

Revelation 19 (3 of 5)

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the marriage of the lamb and the kingdom of God, and encourages listeners to repent and enter the kingdom through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:13:09

Scripture: Hebrews 10:19

Topics: "Revelation", "God's Mercy", "Discipleship"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the profound mercy and love of God, reflecting on how we enter His presence through thanksgiving and the blood of Christ. He highlights the importance of recognizing our need for repentance and the transformative power of God's Word, which guides us through life's challenges. Ravenhill contrasts the eternal joy of believers with the fleeting pleasures of the lost, urging the congregation to prepare themselves as the bride of Christ for the coming marriage of the Lamb. He calls for a return to true discipleship, emphasizing that being a Christian requires commitment and discipline, not just a superficial acceptance of faith. Ultimately, he reassures that the Lord knows those who are His, and encourages believers to remain steadfast in their faith.

Transcript

Enter again into thy gates with thanksgiving and into thy courts with praise. We thank you for this simple and yet this very expensive way of coming into your presence. We recognize again it's through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

It is of your mercy that we're not consumed. It is that boundless love of yours that you sought us when we didn't seek for you. Maybe many of us would have to testify as a hymn writer said I had long withstood his grace.

Long provoked him to his face and would not hearken to his call and grieved him by a thousand falls. Depth of mercy can there be mercy still reserved for me. Can my God his wrath forbear me the chief of sinners spare.

But we thank you that there was an eye that pitied us. We thank you you had a heart that loved us. We thank you you had an arm long enough to reach us and strength enough to lift us and power enough to liberate us and mercy enough to take us into your family that even now.

Not when we get to heaven and pass into that eternal bliss but even now you have said and now we're the sons of God. We come to thank you for your word tonight. It certainly is a lamp to our feet in this dark day in which we live.

It is a map to guide us from the city of destruction to the city of God. It is a jewel that flashes with fresh wonder and illumination each time we turn the pages just as if we turned a diamond in the sun and its different colors would flash upon us. We thank you it is a well of water from which we drink on our pilgrimage through this dry and thirsty world where there is nothing to satisfy us save this life-giving water.

We thank you that it is a pillow on which often we rest not just a weary head but a weary heart and a weary spirit. We thank you it comforts us in our times of being disturbed. We're equally grateful it disturbs us when we're too comfortable.

We thank you that it shows us the despair of man and yet it shows us the marvelous way of deliverance from that awful despair that sin brings. Again we thank you tonight that we can say we know in whom we have believed and we're persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day. May this word tonight be like coming as hungry people to a banquet to find the stimulating food.

May it be oil that will anoint our eyes you told one church to buy eyes off. We're told in that city they made it they exported it and yet the city that sold it needed it. And Lord we don't know how much we need that touch of thine until the moment you put that touch upon us and we wonder why we've been so long in spiritual ignorance.

We thank you then for the word we thank you for martyrs who burned at the stake to give it to us. We thank you for the prophets who dared to speak out in their day when they were out of step with a world that was out of step with God. The longing of our hearts is that you'll turn us again as a nation.

We have no confidence in the white house our confidence is in God's house. When the glory is restored when the voice again is heard when the dross is taken out when the temple is cleansed when the people are pure in heart when the longing is not for any aspiration or denominational pride or sectarian distinction. That to exalt the one who is indeed the altogether lovely and the fairest of ten thousand to our souls.

We thank you we're not languishing on beds of sickness in institutions tonight. We're glad we're not in prison halls like some dear saints in Russia and China and elsewhere. Forgive us as a nation we're so self-satisfied and as a church we're too weary to get to the house of God mostly during the week.

We are not just people who go one day a week we go one hour a week now. It will get less perhaps if we can manage it that way. Have mercy on us give us we pray thee again as we've so often prayed the chance to dig around the tree before it's cut down.

