

Is the Lord Among Us, or Not

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon challenges listeners to reflect on the presence of God in their lives and the necessity of revival amidst adversity.

Duration: 1:00:06

Scripture: Exodus 17:7, Exodus 18:1, Numbers 20:8, Numbers 20:11

Topics: "Presence of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the advancements of technology, particularly the TV camera, and how it has brought both incredible discoveries and disturbing events into our homes. He emphasizes that while we live in a time where nothing seems sacred or secret, there is nothing new under the sun. The speaker then poses the question, 'Is the Lord among us and us?' as a relevant and important question for America and the church. He concludes by discussing the importance of the presence of God in our lives and how it brings light and illumination to our paths, even in difficult times.

Transcript

We're glad to be here tonight, my wife and I. I think I could give you half a dozen reasons why we shouldn't be here. And I can give you more than one reason why we are here. First, because we believe it's God's will that we should be here.

And secondly, because we've learned to love this conference. I feel that it's spiritual, and it's sober, and it's sound. It doesn't take a very wise man to say that we're living in the most momentous days in history.

And no conference has ever convened under a more difficult and complex system of world affairs than this conference this week. But I've been pondering for a number of days a statement made by an old friend of mine, Dr. Kuhn. Some of you may know him, he is one of the most brilliant philosophers in America.

And I've known him, I think, for thirty years. He's in the seminary at Asbury College. And Dr. Kuhn said this a while ago, and it stuck in my mind.

That we need to remember that Christianity was launched in a sophisticated and a totalitarian world. It was launched in the heyday of the Roman Empire. And it was wedged in between the monolith of Greek wisdom, and the monopoly of religion by the Jews.

Christianity only survives in adversity. And because we're living in a day of prosperity, we don't have much Christianity. I find new sermons very much like new shoes.

They're a bit difficult to get on with. I don't have any new shoes tonight, but I have a new sermon. At least I've got part of it.

I'll maybe get through really knowing what it's about. In about five years it takes about 20 times to preach a sermon before it gets hold of me. The text is in the 17th chapter of the book of Exodus and verse 7. And the latter part of verse 7, Exodus chapter 17.

I can't say this text as it was originally given by the people who uttered it. And I would say about this text right at the outset, that this text is a pointed text, and it's a painful text, and it's a penetrating text. As I sat there tonight I was thinking of the word of Paul when he said that he had to, to some believers, stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance.

And I'm going to suggest that during this week there might be a number of things which are provoking, and intentionally provocative, because there is no advancing in our individual lives, or in the church of Jesus Christ, unless we're provoked. And we have scripture for this where to provoke one another to good works. Now here's the text at the end of the 7th verse in the 17th chapter of Exodus.

Is the Lord among us or not? Is the Lord among us or not? The journey of the children of Israel is to some degree a picture of the pilgrimage of a true believer. They came out of Egypt, a type of the world. They came from under the dominion of Pharaoh, a type of the devil.

They were to come into the promised land, the land of rest. But they did like so many people, they got out of Egypt and they got to Kadesh Barnea and they settled down. Kadesh Barnea was to be a stepping stone, but it became a stumbling block.

It was to be a gateway through which they passed, but it became a goal. It was to be a thoroughfare, but it became a terminus. They gave up.

After all they didn't have to get up every morning now and make bricks. They weren't baring their backs to the smiters. They were free men.

But more than once God said through his prophets, remember that thou wast a bondsman Egypt. And I'm amazed at the discipline that many people will go through intellectually or even physically for what the apostle Paul calls a crown that saved us away. And yet our little discipline we really have for a crown which is eternal.

I don't know what this age is going to be called, the age in which we live. Some people say it will be named as the atomic age, but it certainly is listed as a scientific age. And the things that I used to read about as a little boy in England, those amazing adventures of Jules Verne are no longer science fiction, but they're everyday facts.

Your little Johnny doesn't even get disturbed about sitting in front of TV and watching a man walk on the moon. After all he can't remember when men didn't walk on the moon maybe. Now amongst the inventive things, the amazing things that science has given us is a TV camera.

And not very long ago one of them hitched a ride up to the moon, nearly about 280,000 miles away. And it was possible for the first time in history to sit down in a room and maybe your old grandpa couldn't walk around too far. But he sat there drinking his coke or something else and watched a man struggle, timidly coming down the ladder and putting the first foot of any human being on the moon.

Then after the camera had hitched a ride up there, it stowed away in a mini-submarine that the Frenchmen used between here and the Bahamas where we're living right now. And they went up the bottom of the Gulf Stream. They told us they saw things that have never been pictured before.

