

# Purity and Fire - Part 2

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of purity and fire, avoiding false security, and relying on a personal experience of salvation and obedience to God.*

**Duration:** 30:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 3:10-14, John 1:12-13, John 3:3, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 3:1-10, Acts 4:13

**Topics:** "Purity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching repentance. He criticizes the popular approach of avoiding the topic of sin and repentance in favor of a painless message. He highlights the example of John the Baptist, who preached repentance and called people to bring forth fruit as evidence of their repentance. The speaker challenges the current state of preaching and calls for a return to the biblical message of repentance and the need for a genuine transformation in the lives of believers.

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## Transcript

... in America preached to him in the White House, and not one of them got through to him. And a critic writing in the New York Times Book Review, which I get every week as a gift, a critic criticizing the book Lancelot, that was in the February edition, 20th of February this year, said this. I don't know whether it was a Jew or not.

But he said the trouble with the bunch that went to the White House was this. They laid down with Nixon and they... it's an old saying, you lay down with a dog you get its fleas. And this man says they laid down with Nixon and they came up with his fleas, but the Old Testament prophets had more sense than to mingle with corrupt politicians.

They had a mandate from heaven. And you know we're heading for the rocks so fast in America it's tragic, but you read the 27th of Acts. And a little fella called Paul got on board a ship as a criminal, and he ended up as the captain.

He got on board as a preacher, he got off it as a pilot. You say you know I don't get many revelations and angels don't appear to me. Brother Abel how could it happen? Go to jail.

Go to jail, that's where he appeared to Peter. That's where he appeared to the Apostle Paul. Paul is on a ship that's passing and rocking in the waves.

The spas are breaking, the seas are boiling, the people are screaming, fasting, weeping. Fourteen days a night, no sunshine, no stars, no moon. It's Lancelot that was in the February edition, 20th of February this year said this.

I don't know whether it was a Jew or not. But he said the trouble with the bunch that went to the White House was this. They laid down with Nixon and they, it's an old saying, you lay down with a dog you get its fleas.

And this man says they laid down with Nixon and they came up with its fleas. But the Old Testament prophets had more sense than to mingle with corrupt politicians. They had a mandate from heaven.

And you know we're heading for the rocks so fast in America it's tragic. But you read the 27th of Acts. And a little fella called Paul got on board the ship as a criminal.

And he ended up as the captain. He got on board as a preacher, he got off it as a pilot. You say you know I don't get many revelations and angels don't appear to me.

Brother Abner how could it happen? Go to jail. Go to jail, that's where he appeared to Peter. That's where he appeared to the Apostle Paul.

Paul is on a ship that's passing and rocking in the waves. The stars are breaking, the seas are boiling, the people are screaming, fasting, weeping. 14 days a night, no sunshine, no stars, no moon.

It's as black as hell. And the captain says the only thing is we better kill all the prisoners first. Peter stood up and Paul stood up and he says just a minute sir.

I had a visitor last night. On this ship? Yes, yes he came on this ship. Did he have a passport? No he didn't have a passport.

Where did he come from? He came from heaven. Where? Yeah, he stood by, isn't it wonderful he didn't go to the captain. Boy that's snubbing you if you like.

When God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah he didn't go to Lot who was the mayor of the city and also the judge of the city. He went to a man praying on the hill who never put his feet in a lousy city. When God is going to shake this nation, he's not going to the White House.

He's going to go to God's house if he can find the people. But Paul stood on that boat and he said they're stood by me. I'm going to tell you something.

You've thrown all your baggage overboard. You've thrown all the cargo overboard. You've cut the lifeboat off.

You've got nothing left but an empty husk of a ship. But I got news for you. We're going to lose the ship too.

It's going to go to pieces. So everything valuable is going to be lost. But I promise you one thing.

Not one person on this ship is going to be lost if you do as I tell you. God doesn't care that much about the economy of America or England. Doesn't care that much about the Rockefellers and the money.

Doesn't care that much about the Dow Jones averages. God is going to get his way in America if he wrecks the whole constitution, the whole system that we have. He's going to glorify his son.

And you better sing as this precious brother sang at the end that lovely song about being all for Christ and crucified with him because nothing else will stand up when God puts a blitz on the nation. But listen, don't forget this. The house on the rock went through the same storm as that on the sand.

There was no difference in the storm. The difference was that the man abiding on the rock was able to abide. He was able to last.

All right, John did no miracle. But he began to preach. What did he preach? He preached repentance.

I'd like to have heard him, wouldn't you? You know nobody preaches repentance anymore. There's a lovely little track called, what's it called? The Four Laws. Excuse me.