To fertilize it once again with our prayers our intercession and our desires to see Jesus Christ exalted. Grant that this meeting will bring glory to your wonderful name and we'll give you thanks in that name that is above every name the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

We're going to look at the verse that we've looked at so often lately and haven't got too far with it. The book of the revelation and the 19th chapter and verse 7. Revelation 19 and verse 7. Let us be glad. I'm glad it doesn't say let them be glad or we might be a bit discouraged but it ropes us in so let's cheer up tonight.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the lamb is come and his wife has made herself ready. Brother Herb and I were praying today and as we prayed this thought came to my mind about hymns. We didn't sing any tonight we sang songs but usually we sing hymns.

And as we were singing as we were praying this morning this thought came to me that most hymns are really sermons set to music. That's what they really are. Particularly in the case of Wesley.

John Wesley carved out a marvelous theology and his brother set it to music. Now not many people read Wesley's hymns pardon me Wesley's sermons but they should and they do sing Wesley's hymns. All over the world they'll sing next Sunday love divine or love excelling and a host of other hymns.

Hark the herald angels sing they'll be singing that before too long. He's got good theology even in drunken people will be singing at Christmas mild he laid his glory by born that man no more may die born to raise the sons of earth born to give them second birth. They don't know a thing about it but they sing it.

And so again I appeal to you when we do use a hymn which is normally done here. When you come in either spend your time in praying or select a hymn. Would you do that? And I think about the children are going to push a little more responsibility on Betty.

She needs it. And that is on a Saturday morning I think it would be nice if the children chose a hymn each week. Let them choose one hymn and then somewhere in the meeting Betty will say this hymn was chosen.

We won't know who chose it but some of the children are a bit shy. Not all of them but some are and it will be nice if the children chose a hymn. And then I think we'll restore the old English habit of trying to bring a little short story.

Because the older people always listen to my stories. They don't always listen to my preaching but they do like the stories. So I make a bargain with you.

You select a hymn and tell Aunty Betty which it is and then I'll bring you a story each week. If I can manage to find them. If I can't I'll make them up.

It's what lots of other people do anyhow. All right another thing came to me in prayer today was this. You see there are only two clatters of people in the world.

Not the rich and the poor or the black and the white or the intellectuals and the ignoramuses. There are just two kinds of people in the world. The saved and the lost.

And you know the difference is as simple as this. That the sinner has all his pleasure right up to the point of death and after that it's eternal misery. The Christian has a lot of sorrows until he gets to death but after that it's eternal joy.

Now make up your mind which way you're going to go. The guarantee is in the world you shall have tribulation. But once this little thread of life snaps like that, it's eternal bliss forever and ever and ever for the redeemed.

When the sinner dies all his joys are behind him and all his sorrows are ahead of him. When the Christian dies all his sorrows are behind him and all his joys are ahead of him. I think it was when Oliver Cromwell was dying and everybody gathered round.

Oh this man's been leading England so long and they were all so miserable and he rallied his feeble energy and he said well can't any of you praise the Lord. Well if you die conscious I hope you'll be as happy and victorious as that. Can anybody here praise the Lord he said.

Well it's a good thing to be able to praise him. But that's that's a very simple distinction isn't it. That really the sinner gets all he's going to get of joy and happiness and thrill to the edge of eternity and after that eternal misery.

The believer may have a thousand difficulties but once the thread of life goes brother after that it's glory and adoration and man it's going to be the most. Well it even exhausted the language of the apostle Paul because he said he couldn't describe it and I'm not going to even try. Well maybe I'll withdraw that maybe I will try a bit tonight.

All right the text again is let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the lamb is come and his wife. You notice the change in the previous chapter it is the bride but a bride isn't a wife. She's going to be you see her going into the church and you say that's the bride she isn't the wife yet.

But she goes through a contract shall we say and then she becomes the bride and here she becomes the wife and here it says his wife hath made herself ready. I don't know any way to describe to you the ramifications the variations of human depravity. I remember not too long ago we were going through a certain place and we were staying in a hotel and in that hotel there was a school for artists and well you had to have it explained it was art otherwise you wouldn't have known some of it but some of it was pretty good.

You know it suddenly struck me like this those people basically have what seven colors. Isn't it amazing these paint shops advertise on tv and say we have 1400 colors now that's nonsense. There's only seven colors there are variations of every color sure enough but somebody takes just an ordinary paint box there's no design and they start doing this and look what they bring out of it.