They saw fishes about 40 feet long. I caught a fish the other week about 52 inches long and thought it was an amazing thing. But these men saw some fishes 40 feet long.

And so here we have the TV camera which is a kind of peeping tom. We're not only living in a day when it seems that nothing is sacred, but we seem to be living in a day where nothing is secret. You can sit down in the home I say and watch men walk on the moon.

You can lounge in an easy chair and watch men going on the bottom of the ocean like Jules Verne told us many years ago. And not only that, the TV camera brings the races and the riots, those pampered pets of modern society that some people call students. And some have other names for them which couldn't be mentioned from a pulpit.

But let's call them the pampered pets of modern education. You see them with their fists clenched. You see them in fights and in riots.

And one of the signs at the end of the age, the word of God says, is that there should be distress of nations. There is a nation under the sun tonight that is in a state of distress. Whether you take this great, wealthy, affluent, arrogant nation, or you take little Jordan over there just about ready to spit in two.

You discover again we live in a moral universe that was just a few days ago. They had one of the worst earthquakes in history in Peru. And only today the news bulletin said that maybe 75,000 people perished.

And something like 200,000 people are homeless. And yet two days before the earthquake, that government froze everybody's money. It had already driven out the Americans, already taken possession of oil fields and other possessions, involving multiplied millions of dollars.

And two days before the earthquake they said, all money is to be frozen and tomorrow everybody must go to the bank and open their deposit accounts, deposit banks, with a government official at the side of them and declare everything. The government's going to take everything we have. And two days after the country was blasted, ripped in two by an earthquake.

The middle nation of Israel is fighting two or three wars at once right now. It's been in existence twenty years and hasn't known one day of peace. And the Word of God says that just before the end time we're going to be in a time of, again what the Bible calls, the time of Jacob's trouble.

And the Jews haven't got out of trouble, they haven't even got in it yet. And so all around us it seems the Word of God is fulfilled before our eyes that everything that can be shaken is being shaken. And this country that came up more rapidly than any other country in history as I reminded you I think just a few months ago when we were here in February, that compared with other nations, the great tottering old empires of China or even the British Empire, compared with them America is a little babe in a crib playing

with its toes.

America was only born yesterday, but she's dying today and she'll be dead tomorrow unless we have revival. Again I remind you that Christianity was born in a world of totalitarian power, a sophisticated world. There's nothing new under the sun.

The God that gave revival in the Acts of the Apostles is still the same God. As our brother reminded us if a hundred and twenty people could be empowered in the upper room and God and shake the world then the possibilities are unlimited in this week in which we gather together. Now I say we've seen the students rioting, we've seen the crowd brought into our living room, we've seen the cops fighting, we've seen the kids being shot, we've seen all the other distressing things.

But again there's nothing new under the sun. And this text was born in an environment exactly the same. I say I can't, I couldn't give you the information, I couldn't give you the anguish with which the people uttered this text.

It isn't the cry of a man, it isn't the cry of a prophet, it isn't the cry of a priest, it's the cry of more than a million people. But in anger and anguish and they're crying, is the Lord among us or not? I think that's the most pertinent question we could ask America tonight. I think it's the most pertinent question we could ask the church tonight.

I think it's the most pertinent question you could ask in your, your particular assembly where you worship. Is the Lord among us or not? The children of Israel were on their way, a journey that God himself had designed for them from the land of Egypt, and of course the goal was Sinai. On their journey they came to a place called Meribah, there wasn't much water there and they had difficulty with it.

And then they came to another place called Elim where there was water twelve wells of water, lovely date palms, everything they needed. One day there wasn't sufficient, the next day there was more than, or next time there was more than they needed. And now they come to another place, Rephidim, and there's no water at all.

And the children of Israel cry by reason of their anguish. The scripture makes it very clear because it says here in the first verse, pardon me, in verse 2. No again verse 1, there was no water for the people to drink. And so they were in a state of misery.

There was no water given to them and so they moved from misery to madness. And they cry in their grief, is the Lord among us or not? But they don't cry to the Lord and ask the question. They're crying to Moses.

Moses had told them in the previous chapter, when they had been complaining against him. And he said you're not complaining against Aaron and you're not complaining against me. Because he said in verse 8 of the previous chapter, and what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the Lord.

He had told them that the Lord would appear to them. In verse 7, and in the morning then shall ye see the glory of the Lord. And in verse 10 he says, and they beheld the glory of the Lord appearing in a cloud.

That, everything becomes familiar. What we eat, what we wear. The fact that we can run to church, come away when we like.

