

Other God's Dominion Over Us

by Leonard Ravenhill

The secret to true joy is the presence of God, which brings fullness of joy and permanence.

Duration: 1:14:27

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, Malachi 3:6, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:6, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:2

Topics: "Idolatry"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of water as a symbol of blessing and joy. He refers to the pouring of water from a golden vase during a religious ceremony and highlights Jesus' presence on the last day of this ritual. The preacher also mentions the significance of the temple, which could hold thousands of people, and compares it to modern-day gatherings like sports events. He shares a story about a man questioning the presence of God in the midst of tragedy, and the pastor's response emphasizes that God is always present, even in times of suffering. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that the joy and blessings God offers are permanent and can be found through a personal relationship with Him.

Transcript

having dominion over us, but he says we will only make mention of thy name. And that gave me a clue to what I think we should think about today. Maybe you can pinpoint one of the gods that had dominion over you.

Could be a god of lust, a god of fashion, a god of covetousness. Something that you, well, to use another phrase, you idolize. Something that you thought was worth everything that you had as an offering.

And this made me wonder about the day in which we live, what are the gods of the the present hour in our society or in our way of life. I think there are two outstanding gods that we have. One is sport and the other is pleasure.

It's a strange day when a man can fight for an hour and get six million dollars. And yet people would grumble to give six hundred dollars maybe for a piece of massive surgery that saved their lives. There's no question about it that this is a great god because the right now while the sanctuaries are not filled, the sports palaces are filled.

Even on this day we would find thousands, tens of thousands of people in ballparks and elsewhere watching their particular game, the thing that fascinates them. They don't care how far they travel, they don't care if they sit in the roasting sun. As I've said, someday if you want to, if you want to make money, surely some of you men could do this, you could invent a pew as soft as a bleachers.

Because it never hurts anybody to sit in the roasting sun hour after hour after hour. But if they sit in a church that happens to have antique pews like ours that are not too soft in parts, springs have gone on most of them, they find it unbearable. Of course they blame the preacher for being boring, which may be true.

But the fact is, you see, the thing that you love you can give yourself for. Again I raise my hat to some degree to some of these men and women who were athletes in the recent contest. I think it's putrid when politics ruined them as they did, but then politics is another god.

I'm getting all kinds of literature telling me if we only get the right men in Washington we'll change the nation. That's bunkum. I can prove to you historically that doesn't work, the opposite works.

In nine cases out of ten men who got there virtuous get corrupted rather than the other way about. So the gods again I think of this day are pleasure. Oh my.

How much we'll give for it? Sport. And so Isaiah is talking not about those gods at all, he's talking about the periods when they were in bondage historically. And he says other gods had dominion over us.

Now I say today the gods are gods of pleasure. And this made me think how often when we've been traveling, just as you've seen the same thing, you see a big sign and you see these things all whirling around you know and you pay a dollar to be sick. And you get on a machine and you get up and you don't know whether the world's going round or what's wrong or if your legs have suddenly lost all their power and you stagger around.

Because you've been in what they call an amusement park. Sometimes it might be called by another name a pleasure park. But did you ever see one that was called a joy park? You see the world in which we live does not know the difference between amusement and what it calls happiness, and ecstasy, and euphoria, and mental lifts, and joy.

Now you use the word as we sang it today, I asked brother Herb to have this song. Rejoice in the Lord always. And rejoicing is really an expansion, it's a kind of super edition of joy.

It really means joy, crowded on joy. And the apostle says rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice.

I think that maybe in the eyes of the world there's one cliché, it's a scripture true enough that has been attached to the name of Jesus. And very often people quote it and they say well Jesus was a man of sorrows. Nobody ever says Jesus was a man of joy.

Now I don't believe for a minute that Jesus was frivolous, I don't think he told jokes. His mission was far too serious for that. He certainly wasn't a comedian.

He certainly didn't try to establish a rapport as people do with the audience to which he was speaking. And yet it's impossible to think of Jesus attracting little boys and girls as he did, unless there was some

radiance about him, there was something wonderfully different about him. And while I can't pinpoint and say well you know here, this is where Jesus expresses his joy or laughter, or what we would really call delight, yet I do know that he prayed for his disciples that they may have his joy fulfilled in themselves.

And he prayed not only that they should have joy but that that joy should remain, it is permanent. You see you can't buy it. It isn't even a gift of the Spirit.

It is a fruit of the Spirit. The first time I think of it in the in the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 12 verse 12 says, with joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation. That was reminding the children of Israel of the time when they had no water, water was so vital to them.

They didn't have a supply as we have it, they had to bore, drill their wells, and very often again they had dry wells. You remember how they cried by the reason of the fact they had no water. And when they discovered joy they had a, when they discovered water they had a celebration, they danced, they laughed.

It was life to them, it was life to their produce, it was life to their cattle, it was life to everything. And you remember on the last day, the great day of the feast, they did what they had done for thousands of years. You see we still keep the feast of Passover, we keep it as Easter.

And we think of the, though it's not celebrated much in this country, in Europe, the feast that we call Witzentide, or the coming of the Holy Spirit of God. The feast of Pentecost is celebrated. But somehow we've all lost trace of the feast of tabernacles.

They made booths and, and they had celebration and they had great joy. I read somewhere where a critic recently was pulled up outside of a church in England. It was about 11 o'clock and people were going to church and he noticed that about 10 old ladies went in, one man, no young people.

And he said cynically as they went in, well, I don't wonder they're going like that. He said, it seems to me by the expression on their faces that they're going to the dentists. And he said, I waited when they came out and I was sure they'd been.

Well that's good, it's facetious, but by the same token the house of God is not a circus and the preacher isn't a comedian. In this critical hour in which we're living, the onus is not on the White House but God's house. Too easy to go rummaging amongst that stuff and saying this is the fault.

You can't put the blames there. The blame is on God's house. Just a few days ago there was a big conference there in Minneapolis and one of the men, Simpson, who used to be with the Christian Missionary Alliance, now with a charismatic group and he made a point that we've so often that right now the day is fast closing upon us and before long the church will have no protection.