Somebody else uses the same basic colors and they do this and you find a hundred different people produce a hundred different things with seven basic colors. Now by the same token the possibilities of depravity are I don't know I suppose they're beyond any human computation. But there are some basic things that men do evil men do.

They cheat, they lie, they steal and they rob. I have a friend who's blind he's in England and he was going to a shop and he took what you would call a five dollar bill and he knows I don't know how he knows well I think it's the only one he had and he paid with this five dollar bill and he put the the change in his pocket and as he went out of the shop somebody jostled him and not till he got home did he discover that somebody had stolen all his change. He's a rather poor man.

I think that's despicable. I think stealing is bad but when you steal from the blind I think you're pretty depraved. But you know there's something even worse than that.

We're accustomed to it it doesn't trouble us anymore. And that is to some people anyhow when they're dying they'll send for a priest and the priest pronounces a word absolve odious and he gives them what they call in their theology extreme and they die happily because a priest pronounced a word. Now what an awful thing to steal a man's soul.

To tell him he's going to heaven because you sprinkle him with some kind of holy water or something. And after you pronounce that and made the sign of the cross with oil that man somehow slumbers and thinks that he's got it made. I say it would be an awful thing to wake up in hell after you've been deceived on the last breath you had while you were on earth.

But I'm not so sure that it's, there's less guilt on some of the preachers in the evangelical courses these days. You know come up to the front say a prayer and just pray the sinners prayer that's all God asks of you God be merciful to me a sinner amen No no no no no nonsense. Jesus made it very clear that what he was out to establish was a kingdom.

As I reminded you there on on Sunday that when Nicodemus came he did not come asking to be saved. He came positively saying master you see at the end of the previous chapter the second chapter there in John Jesus shall we say had dazzled them they were mystified he demonstrated his power and they saw the miracles but Jesus did not commit himself to them because he knew what was in the heart of man. They would follow him as a leader.

Lots of people want his leadership they don't want his lordship. And there is no leadership without lordship. We've no right to ask people to be saved.

People say well you take Jesus as your savior. Where does the scripture say that? The scripture says he is our lord and savior Jesus Christ. And the first thing remember that Jesus said to Nicodemus was listen if you want to enter the kingdom.

Do you remember the man dying on a cross somehow something got into his mind and he he muttered out there in his agony remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And right from the first moment they hung over Jesus what was what was very hostile in those days. You see the first announcement where was this where is he that is born a savior? No no no where is he that is born the king of the Jews? The eternal purpose of God a way there in eternity was not merely to snatch you and me out of hell.

That is a fringe benefit in one sense it is to raise us to sonship it is to raise us to kingship it is to give us participation in the kingdom that will last forever and ever and ever. And the redemptive work of Jesus Christ is that he might establish that kingdom and reign over it whose right it is to take the throne. Well then how do you enter the kingdom? We enter the kingdom this way we enter it by repentance and repudiation.

Except a man repents of sin he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. By the very fact he repents of sin he's acknowledging he's done wrong he's been with the wrong group he's done the wrong things. So when he repents it's not merely an action to God in which I say Lord I identify myself with my sins.

I say this that God has been right all the time and I've been wrong. I say that God is right if he casts me into hell but in his mercy he says no he he'll forgive me if I repent. All right then negatively I repent of my sin.

The very fact I repent of my sin means I step out into another area. I leave the kingdom of darkness I come into the kingdom of light. But then there's something else that's demanded of me.

I was reading this and it's a very wonderful chapter which we couldn't penetrate tonight the 14th chapter in the gospel recorded by Luke. But you remember that Jesus says look here is a man he makes a supper. I reminded you of it the other day.

And he went around and he said is everything in order? Yes. Invite the people to come in they wouldn't come. This is a picture I believe of the kingdom.

You see Jesus says two things the negative too which we don't like usually. He says two things about his kingdom. One my kingdom is not of this world.

If it was they'd never have crucified him. If his kingdom was of this world he wouldn't have waited for Nicodemus to come to him. He'd have been knocking on Nicodemus's door at midnight to try and get favor with the son he'd rid.