After all most of us are our own boss aren't we? That's a thing we say quite regularly, well I'm my own boss. That's the trouble. If the Lord was the boss we'd be in a different situation.

But right now we're our own boss. They were no longer, no longer fascinated by the fact that they had a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. They'd forgotten that God in his mercy had opened the windows of heaven and supplied their needs.

They'd forgotten the long, long succession of miracles that God had done for them. And immediately now they're rebelling against him. And asking the question, is the Lord among us? Or not? Do you think the Lord has ever been among us? Would you dare to say in the fellowship where you worship the Lord is among us? I, I get a little tired of, well I get very tired of preachers to be honest.

Particularly preachers who are tigers in the pulpit and kittens outside of it. I get tired of hearing preachers say maybe over the radio or somewhere else with vigor you know. Because they've got one eye on the unbeliever down the street and the other on the modernist up there.

And they say well thank God in this church. We're, we're not as other than us. We do believe the bible from cover to cover.

And then they spend the next twenty minutes telling you why you can't have revival. And why the gifts of the spirit aren't for today. Do you wonder the kids don't believe you? They're a bit smarter than you think.

They know you don't have what it takes to meet this generation. They know that if you stood up next Sunday morning I'd challenge you to do it and say to your congregation. Is the Lord amongst us or not? Somebody might shoot right back and say sure he's not been around here for a long while.

When our brother was singing that song I first heard it with Miss Kuhlman. He touched me oh he touched me. And I remember being in a big meeting with her with thousands of people.

And she said you know the easiest thing for your preacher to say on a Sunday is thank God we're not a great class. But you know the Lord is where two or three are gathered together and he's the same yesterday today and forever. Now she said if he is.

If he's in the midst. If he doesn't change and he doesn't. Then why isn't he doing the things in the midst now that he did when he stood in the midst in the days of his flesh? Come on you can't have it both ways.

We used to sing a song in England what if by form we cannot see we know and feel that thou art here. You know the reason we sent reports out about Crusades and everything else is nobody'd know what had happened if we didn't. And you've got to exaggerate it and inflate it and say a lot about it and where all your adjectives are.

But you know when God works you never have to advertise. There isn't a revival in history that ever cost a red cent. Crusades yes.

A star-studded platform of broken down board players and ex-movie stars and what have you got. Oh they're an awful expense. But revival never cost a dime.

Evangelism is the work of men. Revival is the work of the spirit. Evangelism is the work of the church in the world.

Revival is the work of the spirit in the church. And if you narrowed this down you wouldn't even be looking outside tonight. We have to look to the temple of our personality and say is the Lord ingraining me or not.

You know the Lord has always looked for men. And he finds them in very strange places. And he doesn't repeat what he's done before necessarily.

And when these people come in their anger and their anguish and they say because after all you've got to try and picture the measure of these people. There are possibly more than a million of them. There are possibly scores of thousands of crying babies.

There are possibly hundreds of thousands of cattle that have nothing to drink. And what with the crying of the babies and the roaring of the cattle and the displeasure of the people. Poor Moses here he is.

He's pressed on every side with his angry people. Is the Lord among us or not? Now if you read the first verse of the chapter it says all the congregation of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin. After that journeyed according to the commandment of the Lord.

Life is what's leading them. God was leading them. And he put a blockage in the way.

He put a great big rock, a lifeless rock. It had no moss on it. It had nothing growing on it.

It was the biggest obstruction that they had. And they wondered just what. Well after all the God who led them there knew it was there didn't he.

And before you throw your hymn book at them let me suggest that the God who brought you into a tight corner just recently. Well he knew you were going to get there before you got there anyhow didn't he. Did we have to make all the mountains away before we get there.

A solid rock. Oh they've forgotten the lyrical of yesterday. They didn't say come on let's get together and give God an offering of praise.

And let's thank him for all that he's passed and trust him for all that's to come. Let's remember how he delivered us from the hands of Pharaoh. And how he opened the Red Sea.

And how he opened the heavens. And lift all his mercies. When all thy mercies oh my God my rising soul today.

But how easy it is to get depressed. The first time the sun goes behind the cloud. The first time the enemy comes.

The first time your prayer isn't answered within about an hour. And down with God we say what and why. And immediately we get swallowed up with unbelief.

And the Lord says to Moses, Moses you get what I told the elders. And go and stand on that rock. And smite the rock.

I think that's very significant because apparently all the children of Israel didn't see the miracle. Because of that unbelief. Because they murmured, they were not murmuring against Moses they were murmuring against God.