Personally I wouldn't care a hill of beans if they did tax churches. Not a bit. Drive a lot of the wolves away.

You'll soon find out who are the men who are really serving Christ because they love him and love people and not after a job. Before long I think that when you pay your pay packet there'll be extra things kept out of your pay packet. Before long they'll be taking a certain supply of money out of the offerings in the church.

The end of the age is crowding in upon us and there is no way of saving it either in America or anywhere else except revival. And I mean revival. I mean historic revival.

I mean that somebody somewhere has been traveling for months and months. You don't have revival to order. God isn't on the side of money and organization.

If he was I'd quit. Revival has come in the poorest circumstances, in the hardest situations, but it has never come without birth pangs. It has never come without blood and sweat.

The son of God couldn't get it any other way. Do you think you and I will get it cheaper? There's going to be a purging in the church of Jesus before long. I'm absolutely sure of this.

He's going to send his fire. He's going to come as a rushing mighty wind. He's going to come as John said, and when he comes who shall abide the day of his coming? He's going to come like the man who has the wheat there and he winnows it there with the tribulum from which we get the word tribulation.

And he says when he has come, he says John says now you just think I'm wonderful because you haven't ever seen a prophet in your life. I believe one of the signs of God's judgment on us as a nation right now is we have no prophets. If you know one tell me.

Preachers yes, clever preachers yes, theologians yes, organizers yes, prophets no. And when God is angry with a nation, he gives a nation no prophets. You see some people think that God's judgments are not around unless buildings start falling down and we have a massive earthquake or something.

Or we have a plague such as this mysterious illness in uh which could have developed in the country that's that's come pitiful enough and sorrowful enough there in Philadelphia. You see God's judgments are not always as obvious as that. Right now the great need is as the prophet Isaiah says we're in a dry and a thirsty land where no water is.

And therefore water I say was a a benediction. It brought ecstasy. It brought great joy.

And on the last day they poured out that water. No the next to the last day they did. For seven days they did it.

The last day Jesus stood in the place where day after day after day they'd poured from a golden vase, they'd poured water brought from the pool of Siloam. On the last day Jesus stood in that very place. I think one of the most heroic things he did.

That temple held more than 6,000 people. All the hierarchy were there. The men wearing their plumes.

All the distinguished people were there. And Jesus stands in the place where every day the man who had a prerogative with God according to their concept, the only man who had the right to do it, stood there and they pulled out the water and he reminded them of when the rock was split and God sent them life. And Jesus stood there on the last day, the great day of the feast and said if any man thirsts, that was a smack in between the eyes because they believed only the Jews had a right to thirst.

The Jews haven't a monopoly of God. If any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink. Out of his inmost being he said there shall flow rivers of living water.

And this spake he of the Spirit who was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. And you may have your theories as to why there's a holdup of revival and I'll tell you why. In my judgment because Jesus is not yet glorified.

There's too much trivia blocking the way. And it wasn't until the fire descended and those men came out of the upper room in the anointing of the Spirit of God that they went forth to turn the world upside down. All right? This is the secret then.

The secret is joy. With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation. Again I say joy is not a gift of the Spirit.

It is a fruit of the Spirit. But notice will you it's always second on the list. The fruit of the Spirit is what? Love and joy.

What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and joy. And joy comes by living righteously. And joy comes when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

You see it's not a mental thing. It's not merely an emotional thing. You could go to church and sing an hour and clap your hands and have all the joy in the world and fall flat on your face five minutes after if that's the only joy you have.

Because it's something you work up. It's an emotion. It's an ecstasy.

It's a euphoria. People say you know I didn't get much out of the preaching but boy I enjoyed the singing. Well I've never been to a camp meeting and enjoyed the singing and felt the same kind of relief I have.

I sat around the campfire when they've sung songs and boy when they finished I could have gone and conquered the world. You know why? I'd forgotten all about my problems and my other things and I felt real good because I'd had a good sing and my soulish part of my being has had a lift. But that isn't joy in the way that the word of God speaks of it.

What is the secret of joy? Well I put it this way and I don't know any way better to put it than you could because you have a different mind. But this is how I put it in my mind. The essence of joy, the essence is a presence.

And I found the key to it in the 16th psalm in the last verse where it says, Thou will show me the path of life, listen, in my presence is fullness of joy. You see you can take everything from me except his presence. You can take the fellowship of the saints, you can take the church, you can take my bible, you can take my freedom, but you can't take his presence.

Now often we, I've heard this quoted at funerals, you know, that somewhere beyond the bright blue sky there's a wonderful place, there's a land that is fairer than day and by faith we shall see it afar. And I wouldn't diminish that glory for anything, but I'm quite sure of this, that there's something I need between here and there. I've a long journey to make, you've a long journey to make.

You see and the New Testament makes it very, very clear that as long as you and I are in this body, in this flesh, we're going to be tested and we're going to be tried and the one thing that Satan wants to destroy in us is the peace and the joy that God has given us. In my presence is fullness of joy, not just joy, but fullness of joy. This psalm is a great psalm.

I'm not going to stay in it too long, but let me read it to you as I read it in the 16th psalm again, verse 5. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance. This is all in Ps, call them sweet Ps if you like. Verse 5, the

Lord is the portion.

In verse 6, the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places. In verse 8, I have set the Lord always before me. That's the position.

In verse 11, thou wilt show me the path of life. In my presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore. The last thing to say there is that there's permanence.

Do you remember what God said to his servants there in Malachi chapter 3? He says, I am the Lord, I change not. Now, we take it up in the New Testament and we say, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. But that is not only true of God future, it is true of God in the past.

I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. So, you see, this joy that he gives us is a permanent joy.

It's a person. It's a position. It's a possession.

It's permanent. In the 33rd chapter of Exodus, you have a man whose life had been shattered. He had had one of the most unique experiences that any man ever had from Adam to this day.

He'd been on a mountain with God. I had a phone call the other day from a young man in Pennsylvania. Seemed a very charming man.

He had a cultured voice. And I discovered he had the advantage of the best universities in this country. 35 years of age, an income of 120,000 a year, being asked to move into a vice presidency, and then move into the presidency.

