

# Pharisees

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for repentance and a focus on inner transformation, rather than external appearances and material possessions, in order to truly enter the kingdom of God.*

**Duration:** 1:01:38

**Scripture:** Luke 15:1

**Topics:** "Pharisees"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the state of the church and the need for revival. He criticizes the increasing focus on traditions and vanity within the church, emphasizing the importance of the glory of the Lord filling the temple. The preacher also addresses the issue of Christmas parties and highlights the need for brokenness and a genuine desire for God. He references the psalmist's longing for God and compares it to a deer panting for water. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the Pharisees' contempt for sinners and the importance of Christ receiving sinful men.

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## Transcript

Okay, let's look at the Gospel recorded by Luke, and the 16th chapter. Luke chapter 16. Chapter 15 begins by saying, Then drew near unto him publicans and sinners, for to hear him.

The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, Can you imagine these haughty, arrogant, self-righteous, self-satisfied Pharisees? What did they say? Contemptuously, this man receiveth sinners. Aren't you glad he didn't? Where would you be if you hadn't? When I first went, the first time I went to Ireland, I was very impressed with quite a number of things. First of all, we had the prayer meeting in a building that had no floor.

It was mud. And the water was streaking down the side of the hill, and so I put my feet on the rest, you know, on the chair. But the praying was wonderful.

And one of the favoring hymns there was, Christ receiveth sinful men. Do you know that one? Sing it o'er and o'er again, Christ receiveth sinful men. Well, that's how we sang it, you know, being good Methodists, we sang it like that.

Sing it o'er and o'er again, Christ receiveth sinful men. And the women tipped in, and women as well. When there were women in the upper room, there were women in heaven.

Maybe not too many, because it says there's silence for the space of half an hour, so I'm not so sure. This man receiveth sinners. How contentious they were.

I was reading this week about one of the great preachers last century in, I was going to say in America, no, in Scotland. He was extremely well equipped with a wonderful personality, vocabulary. Everything was his.

And one day he went down into town and preached and the crowd assembled. There was another man there who had a face. He was a butcher, he only had one eye.

And he had a skin problem that made his face very, very red. And he had a shrill voice. And everything about him was kind of offensive.

And yet one end of the face, this brilliant preacher was preaching, and this man who, the description I had of him said it looked as though his face had been chopped out with his own axe that he chopped meat with. He was so repulsive. But once he got anointed, he was totally transformed.

You know, we put so much stress on personality today. Before slavery was abolished in America, it was abolished in the British Empire. And one of the men that was the instigator of it, chiefly along with Wesley and others, was a man by the name of Wilberforce.

And he was grotesquely built. He had very long legs, a very short body, extraordinarily large arms. And sometimes he'd jump up on a seat in the Houses of Parliament and get going, and get anointing, because indeed he was a wonderful preacher, and teacher, and man of God.

And somebody said, when he stood up there, he forgot all about the shape of his body, his arms, his long legs. He was totally transformed. He appeared like an angel.

You know, that's what God does with personality. We put so much stress on vocabulary, personality, hairstyles. Some of the boys go to beauty parlors now.

Isn't that something? I see some of them nodding, they're guilty. Come and repent, but it's all right. Dave, you don't get your hair done, do you? I don't get mine done either.

But isn't it wonderful what God uses, who God uses? Okay, let's come to 16, chapter 16. I read that because I want you to know here that from this 15th chapter onward, Jesus is on a collision course with a Pharisee. They had never left him at all.

Pharisees and Sadducees. Pharisees believed in a resurrection, and the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection. If somebody quit, that's why they were Sadducees, because they didn't believe in a resurrection.

They had no hope. Verse 14 of chapter 15 says, And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him. Maybe in your scripture, as it is in many of the scriptures, it says, The Pharisees who loved money.

And he said unto them, Yea, they which justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in his sight. The law and the prophets were until John.

Since that time the kingdom of God is free, and every man presseth into it. Or one version says, every man gets in with violence. Now remember, he's talking to these self-satisfied, self-righteous, self-sufficient, self-contained Pharisees.

And he says, the only way for you to enter the kingdom, you're covetous, they love money. Remember what it says in Colossians 3, doesn't it? That covetousness is as a sin of idolatry. And idolatry is a sin for which one could be publicly stoned in the Old Testament.

You see, they were totally consumed with materialism. As many professing Christians are today. And he said, if you're coming into the kingdom, you'll have to come in with violence.

Remember what it literally means? You'll have to come in and tread underfoot all the treasures that you have. Your security, your arrogance, your knowledge, your religion, all you have is wrong. You'll have to tread underfoot, you'll have to break through the whole thing.

If you're coming into the kingdom, there's no easy way in for anyone. It's a cost, cost, cost. He says, for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God.

That which is highly esteemed. He's given preeminence amongst men is an abomination in the sight of God. The Greek there actually says it's a stench.

The things you treasure that corrupts in the sight of God. See, these men loved preeminence. They stood at street corners and prayed and stroked their beards.

They loved popularity. They loved preeminence. They loved prosperity.

They loved everything which is contrary to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. His kingdom is invisible. The treasures we have are not in earth and vessel in the sense that we think of them.

And so he says, if you want to press into the kingdom, the only way to come in, that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. And he goes on in verse 20, he says, there was a certain beggar named Lazarus which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which swell from the rich man's table. Well, I'm putting that in there for this reason.

The dogs came and licked his sores. Nobody else cared for him. And it says the rich man died and was buried.

The poor man died and was carried. One was rich on earth and the other was rich in his relationship with God. I'm going to put a twist on this that you won't like, I'm sure.

That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. So we've come back where? To Christmas. Highly esteemed amongst men.

Millions of Christians are more excited about the Christmas tree and the trimmings than they are about the second coming of Jesus Christ. You know, this pollution has not only entered your homes, our homes, it's entered the church. They have to have their Christmas bazaars, their Christmas banquets, their Christmas shows, their Christmas trees.