And so the Lord says to Moses go and stand on a rock and I will be with thee. I once read somewhere that somebody had counted how many times the fear nots were in the Bible. And they said there were 365, one for every day.

You see God is always with the minority. God is always with the individual. The storm may roll without me.

My heart may low be laid but God is round about me. I'll be with thee there on the rock. So he doesn't ask any questions.

He doesn't set up a committee. He goes and stands on that rock and does exactly what God told him to do. Now you'd think they'd learn a lesson and they'd never need to be cured again.

But they certainly did before very long. God added another miracle to the great list of miracles. But they were like the rest of us.

They kept murmuring, complaining. In Psalm 106 the psalmist says that God led them through deep waters. In Psalm 107 he said but he led them by the right way.

You know you better be up to your neck in water. In fact you better be over your head in water with the Lord leading you than on dry land without him anyhow. My good friend Comrade Murrell sitting here.

We did five or six weeks together earlier this year. I learned a lot from him and esteem him highly in the Lord. And one thing he riveted in my mind was this.

That if you're really going to have faith. Faith can only be exercised when there's a real need. Oh he'd like to use faith like some magic thing.

As though I have the gift of faith. You have some other gifts. But here's my faith and I turn the key in the lock.

And hey presto I get things because you see I have faith. Or I'd like to use faith so that I don't get into a tight situation. Where I'm going to be embarrassed in this situation.

Because God isn't delivering me at the right moment. You see what God wanted to do. He never intended that they should stay in Rephidim.

His goal was Mount Sinai. He couldn't bring Sinai to Rephidim. He could only take them from Rephidim to Sinai.

And then he did every one of those experiences on the way. It was a riveted way. It was never without difficulty.

It was never without hostility. It was never without enemies. It was never without somebody in the rank and file who was murmuring and distressed and burdened.

Oh if only they kept their eyes on the Lord. But again the same could be said of you and of me. How many times we've got our eyes.

On the circumstance. On the situation. On the rock that isn't yielding anything at all.

You get the same kind of thing just a little further on in their history. The twentieth chapter of the book of Numbers. I believe God intended this river of lives should follow them with us wherever they went.

But disobedience and unbelief came. And the river seems to have dried up. And again Moses has to go and stand on the rock.

But this time the Lord says to him, speak to the rock. On this occasion Moses took his rod. In the seventeenth chapter of Exodus.

The rod that he threw down and it became a serpent. The rod that he weighed and it divided the sea. Oh but we're slaves aren't we.

We only need something to work for us. Immediately we put pass rights on it and say. Boy we better keep that in our minds you know.

Next time we're going to get in a tax fund. We'll use that very thing and God says no you won't. You're trusting in the rod.

We get a method. Something brings in some money or we did this or we did that. And immediately we begin to say now you know this is just because we're right.

Well I've heard preachers and you have. You've heard preachers say now look you'll never get anywhere if you're disobedient. You'll never have.

Look I can tell you individual people who are disobedient and have blessings. I can tell you a group of people who move through the whole world with revival. And they have and they do and they will continue to to defy the basic laws of God.

You say they never have genuine. They have had genuine revival. All right give you the name.

All right the salvation army. You say well what in the world's wrong with the salvation army. Well in case you don't know there are two things the salvation army have never done from 1865.

When they became a group of people until this very day. And I don't know that they're ever going to put things straight. You know what they haven't done.

Well one of the commandments of the Lord which you baptists really exercise. Was going to all the world and preach the gospel. Baptizing them in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit.

The salvation army doesn't baptize anybody. Neither by sprinkling nor by pouring nor by immersion. And it's a basic commandment isn't it.

They don't do it. They never have done it. They never will do it as far as I know.

The second thing is the Lord said when we break bread together. Do this until I come. We're looking forward to his coming.

We're looking back to his crucifixion. We're looking forward to his coronation. But never in their history have the people of the salvation army ever had the Lord suffer.

It's not a part of their fellowship. Now that's a basic commandment. Do this until I come.

They've never done it. Baptizing them they don't baptize them. And yet they've had some of the greatest revivals in history.

The salvation army went into 70 countries in 90 years. You may say today they're more of a social setup. That's all right.

But tell me what denomination hasn't backslidden apart from the Baptist. The basic commandments are there but they don't do them. And they're blessed and blessed and blessed.

Some of the greatest books on the Holy Spirit were written by some of the salvation army teachers. Now I'm not suggesting for a minute that that gives you a license to disobey the commandments of God. Not for a moment.

But I'm saying in spite of that God blesses. If God was looking for a way to condemn us maybe there'd be nobody here tonight. Or we quote John 3.16 but quote John 3.15 really before that.