The whole world dropping into his lap. But he said, somebody smuggled a book to me called, Why Revival Tarrys? And I read two verse chapters and it killed me. I'm going to tell you, he said, I sat down in a chair and I wept.

And I mean I wept. I wept with brokenness. I wept with contrition.

I wept with sorrow. Because he said, you see, God had just called me from a job of \$2,500 a week at 33 years of age, 31 years of age then. And the only thing I could do was obey him.

And we went and lived in a basement, my wife and I, and we slept together on a couch that was all messed up. And he began to tell me how God had led him step by step by step. And then he said, God said to me, shut yourself away.

I got to the end of the second chapter, he said, of Why Revival Tarrys. And in my broken condition, I said, Lord, I'm going to hide away. I promise you I'll go.

And a little while after, he said, I started reading the third chapter, and in the third chapter of your book, you said this, why don't you go and hide away? And that was confirmation. And I got a cabin in the mountains, and I met God. Did you ever meet him? Some people only meet their lousy sins.

Some people meet the logic of the preacher. Some people meet the terrors of hell. Some people are just afraid if we don't do something, God won't rescue America.

I read a book the other day when a man says, the supreme love of God in the world today is America. That's pure idolatry. We've had 25 years of living like kings, where a lot of people have been going up the road in oxcarts.

I've been in countries where in 1970 something it was, when I went, say 65, people didn't still have a g-string. They hadn't a house, they hadn't a shop, they hadn't a place of worship, they hadn't a testimony, they hadn't a missionary. What in God's name is he to bless us for? The best thing that could happen would be concentration camps.

You don't say amen, but you say it would be, because maybe that's the only way we'll get revival. He's blessed us, he's kissed us, he's nursed us, he's showered his blessings on us, and we break his sabbaths, and we fill our coats with divorce, and we're the most immoral setup we've ever had in history. It's not going to come by legislation.

It's going to come when the church of Jesus Christ has a vision of his holiness, a vision of his majesty, and we're broken and humiliated before him, where we say as John not said give me Scotland or I die, but we say give me America or I die. Moses had been on the mount with God. Do you think he ever forgot it? He comes down nursing his tables of stone.

He comes down in ecstasy. He comes down with all the joy of the Lord upon his spirit, and then he comes down, he hears music, and he says this is not the voice of the people who are crying for deliverance. This is not the voice of the people who are feared upon them, and he sees that while he was up there with God, that just a few yards down the road as it were, they made a golden image, they made a molten image, and he was angry.

And he threw down the rocks, and in a nice way God says listen Moses if I got as angry as quickly as you do, boy I'd have burned this world up many times over. And the Lord takes him on one side and talks to him a little while, and he cools down a little bit, and the Lord says now come on I'll tell you. I'm going to let Israel do this and do that.

Do you remember his answer? Moses says will your presence go with me? I think that's very wonderful. He didn't bargain with God. Why didn't he say Lord I'll admit you're the greatest person in heaven, but you know I'm the greatest person on earth.

Do you know I gave a job, I gave up an income of multi-million dollars. Do you know I used to live in a palace where the rugs were worth a million dollars each, where I had slaves. I've given up a multi-million dollar income to serve you with this lousy bunch of people.

I deserve something better than this. He didn't say that, he says give me thy presence. Do you remember the hymn writer Francis Henry Light? He went to the school our boys went to in Ireland, years before they went of course, and he wrote the hymn Abide With Me.

And in it he says I need thy presence every passing hour, not but thy grace can foil the tempter's power. You see if you have the presence of God, because God will not dwell where there's uncleanness. You may have different ideas, that's all right.

You're responsible to God for what you have. I believe one reason we don't have revival is the churches are not pure enough to handle it anyhow. Where are you going to put them if you get them saved? Mr. Chadwick was a great authority on revival and he used to say to us over and over again, gentlemen

remember this, you don't put a newborn baby in a refrigerator, Zion has to get into that place where she can mother the offspring that God is going to give.

We need what the Word of God calls mothers in Israel, that we're going to have to nourish and care for this new thing that God is going to do. The psalmist I say says that thou wilt show me the path of life. I like that.

Every other path is death, I don't care what you have on it. You can have ecclesiastical dignity, you can have your multi-million dollar crusades, you can have great people to pronounce their blessing on it, they're death in them unless he leads. But when he leads, it's the path of the just that is a shining light.

It's the path he says, thou wilt show me the path of life, and in thy presence there is fullness of joy. You see that's the answer to all our problems. I read just the other day of a man, he'd had a good profession in a church, and he had one boy that he loved very dearly, and that's quite legal, and everything the boy wanted he got.

Finally he said, Daddy, you know there's a very smart racing car down the road, at least, it's not a racing car, it's a sports car, it's an important, uh, well there is another one, well there's one in the university, but I would like this one. My favorite color is a kind of canary yellow, and, uh, I have a girlfriend and she likes yellow, she wears yellow dresses, and she likes yellow flowers, and you know, I think I could pull it off if I had this car, and Daddy bought it. Two or three days after the police rang the doorbell, and announced the boy, and somehow missed it going round the bend, and they found the wreckage of the car up against the pillar in the road.

Well, obviously they had to bury him, and the father, after the service, was talking to the pastor, and he said, you know pastor, I think I've done pretty good for the church. Remember when you needed an organ? Well, I gave you almost all the money. Remember when you needed other things, and he went on, and he said, uh, tell me pastor, where was God when my boy died? The pastor looked him straight in the eye, he said, brother, he was exactly in the same place that he was when his own son died.

Hmm? Are we Christians because it's safety first? Are we Christians because there's some kind of enchantment around us, in a dirty, sordid, wicked, perverted world like this? What's my reason for wanting his presence? I want his presence because I want to know the path of life. I want his presence because I want fullness of joy in my spirit, not in the external things. You know, in that wonderful psalm, I had been meditating for a while on this, and then I thought of this psalm 139.