If his kingdom was of this world he'd have been after the Romans seeking somehow to get some power with the with a hierarchy that was ruling over the nation. If his kingdom was of this world he'd have gone to the scholars the Greeks who had great power. Let me remind you again because if this doesn't tickle you inside or do something that sister there says sometimes sister Pat something tickles her inside or stirs her inside.

It stirs me inside when I remember this. That Christianity was not served up to the world on a silver platter. Christianity wasn't dispersed with a bunch of nice men sitting together.

It wasn't taken to the officers club of the Roman Empire who happened to be dominating. Christianity was born in a sophisticated world. It was born in a totalitarian world.

It was born when the nation was in slavery. Now that's a pretty grim place to be born isn't it? It's just as though you had dropped parachuted into Russia tonight and you got down into a hellhole there where they were discussing the merits of Lenin and Trotsky and all the other guys and you suddenly come and start talking about Jesus. Man they give you the boot, get out of here.

And particularly when you come in and say well this person we're talking about is going to be a king. A what? Well he's a challenge to Caesar if he's going to be a king. He's going to be a prophet then he's a challenge to the Old Testament.

He's going to be a priest. He's a challenge to the hierarchy. Jesus says my kingdom is not of this world.

It's not of this world for those reasons that it doesn't come offering to parley with the world. Jesus didn't reason with the world, he set up a standard in the midst of it. His kingdom is not of this world because everything in this world is destructible and his kingdom is indestructible.

Every other kingdom you sit down and you have discussions and you make laws. He doesn't make any laws with anybody he gives them. And we either obey or we disobey.

And then in Romans 14 you remember that Paul says the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. That's pretty rough on us isn't it? The kingdom of God is not meat and drink. What is it then? It's righteousness and peace and joy.

You see if the kingdom of Jesus was anything less than that, you could thrust a sword through it. How can you thrust a sword through an idea? You can't kill a philosophy. You can kill the men who multiply or propagate that philosophy, but you can't kill a philosophy.

You can only destroy what is visible and the kingdom is invisible. You know there was a certain cathedral in Europe and I don't know who designed it but it was at the entrance as you came in there was a thing

that looked like a massive stone umbrella. A central pillar and out of it went branches this way that stone beautiful.

All people admired it and said that's about the most marvelous piece of gothic architecture I've ever seen. You know there's only one thing wrong with it, what's there? Well you know there's a lot of miming around here and supposing they cut a cavity under this cathedral, we know it's going to happen. Well that central pillar holds the whole thing up and if you take the base away, the house will come down.

Well you know that was all through except one thing. It wasn't until after some years they were busy under there doing some more kind of, I don't know what they're doing, kind of surveying. Do you know what we've done? No.

We've cut the whole foundation of the pillar away. Oh man, the cathedral will come down. Somebody said why hasn't it come down already? It's been cut away for about four years.

So they went and they searched the work of the artist and they discovered this that he'd written somewhere in fine print, don't have any trouble about this central pillar holding the building up. Because really it's only an ornamental pillar, it's actually the building that's holding the pillar up. It's the foundation that's secure.

And you know so many times people have almost, almost buried the church. Voltaire, contemporary of John Wesley. Oh he had a heyday.

He said in a house one day there in France, you know, a hundred years from this day, there'll be no Bibles except in museums. No Bibles, just be, people will have grown up. They'd be too intelligent to read the Bible.

And they had quite a party. They were ready to bury Christianity. You know it's nice to get the relatives to a funeral and get the wreaths and choose the hymns and prepare the eulogy.

You just need one thing to have a successful funeral. That's a corpse. And for some strange reason, Christianity refuses to die.

Oh they've written the epitaph for it. They've got songs ready to sing over it. They, there's somebody with his hand on the bell, you know, ready to toll the bell and say, hey hear ye, hear ye, the Christian message has gone and Christianity.

But no sir, it doesn't do that. It's rather like tennis and stream which says men may come and men may go, but I go on forever. The kingdom of Jesus Christ is not meat and drink, but righteousness.