That Jesus came into the world not to condemn the world. We are condemned. We're condemned by conscience.

We're condemned by memory. We're condemned by our neighbors. We're condemned by our failure.

He didn't come into the world to condemn us. We're lashed with condemnation. He came into the world to redeem us.

Now the Lord said to Moses this first time go and strike the rock. And he smote the rock twice. He says to him on the second occasion go and speak to the rock.

On the first occasion he took the rod of Moses. On the second occasion he took the rod of God. The difference being what? I think the difference being this.

That he took the rod which had been used by Aaron. The rod that budded. He had to throw aside the rod on which he had depended.

Oh it's hard to do that isn't it? Is it hard for you to give up some of your preaching habits? Or some of your forms of worship? Supposing you abandon Sunday morning and saying we'll just wait on the Lord. Till somebody rises up to praise him or to pray. Instead of this routine stand up sit down, stand up sit down.

You know the Holy Ghost couldn't come to your church till twenty to twelve on a Sunday morning could he? I mean how could he come before you lift an offering? How in the world could he come before the choir sings? You'd have a riot on your hands. The choir master would resign. The organist would say to think I gave up Thursday night when I wanted to make a new dress.

And I gave up Thursday night to rehearse the choir. And here you just gave a meeting over to the spirit at quarter past eleven. And we, the choir didn't even get to sing.

And I didn't get to you know play that nice piece I like to show off with when the offering has been taken. Two hundred years ago Charles Wesley wrote to him, stay thou insulted spirit stay. And two searing centuries have crashed through time since he wrote that.

But if he wrote it this morning he wouldn't need to change a word in it. Stand thou insulted spirit. The second time Moses wasn't obedient.

He didn't do as he was told. He was to take the rod but not smite the rock. And I don't quite know why he did it.

Maybe in his anger. But for some reason he smote the rock and yet despite the fact he disobeyed God. Water just out of that rock.

And life came to the people. The question of the people is the Lord among us or not? They knew when he was amongst them because his presence was salvation. When God is amid our midst his presence is salvation.

When God is in the midst there is life, illumination, the world. Isn't something you settle down to and say oh boy he's going to preach it. You know you see people look at the watches before you start preaching.

And they kind of sigh as much as they preach it. Could you get it over you know as soon as you can. Don't lengthen the agony.

It's awfully good of us even to come. Most of our neighbors don't even come to church. If you could cut it down to twenty minutes or even fifteen and ten would do it.

Really we wouldn't argue if it was five. But could you cut it down. It's a little hard to bear.

Ah but not when God is in the midst. We had a letter the other day from our boy who is a missionary in South America. And they're having a touch of revival down there.

Well I think it's revival when you get more than a thousand people praying till after midnight. Don't you think you'd be having revival in your church if you had that. And his wife said in a letter that little girl that we haven't seen yet.

She's two years of age. She fits through the services which are about three hours or maybe longer than that. And she's only two and if she misbehaves she knows what it means.

Oh that would kill us nearly wouldn't it. A three hour service without popcorn and cokes. Good night.

How uncivilized can you get. If ever we get meetings as long as ball games. We'll have to stand up at the seventh inning and have a stretch.

No not when there's revival. When the spirit of God is there. Somebody says you know we've been in this meeting for three hours.

And you say now don't be ridiculous. Why sure that's right. Why I didn't think the meeting had lasted more than an hour.

More than half an hour. You see when God is in the midst. When he's breathing with his life.

What happens? Well there's light. And the path of the justice is a shining light that shineth more and more and more into that perfect day. The way doesn't become broader.

It becomes more illuminated. The situation is not easier. It's more difficult.

The burdens are not lighter. They're heavier. But the compensation is that he is in the midst.

Nobody asks the question. It's superfluous. Nobody ever asks the question when the Holy Ghost is the master of ceremonies.

Nobody says is the Lord in the midst. We're too conscious that he is in the midst. And when he's in the midst.

I say there's a progressive revelation. Because of the light. There's not only progressive revelation because of light.

But if God is in the midst. God is life. Jesus says I am the way the truth and the life.

And when he's in the midst. There's not only progressive revelation. But I believe that there's a perpetual reproduction.

You know I think one day the Lord's going to make us realize that we're so bankrupt. That we'll start going back to the New Testament to see what Christianity is all about. And we'll discover that it's not really legitimate just to have one preacher in the assembly.

That really it's a body. That's not denying the right of the preacher. Because there'll be preachers as long as time endures.

The word of God makes this very plain. But the preacher does not have a monopoly of wisdom. And we'll discover that there are conditions laid down in the word of God.