I don't think any of the psalms are shallow, of course, but this is one of the most profound of all the psalms. Psalm 139 begins, thou hast searched me and known me, thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Verse 40 says, there's not a word in my tongue, but thou knowest it all together.

Verse 5, you've set me behind them before. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it. Now look at this, verse 7. Whither shall I go from thy presence, or whither shall I flee from thy, whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there.

If I make my bed in hell, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be as light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, and the darkness and light are both alike to thee. Does that strike a chord? Huh? Oh, in his presence there is fullness of joy. In eternity, this afternoon, there's an eternal anthem going, it has no discord.

They never get tired, they never get weary. The holy beings are there and they're singing, holy, holy, holy, ceaselessly. Oh, I can think of his presence, his undimming presence, his undiminished presence, before a number that nobody can number, worshipping and adoring the Lamb.

But hey, what about his presence in the other place? Do you know the torment of hell will be the presence of God's holiness? If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part, you see what he's saying? He says God is omnipresent. Some of you proved that in a foxhole, maybe. You proved it on a sinking ship, I proved it in a storm in the air, I proved it when a ship almost turned over in mid-Atlantic.

I proved it in a gold mine, I've been down a coal mine, and everywhere I've gone, I've been conscious of his presence. But the psalmist here gets out into another realm. We're thinking in eternal dimensions a minute ago.

The joy in his presence, in his presence there is fullness of joy. At his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. It's unbroken felicity.

There's no sorrow, there's no sighing, there's no weariness, there's nobody poor, there's nobody crippled, there's nobody retarded. Everybody is coming to the fullness of God's manifest power. But now he says, if I make my bed in hell, thou art there.

I believe every time somebody moves in hell, they're confronted in their sinfulness with God's holiness. They're confronted in their corruption with God's righteousness. I believe in hell forever and ever they'll hear every sermon they ever heard preached in their lives.

I believe a man will scratch his hand because he can feel the track somebody put in his hand when he was walking on a certain street and he screwed it up and threw it away. In hell, men will lust for women. The lust will be there forever.

It will never cease to burn, but they'll never satisfy that lust. God's presence. I will mimic it.

Your calamity will laugh when your fear cometh. Why, you get the two extremes there again in the book of the Revelation, where it says the righteous shall see his face. What an ecstatic moment.

I shall see him face to face and tell the story saved by grace. But others in that very same book, it says, when they see his face, when they see that face, they call for the rocks and kneels to fall on them and say, hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne. And from the wrath of the Lamb.

The majesty of God will mock at their misery. Isn't this enough to make us, as the good book says, gird up our loins? It's enough to make us awake to the realization that whether men die rich or poor, whether they die in the White House or God's house or anywhere else, except they've been born again of the Spirit of God, they have endless misery. And there is no fleeing from his presence.

There are a million roads into hell, but not one road out. In heaven there is all joy and no sorrow. In hell there is all sorrow and no joy.

In heaven there is majesty. In hell there is misery. Yes, one day the books are going to be open and we're going to be shown every step that we've taken in our pilgrim journey.

And by the same token, I believe the books will be open and the sinners will see every time they transgress the law of God. A fire will burn in them as fierce as the very fires of hell itself. You remember when the man landed in hell? There's only one case I know of of anybody praying when they got to the other side.

And that's the man who prayed from the wrong place. He prayed from hell. He prayed to the wrong person.

He prayed from Abraham. If you could pray to saints, surely he was one, but you can't pray to saints. And so he prayed from Abraham's bosom.

And the man over in the other side, in the area that we call Davi's area of hell and perdition and destruction, he said, well, hell is too terrible. I've got five brothers. Don't let them come to this place.

He didn't say heal their sicknesses. He didn't say give them some employment. He didn't say to make life a bit easier.

He says, don't let them come up, strut their way to destruction. Couldn't you send somebody from the place of perdition? And listen, you know what the answer was? If we sent somebody that rose from the dead, they wouldn't believe. And then came that terrible word, son, remember, remember, remember.

Memory is eternal. I've reminded you before that Themistocles, when he was the mayor of Athens, could recite the names of every person that lived in the city, and there were more than 40,000 of them. One of the greatest warriors that the world ever knew was a man who'd memorized the name of every soldier in his army.

There have been some fantastic memories, but no memory like the memory when the finger of God is put there on the memory of a man, and there's unleashed all the sins and habits and wickedness, just like throwing a film, and there before a thousand million people, his sins are going to be recalled, and God, who is just, won't put one more against him than he committed. You see, there's no way, humanly speaking, of describing hell, its misery, its torment. It's God's cesspool, where all the filth of the world is poured in.

You can think of the filth of Babylon, you can think of Las Vegas last night, you can think of that area where we've legalized prostitution in a Christian country, within God we trust in our coins. You can think of the lousy areas of London, you can think of other areas in Europe. They disregard every law of God and man, and all those people are going to be huddled together forever and ever, I've heard people say, you know, I, if I went into a church and there was a negro there, I'd walk out.

Well, some folk are going to have to live with them in hell forever and ever. I wonder how they'll get on there with the class distinctions. There's no race distinction there, no class distinction, no social distinction.

Just the redeemed walk in heaven, and the unredeemed walk here. And somebody would say, if I had wings, man, I'd get out of this place. Where will you go? If you go to the uttermost parts of the earth, God is there.

If you make your bed in hell, surely God is there. There is no escaping. We're prisoners of God.

The man on the street says, I'm a free man. Don't believe it. Don't believe it.

No man is free. No woman is free. One of the things that's alarming a lot of people now is they, in fact, I, I talk with a man I won't tell you how far from here he lives, but he doesn't live too far away and he discovered his house had been bugged and his, his office had been bugged and, and he was amazed to discover.

He lives within 50 miles of this very spot I'm talking from now. And he said, I wonder, I wonder, I wonder what's all been recorded there. There'll be no escaping it.

There'll be men listening and they'll, they'll listen and they'll hear for a thousand years. They'll see somebody standing there beckoning with a finger, singing just as I am without one plea. And they remember they sat night after night after night after night listening to Billy Graham or somebody.