I thought there was one there, I was going to say, take it away, but anyhow. You know, it began actually, it began in Babylon. And it began with a woman that was called the Queen of Heaven in those days.

And in the heathen religion of Babylon they had a woman and she had a child. Well then from there it passed through the second chapter of Revelation where it talks about Pergamus, which was corrupt. From there it passed on to Rome.

There's nothing in the Scripture about Christmas. There's no church history that mentions Christmas celebration until the third or the fourth century actually. It's an artificial thing.

You see, the church of Rome couldn't get the people to give up their heathen practices. Last Friday night I preached in a big auditorium. And I preached on one of my favorite characters, Elijah.

I think he was there, he did a good job. And I mentioned that he went out, what did he do? The people had built groves and thrashed it off. I said, you don't build them, you bring it in the house.

Come on, what do you think Jesus feels like right now looking down in Christian homes right as an emblem of idolatry, an emblem of worldliness? We're suspicious of other things. We don't want dances in the church. We don't want this and that in the church.

And yet hundreds of churches have a celebration. They bring in the streets. They decorate the streets.

Well, it's supposed to be about 50 million born-again people in America. Supposing half of them have a Christmas tree. That's 25 million.

Supposing they pay \$7 to \$10 each, how many millions is that? How many millions of hours do we spend fooling with a tree? Searching for it, putting it up, decorating it. And yet those people, you can get them in a church, they'll come to a banquet, they'll come to a Christmas festivity. That's it.

But God in heaven, I tell you, as sure as I'm here tonight, I think things are slight on God. We don't believe His word. The world is seeking on the edge of something far worse than any holocaust the world has ever known.

We're heading for judgment. And yet we're fooling around in church, singing and having parties and carrying on. And that which is esteemed highly amongst men, it is.

Well, some of you may disagree with me. Well, if you do, you're wrong, but anyhow. But you know, you can't touch this thing.

We have a dear couple of people in a Bible class we go to sometimes in Waco. Very, very godly people. And they have a lovely little baby about, little boy about three years of age.

But the in-laws are mad with them, because they won't have a Christmas tree. Because they won't tell the child about Santa Claus. What's Santa Claus got to do with Christmas? You'll hear more about Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer this year than you've ever heard in your life.

Or Winter Wonderland. The old, old carols are passing out. The interesting brightest and best are the Sons of the Morning.

And a whole host of carols that I haven't heard for the last decade. And there is such a seeping in, a worldliness into the church. You can get them to do anything but pray.

The most difficult thing is to get people to pray. We're so caught up with the visible. Well, we're doing this, of course, but it's raising money for the church.

You can tell when a church is spiritually bankrupt, it has to beg for money. If people are really paying their tithes and offerings, and personally I don't believe we'll get a fraction of reward for paying our tithes. That's God's income tax.

The reward will be on our offerings. I don't expect a dime for what I've given. The income tax of God is, I want to say, ten percent.

But you see, we've slipped into so many wretched things that we call culture, and they're not, they're heathen. Christmas is a heathen celebration. The Catholics couldn't get those heathen people to stop dancing around the druids, dancing around priests in England.

And they couldn't make an improvement with the others, so what did they do? They bought a pagan festival, celebrating that queen with a babe and said that was the Virgin Mary, and they married the two. And they gave a special mass, Christ's Mass, Christmas. Even Jimmy Shaggart, poor guy, he's no one to visit.

He must be, because I heard him, I love the guy. But he said a couple of weeks ago, we need to put Christ into Christmas. He never was in it.

He never was in Christmas. It's a pagan festival. There's nobody on earth, there's not a historian can prove that the shepherds were watching their flocks on the 25th of December for the simple reason that it's a rainy season, a cold season, and they couldn't stand out there.

They'd already moved their sheep and protected them, put them in a protection. And there's nothing at all that suggests, in the word of God, it was the 25th of December. You know what? I wonder how often you celebrate your birth.

I don't mean your physical birth, you're nothing to do with that. How often do you celebrate your spiritual birth? That precious man who, well he didn't write the Psalms of the Time of Thinking, but out of his diary, a lady gathered all those verses, you know the hymn, the Psalms of the Time of Thinking, the dawn of heaven breaks, the sun of all night strides forth, that fair sweet dawn awakes. Dark has been the midnight, but day springs at hand, but glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.

I like this verse, with mercy and with judgment, like my web of time he wove, and I, the dew of sorrow, was lusted by his love. I'll bless the hand that guided, I'll bless the heart that planned, when thrown where glory dwelleth, in Emmanuel's land. Then he says a verse I've tried to see fulfilled for sixty years.

The bride eyes not her garments, come on. You ever see a bride get married not looking at her dress? Good night, she looks at herself fifty times in the mirror. Then she rejoices as at last she's caught him.

The bride eyes not her garments, but her dear bridegroom's face. Come on, how often do you, well it was Rutherford who said, look, if the glory of your own experience of birth in Christ fades, you're in trouble. You need to wait on him and gaze on him and realize how merciful he was to intervene in your life and rescue you from a horrible pit and from destruction.

You know, we ought to celebrate every day of our lives. We shouldn't have to wait until this stupid festival of Christmas, this pagan thing. I say, as the Lord looks down right now, and he sees all these multitude of millions of people across the nation or in England, fooling around with trees and tinsel and toys, are you going to suggest he sees all the trouble of his soul in that? Do you think all these celebrations, my dear wife and I were in a meeting some time ago, two or three years back or more, and they had a crib, you know, on the platform there and they put a live baby in it.

I thought that was horrible. I can't put up with these plays, these Christian plays and drama. Once we've lost the anointing of the Holy Ghost, you have to fill it in with something.