Do you know why it's popular? Because it's painless. It has no repentance in it by design. Bill Bright designed it that way.

He said, I don't want people to think that Campus Crusade is negative. Well, he's smarter than Jesus. He's smarter than the Apostle Paul.

He's smarter than John the Baptist. Because he says, John began to preach and to say, what? Next chapter, Jesus began to say, to preach and to say, what? On the day of Pentecost they said, what shall we do? And Peter said, read the Four Laws or go to a convention for the weekend or take something to calm your mind down. You're getting upset.

Peter on the day of Pentecost said the same as Jesus. He said the same as John the Baptist. He said, repent.

And repentance is not saying, I'm sorry. It's not something I say. It's something I am.

Repentance is intellectual. I'm going this way on the broad way that leads us to destruction. I've been angry against God.

I've wanted my own way. And suddenly I turn right round and I say, God is just if he sends me to hell. Oh, that blessed man, Charles G. Phinney.

I would have loved to have heard him preach. Yes, his meetings lasted three or four hours. But I'll tell you what.

Nobody ever left his meetings and somebody say to them, what did he preach? I don't know, I've forgotten. Phinney did the same as John the Baptist. He left blisters on people's souls.

Phinney didn't preach the love of God. He preached the anger of God. He didn't preach the mercy of God.

He preached the judgment of God. He didn't say, you're a bunch of poor helpless sinners. Jesus loves you.

He says, you're rebels. You put your fist up against God. You know he preached 28 nights without making an altar call.

I don't know anybody more stupid than evangelists. They go into a meeting and the first night they preach 20 minutes. And in 20 minutes they expect to break up the solid ground, sow the seed, water it and reap a harvest in 20 minutes.

Do you know anybody else can do gardening like that? I wish my garden would grow like that. My garden has an awful time, don't you Martha, trying to raise the garden. In our house we believe in faith and works.

I have the faith and Martha has the works and we get the garden going. But you know we're afraid. The evangelist reputation depends on how many come to the altar.

And the poor little squirt there, he'll work hard. If somebody comes to the altar, he'll get used to come to your cons or any problem you have. Or you haven't been attending Sunday school enough and he's all kinds of dribble gravel.

Oh brother. I'd like to go to, I go to many places I don't even make an altar call. I sit down and the preacher's embarrassed.

He doesn't know what to do. Well what do I do? Well do as you like. Stand on your head if you want.

What do you want me to do? If the Holy Ghost hasn't moved you to repentance. You see people are terribly worried about eternal security. I'm far more worried about false security than eternal security.

We've got more people laboring under false security right now in the church of the living God than any period we've ever known. You say to people, you say, well I don't really know. Well if you were carrying a hundred pound pack on your back and somebody lifted it off, do you think you'd know? If you were in debt for five thousand dollars and somebody said, hey I'm going to pay all your debts.

I think you'd mark the place on the ground. Do you think you'd know where you lost all your debts? If you had a neighbor you'd never spoken to in your life and suddenly the next day you spoke. Wouldn't you remember it was the third or fourth of June? You say, I remember talking to that and he talked back to me.

And a sinner has never talked to God. He loses his burden, he loses his debts, he becomes related to God and he doesn't know. In God's name what's wrong with our preaching? Now if you say God designed that you and I should not commit sin, you're in trouble.

And some people stand up and say we sin every day, thoughtwardly. Well wouldn't you be kind, will you be kind and help the poor kids that are more confused this generation than any generation in history. Will you give them a list of the sins they can commit? Yeah, we should all laugh but only you pick the point, thank you.

What sins can you commit? Adultery, stealing, lying, what can you commit? A woman came to Jesus loaded with sins and he says I love you, go home and sin less. What did he say? What? Sin no more. Is that in the living Bible or the old one? It's in the old one.

They must have changed that in the living Bible, that's too hard to take these days. Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee. I'm trying to write a book right now on being born again.

You know John, John, John is a great exponent of that. He says it can't come by flesh and blood, you can't inherit it, you can't create it by your will power. And then he develops it all in the first and second epistles that he wrote.

He's a marvellous man, he's terribly ignorant. He never went to Bible school or theological seminary and no education. And after he called that man at the beautiful gate of the temple, the judge said well a notable miracle has been done but don't take any notice of Peter and John, they're unlearned and ignorant.

John wrote the fourth gospel as we call it. Dr. Kaufman calls him the Plato of the New Testament. He's so profound, that's a profound book.