And you can't destroy righteousness. Righteousness is that which is, God has worked in us. And righteousnesses are the things which work out of the righteousness he put in us.

Righteousness is the root and righteousnesses are the fruits of the righteousness which is, which is within us. And therefore you cannot destroy righteousness. And joy is that overflow that we know that we're his and we have the ecstasy.

We have a foretaste as the hymn writer says, oh what a foretaste of glory divine. And peace, a peace that passeth all understanding. These are ours.

Now Jesus, as I said, is talking here in this 14th chapter, about a man that had a supper and he called his friends and so forth and so on. But he lays down a law of the kingdom. You see there are some people who say it's fun to be a Christian.

Well they never read the Bibles at all, they read comic stories. It isn't fun to be a Christian, it's a task. It demands discipline because you see, we live in a day again when when people want to be followers but not disciples.

Jesus didn't say go into all the world and get people saved. He said go into the world and make disciples. And disciples mean discipline, it means we're under orders.

Not of the hierarchy in the church but orders from above, from the master above. And therefore we are disciples, we are disciplined, we are people under orders. And Jesus says listen, this is what you do when you have a feast.

Never invite anybody to your table that can invite you back again. Run your house like that? Don't think many of us do, but I'm telling you what Jesus said, not what we wanted to say. He says if you're making a feast, never invite anybody to that feast who will call you back again.

And he says one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things and he said unto him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Oh you thought there's going to be something better than that, you can eat bread down here, black bread, brown bread, rye bread, other bread. Going to eat bread in the kingdom of God, but wait, wait, he says blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Well what's he just been saying? He's just been saying you, you never, you never invite anybody to the house that can, can invite you back. Well don't you realize, are you so sleepy tonight? Don't you realize this, that once day, once down, once you sit down at that table, you'll never be able to repay him, you'll still be hanging on his mercy. He's going to take us into his table and there's no chance of returning.

You can't say Jesus I live on 46th avenue you know, on that little suburb outside of the pearly gates and I want you to come to this. No, no sir it's all over. Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Now the people wouldn't come in, so what does he say? He says go out into the city and bring the naked and the blind and the poor and the wretched and so forth. And there went great multitudes to him, they followed him and he turned to them and said, if any man come unto me and hate not his father, his mother, wife, children, brethren and sisters yet, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And who so doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Now listen, the next part is this, which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost? Or what man going to an army, doesn't first sit down and see if he has more men that can fight with him than those coming against him? Now the preacher says you see, you to sit down and count the cost of discipleship, that's not what he's saying. I believe what Jesus is saying here look, is this, listen, for 30 years, for 30 years I've been counting the cost of taking up my cross. For 30 years I've been thinking over what's going to happen in my kingdom.

And I've come to this conclusion, that no man is going to come into my kingdom, I'm not going to carry all the cross, I'll carry my cross, you carry your cross. Now negatively I say it is this, that a man renounces his sin, he repents of his sin, and immediately he repents of his sin, he gives up his all way. Like somebody said to a man one day, who's a drunkard and a liar, and he gambled and smoked, did every devilish thing,

and he said well yeah, sure I'd like to get rid of my sins, my guilts, my conscience troubles me, and I have bad nights, I dream about it, and I fear hell sometimes, but say if I got saved, would I have to give up all my old companions? And the preacher said oh no, no, no, oh well that's a relief.

No he said if you get really saved, you won't have to give them up, he'd give you up. Immediately you renounce your sin and become a new creature, you don't have the interest, you don't have the desire, you don't have the appetite, therefore you give up your sins, you give up the gang you're running with as it were. But now positively you take up your cross, and you know what, as soon as you take up the cross, just as you rejected the world, the world will reject you, because you've taken up your cross.

And I can still hear Dr. Toser saying Len, you know the man that was carrying his cross, you knew one thing about him, he wasn't coming back. So many of us want to play at carrying our cross. Jesus I my cross have taken all to leave and follow thee, destitute, despite, forsaken, beautiful, but that's not the thing, is have we done it? If a man will not take up his cross, now you say it's fun, it's real fun to be a Christian some guy says.