I heard somebody say that there isn't a preaching, an anointed preaching within 50 miles of Tyler these days. There are some good men there, I admit. But where's the thrust at the Lord? Where's the trembling? Where are people going home to be sleepless? As I say, we're not concerned even about the second coming of Jesus, actually.

If we were, we'd be really uptight with God in our praying, in our devotion, in everything. But things which are highly esteemed amongst men, you know, these Pharisees love the chief praises in the synagogue. The Pharisees love to display their virtues.

They controlled, they had the government of the church. There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews. They were powerful, they were prosperous, they had position, they had power.

And Jesus said, if you're coming into the kingdom, you have to shed the whole lot. You have to be stripped of everything that you prize, everything that you treasure, and coming right down on the floor level. That's too much.

You know, again, I've told you before, and I still agree with it. In fact, I agree with myself always, always. You know, maturity does not necessarily come with age.

It comes with the beginning. I've failed again and again. As I thought about standing outside of St. Peter's in Dundee, that's a famous city for whisky and for... Whisky and for what? Dundee cake.

But there's a stone as high as this wall, really. And certainly there is a history of Robert Merrimack Shane. After he had died, I think it was from a marriage that came, I think it was, and he said to his janitor, can I go in the office, or as we call it, the vestry, where this man used to pray and prepare his message? You know what he used to do? I've never read in history of anybody else doing it.

He took the names of all the members. He sat on the front row of the church every Monday and read so many pages of church memory, put his finger and prayed for every member, every man, every woman, every child in his parish. But he said when he came in with his Bible before preaching, he would put his elbows on it, put his head in his hands and weep.

Then he went up in the pulpit and in Scotland, they have a kind of a big red velvet cushion there. He'd look on the congregation, put his elbows down, put his hands down and weep. It was a brilliant Greek scholar, a brilliant Hebrew scholar, but above all he had an intimate walk with God.

He was a man who said not too long before he died, farewell mortality, welcome eternity. He lived continually as I've told you the Puritans did. The reason they were so potent, they weren't errand boys for the church, they weren't raising funds, they were raising hell.

They raised hell, hell opposed them, hell feared them, and they fell on their faces, as this precious man did. He was 26 years of age, so come on, cheer up some of you young guys. He was followed by W.C. Burns.

You see some men are so good at prying up the ground and swinging the seed, that's all God lets them do. And W.C. Burns came along after this weeping man of God that everybody knew in the city. W.C. Burns came and he hadn't been there many weeks before the whole town was agog.

Traffic was stopped, why? Because there was a Holy Ghost Revival on. Maxine was 26 years of age. I'd always figured the man who followed him was twice his age, actually he was 22 years of age.

I should encourage some of you. 22 years of age, and yet there were hundreds of men with Doctor of Divinity degrees. Some of the greatest preachers in the world today are in the little churches in Scotland.

You go up a hill and you'll find a man there who went there straight after he'd been to New College and got the most committed PhD in the world, and he settles down with maybe 40 people there. And he stays there 25 years. He marries their children.

He dedicates their grandchildren, or their children. And these men settle down, why? They're not birds passing in the night. I preached to a bunch of preachers this week.

I told them, I said, I expect some of you to be charged at the judgment seat with criminal negligence. There's a lady with a precious baby there. They didn't leave it at home, put it in a drawer and leave it.

They brought it, and I'm glad. It may heal a lot of wisdom tonight. What do you do with a newborn baby? Do you take care of it? What do we do with a newborn? Nothing.

There are more spiritual abortions every Sunday in America on the Lord's Day than there are physical abortions every day in the week. People come to the front. We don't have time to deal with them.

What in God's name are we dealing with? I went to a church where if you came to the altar, it was sacred. You were expected to come once to get saved, and maybe later in the time to get the baptism, or if you want to, as they called it, sanctification. But then after that, boy, if you came to the altar, you were on the prayer list of the church.

What's wrong with Leonard? He was at the altar. But you know, when I went to the altar, somebody came to me. I was almost 15, and somebody prayed with me.

I was a self-righteous, smart little 15-year-old kid. I'd gone to the Methodist church. I sang in the choir.

The boys choir, anyhow. And when I went up there, I had no guilt that I knew of. I had no condemnation.

I never smoked. I never drank. I never did evil.

I lived in a home where God lived. And it was hard for me to break through. But then somebody knelt to the side of me and showed me that all we like sheep have come astray.

We used to take every person that came to the altar through right through the scripture. When the revival was on in 1926 in Ireland with W.P. Nicholson, that precious man, he would call people to the altar. He'd say, you four, get up and get out.

Come on, fill these front benches right across these big Presbyterian churches. He would say, now if you don't want to stay an hour or two, ought to go home. He'd call the altar at nine.

He'd still be there at one in the morning. Every person had been dealt with individually. What's your besetting sin? What's crippling you? You see, what we do, we try and induce some idea.

The biggest sin in the world is not adultery. It's not lying. It's not breaking the Ten Commandments.

The biggest sin in the world is saying, I want my life and not let God have it. We're troubled about people in jail. They're doing evil.

No, they're doing evil to God. They're robbing him of their brains. They're robbing him of their hearts.

They're robbing him of affection. We can't give him money. How can we make God rich? We can't give him power.

Power is a source of all power. And yet, somehow, we're always trying to imply to people that secretly they're living in lust and sin and this, that, and the other. And it's not true.

But let a man realize that he's offended a holy God. Our people don't do that. What if he comes to the altar? Oh, I'm smoking.

I'm drinking. I'm not caring for my wife and one or two other things. He never thinks for a minute he's been crushing God's heart every day by rejecting the blood, by rejecting the Word, by rejecting all the prayers that people have put on over him.

We don't think of it from God's angle. It's all our side all the time. No, lots of people get saved for selfish reasons.

They're afraid of guilt. They're afraid of being found out. And they weep when they come to the altar.