They remember their mother's prayers. There's no escaping from it. So that presence of God, the presence of God brings ecstasy or it brings misery.

If you draw near to God, you draw with a full assurance of faith and you say, this is the crowning event of my life, that day by day I draw near to him and he draws near to me. And it really becomes true, I hope, that he walks with me and he talks with me. And he tells me I am his own.

So there is joy in drawing water from the wells of salvation. There is joy in which is a product, a by-product of obedience and that's what it is. In thy presence there is fullness of joy.

I don't care whether it's a sanctuary where God is or whether you're out on the side of the road with a flat tire and it's pouring rain and in your heart you've got a sense of his presence, you've still got fullness of joy. It is not dependent on circumstances. A lot of people want revival, they want God to bless our nation so we can live in easy street again.

But I remind you today there are more lost people in the world at this moment than ever in history. I don't know any church however spiritual it is that called a night of prayer when 50 million people went down the drain in Vietnam and Cambodia and Laos, do you? Oh we're spiritual, we've got another birth. We're spiritual because we'd six new people in.

Well those things are nice, but listen my friend, while we got one or two that are teeming, millions of the lost and unreached. And there's not a society on earth that has the method to reach them. There's only one way that it can be done.

We're trying to melt an iceberg with a match. We're trying to gather the wind in our arms. The only way is to get to that place where we're in his presence too, where God intoxicated men and women.

And God is not only first in our lives, he's everything in our lives. He is the first and the last. You see that's the kind of, that's the kind of holy zeal that men had that went and wrote the chapters in church history.

Old Dr. F.B. Meyer, I think it was, was talking one day about Peter and about those days of hardship that they had. You know in every epistle there's a background of sorrow and anguish and buffeting and opposition of the world. When people say we ought to change circumstances, I still ask you, and nobody's ever answered the question, why didn't Jesus speak about slavery? There were 60 million slaves, I can

give you the account of it.

In the world at that time they didn't fight against it, neither did the apostle Paul. Why? There's a greater goal than that. The word of the apostle I quoted earlier, rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.

That's in Philippians. Remember that? And he has said elsewhere very much the same thing anyhow. In chapter 3 of Philippians verse 1 he says, finally my brethren rejoice in the Lord.

A little later he says, ye are my joy and my crown. It's a by-product of obedience. By the pathway of duty flows the river of God's grace.

Madam Guillaume said, I want one thing only and that is his presence. Could I be cast where thou art not? That were indeed a dreadful spot, but with thee my God to guide the way, it's equal joy to go or stay. I was saying that, speaking of Peter, F.B. Meyer said this, that he had recently made a discovery about three marvelous men who were to be martyred in England.

They brought one of them and said to him, you are going to be decapitated. See that block of wood? They're going to bring you out tomorrow, they're going to read a scripture to you, which was a nice way to die of course. And we shall sing a hymn and you lay your head down there and a man will take a huge axe and off goes your head.

They said to another old man, you see that stake there? You're going to be tied to it and you're going to be burned at the stake. Many people, of course you do have a way that you can get out of that and that is that you you repent and acknowledge you've been wrong. Well they brought the old man out the next day and he was very calm, he was very confident.

And he went to the chopping block, they told him to kneel and he knelt and he just looked up and as he looked up he said very sweetly, what I think must have been one of the most beautiful things that was ever said in such a situation. With a man standing with a huge axe going to lop his head off, he looked up and he said, I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. Now how do you lick a man like that? And they chopped his head off.

And they took the other old saint and there they began to light the fire and as they lit the fire and the sparks came up, they had some special combustible stuff that came up quickly enough to really get the fire going and he said, me thinks I see roses flowering round my feet. That must be pretty embarrassing when you're trying to roast a guy to death and he enjoys it. John Bunyan, oh yes you've got to read John Bunyan's immortal classic, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and read it right after that, read the Holy War for your children, forget all about them loving Lucy and everything else, get them to something sensible.

And read Mr. Bunyan. You remember how he follows from the wicket gate, he follows the path of the pilgrim right up there to to the city of God. They put him in prison for 15 years.

That's a long while to deteriorate. And in case you don't know, they didn't have TV in the prison he went in and they didn't get their eggs cooked the way they wanted them. And they didn't play table tennis after five o'clock at night.

And they didn't go on strike if they couldn't have what they wanted. It was a lousy dirty prison. I've been to it there in Bedford in England.

I sat in his chair one day. I stood by his pulpit one day. The little Baptist preacher John Bunyan, this is what he said, this prison very sweet to me hath been since I came here and so also would hanging be if thou dear Lord wilt appear.

You know they've some humor those boys haven't they? This lousy prison is sweet to me. And he says you know if they hang me it will be gorgeous. You know when they get the rope around my neck and knock me off there and I start swinging there.

But if your presence is there he says well what else is there? This is the victory that overcometh the world. This is the mystery of godliness. Now you say does a man rejoice in circumstances? No he doesn't.

Well you said he did. I didn't. What did you say? Well you missed it all together.

You must have been sleeping. He doesn't rejoice in hanging on the end of a rope. He doesn't rejoice because his feet are beginning to crackle.

He doesn't rejoice because he sees a man shaping the edge of a big horrid sword that's already rusting with blood. He rejoices in what it says here. It says rejoice in the Lord.

What's he doing? I don't know. I don't have to do. But I'm rejoicing in the Lord.

What's he doing? I don't know. I don't have to do. But I'm rejoicing in the Lord you know what? Because great is his faithfulness.

What are you rejoicing in the Lord for? You're going to hang on the end of a rope. He says well I'll tell you. I went down the road one day.

I couldn't keep on my feet. I was drunk. And I just heard a woman saying to another woman something as well my bread is getting ready to bake and uh but oh in the church yesterday we had a sermon.

And uh the preacher said you can be born again. You can be made a new man. And he said I just sat down there at the side of them.

I just and somehow I began to sober up. And I just heard a gossiping woman. That's the way to gossip ladies.

I heard a gossiping woman talking about Jesus making people new. And you know what he did with a cursing, swearing, blaspheming thinker? He changed my life. He took my sins.