After all life will only work one way and that's God's way. The church will only work one way and that's God's way. I'm not talking about gathering a bunch of people together.

I'm not talking about getting drunk with statistics. I'm not worried how many stations you broadcast over. But that doesn't interest me at all.

I don't think it's got anything to do with your spirituality. And I could prove that because all that has to happen is your income drop and you drop. But oh when the Spirit of God, when he is Lord and when he is Master.

And when he's in control and when he's in the center. When he really is the head of the body. And the body is functioning as God wants that body to function.

After all a preacher only has two things to do according to the New Testament. And number one is give himself continually to prayer and the other to the study of the word of God. That's all he has to do.

Doesn't have to visit the sick. That's the job of the elders in the church. Doesn't really have to bury the dead.

Let the dead bury the dead. But I mean somebody in the church could bury them. You see when in one state what God has given us as a formula in the New Testament.

The church of God will function. But it won't function any other way. It may appear to function.

This is true about evangelistic crusade. Far as I'm concerned I think most of our evangelistic crusade you've got a bunch of guys chasing lions with fly swatters. We can't kill the lions that are devouring the nation.

You don't shoot them down. You don't kill them. You don't destroy them by verbal power.

By if you like theological eloquence. If we could have preached revival down I think we'd have preached it down by now. I know that God uses messages and messengers.

But by the same token we're totally dependent on the Holy Ghost. Not only is God in the midst in life. And God in the midst in life.

But God is in the midst in love. The Salvation Army used to sing a song years ago. Except I am moved with compassion.

How dwelleth thy spirit in me. In thought, word and deed. Burning love is my need.

And I know I shall find it in thee. Is the Lord among us? Well it's a bit early to ask a question right at this first meeting. But I think as the meeting proceeds we'll be able to answer one way or the other.

Either he will be here overwhelmingly breaking our hearts. Causing us to seek him in repentance. If you stand in the middle of America tonight.

Even in your thinking and ask the question. I think you'd have to say no God isn't here anymore. I suggest while you do have a week off and a little quiet.

You might read carefully, slowly, prayerfully. The 58th and 59th chapters in the book of Isaiah. The church only functions for one thing.

And that is to bring glory to God. And she does that as she evangelizes the world. And there is nothing in the world.

There is nothing in the world. N-O-T-H-I-N-G In capital letters. There is nothing in the world more important to God than world evangelization.

That doesn't mean every man and woman in the world is going to be saved. It does mean this. That in a day when there are more lost people in the world tonight.

Than ever in human history. The church was never more feeble. I saw a copy of TV news.

I think it was this week's issue. In which it said on TV now that the social matters of the nation. Are going to outweigh all the spiritual considerations.

Well that's been the habit for a long while. Well you say well I'm sure God isn't with the Russians. I'm not worried about the Russians right now.

I'm worried about America. We can't go on much longer the rate we're going on. It would seem to most people in the nation.

That unless the skyscrapers fall down. And we have a blast like they had in Peru recently. Unless God Almighty comes with devastating earthquakes.

Or sends a plague or something else. There are no judgments of God in the nation. I suggest to you the judgments of God stand tall in this nation.

Or my country of England tonight. As tall as anywhere in the whole world. In the state of New York alone.

You are in New York City area. You have a hundred thousand young people drug addicted. You'd kind of think that somewhere.

Somebody might have a whole night of prayer. And get concerned wouldn't you. I never heard of it.

In the state of California they have the biggest plague of venereal disease. Amongst the teenagers that ever they've had in history. The rate of illegitimate births is higher.

Oh I can give you all the frightening sickening statistics. But you see God doesn't have to come with it. I think again it was Brother Merrill who said a while ago.

Maybe something to this effect. That one of the reasons we know that God is grieved and angry. And God is not in the midst of the nation is this.

That there's no voice of a prophet in the land. If God shuts up heaven that there's no rain. Then of course we have no crops.

We've no fertility. We get anguished and concerned. Because it's going to hit us right where it hurts the most.

That oh when God cuts off his spiritual blessing. He doesn't worry us the same. No voice of a prophet in the land anymore.

Again Christianity wasn't born to be a hot house plant. You don't have to watch the temperature. You don't have to water it very carefully.

It flies in adversity. When it's despised and hated. When hell opens its door upon it.

When there's some cruel tyrant like Nero or Domitian. Or somebody else who put the price on the head of every believer. Then of course you separate the sheep from the goats.

Or if you like you separate the wheat from the chaff. And I'm going to say right here. That I believe we've got young men tonight dying on the battlefield.