Half of it isn't real. It's remorse. It's not repentance.

I don't believe you can divorce repentance from restitution. You know, there are some prayers God Almighty can't answer. I think of a person I know quite well, a well-known personality in America.

And when she was in the world, attractive, fascinating, she had children. And she gave them both away. She testified to this on the 700 Club.

She gave both her children away. Since then it seemed she would have one, but she didn't have one. But there's nothing on God's earth that's going to bring those children back.

The other, her husband is married, he has children with someone else. She's married now. And she can pray and grieve and weep, but there's nothing can change it.

And she's asked to stand the torture of it all the time. You know, it's so easy to get into sin, isn't it? And so difficult to get out. But I'm haunted with this, that that which is highly esteemed amongst men.

What do we esteem? A brother I was able to bring to the Lord a few years ago, he was a bus driver and he came in our midday service. And God got hold of him. And he got marvellously saved and filled with the Spirit.

And he began preaching and God has used him. Recently he sent me a letter and on the top it had his name. Let's call him Tom Jones.

That wasn't his name. Reverend Tom Jones. Oh.

Why? Oh boy. What our preachers in England want, Pentecost and otherwise, they want to get an ordination and turn the colour backwards way. What in the world has that got to do with spirituality? I wrote to him and I said, Brother I don't use, I've got an R.E.D. which is registered in the Supreme Court of Adjudication in London.

It's as good as the Archbishop of Canterbury. I don't acknowledge the thing. Because it says what? In verse 9 of Psalm 111, Holy and Reverend is his name.

How can I be put on that level with him? It's an abomination. But it's esteemed amongst men. And people are being classified now.

Good night again. I've been on PCL or 700 clubs three or four times. Who are you? You're nobody.

But now you have to have some qualification like that. But what does it say in John 5? In verse 44. It says, Why do you receive honour one of another? You can't hear God.

You're so conceited. I read yesterday about a lady that's making what do you call them now? Records. She's received four Doves.

Dove awards, three Emmy awards. For what? Do you know what? These Pharisees they love to praise the men. What did Jesus say? They have their reward.

You can't do a thing without reward. Either here or hereafter. That girl got six Emmy awards.

She'll get nothing in heaven. She got a reward here. You say God doesn't expect us to pay for our sins.

Jesus paid. And he doesn't have to pay twice. He doesn't have to reward twice.

And he won't. There's going to be some awful shocks when we get there into eternity. And all the values that people have put on things that have no value at all.

You know the more, the longer I live the more I see the gap between the true Christian church and what exists as a church today and what exists in the world. The thing we have today is totally foreign from scriptural Christianity. As I've said to you we're not we don't export biblical Christianity we export American Christianity.

Or we export English Christianity. Just as we've been traditional. You see these men did not like to break with tradition.

Ask your Christian neighbor. Ask your pastor. Why do we have a Christmas tree? It's a tradition.

So what? Are we contaminated with the world? All these people are furious because again our dear friends won't let them have a Christmas tree. And won't let the child talk about Father Christmas. You're robbing him of joy.

You're robbing him of fun. What's he better do? Robbing him of fun or lie to him. Tell him there's a Father Christmas.

Tell him there's a Santa Claus. Lie to him. What we sow we reap.

I'm still convinced of this. As Phineas says that when the glory of God is in the temple you don't need anything. The glory is fascinating.

The glory magnetizes. But when have we seen the glory? I was talking again last week about the majesty of the Puritan preachers. Again I say they lived in eternity six days a week and came down to earth on the seventh.

Lord it was revelation. They'd been near to the heart of God. They had his compassion.

They had his love. They had his authority. They knew his character.

And they revealed Christ as no one else has done since the days of the apostles. And again they had no buildings. They had no lighting.

They had no heating. They had no choirs. They had no music.

They certainly would have almost dropped dead if anybody applauded. But we expect that now. It's part of the show.

It's got nothing to do with preachers. It's becoming more and more and more a symbol of acceptance and what a preacher wants. But what is it? It's a tradition of men.

It's getting more and more of a tradition. These singers when they sung they paused. Oh sure.

Give me applause. Give me applause. All this vanity is going to go.

I found more and more people this week. I talked with a lady today, my dear wife now, in the hall and she said you know I believe we're infinitely nearer to the coming of the Lord than we realize. The work systems are collapsing more and more and more.

The church is weak, ineffective. It is. If we didn't have a Christmas tree outside some churches nobody would know we're there.

But when the glory of the Lord fills the temple it's entirely different. You know this silly business of Christmas parties. Supposing you went to a birthday party.

It was your birthday. And you had 25 guests and they all started moving along giving each other a gift. And nobody gave you one.

Don't you think it would be rather flat? And that's what we do at Christmas. We give gifts to each other. We don't give him any.

So some churches say give us money for the Lord and he never sees it. What do we do? Shoot it up to heaven? You know smart people in the world say well use your money. You can't take it with you.

No you can't. We can send it ahead. If you can't, why does it say lay up treasure in heaven? You know it's not easy.

And yet it is easy. One tends to live the Christian life. For instance it says if you have a party don't invite people who can invite you back.

Well don't we all do that? We're going to the smiths tomorrow. They're coming to our house the next day. But the scripture says do the opposite.

Bring in the poor and the needy and the lame and the blind. We had a lady came to our church remember in Sheffield, England. My goodness she was a poor thing.

I think she weighed about maybe 85 pounds. And she was always pale and sickly and I went to her home one day. It was a big old house.

At one time it had been the fashionable quarter of the city. When I got in there was no chalk on the wall. No pictures.

Just some rough chairs. When she walked she wobbled because the shoes she had were too big. Everything she got her husband took it and pawned it.

And he beat her up. He's a man who I guess weighed about 250 or more pounds. And he beat this precious little woman.