Then to prove his ignorance he wrote a first epistle, a second epistle and a third epistle. And then to really put the cherry on top of the thing to make it really ignorant he wrote the book of the Revelation that still baffles all the wise men. Would you like to come forward and I'll lay hands on you to get a baptism of ignorance? No candidates, you know, nobody rushing.

If I say come on now, you'll do miracles after this, there'll be a stampede. But that's alright, stay there because the worst is yet to come. Another thing, another beautiful thing about John.

Do you know God said to him single-handedly, prepare ye the way of the Lord. I love that. I believe with all my heart that it's alright to die a minute from now and be just.

I believe that God is using agape force on this very level to prepare the way of the Lord. That you can't pull down boulders and fill in valleys and make crooked places straight without sweating and anxiety. You can't have babies without birth pangs.

You can't have revival without cast. You'll know when your soul aches for revival when you can stay up at night instead of going to bed. When you can fast more joyfully than you eat.

When you can deny yourself the company of people rather than our fellowship within. For first of all God is a jealous God and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son and with one another. We've changed it round.

Do you know what kills most preachers? I didn't agree with Dr. Campbell Morgan 50 years ago, I agree with him now. I heard him preach many times. But he said late nights, late nights are the death of most preachers.

It's true of song leaders too, the whole bunch. Oh we had a great time. Do you know we went to a home, actually it cost 2 million dollars to build.

They had a marvelous park and everything. And they came home droopy at 2 o'clock in the morning. Why don't you go to a nightclub and live it up? They've just opened a Christian nightclub in Los Angeles, it'll go great.

You see we can always copy the world, everything the world does and then we try and sanctify it. I like the emphasis, dear David, I love David. I knew him when he wasn't anything kind of thing.

I've seen that guy mature and I want to tell you he's gone through hell. I've wept with that guy on the rug many times. But I say to Tony, wherever he is this afternoon, any other leaders this morning.

Do you know what? Leadership is a lonely life if you're going to do it God's way. If I'd been Moses I'd have been driven up the wall nearly. 40 years in captivity, 40 years on the backside of the desert.

5,000 people died every day in the concentration camps of Egypt. And God did nothing about it. This is a man who was going to kill them one at a time.

He'd still be at it today and he wouldn't have done anything. God mopped them all up one day, pulled the plug as they were going over the sea and they all got drowned. So I leave it to God, He'll work it out.

40 years on the backside of the... John the Baptist was in the wilderness for 30 years. I get young men writing to me and say, you know, God's called me to be a John the Baptist. And I write back and say, yes, you'll be dead in six months.

They never write again. Would you like to go to Bible school for 30 years with God in it? You need by certain formulas, you can be... You might go to a... And wear your collar backwards, I used to wear mine that way. But I stopped walking backwards way, so I got one that goes forward.

And... You can offer to be a preacher. You can become certified, whatever that means. They certify cattle too, but anyhow.

You can be certified as a preacher. But you can't offer to be a prophet, God selects them. Preachers talk to God, God talks to prophets.

God has a lovely school, you can go for nothing. I preached when I was with my dear pastor friend there, Brother Ryan, up in Oylton. I preached on Elijah, and I said two divisions simply in his life.

God said, go hide thyself. In the next chapter, God said, go show thyself. He said to me, Raven, when you said that, God said, that's your word, that's why I brought you tonight.

He's already been through Bible school, he's been through seminary. He wrote to me the other week, and said, Brother Ravenhill, I'm taking your advice. I was booked every night, listen to this, there's a young man needs money, he's been married not too recently.

And he said, I need money and I need other things. And I'm engaged every night, this was in... March, March, I guess, when he wrote to me. So his engagements every night of March, April, May, June, July, August, into September, and I've written every church and cancelled them.

I'm going to do what you said, I'm going to hide, I've got a job on a farm, I'll finish at five at night, stick my head under a pump, my wife has agreed to this, and I'm going to spend the summer with God. Not only that, he said, I talked to a buddy of mine, he said, you know, God has said the same thing, and he's going to a neighbouring farm, and he's got a job, and we're going to meet sometime during the week, and pour our hearts out to God, in prayer, in intercession. You know, when fellows do that, I kind of think they're serious.

At least they're putting themselves in place where God can come down and speak to them. God says to this man, single-handedly prepare ye the way of the Lord. Ha ha.

Oh brother, if you've got everybody but God, you've got nobody. And if you've got God, you don't need anybody. I've been a lone wolf for years, nobody wants me.

