust that will make the holocaust when six million Jews were murdered, if there were six million Jews in the country, it will make it look like a Methodist love feast, somebody said facetiously.

It's on the drawing boards. These men's corners, that preacher preaches hell. I say something, you make it, you've got it in the back room there.

All you have to bring it out, we can barbecue the biggest city in America in less than 10 minutes. Barbecue the whole city. Whole New York could be paralyzed and destroyed and bodies be frizzling on the sidewalks like a barbecue.

That's a rotten picture, but it's true. Science says we're going to have a holocaust. The Bible says in 1616 of Revelation, we're going to have a battle of Armageddon.

And after that battle, the bodies will be so high, it's going to take seven months to clear the streets of bodies. Come on, don't plead your ignorance. Plead your laziness.

Plead the fact you have no compassion. Of course, your own relatives will be damned and lost, so what? I mean, you're a nice new dress when you go home, you have something else nice. Why be serious? The shoes on the other foot, why should we laugh anymore? If you know there were people within 10 miles of this area coming in on us as we go out tonight and they have weapons that could be shot in the ground and we all fry, we'd be a little bit concerned.

Lot went out, what did he say? He says, listen, this city is going to... and they mocked him. Oh, come on, you're going to tell us this time, instead of a story like Noah and being in a boat and getting drowned, the person up there is going to send not rain this time, but fire. Try it out somewhere else.

They mocked him, but they experienced it anyhow. I remember one day we were backstage with Catherine Coombe in the big crusade and Dave Wilkinson said to her, you must have a lot of joy when you go home. And we used to go out to lunch and talk with her.

You must find a lot of joy when you go home at night. She said, David, I don't think of how many were healed. I think of how many went out of the meeting still crippled.

I can see a load of wheelchairs going down the aisles. They used to line the streets with ambulances. I see them and I ache for them because we're not really meeting their needs.

I wonder how many preachers in Tyler go home on a Sunday and say, God Almighty, at least 10% of my congregation is not saved and every week I go home and all I want is a big fat steak and sit down and watch football in the afternoon. You know what? God won't take us seriously until we take God seriously. Here are the conditions.

They're in this word. What did God say in his word? 17th of Luke, don't look, I think it says there, as it was in the days of Noah and as it was in the days of Lot. What does it say about the days of Lot? They bought, they sold, they planted, they built it.

Last year in the newspaper I saw this, the building rate in Texas, number one at the top of the list for building is Houston. Number two on the list is Dallas. Number three on the list, little Tyler.

They bought, they sold, they planted, they built it until the day that Noah went into the ark, until the first beam of light fell, of hot cinder fell from heaven. They were married and given him marriage. You know that is in Hebrew, they were married and then they threw over their wives and got some other wives.

They were married and changing wives. Wife-swapping is a hobby in some parts. All the signs that they had in the days of Noah are with us today.

Everything that they did and indulged in and from their noses at God, they're right on our doorstep. Tell me, have we got any Abrahams around? I've said this and I mean it. If God would let me, I think I'd walk away from Tyler.

Dear Lord, for seven, eight years I piped and they haven't danced, I mourned and they haven't went. If there was real concern, this place would be jammed out tonight, standing room only. The people come, it gets a bit too hot, they go away.

This man stands there, the only man in the world. Lot could have been at the side of him, if two of you should have gone. Lot is so busy making money, so busy going to his fancy clubs, so busy doing all the social rounds, he lets the old man there, three times his age maybe, bleed his heart out before a holy God.

And he can't pass his mantle because the son isn't, the nephew isn't interested anyhow. It's not much credit to me, but you know, when your hair gets like this. Somewhere we missed it down the road about 50 years ago.

And I pray for you now, I pray for you at home, I don't want you to miss it. There's not much time left, it's holiness or hell. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

I'm glad I don't have to bury many people these days. One of the most stirring words in the whole of the scripture to me is in the 10th chapter of Hebrews, where it said that we, we frail mortals, with all our horrible limitations, we may be partakers of the divine nature, number one. We may be partakers of his holiness, his very character can be transferred into my life, and I can remain holy, I can be purified of all corruption, all selfishness, selfish desires, self-interest, self-seeking, self-glory, self-promotion, can all be wiped out.

And God can become all in all. Then two verses after that, when it says we can be partakers of his holiness, it says that without that holiness, no man shall see the Lord. Don't let your preacher fool you.

The tragedy with our day, we're more concerned with happiness than holiness. We're more concerned, we're not concerned with sinfulness, it's holiness that frightens us, it should be sinfulness that frightens us. We're going to pray, you know, if that tragedy happened tonight, if God says, well, mercy's run out.

Again, I want to tell you, remind you right here, remember where he went. The angel didn't go down to Lop sitting in the gate of the city with all the supermen of the city, he went to the man, the old man up on the mountain. The man in the white house doesn't know that much about God's will and what God's going to do.

He admits he never heard a thing about being born again after all the preachers have visited him. God has enlightened us, God has instructed us, God has empowered us, if we want it, to stand in the gap and see something happen that hasn't happened in the last hundred years. In fact, it hasn't happened since Pentecost.

I'm convinced if I wasn't, I'd hang my harp on the willows and say, Lord, let me go to glory tonight. I get so tired and worn. I can't sleep.

I preached myself out at Brother Don's church last Sunday morning. Tried to rest after dinner, couldn't do a thing. Felt like a log.

Mother said, darling, are you asleep? I said, no, are you? No, I can't sleep, I can't. I'm too tired to sleep, I'm too dry to weep. We're not going to get revival the way we've gone, God knows, in the last 25 years.

We've spent billions of dollars in America alone, having campaigns. Isn't it amazing, we have to take people from churches, our buses. I'm saying this, Samson.

We were going into Birmingham a few years ago, got off the main drag, and there was a lineup of yellow buses right up. I said, Martha, what in the world is this? A circus must be on. Oh, Billy Graham's in town.

What did the buses do? Oh, we're going to leave at half past five. If you're not there, you'll have to get there the best way you can.

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