He's faithful and just. And I believe he took my sins even mine and cast them behind his back never to be remembered against me anymore forever. I was born again of the Spirit of God.

And his proof was that for 15 years he was in a lousy cell and never complained. Hmm? Ask my darling wife. I don't know but I do hope I don't have a griping spirit, a complaining spirit.

Hmm? Yeah. Do you know we got to the shop the other day? Would you believe they had no Kool-Aid? And we had a flat tire. And would you believe they didn't have a matching tire? We had to put a black one.

I mean it's horrid driving down the road. Three white wall tires and a black wall tire. I mean you feel so inferior don't you? Huh? And do you know what else happened? No but I'll tell you the other day I happened to hear a bit of news about a blast that came to a country of heathenism where they've no God

they can thank and they've no God they can blame.

And it liquidated the city. And an estimate I got was that more than a million people died that were seriously injured and the city disappeared. There isn't a shop, there isn't a place to drink water, there isn't a place for toilets, there isn't anything, there isn't anything but misery and sorrow and darkness and anguish.

And yet some God, some of God's people grumbled every day since. Come on in God's name what do you think God's gonna do? Send us pennies from heaven? We live in the most sloppy, comfortable, easy society that history has ever known. Do you think we're the most thankful people? I don't.

You see God is a just God and God's a holy God and he's not going to put up with our sin much longer. Rejoice in the Lord always. Well that's good.

What's he say here? Well let me tell you what he says. Number one, rejoice. That's nice isn't it? Number two, rejoice in the Lord.

You get that? Number three, rejoice in the Lord always. Number four, rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice.

Well why do I have to rejoice in God to that extent? Well let me tell you what he says in the chapter in case you think I make it up. He says rejoice in the Lord, number one didn't I, it's good for your nerves. Is that in the Amplified? No it's in the Ravenilified.

It's in verse six because it says be careful for nothing. Oh oh oh. What gets us down? The cares of this life.

You know as a Christian you're carrying illegal baggage if you carry cares. You don't have one care that can put a crown on your head. Well why in the world do you carry them? They put wrinkles on your brow, that's the only thing they put on you, won't put a crown on your brow.

He says rejoice in the Lord always, verse six, because you don't need to be careful for anything. Now God gave gifts to men didn't they, by the Holy Spirit. I like to remind the people the Holy Ghost can't give you anything Jesus didn't get.

And the gifts of the Spirit are the gifts of Jesus. He led captivity captive and he gave gifts unto men and the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts that God has given. Okay.

But it also says you stir up the gift of God that's in you. You see your gifts can go rusty, you can just settle down on your gifts. You can hide them like the man hid his talent.

Do you think they're working overtime in heaven, they got the measure of your head and found what size you take and they're trying to make a crown worthy of you getting there? We live like that. Oh when we get to heaven. Somebody said to John Wesley as he stood the grave side of the man he loved most, the man he said was the nearest addition to the apostle Paul, John Fletcher of Mabley.

The man who when he went to walk down the street, that dignified cultured Church of England gentlemen, the drunks took their hats off they said and propped themselves up and said there goes the man that loves our souls. They buried him there in that little church in Mabley. I passed it many times on the train going to the north and always waved my hand as I went past or the old churchyard.

There lies the body of one of the greatest saints ever lived. And John Wesley said you know heaven's going to be a wonderful place got people like that. And somebody said Mr. Wesley brush the tears away.

You'll see him before too long. Wesley in my mind one of the greatest saints that ever lived. A man that did exactly what we read of here in the Word of God.

He had a consuming love. He was devoured by the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a joy unspeakable but when people took a hatchet and were going to split his head open he said I had an inward calm.

Do you know what I believe joy is? It's a dignity of the soul. It's character. And he said when a man was going to split my head with a cleaver I just felt an inward joy, a peace, a stability.

But you were saying just now about me renewing fellowship with Mr. Fletcher in heaven. Oh friend he said. You know what the only time I see Fletcher will be when the radiance of Christ flashes on his face because he'll be right up there at the head of the whole marriage supper and John Wesley will be so far behind that I'll only see the reflected glory of Jesus in his face.

I feel so unworthy to be in the same heaven. Do you ever feel as unworthy as that or do you feel you know you know Lord you got something when you got me. I mean my ability and all I have I could have been almost anything but I was at you were nothing when he found you then.

Few men in history had all Wesley had. Genius, poetry, gift of languages, money, social standing, intellect, name it he had it. As I've said my problem with Wesley is he was more spiritual when he wasn't spiritual than I am when I am spiritual.

He got up at four o'clock in the morning to pray when he wasn't saved. He refused to spend a surplus penny because there were so many people who were poor. But one day he picked up a piece of paper that a French lady had written a hundred years before before he was saved.

He was saved when 24th of May 1738. She wrote it in 1630 something. He loved reading the French poets and he read what this little French lady wrote.

And she'd written this. Come Savior Jesus from above. Assist me with thy heavenly grace.

Empty my heart of earthly love and for thyself prepare a place. Now that's pretty. And then she added this.

Nothing on earth do I desire but thy pure love within my breast. This only this will I require and freely give up all the rest. Wealth, honor, pleasure and what else this short enduring world can give.

Tempt as ye will my soul rebels for Christ alone resolved to live. Thee will I love and thee alone with pure delight and inward bliss. To know thou takes me for thine own.

Oh what a happiness is this. Nice isn't it? Poetic, rhetoric, oratory, poetry. The only thing was he got it in his flesh and blood and he did it.

He could have died the Prime Minister of England. He gave his genius to men and women in the gutter. He could have had Edison medicine because he loved to invent things.

But he shut himself away and mastered the word of God. He could have died a multimillionaire. He had the genius.

He died practically penniless except for a pound for each man who would carry him to his burial place. He says I let none of these things move me. Rejoice in the Lord why? Because I can have an experience in God where I'm careful for nothing.

And in the same verse where I'm thankful for anything, where I'm prayerful in everything. And in the same verse where I'm thankful for anything. That's a mighty lot of stuff in one verse isn't it? And rejoice in the Lord you know why? Because in verse 13 he says I can do quite a few things with the help of the Lord.