The reason Tony asked me to come here, he doesn't know me, but... No, I've lived a lonely life, I'm not ashamed of it, I'm not afraid of it, I rejoice in it. If some people wanted my company, I'd want to know what's wrong with me. They're so spiritually sick, and anemic.

Oh, I've thought to them once or twice, three times the word of God says after that, treat them as a heretic. That's pretty rough, but it happens to be scriptural, you see. And our love is a sloppy, sentimental, blah blah blah, kind of a thing, you know, that, well, it's got no character to it.

God wants love with character. God is full of love, God is angry with the wicked every day. We're not going to keep on, dear friends, and I love America.

I have an advantage, I came here twenty-odd years ago, 1958, came in 1950 first, and have been in another country ever since. Live here now with my family, thank God for America. But we're not going to keep going at this rate much longer.

You don't get the government dismantling the Ten Commandments, legalizing abortion, trying to push ERA, and these, I was going to say precious, maybe blessed women that are around, you know, women's lib. Woman has been a problem from Adam's rib to women's lib. And, and you know what? But we're not going to keep doing all these things.

You know these homes for unwed mothers around the country are nearly empty? Why? There's no shame in having a baby out of wedlock. Women boss, they'll do it. Your film stars have it.

Most beautiful woman in the world, what do you call her? Dino, Dinovie, or Donovie or something? Well, as far as I'm concerned, those people are just prostitutes. But they meet in high society. Gerald Ford wouldn't have Solzhenitsyn there to tell him what's going on in Russia.

A man who has Christian character, he had Andy Warhol a couple of weeks after, who makes the dirty, explicit films and writes lousy books, and he sat at the table and used state china and state silver. You see, when a prophet comes around like John the Baptist, he doesn't care a hill of beans whether you sit on a throne or sit in a gutter. He's after your sin.

He's not concerned about his head. He says to what? Destroy me. You can't destroy me.

Try and blow the sun out. You say, I saw Leonard Ray. You've never seen me.

You see the shell I live in, this old body, broken up body. I've had a broken back for 25 odd years or more, 1970, and broken legs and broken feet. The devil has suggested he got me, and I said, you've got it all wrong.

I got you this time. I'm not giving up. I'm going up, but I'm not giving up, but that's all right.

But John did no miracle. John single-handedly was a voice, a voice. Do you know why I think Jesus didn't say a word of repentance to that blessed, wonderful man I say of impeccable morality, that scholar, that gentleman, a member of the Sanhedrin.

That was one stop before heaven. And Jesus said, you must be born again. Why didn't he say something about repentance? Do you remember it was a committee sent down from Jerusalem to see what John Baptist was doing? A bunch of the most distinguished men in the temple, and I'm going to make a guess, because of his high standing in that group, Nicodemus was one of them.

And he heard that man preaching, and he thought it was Elijah risen from the dead. He heard John preaching with such power and with such authority. I don't believe he had a... I believe every night after that was a sleepless night until Jesus said, you must be born again.

I like to think he was there that day when Jesus stepped down. A prostitute in front of him, a jailbird behind him, Jesus standing in the midst of them, and John says, behold the Lamb of God, the most amazing thing any man had ever said in history. And I like to think Nicodemus was standing on the bank, and he said, it must be him, it must be him, it must be him.

And right previous to that chapter, the third chapter, he had been doing miracles. And you know, people know whether you're really talking for the sake of talking and earning a few bucks. They sent the police to arrest Jesus, do you remember? And they came back empty-handed, and they said, why? Did he deceive you? But they said, no.

But no man that we've ever heard spake like Jesus. Never man spake like this man. They said the same of John Baptist.

He alone is to prepare the way of the Lord. And they came unto him from Judea and Samaria. And listen, they not only came, not only was he a success geographically, he was a success socially.

Because it says here in this third chapter, oh, in case this interests you, this is a very delightful first verse in the third chapter. John came on the scene. He came in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar.

The Caesar at that time was not Julius, he was Tiberius, which is interesting. And then there was Pontius Pilate, who was the governor of Judea. And Herod was the Tetrarch of Galilee.

And his brother Philip, the Tetrarch of Arturia and of the region of Trachonitis. And Licinius was the Tretarch of Abilene. And Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests.

Now that's about as refreshing as a mouthful of sand. But you see, again we think that John the Baptist stepped onto a scene where they were all swinging from trees, or, you know, half-civilized. Christianity was born, remember, in the vortex of the greatest learning ever.

Here is the might of the Greeks with all their intellectual power. Here is the might of the Jews with all their great history and theology. And in front there's a barrier of the greatest machine, war machine in history, the Romans.

