

Paul's Passion and Preaching - Part 3

by Leonard Ravenhill

Paul's passion and preaching emphasize the importance of living for Christ and being magnified by God, whether through life or death.

Duration: 7:51

Scripture: Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:20-21, Colossians 3:9-10, Hebrews 12:14, Jude 1:21

Topics: "Authentic Faith", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living in alignment with the teachings of the Bible, highlighting the discrepancy between what is preached and how one actually lives. It delves into the story of Madame Guillén, who found contentment and joy in God even in the midst of imprisonment and adversity. The sermon challenges listeners to seek a deeper, genuine relationship with God rather than just superficial knowledge or religious practices.

Transcript

I like the way our dear Paul is reading Monday. Time and again he's held this book up here and says whatever books we're going to be judged by when we get to heaven, surely we're going to judge by this book. Do you know you'll wish you hadn't boasted about so much Bible knowledge when you get there? When God says this is what you boasted of and there's where you lived, you talked about that, you lived down there.

You taught freedom, you lived in bondage. You taught purity and you lived in pollution. You taught liberty and you're a captive.

It's an awful thing ever to have that word of God. I say almost to all the fellows that come in my room, I don't have a lot of books, I have a good few hundred, and I say you know all these men that wrote profound things that they wrote and yet not one of them had a bigger Bible than I have. Madame Guillén wrote some wonderful things.

We're from a lousy prison, it's not there any longer. The walls were 30 feet thick and they shut her up, they took her Bible away, they wouldn't let a confessor go and have fellowship with her. And there she sings triumphantly, a little bird am I, shut off from fields of air, content within this cage to lie, for God has pleased me here.

Well pleased a prisoner to be, because my God, it pleased a thief. It pleased God to shut a tender, gracious, brilliant woman up in prison for years. What pleasure does God get out of it? One she never murmured, she never complained, she loved him more and more.

She said there's nobody else to love anyhow. I love you, love so amazing, so divine. I had a brilliant young man came to see me today, my son Paul.

And we had a wonderful time, we've hardly had any time with him at all this time on home. Now I'll be going Monday, now be merciful if you want to talk to him, please don't go to the house, he won't be there tonight anyhow. But call on the phone if you want to wish him goodbye.

But he was telling me today, he'd been reading again, part of this woman, Madame Guion, her works are being republished in America recently. And there was a French teacher called Didion, or Didio I suppose it is. And he said, you know, it pains me to think how few people really enter into a living relationship with God.

We're all living on the perimeter. We're all in water to the ankles, not water to swim in. I'm not going to listen to your sermons and all the rest of it.

I want to see God work. Paul, I think, was the greatest preacher ever. He wasn't an auditor.

Apollos was the auditor of the early church. He was the greatest theologian. He had the greatest concept of God.

But remember what he says, my speech, my word, my preaching was not in word only, but in power and demonstration. And that's more than tongues. Dear God, we've got lost in gifts.

We don't exalt Christ, we exalt gifts, prophecy, interpretation. Paul would have loved this hymn. I haven't memorized it, I should do.

It's written by a man called Brook. It's pretty strong, I think. He says, my goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessing.

My goal is God himself, not joy, nor peace, not even blessing, but himself my God. It is his to lead me there, not thine, but his, at any cost, dear Lord, by any road. So faith bounds forward to its goals in God, and love can trust the Lord to lead her there.

Upheld by him, my soul is falling hard, till God hath full fulfilled my earnest prayer. No matter if the way be sometimes dark, no matter though the cost be often great, he knoweth how I best shall reach the goal, the mark, the way that leads to him must needs be straight. One thing I know I cannot say him nay.

One thing I do, I press toward my Lord, my God, my glory here from day to day, and in the glory there, my great reward. I usually ask a congregation somewhere, particularly when I go to a new place, as I did last week to some hundreds of preachers and other people, did you come here tonight to meet God? Ninety-nine percent of people in America do not go to church to meet God, not in England, they go to hear a sermon about him. They don't expect a divine invasion, they don't expect a confrontation, they don't expect the word to become a mirror, and I see all the corruption in my nature, and before an altar call I scream and say, I'm corrupt, woe is me, I'm undone.

Remember that man didn't say, I didn't say, Lord, I need a bit of help, I'm a bit weak, give me a bit of help. Lord, I need a bit of courage for a job. Lord, I'm behind in my tithing.

Lord, he said two desperate things that bring personal revival, I am under and I'm unclean. And when you get there, brother, you're serious with God, then he starts doing some surgery, and it's desperate, but it's desperately needed in this awesome hour in which we live. I'm going to skip into this again, Philippians.

So what does he say? He'd been asking for prayer, but listen to what he says again, that Christ may be magnified in my body. He doesn't say, Lord, make me a more attractive minister, don't give me a deeper ministry, don't give me more miracles, don't make me a star person, God in heaven. I used to covet that at one time.

There's a competition amongst preachers, and I was foolish, foolish enough to fall into it, but there came a day when, boy, all that went. I couldn't care less what people think or say. He says that Christ may be magnified in my body.

He's not passing an opinion here, he's declaring a principle that must take place in his life. Let's say here, verses 20 to 21, he says that Christ may be magnified by my body, whether by life or by death. He says, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain, but listen, it's only gain to die if you're dying Christ, it's hell if you don't.

You've got to be leading right up to every bit of light you've got. As I've told you before, I want to be in that position with God that without a second's notice, he can transfer me from here to heaven without me being an embarrassment to him when I get there. I'm supposed to be made for his praise.

I'm supposed to be pure in heart. I'm supposed to have rejected every other vile affection, every other thing which would contaminate my life, and that's how we have to live anyhow. We're not going to get a notice, most of us, that we're going to die.

You know, people say, I believe Jesus may come today. I say, you're lying. Oh, that's a rough thing to say.

I say, if you believed Jesus would come before 12 o'clock tonight, you'd make a dozen telephone calls, you'd do this, you'd do that, you'd do the other, you'd level your own life. You'll be asking God to do it, you'd go do it yourself. The scripture says, keep yourself in the love of God.

There are so many commandments. Read Hebrews, let us, let us, let us. You know, we sing Jesus paid it all, that's not true.

In blood redemption, yes, but there are things I have to do. I have to put off the old man, I have to put on the new man. I have to renounce this world, all of its pleasures, its pomp and its pride.

Give me but Jesus, my Lord, crucified. So let's say this then here, verse 20 and 21. I call this Paul's purpose.

In Galatians 2, 20, you remember, he says, I'm crucified with Christ, for ever and ever I live, not I, but Christ, and the life which I now live in the flesh.

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