Godly, saintly, praying woman that came to church. When she came, she came in old clothes. I'd say, oh I know that dress Mrs. Saunders used to wear it.

You know what we're going to do? We're going to have Christmas parties for the church. Turn God's house into a flea house. But you know they're smart.

They don't have it in the sanctuary. They went to buildings. And then they say it wasn't in the church.

Well who's the church? Not a building, the people of the church. You can't evade it like that. It's hypocrisy.

This precious woman came along. And as I say she wore old clothes and lived in misery. One Sunday morning she came in goodness.

I thought, what in the world's happened? She had a nice little hat and a lovely coat and a handbag. And going out she waited for me. And she said, what do you think of me today? I said, you look wonderful.

She opened the coat. She said, you know, nobody ever wore this. My shoes, nobody ever wore them.

My hat, nobody ever wore it. My handbag, nobody ever used it. Well, I said, that's wonderful.

She said, you know Mrs. Moore? Mrs. Moore was a lady that we knew quite well. I said, sure. She said the other day, she said she was praying and saying, Lord I love you so much, I love you so much.

And the Lord said, you can't love vertically without loving horizontally. If you love me, look after my dear ones, my little ones, the neediest, the poorest. And she said she came to see me, drove up in a lovely automobile, and said, can you take an hour or two off? I said, yes.

We went to the best shop in town. And she took me around the window and said, you know, I've had my eye on that coat for weeks and made up my mind I would buy it. And the Lord this morning said, no, buy it for her.

You know, we talk about charity, don't we? Charity is giving away your old clothes. Love said, I'll wear the old ones and buy you new ones. I take 39 regular, but anyhow.

Isn't that what it's all about? Love is the most powerful thing in the world. Read 1 Corinthians 13. In the authorised version, as I say, sleepy Elizabethan English that people don't like when I say that.

What does it say? Charity suffer from this kind. Charity envious not. Charity bond of not itself is not first up.

Moffat's translation says, charity is never rude, never resentful, never thinks evil. But you take the word charity out and put the word that should be there, love. Love suffers long and is kind.

Longsuffering, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering. Well there it says, love suffers long and is kind. Love envious not.

Love bond of not. It never struts. Love never struts.

Never praises itself. Never gives itself honour. Never esteems itself higher than others.

Love doesn't do that. It can't do that. The stooping example is Jesus.

But love suffers long and is kind. Love envious not. Love bond of not itself.

What is 1 Corinthians 13? Well I'll tell you what I believe it is. And I never read it in the book. I found it when I was praying.

I believe 1 Corinthians 13 is a full length portrait of Jesus Christ. Why do you read it this way? Christ suffers long and is kind. Christ envious not.

Christ bond of not himself. Christ was never rude. Christ was never resentful.

Christ was never irritated. Pretty tough isn't it? Love does pretty well most of the time. It says love never faileth.

I've often asked people, supposing God was as impatient with you as you are with your children, what would have happened? He'd have cut your head off years ago maybe. But Christ suffers long and is kind. Christ envious not.

Christ bond of not himself. Christ is never rude. Now these are things the Pharisees knew nothing about.

And yet Jesus says the things you have you can touch them and buy them and curl them and speak your name on them. But they have no value. If you're going to come into my kingdom all those things you've got to trample them underfoot.

The esteem of men. The honour of men. All the things that a vain world charms most.

All the vain things as we sing sometimes. All the vain things that charm me most. One of our teachers used to say when we sang Isolator under Scottish I'd say well listen we're singing this again.

All the vain things that charm me most and help me least. So Christ suffers long and is kind. Christ envious not.

Christ bond of not himself. Christ was never rude. Never resentful.

Never glad when others go wrong. Always slow to expose. Always eager to believe the best.

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. So we took out charity and put in love. We took out love and put in the name of Christ.

Let's make it fit a bit tighter. Put them all out and put I. Put yourself there. Do I speak with the tongues of men of angels? Not of love.

I'm nothing. He doesn't say tongues are nothing. He says I'm nothing.

I bear all things. I believe all things. I hope all things.

I endure all things. I never crack under pressure. I found the supply through Jesus Christ continually flowing into my life.

Is that right? I remember going for our vacation. The first vacation I remember went from Leeds to the coast about 60 miles. And one day, well there'd been a wreck there.

And one day a boat went out and I saw a man get overboard. He had one of those great big divers helmets on him, a huge thing. I said to my dad, where is he going? Is he going to walk on the bottom of the ocean, of the sea? I said I wish I could go.

I wouldn't go now if you got the chance. The boys want adventure. And then when he went, there were two tubes fastened to this helmet.

And there was a man on the boat and he was winding something. What was he doing? He was pumping oxygen down to the man down in the depths. He was in an unnatural atmosphere.

But he was receiving, what, life from above. One of those tubes took the foul air out that he breathed and the other one brought the fresh air in. Well there's a hymn that says, moment by moment I've kept in his love, moment by moment I've life from above.

And as long as I keep that, I can go through hell if need be. Because that life is going to flow, that love is going to flow, that peace is going to flow. You know, I don't care what people think about the world.

I believe every true believer is a spiritual millionaire. We've resources that we'll never, never, never fathom and never tap. And they're for any of us.

Not just for PhDs and DDs and the other Ds. They're for the humblest of believers. And yet you see, these men couldn't accept this.

Here's a man talking about money. He says, you covetous men, you'll never make it. Do you know why he says it? Because he hasn't got a penny.

He's the poorest preacher we've ever seen. He doesn't own a house, he sleeps in fields at night. He's the contradiction of everything else that the lawyers and the doctors of divinity and whatnot had.

And they were rebuked by his life more than by his words. Every man should be the best example of his own theology. That's why I love the Apostle Paul.

I believe he never failed out on one thing he taught. He was the essence of everything that he taught. He had that love that was able to bear all things.