And yet a bunch of men came out of the upper room and they pierced that Roman army and they pulled down the strongholds of intellectualism and they got through and they captured even the prize figure in the church, as we would call it, the Church of the Jews. They got a little insignificant-looking man, physically but intellectually, a colossus by the name of Saul of Tarsus. Boy, they got some prizes.

But let's get to John's preaching for a moment because I'm nearly through my introduction. It says that while he was preaching, this is what he said. He's a very flattering kind of a fellow.

You know, they sent all the intellectuals and scholars down to see John and they said, Have you heard the news? Yes. Have you been to see him? No. What about going? Let's go.

And they all went down and they saw this little guy with his ragged shorts on, made of leather and he pulled the skin off an old dead camel and put it round his shoulders so he wouldn't get sunstroke. He was strange in his dress. He was strange in his diet.

He caught those big locusts that flew around and he lived on locust burgers morning, noon and night. And they must have been delicious. He was strange in his dress.

He was strange in his diet. He was strange in his doctrine. He was preaching repentance.

And those big guys came in their priestly garments and looked down and said, Who art thou? Well, John had been preparing for this for thirty years. He'd had an answer ready for thirty years. He waited for it.

He looked up at the big intellectual PhDs and he said, I'm a voice. See, they were only echoes. He said, I'm a voice crying in the wilderness.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. And then, to show how gentleman he was, he says, you generation of vipers. Oh, goodness, that's not the way to talk to the Archbishop of Canterbury, is it? You generation of vipers.

That's like me saying to some of the big lords who shout over TV and radio so much, Hey, you swine, what are you doing round here? It's not very nice. It's rather disgusting. It reminds me of a man who said, Oh, we had a great meeting in our church last week.

He said, we had an earthquake. Of course, nobody was disturbed. That must be a new kind of earthquake.

It must be something, must have got synthetic earthquakes as well as other things. There's nothing we need more in the nation right now than a spiritual earthquake. Bring some of these big houses toppling down and God being glorified.

But listen, while he preached, this is what happened, and this is preaching. That while John was preaching, verse 10 of chapter 3 of Luke says this. The people asked him, saying, what shall we do then? Verse 12.

The publicans came to be baptized and they said, Master, what shall we do? And the Roman soldiers, the lesser breed without the law, the men that had on their breastplates and their shields, discovered that there was something he had that could pierce through the greatest defenses they ever had. And these heathen men standing there, they were used to strange heathen gods. Listen to a man for the first time in their lives with the anointing of God.

And listen, it says of the Roman soldiers in verse 14, the soldiers likewise demanded, saying, and what shall we do? We've no longer got any preachers that can hold the hell down, spell down. But John did it. The people, while he was preaching, said, what shall we do? The publicans said, what shall we do? The Roman soldiers said, what shall we do? And he said the same thing to all of them, bring forth fruit, meats for repentance.

I don't hear much about that. I hear about fruits of the Spirit. I hear a little about Romans 6, having your fruit unto holiness.

But I don't hear too much about bringing forth fruit unto repentance. Now look, if you're saved now, you better go back and repair some of the fences you've broken if you didn't do it. If you've stole money, restore it.

If you lied, go confess you lied. Don't cover it all up. Say the blood washed it away.

Listen, you have a moral obligation. It will test you to your toes, I know. I kicked a football through a school window once, just before I left school.

In those days you got a stanking and a boy had to bend to the ground and he got hit in the right place. You know, they applied the Board of Education to the seat of knowledge and that fellow cried when he got stanked. And I didn't say a word.

But I got saved when I was 14 and a half years of age. And almost the first thing the Lord said to me, go back to the schoolmaster, tell him you broke that window and offer to pay for it. I didn't go to school, I'm not educated.

I left school in the seventh grade. I didn't go to high school. Oh, I went to high school.

It was on top of a hill. But that's the only high school I went to. I didn't go to college except a pre-Bible college for a few weeks.

And I thank God for that. I'm not boasting of ignorance. I'm not a scholar.

But I know God. And I spent as many hours on my face as any man living, I think, seeking God, praying. I spent as many hours nearly out of bed as in it.

I say that because there's one way only to God and that's the way through the book. You can have all your fancy ways you like. If you want to make a shortcut and just become a singing evangelist, go ahead.

But I'll tell you what, you'll miss a billion dollars reward in eternity. If you spend more time singing than praying, you're sick. Now I'm not saying that here, I say it everywhere I go.

If you have more confidence in your presentation and you're putting it off and watch out too much show you put on, be very careful about it because God is a jealous God.

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