Who if they'd followed God would be dying on the mission field. You see it's easier to stir up a little more love for the stars and stripes. Or the Union Jack.

Than it is for the old rugged cross. Oh we'll sing about it sentimentally but please. Don't ask me to give up my career.

I'm going to be a lawyer. I'm going to be a doctor. I'm going to be something else.

And you see if I didn't give all my genius to this. I might just be Tom, Dick or Harry sweeping up. Collecting garbage or something.

And you could be a very holy man and do that I know. But you see by the fact I'm giving my genius to this. I'll have more money to give to the mission field.

You couldn't give God a million dollars a week in compensation. If he wants you on the mission field. You can't tip the scale.

We're living in a day when the world challenges the true believer. More than any other period in human history. And I say again the New Testament church was born in obscurity.

It was born with the powers of darkness over it. It was born with these tyrants breeding down the neck. It's very easy to read it.

It's very nice to slide over the gap between the Old and New Testaments. We don't know too much about it. We don't even try and think about it.

There's a period of four hundred years of darkness. And then you have just one voice of John Baptist. And then you have the outpouring of the Spirit of God.

But think of it. Well except you're a bigot. It wouldn't cost you too much would it.

To switch from say being a Baptist to being a Pentecostal. I'm living in an island now. And in another island not far from us.

There's a man there who's a Christian. His daughter is not a Christian. But he knows all the answers.

And he believes that he's one of the most fundamental thing in the world. But he's so bitter against the Pentecostals. He said this blasphemous thing not very long ago.

He said you know I'd rather see my daughter go to hell than become a Pentecostal. Could you ever think of a man who claims to know the Bible inside out saying a thing like that. There's a blindness for bigotry.

No it doesn't cost very much really. If you lived in South America it would. If you were a Roman Catholic and became a Protestant.

The priest would go ahead and say don't sell this woman any food. And don't sell this man any meat. And don't do this.

And little by little he'd squeeze you economically until you began to feel what it's really like. To take up the cross. You imagine Peter going down the street.

After the Holy Ghost had come upon him. He sees an old friend and he says hi Peter. And he says hello.

He says I say Peter you're not going through with this business are you. I mean Peter you know as well as I do that the Christ the miracle worker. Surely he disturbed everybody for a while.

But you know very well it's all an old woman's tale. He didn't really rise from the dead. Hey Peter see there's the high priest just going into the temple.

You know Peter you don't have a high priest. You don't have a temple. You don't have a Bible.

You don't have any prestige. Oh come off it Peter. You've always been a pretty smart fellow.

I mean we won't blame you. I mean we're as human as you are. Why don't you just say well I'm sorry.

I've been fooled. I really want to get back into the good books of people around here. And I'll be in the temple next Wednesday.

And I'll write a letter of apology to the Sanhedrin. You'd think those boys would have been smart when they came out of the upper room. And gone straight to the Sanhedrin and said we're going to have a crusade.

And we'd like you to sit on the platform with us. And we'd like some of you big shots. You know one or two of you Pharisees would really give us a bit of prestige if you sat on the platform with us.

And I think you know if you could get one or two of the servants out of the house of Herod. And that envoy that's coming from Tiberius Caesar. It would really give us a bit of a start.

Wouldn't you like to give us a bit of prestige? No. They've got everything they needed in the Holy Ghost. They were prepared to be totally split silver and gold.

I have none. They look to a man who was twisted and crippled there at the gate. The type of a world in which you and I live.

And religion tosses him a dime. And somebody else tosses him a dollar. But he's waiting to see a Christianity revived that can go to that crippled world.

And say to it stand up in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Look we're in such a mess in America there isn't a legislature that can help us. If you bring all Mr. Truman back and you bring anybody else around.

Mr. Johnson and you get them all together in the White House. And bring the whole bunch of them back and they sit up all night and try and remedy. No sir.

All the king's horses and all the king's men are not going to put America back together again. She has revived or she dies. America is beyond the place where legislation can help us.

I don't blame the kids for rebelling. Don't like the way they do it. I think they're justified in the rebellion.

I don't think they're justified in the way they do it. After all the United Nations are going to solve the problem. There'll never be another world war.

I'm old enough I'm getting ancient. I can remember the aftermath of World War I. When they said that was the war to end wars. There'll never be another world war.

And boys will watch their daddies go to fight in France at Vimy Ridge and Battle of Mons and Passchendaele. They live to fall over their father's grave. They've looked to the United Nations.

And the United Nations hasn't got an answer tonight. Bewildered and stupefied. They've looked to the World Council of Churches.