I'll tell you how much that they tied him to a wisdom post. Lashed him 195 times. Five times received, I 40 stripes saved one.

That makes 195. Once I was stoned. Thrice I was stoned.

Once I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I was in the Mediterranean hanging on a piece of wood tossed up and down. And yet he never squealed.

You don't find any expression of self-pity or self-interest. He's consumed to exalt Jesus Christ. As I've told you before, I used to think that the secret of his life was given when he wrote the letter to the Corinthians.

When he said the love of Christ constrained me. I don't believe that. I believe the secret motivating part of his life was this, that Christ may be magnified by my body, whether by life or by, if they kick me and bruise me and beat me, so what? They're going to see the very nature of Christ is in me.

Whereas there's a hymn in which he says, Thy nature, greatest Lord, impart. Come quickly from above. Write thy new name upon my heart.

Thy new best name of love. Thy nature, the nature of God. It's not something when we shuffle off this mortal coil as Shakespeare would say.

But even now, born again of the Spirit of God, we receive a new life. Selfless. Christ-centered, not self-centered.

And you see these palaces are all tied up in themselves. Tied up in their ability to rule in the synagogue. Tied up with their wealth.

It says they love money. They love possessions. They love positions.

They love power. And Jesus says that's the very thing you don't bother a bit about. I remember once we were in the town where I met my dear wife.

We had a big tent there and we had a fence around it. And we spent as much time praying as anything else. And it was Saturday morning and we'd locked the gate and this big wire fence, stone fence, was around the place.

And we'd been praying about an hour and suddenly a strange voice prayed. And I thought, mercy, who's this? And I look, here's a little man at the side of me. He was an old man, he was 80, but anyhow.

And he was bald and he had a kind of a squarish head. And when he finished praying, he lifted us into eternity. I put my hand on his shoulder and said, sir, I don't know who you are, but I said, I wish you could travel.

We could travel. You could travel with us. No, no, he said.

I said, well, how old are you? I'm in my 81st year. I said, wouldn't you like to be our age? Oh, no, no. This was 1937.

He said, I wouldn't like to see the world when you're 80 years of age. He said, it's going down, down, down. It's getting more corrupt, more powerless.

The church is going to be just the ritualistic and formalistic, caught in the scriptures but no power in it. I wouldn't like to be 80, to live to be, I wouldn't like to be your age, now 21, 23 or 24, and live until you're 80 years of age. But he said, God has kept me for over 60 years.

I remember he said this to us. Now, Brethren, there were about seven of us, said, Brethren, look, let me tell you something. You've got an adversary, the devil.

He doesn't always come roaring and shouting. He's full of subtleties. And he said, life is like a ladder, and you're, as preached as he said, he'll help to push you up the ladder.

And when he gets to the top, he'll push you over. But he said, remember this, if God wants you at the top of the ladder, all the demons in hell won't keep you from getting there. And if God doesn't want you there, when you get up, you'll come crashing down anyhow.

You know, there was a chorus some years ago, I'm ambitious to be preaching them to him. Most of us like to be accepted, don't we? People who like it. Why in the world should it bother us? If my title is clear to mansions in the sky, I ought not to be in the habits of this world, the customs of this world.

They should have gone. Sign 2 But we're proud of that. I'm convinced with all my heart that it's no good praying if we're not right with God.

You say Christmas preach? Sure, if you know it's a healing practice, it's in your hands, quit praying. It's in your house. Last week, I stressed again preaching on holiness that Isaiah 58 says that what we have to do is to take our foot from the Sabbath.

I said, that's football. I insist on the fourth commandment. Keep the Sabbath day holy, that's God's tithe on our time.

And yet half the Christians in America anyhow, they've got football fever and some other fever. Don't pray if you're breaking the commandment. If you're breaking the fourth commandment, why shouldn't your friend down here commit adultery? He's only breaking one commandment.

You're breaking one and he's breaking one. And we sabotage our own prayers. We blame the devil, we blame circumstances, but all the time we're sabotaging our own prayers by disobedience.

There's nothing that will cause a greater ruckus in your family than abolishing Christmas trees and not keeping the customs of Christmas. Do you know what Peter said? No, not Peter. Pilate, what did he say? When he said, come on, let's have Barabbas, we don't want Jesus.

Let Barabbas go. Crucify Jesus. What did Pilate say? A thing I've never heard anybody preach on.

But ye have a custom. Aren't we slaves to custom? Why do we have a Christmas tree? It's a custom. What do you think it is? It's a Christmas card.

It's a custom. So many things we've just cottoned on with the world. They're seemingly innocent, but all the other hands.

They're just habits. We can't explain them, as I say. There's not one man in a hundred who can tell you where the Christmas tree came from.

He doesn't know it's Babylonian. He doesn't know it's a false thing. And yet you see, we pray fervently and all the time if there's disobedience in our life we sabotage our own prayers.

I tell you, the older you get, and everybody gets older every day, but you know, you realize what was it? Who was it now? A.D. Simpson, I think, that wrote about the perishing things of clay. Born but for one brief day. Oh how quickly they're going to vanish.

How quickly markets change. People now are seen in a pinch here in, that planned years ago that when they got to fifty or sixty they'd retire and practically do nothing, and now their money's gone, the balloons burst and where are they? All this vanity is being destroyed. It's going to get worse, not better.

God is going to bring us to the place where they're absolutely naked before him. But I want to be naked now. I don't want to stand naked at a judgment seat, and millions of people looking on and discover that I'm wretched and naked and blind and poor and miserable.

And so much that passes for Christianity is not Christianity at all. It's false. It's the, what's the scripture called? Tradition of the elders.

It's been handed down to us. And we just take it out of steered custom. It has no spiritual value.

It doesn't glorify God. To close with that precious man again that had the revival at St. Peter's in Dundee, Max Jane, thank you. Max Jane.