That must be the New English Bible. Verse 13 says I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. Well that's enough to make you rejoice isn't it? I can have a hundred percent victory through Christ.

Man the Lord will make me leap for joy. And then he says in verse 19 of the same chapter that my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. There's an interesting verse let me finish with it in the epistle of James.

The first epistle. There's only one. And the first chapter in verse two.

Listen what he says. My brethren count it all joy when you inherit money, when you get promotion, when your husband buys you the best birthday gift you ever had in your life, when circumstances all line up and the angels waken you every morning. My that sounds nice.

Isn't it funny what the Bible says? Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Oh man that spoils it. Brother Raymond you got me up in the air I'm down on earth again.

Well you happen to be going to live on earth the next few days so maybe you're in the best place eh? Count it all joy when you when you fall into divers temptations. Oh my. Do you remember last week or was it the week before we were talking about sanctification? What did it talk there about the trial of your faith? And Peter goes on in this very epistle, in his epistle the first chapter talk about the trial of your faith which is more precious than gold.

You see we've got a crazy ridiculous idea even in the church. Success is greatness, success is numbers, success is business. I can show you hundreds of preachers in this country and any other country who I believe in the sight of God are number one failures but outside they're number one successes.

They know how to organize, they know how to be sweet, they've got personalities and they can really put it over. The sign of favor is not success the sign of favor is first his presence and you can count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. We had a very, very wealthy lady in England and she inherited amongst other things in her art treasures and so forth, she inherited a rope of pearls.

They didn't come out very often she wore them on state festivals you know and going to Buckingham Palace or going to some great celebration but they were very beautiful. And someone would come and say you know I've never seen pearls like those. I notice the clasp at the back is different.

Yes it was a rope of pearls but it wasn't a it was all handmade. A certain craftsman made it he used to make it for the court of Russia or something you know. And really I shouldn't wear these jewels because they're worth so much.

Oh why they're beautiful. But you know one day when she was talking to a very old friend the lady had got to be old herself she said you know I can remember you wearing those jewels when you were not much more than a teenager. Do you think they're as precious now as when you got them? She said oh yeah more, more, more.

The value of the markets changed. Oh well I just want to tell you something. They're not as beautiful as they used to be.

They've gone very dull. At one time I would look at them while other people were talking I'd be, I'd be absorbed by their beauty but they've no radiance. As a matter of fact I'm not sure I'd even want to wear them.

The lady was spoiled for the evening. She went home and eventually she went to see a jeweler that she knew and and he said well yes no question about it. I just took them in the dark.

I checked them and they've lost their luster. Can you restore it? Mm-hmm. Would it be very expensive? No not very expensive.

That's not the factor. It's not the money that's involved. What's the factor? Well um it's the time it's going to take.

Oh well I do have a banquet to go to in about a month could it? No. Well um I have a granddaughter getting married next year to a very wealthy person would that? No. Oh so really the problem is the is the time.

Well no that's not really the problem. What is it? I mean expense. No no it's not expense.

It's uh number one problem one problem is time sure enough but the other is the danger involved in it. Involved in it? In just putting the luster back in some pearls? Mm-hmm. What is it involved? Oh I can't tell you that.

That if you loan them to me I'll get them insured and I'll return them between two and three years. Could be four but I think three would do it. Well I'll have to consider this with my husband and my lawyer and oh go ahead I'm not bothered to handle them.

Finally she came back and she said well I'm leaving them in your hands and I've got them insured and would you let me know and she kept hoping and hoping and it got one year passed and two years passed and almost the end of the third year and one day a man came riding up the avenue galloping up on his horse and uh he wanted to see the duchess. She was to go down to the jewelers and he took her into a room and there he showed her the jewels the the uh pearls. Oh the luster on them.

He only had the light on dull but but they were radiant they were throwing out all those exquisite colors they were magnificent. They looked as though they'd been reborn and just born and she said but I I don't understand that is it going to cost me very much and he said no it's it's really not expensive. But aren't they beautiful? Yes they are.

Do you really think they're as beautiful as when you first inherited? I I think they're better because I'd heard so many stories about them now I can believe it. So it's not the expense no the time factor it's over three years yes. Will you tell me the secret? Well all right he said yes because you may want to tell it to your

grandchildren.

You see there's only one way to restore the luster in those pearls and that was to put them back where they came from. So I had a special contraption made. It was something like a calendar.

It was something like a ball and holes were pierced in it and I had these pearls so none of them could escape and then I I rented a diver and he went down off the coast where I happened to know a certain thing about the waters there and he went way down in the deep and and he anchored that that ball with with all those jewels those pearls in he anchored it there in the in the bruising of the water where the water goes past at a certain rate and there's certain qualities and and I knew they would have to stay there. But you see what they needed in order to get their luster they needed to go back in the darkness. You know there's one way amongst others the Lord told me today about making us appreciate what we've got.

One of two you can do it with children in various things. That is increase the amount of what they've got and they might value it more or else take the whole thing away and let them realize they've nothing and then they want the thing that they didn't value when they had it. Do you think that's the way freedom goes? You think sometimes I'm a bit hostile against America? No England's in the same mess.

Face it the whole world's in the same mess. The only difference now between now and World War I and World War II is this that it says in the last days that we'll be what? Well there's going to be wars and rumors of war sure enough but there's another thing added on for our day and it's perplexity of nations. Nobody knows the way out.

There isn't a man in the White House knows that there isn't a man in government knows the way out. They're all mystified right now about the dollar. There are two things that scare me.

What is America going to do with the Jews? Because if we quit the Jews you can start digging our grave I'll tell you that. And I had a man in my home just a few days ago from Israel he said the most hated man in the world in Israel is Kissinger. The number two spot that gone quiet since they quietened down about the Panama Canal the number two problem is what are we going to do with little free China called Taiwan? Well according to the third century report which is Christian I get it a friend of mine subscribes for it for me it says that Kissinger and Ford have agreed to let it slide under the table till after the election and then goodbye.