It was to go like a roaring lion. It hasn't got the bleat of a mouth. The World Council of Churches.

They've looked in every direction and all of the helpers fail and comforts flee. And so they say to us sarcastically the Church is just a stained glass ghetto in a plastic society. I think that's a biting phrase.

Plastic, the most malleable, cheapest, commonest thing that man has ever invented. We're living in a plastic society and the Church is in the middle of that plastic society as a mere ghetto. The people who are hoping against hope that somehow they'll escape hellfire and have a three-decker crown on their brow.

And they want to go to heaven and they want to rule over five cities but take up their cross now. What in the world ever made you think you're going to wear a three-decker crown? Whatever in the world made you think you're going to rule over five cities? Or me for that matter. Brother you and I tonight bear, if we're Christians, if we're born again of the Spirit of God, we bear the most honorable name in the whole history of mankind.

We bear a name that if we're ruling the anointing of God makes hell tremble when we mention it because Jesus Christ is not coming again to die or do anything but gather his own. And I think we might keep it in our minds tonight. I want to keep it in mine.

And it sobers me anyhow. I'm not interested in the things I used to be interested in. If I'd had the offers twenty years ago I've had in the last few years, man I'd have thought I got it made.

I'm not interested in those things anymore. The only thing that interests me now is to see that revival comes in the day in which we're living. That as far as I know my heart is in tune with God.

But I don't want to hinder, block in any way the outpouring of the blessing of God in this evil day in which we live. Let's keep this in mind that God can't do anything else for the world in which you and I live. All that he's ever said, if the world lasts another million years God isn't going to add a PS to that book.

He's said everything he's going to say. He hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. And that was two thousand years ago.

He's nothing to add to that book. He's nothing to add to Calvary because Jesus made a perfect atonement. He has nothing else to give to his church because the Spirit of God has been given.

It is true that you and I might receive more of him. But it's a very sobering thing, a shattering thing as far as I'm concerned to realize there's nothing more God can do. It depends on our appropriation.

Talk to me as much as you like about the sovereignty of God. And I believe in that. But God never works independent of human personality.

He finds a prophet here. He finds a messenger there. He finds an ambassador somewhere else.

And that man in the anointing of the Spirit goes forth. And when he goes, when that man's heart and life is poured out, nobody asks the question, is the Lord amongst us or not? We know he's there. And I don't care how small your church is.

I don't care what your community's like. When God the Holy Ghost comes, everybody will know he's come. I was talking to some people the other day about the early days of the Salvation Army, again 1865 and onward.

I went to work in a city 30 years ago in England. And they had one of the largest buildings that the Salvation Army ever built. There was a block of stone about the size of this desk on one side of the door and another on the other side of the door.

And it said that it was engraved on one stone, William Boole, the founder of the Salvation Army, laid this stone. On the other stone it said the Jackson sisters laid this foundation stone. They went to that community.

We don't grow any cotton in England, but they do spin it. And that area was full of cotton mills. The people were rough and tough.

They were drunk. They fought. These two women went along.

Whether you agree with women preachers or not, the Salvation Army does and they've had marvelous revivals too. And these two Jackson sisters went along. They tried everything they'd been taught in the Bible school and somehow it didn't work.

They visited the sick. They held their street meetings. They went out at night.

Everything they'd been taught in their curriculum at Bible school, they tried, it didn't work. And so in despair they wrote a letter to the founder of the Salvation Army, William Boole. They just listed the things they'd done.

Dear General, we, the Jackson sisters, we have tried this and this and this and this and this and this and this, and not one of these things worked. We're asking you to transfer us to another area of the country. We'll go anywhere if we can only leave this area.

They came to Maryborough. There was no water. Well God knew there was no water.

God knew there was no revival. The old General never had a great deal to say, but he could say a lot in a few words. And all he did was send them a telegram, not a letter.

He just sent a telegram with two words on it. Try tears, try tears. They did.

And they had revival. They built that auditorium seating seventeen hundred and fifty people and there wasn't a Sunday that the place wasn't jammed to the rafters. Month in and month out, year in and year out, until that whole community knew that God had come again to his people.

Nobody asked a question, is the Lord among us or not? It was too obvious he was there. Drunkards were saved, transformed. Jailbirds were converted.

People all over the area were marvelously transformed by the power of the Spirit of God. A question that will, I suppose, cause us some heart searching and maybe before we through the week some tears. Is the Lord among us or not? If he isn't among us, why isn't he here? If he has been with us, why has he gone? If he is gone, what will bring him back? Because except God is in the midst, there can be no true revival.

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