He said, everything that came into my life I said, well Lord, what eternity content is there in this thing I'm doing? If there's no eternity content in it, I'm not doing it. And you have to do a job, I know that. But on the other hand, what's basic in our lives? Are we seeking, reaching for this, buying that, doing something else? How many spiritual millionaires do you know? Hmm? I know a few, not many.

That's a famous preach in my office not long ago. I said, you've been across America you say, how many holy men do you know? Men who qualify for being really holy in life. In personality, in language, in accent.

Do you know ten? He said, no. You see, this is what the, there's so much about us that's like the world, you see. You go to a Christian house, it's full of decorations, just like pagan houses are.

There's no difference, there's no line of demarcation. Oh, that's funny ideas where you'll have. Come on, read the scripture and find out.

It's a heathen wretched custom. And money that we spent by the million on Christmas trees and decorations that have gone to mission fields and elsewhere. Not only that, it gives God when we want to be like the world.

Love not the world, neither the things of the world. And that embraces an awful lot of things that we've become to accept traditionally. There are tens of thousands of people actually, when there's a ball game in Dallas, they're fidgety.

They want to get out to the service. The service is ten minutes too long. But are they sitting out tonight? There's some ball games, school ball games tonight.

They'll sit out in a perishing cult with things up like that. They wouldn't do that in church. They wouldn't do that in a prayer meeting.

You know, it isn't the quantity in a prayer meeting that makes a difference, it's the quality. It's not how loud we shout, how long we pray. It's what's there inside, beyond our words.

As I said before, some prayers, even in this sanctuary, some of the prayers which are not uttered audibly, may be the strongest prayers that we have. There's a language which is groanings which cannot be uttered. And I can't find a revival in history where men didn't know that.

The revival, to quote two things, the revival that preceded the world's revival. We met somebody this week who said they'd been to Abraham and Assembly of God. And I preached in Abraham and Assembly of God in 1949.

There were some rocks as high as this and an old deacon was walking up there with his cane and he heard some groanings. Well, people often got the rocks and slipped over and he thought somebody might have a broken leg. There were four young men there weeping and groaning.

Lord, send revival. Send revival. And Evan Roberts had a touch of God when he was 24 years of age.

He'd already prayed 12 years. Imagine that. Come on, where are the youngsters in our churches? We're so busy entertaining them, making them happy, we're not concerned whether they're holy or not.

Oh, we're getting crowds. So what? Jesus didn't get 5,000. They fed them but he didn't say 5,000 awake in the upper room.

There were only 120 all the way. He was seen as 500 better than once, 380 didn't turn up. Well, that's about the proportion today out of 500.

You're very fortunate if you get 120. You see, God is looking for a people who hunger and thirst after righteousness. We're not satisfied with meetings, not satisfied with success, not satisfied with anything.

We want the living presence of the living God to come until people then pass the sanctuary, until they know God is in residence. I just thought of this again. I was reading today about John the Baptist and what did he say about Jesus? He upon whom the Spirit shall descend.

We call that, but well, that's not what it says. On whom the Spirit shall descend and remain. Remain.

From the moment of his baptism there till the cross. He never once varied in his obedience to the Father. And because of that we vary.

We are rich in anointings. I know the rich anointings. I need them.

I cry to God and I have to preach because I want the anointing of the Spirit of God. But by the same token because of Jesus the Spirit came and remained upon him. I believe it's possible as these young men have done in their twenties they've lived till they've been 50 and 60 and never once never once had a flat experience without testings and trials but they've given 100% obedience to God.

And I don't know about you. I want to continually know the Spirit of the Lord is there whether I wake in the middle of the night to pray or middle of the day. I want that Spirit to abide because he has the mind of God.

He has the power of God. He has the authority of God. I don't want to pray my own prayers.

I want to pray as directed by the Holy Ghost. Poor America. So rich.

So poor. Our gorgeous church is so devoid of holy power. I quoted last week again to a lot of preachers there about the fact when Pompey was sent by Julius Caesar to a foreign country which was Israel as we call it now.

Palestine. And people told him and he asked what's that big building? That's where God dwells. God? There's hundreds of gods involved.

No, no, this is the God who put the stars up there and the moon over there and the sun over there. And he controls the waters of the earth. Well, to cut it short, Pompey, who is now a writer of Julius Caesar's, he arrived with panoply, came with horses, he came with all the helmets they had and breastplates and plumed helmets.

And he told the people in town, he told the priests, I want to see your God. And you can't do that. He said, yes I can.

And the next morning he was followed by two thousand people yelling, no, no, don't, don't, don't. He was remembering 2 Chronicles 26, what it says there that, which is quoted in Isaiah 6, in the year that King Uzziah died. Uzziah, if you read the chapter, it says that four score, which is eighty men, plus the main priest, eighty-one people, such as top Uzziah, he must have been given possessions, beaten them all off.

One man can't usually beat eighty-one men off. But he went, he went to the, he came out and he came to the court, the outer court, the inner court, the Gentile court, the woman's court, the priest court. Then he came to the holy, holy place.

And there was a thick curtain and he said, where is this God of yours? Oh, our God, he comes in such kind of glory. He's brighter than a million suns. And he's in there, behind that curtain, carried away.

They tore the curtain away. And it was pitch black and it was pure as he waved and waved. I've come from Rome to meet your God, to see your God, and there's nothing here.

It's empty. Where is your deity? Where is his presence? Where is his blinding glory? Where is his majestic voice? Where is it? Where is it? And he screamed in torment. Now our young people come to church, they come past the tennis court, they come by the baseball court, the volleyball court, they come to the sanctuary, there's nothing there but grits them.

They don't leave there with a consciousness of the eternal God. They don't go home and say, Daddy, Mummy, what was that mysterious presence in the sanctuary? It's got to come back, and you can't get it by money. You can't get it by having a big TV show.