We want to trade with big mighty China what do we want to bother with a little Christian country that lets us have a few cheap TVs and radios and things. No I don't understand the complicated situation neither financially morally I see a bit of it spiritually I think I understand some of it. You got to remember this this is God's world.

God's son died to redeem it. God's heartache right now is the church not America as a nation the church in America the church in England the church in Australia the rest. And I get as much heartache over it as anybody.

I'm making no false moves. I could join a dozen things this week if I wanted. There's all kinds of glamour jobs hanging around.

All kinds of ways go here in the world go there we'll set you up with this we'll do that for what? Happen to have seen too many in my day. They become abortive. There is only one way and that is that when we get to the centre of the whole situation to say Lord your presence is my joy.

Your presence of peace. Your presence of power. I don't care if you wreck the economy.

I don't care if you let America be invaded with the communists there's a world of good and England and elsewhere or would it? No those things in themselves won't bring revival. One thing brings revival when the Holy Spirit of God comes in one of his supreme offices is to bring conviction. You know these days we talk I've got friends number of friends we talk about Finney.

Let a little saying today about Finney maybe the greatest soul in America ever had. But he didn't preach 20 minutes and beg 20 minutes for folk to come forward. A month from now I'll be preaching to maybe a thousand preachers.

And I've told them repeatedly the most ridiculous people in the world today I think are evangelists. They expect to go to a meeting and in 20 minutes break up the fallow ground, sow the seed, water the seed and reap a harvest. Nobody else expects to do that.

I wish I could do that in my garden. Put some fruit trees in two weeks ago and there's nothing on them. And we've watered them and looked after them and they still have no fruit.

You see fruit is not just from a tree. Fruit is the overflow of life in a tree. And the fruit of the Spirit is the overflow of life in us.

Love, joy, peace. Joy is being satisfied in the place where he has put me without a gripe, without a grumble, without a secret complaint. In his presence is fullness of joy.

And I say you can cut me off, you can wall me in, you can't roof me in. You can cut me off from everybody else, you can't cut me off from his presence. And he says in his presence is fullness of joy.

He says rejoice in the Lord. And maybe right now you can't rejoice in your circumstances but you can rejoice in the Lord. You can't perhaps rejoice in your health, you can rejoice in the Lord.

You can't rejoice in a dozen things that seem to hem you in, you can rejoice in the Lord. Why? Number one, he saved you. Number two, he'll keep you.

Number three, he can keep you from falling. Number four, he can keep you from grumbling. Number five, he can present you faultless before his Father's throne with exceeding great joy.

Brother, if that isn't something to shout aloud for, I don't know what is. John Bunyan says this and I'm through. Do you remember what he said amongst other things? When the man got saved, the man's staggering up the hill with a burden and he says, I came to a place where two ways met.

It was walled on either side and before me there was a cross, a place somewhat ascending. And he says this, if I remember it correctly in words, it's as near as this and he said, I saw a cross, the burden loose from off my back and it began to roll down the hill and it fell into an empty sepulcher where I beheld it no more forever and I gave three leaps for joy. One for the Father, one for the Son and one for the Holy Ghost.

But after all, they were the agencies of his redemption. I gave three leaps for joy. Huh? Isn't it great to have his joy? The world doesn't know a thing about it.

You can't buy it, you can't bargain for it, you can't sell it, you can't get it injected, nobody can hand it on to you, nobody can take it from you. Because Jesus prays and read it in John 15, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves and your joy. No man taking it from you.

If you lose your joy, you lose it. Now don't, don't, don't try and edge that. You say, I've lost my joy.

Exactly, you lost it. Nobody took it from you. God doesn't want to.

People can't, the devil would try to, but if you let it go, you let it go. Under temptation, under trial, under some hostility, it's your joy, it's your peace, you've a right to keep it. Rejoice.

In the Lord always and again I say rejoice. My joy shall remain in you. And no man shall take it from you.

You know when we've been there about, what's the song say? When we've been there ten, I don't know whether he said that. That won't be one tick of the clock, he should have said when we've been there ten million years. And that wouldn't be a tick of the clock.

But oh, when we get into his eternal presence, where there will be fullness of joy, the world, the word of God says that, I hath not seen, heareth not heard, neither hath it yet entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed some of them to us by his Spirit. And I like the hymn that says, Oh what a foretaste of glory divine. You know the very best moment you've had on earth will be the worst moment you'll have in heaven.

You know that with all you've had, you may have had miracles and healings and tongues and signs and wonders, you know you haven't even tasted one millionth part of redemption. That's what the book says. That's what the book says.

That our redemption doth night. That as yet we haven't tasted. Oh he's done a lot more for some of us than for others, but you know what? We've never entered into it yet.

And thank God when we cross that borderline there'll be no chance of anybody stealing anything we've got, joy or peace or rest or anything. So let's rejoice. Doesn't mean you always have a grin.

You may be in heaviness through manifold temptation, but you can still have joy and peace deep, deep, deep, deep down there in your spirit that no, nothing can reach and no man can take it and no one else can take it. It's peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And we pray.

Again our Father we thank you this afternoon for your word. We thank you for this undiminishing truth. It changes not because you change not.

And we pray Lord as we go to a world that wears its cares and its sorrows on the headlines of the newspapers, on the faces of people, that Lord we'll have that deep joy, that deep inward peace that you give, that which money cannot buy, that which wars and rumors of wars cannot take away, the abiding joy of the Holy Ghost in our lives, that others will take knowledge of us that we've been with Jesus. We do remember the sorrowing, suffering church in its anguish. We remember those atheists, those godless people trained in unbelief, trained to oppose your truth.

In China we can't imagine their misery. We can't imagine mothers running around with not even a drop of water to give them. We can't imagine anything but plague and destruction sweeping over it and they'll not in any way tell us what's happening.

We pray that somehow in their misery, that something may happen to turn this curse into blessing, to turn this death into life, to turn this sorrow into rejoicing. I hope us to go forth as those men in your word. It says that when they went forth they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

So let thy presence be upon each of us we ask in Jesus name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4259.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/leonard-ravenhill/other-gods-dominion-over-us/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net