It comes through brokenness. It comes when you really say, God Almighty, I'm not concerned about position, prestige, personality, possessions. I'm craving in my spirit to say to the psalmist, Lord, as my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God, like a heart.

Everybody's deer hunting down there where we were. You see the little scared things went out? Their tongues out, saliva pouring, and they stopped for a drink, and off they go. And the psalmist says, as the heart pants after the waterfall, so pants my soul.

You know, we settle down so easily. We get to a plateau. Things aren't as rough as they used to be.

It's easier to live. It's nice. I've found such a comfortable church.

There's nothing going to disturb me. God Almighty is going to have to shake the church of Jesus Christ up. Get rid of our complacency, and show us how much we're tied in with the world, world systems.

Just this morning we received a letter from a lady who said, well, our pastor is a very good, and I know the pastor, he's a godly, sort of Baptist preacher, Dr. So-and-so. But he said, Beloved, it's so painful going to church. Every week it's money for this, we need money for this, we need money for that, we need money for that.

Where is the glory of God? You never have to ask for a dime when the glory of God is there. When people are living where they should live, they'll give their tithes and their offerings. I know we have to do according to Psalm 126, where brethren dwell together in unity.

There the Lord commands the brethren. But where there's fraction and ambition and position sought after, you can't have the blessing of God. The dew only falls when there's no wind.

And we've forgotten now to be still and know that he's gone. Things highly esteemed amongst men, positions in the sanctuary, honors, doctorates. How can you receive the blessing of God when you receive honor one of another? I hate going to some of these conferences, back slapping and appreciation and talk.

He doesn't get the glory. Isn't it disgusting when you think that 2,000 years after Jesus came, there was 3 quarters of the world doesn't know him. And we're so busy at home extending and building and building and that money could go for God's kingdom.

And we're so selfish and so satisfied. I remember when we were in a tabernacle in Oldham, when it came to Christmas Day, we did a big feast, festival. I was reading about it today in Proverbs, about eating and drinking to excess and gluttonous eating and all the rest of it.

And in Christmas in England is a festival, it's a combination of everything from Thanksgiving and its riotous living and careless living and concerts and shows and Christmas displays and all the rest. But England's down the drain right now. But I'm glad of this.

God has some men hidden away. There's a remnant right through this nation of men that we don't know that God's going to bring forth an anointment. They're going to be the leaders.

They don't want financial backing. They don't want denominational blessing. They're just consumed with seeing the will of God in this day and delivering our present generation of youngsters from cults, from drugs, from drinking, from all the rotten things which are devouring the nation.

You know, let me say this one thing. You know, people said years ago, I remember, when I came in 1950 to America, the one thing that was really going was Juice for Christ. Saturday night, good night, you go to meetings, there'll be one or two thousand people there.

This is the street you gather youth. Then came the child evangelism. After child evangelism came Campus Crusade.

All we have to do is get the money. I know wealthy people who gave vast sums of money to Campus Crusade. I'd say that if the leaders were here.

I don't own Campus Crusade. It's on fire for God today. They're full of verminous stuff.

They're full of adultery. They're full of drugs. They're full of unseemliness.

We are at the bottom of the barrel. There's nowhere else to go now. We've tried Juice for Christ.

We've tried children's meetings. Those, all those young men on the campus need to know. Listen, they know more about Christ than you know.

They're not ignorant of heaven and hell. They just don't want God. They can't be bothered.

He interferes with their lifestyle. Don't believe the idea that these people are longing. As a friend of mine said when he went to Africa.

He discovered they weren't waiting with open arms. They love their sins. They love their dancing.

They love their wild parties. They love their liquor. And when he presented Jesus, oh we heard about that from many, many years ago.

You know it's a terrible thing to think that we're slighting the Holy One of Israel. For millions of people, that crib that they have, that Christmas celebration will meet them at the judgment and God's going to say what did you do about it anyhow? You were fake with the Christ. They'll be half drunk singing, half the herald angels sing.

Mildly laid his glory by. Born that man no more may die. Born to raise his son to birth.

Born to give birth. And it doesn't mean a thing. It doesn't mean a thing.

We're such a veneer of religion. We're so satisfied with good meeting. We don't walk out breathless.

We're going to do that. As I told you before, I want to be like Simeon. I want to say Lord I'm not going to die until I see the glory of God.

And I find all over the nation now there's a deep, deep hunger amidst all the apostasy, amidst all this debacle that they have up in Washington. There's a recognition everything around us is collapsing. And now's a chance for the church to come out in power and majesty.

And see not just nice little people warmed up. Get all of some of the criminal elements. Get all of some of the harlots in the city and the drunkards.

When we have a crusade what do we do? We send churches, buses full of Christians to revival crusades. We don't go to the harlot down the street. We don't go to the tavern.

We don't sink the down and out. We're feeding the front row while the others perish. I wanted to pray tonight again for the lost people in America.

There are millions and the precious Indians that these dear fellows pray for. And those areas of the world, dear God it's shocking when you think that 2000 years after Jesus came there were five billion people in the world and not maybe two billion have really heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it's our responsibility.

We need to get rid of all this Christ that menaced King Charlie and it's an abomination with God. And please Lord give me a heart like Thine. Give me a compassion like Thine.

Give me a love like Thine. I pray for dear Sonny there and his team that God will do something new there and launch out a budget for hundreds of holy men filled with fire, filled with fervor, filled with faith. It isn't scholarship, it isn't that that matters.

It's being in a living relationship with God, having a burden like His and be willing to lay down our lives as He laid down His life. We're going to go to prayer. I hope you can stay.

If you have to slip out, slip out. So let's pour our hearts out now. Let's tell God we're embarrassed to be in a nation that knows so much about the Christ and knows so little that has a form of Godliness and yet hasn't enough the power.

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