Listen how funny this is, if your hand offend you, cut it off. I don't see much funny about that do you? For it is better to enter into life named, 43rd verse of the 9th chapter of Mark, it is better to go through life named. Do you realize that? If you literally had a hand cut off, do you think you'd be handicapped? Would I be handicapped the rest of my life? I surely would.

But he says it's better, what, to go into heaven having two hands, no, better to go into heaven with one hand. In fact he says a little later in the 45th verse, if thy foot offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter, halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell fire.

He says in verse 47, if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye. Oh we don't, oh man if you make it as difficult as that, do you know what? We won't get really people, get people saved.

Well I've got news for you, we're not getting people saved. We're getting people to become church members. We're getting people to become nice, and decent, and give up a few lousy habits.

But you see I can do everything, I can beat my breast, I can fast, I can pray, I can swear a thousand allegiances to God. But when I've done everything in the way of repentance, and repudiating the world, and even taking up my cross, I need a number of things. I need the blood to cleanse me, I need the witness of the Holy Ghost from heaven, to say that God has done this miracle in me, and I need my name writing in the Lamb's book of life.

Because if it's not there, there's no chance of me getting into the kingdom. That's why I say it's a terrible thing, to say to a dying man, oh I give you the blessing of the church, absolve all dears, you're going to make it. It's a lie.

Martin Luther raised his voice against that. There was a priest of that day by the name of Tetzl, and he ran up a list, a prize list of sins. It's so much, you pay so much to the church, you get absolution for lying, so much for adultery, so much for stealing, so much for murder, and it became a terrible period of indulgences.

And that was the final thing that fired, I believe, Martin Luther. He rebelled against it. But you know we accept it today, it doesn't worry us too much.

It's just done. And if you raise your voice against it, you're a bigot. Particularly in these days, when well, not only the sheep meet together, but the goats get there, and a few skunks these days, and they have a meeting, and you're supposed to pronounce your blessing on it.

There is nothing that divides more than preaching the Word of God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. And brother, we're going to get back to that before too long. Easy believism, it's got to go.

We've had too much of it. Jesus says, in essence, he says, listen, before I entered this, you see, you say, well I thank the Lord that he came in a manger, and oh wait a minute, you've missed, you've missed about a thousand million years, if you start at the manger. So happened that he was with the Father before the world was.

So happened one day that he took off his eternal robes, and laid them down, and the angels must have been mystified. Maybe terrified. Have you ever felt what, have you ever wondered what they felt like when they went back to heaven without, without Jesus? Huh? When they hovered there, and the babe was born, and those angels shouted their hallelujahs, and stood up those sleepy shepherds, and then they went back to heaven, and for 30 years they watched him.

Hmm? Never had a horn, never had a dime to his name, never had any creature comforts. What is he doing? Well, he's beginning that marvellous, marvellous, marvellous work of redemption. You see, this is why it says in this chapter, I reminded you before, I heard as it were a multitude, as the sound of many waters.

Have you ever heard the ocean when it's roared at night, and come dashing up on a beach, and blasted against the rocks? And he says, not only many waters, as a voice of mighty thunderings. My, wouldn't it be wonderful if you could somehow get the noise, a taping of the noise of Niagara Falls, and then get a taping of the Victoria Falls in Africa, and a taping of the Angel Falls down in Brazil there, and then some other falls, and put them all together. If you could get a recording of all the thunderstorms that have ever existed since the creation began, and you put all that noise together, and listen, it will be like a whisper.

Because this is the triumph, this is the consummation of all that Jesus did before eternity, and right through life. Look at him going up there, he's faint, he's being pushed around. They put a robe on him, they put a reed in his hand to suggest his kingdom, and his, his authority is about as strong as that reed that shakes in the wind.

And one man comes up, and gets a mouthful of flame, and spits it down that holy face. Another man takes his beard, and snatches it till the flesh comes out. And he's faint, he's being pushed from Caiaphas to Herod, and Herod back to Pilate.

And his body, because he was human, is feeling the exhaustion. And he's staggering up the hill with a cross that two men would have to carry normally. As he staggers up that hill, the spit is running down his face, and they're blaspheming and ridiculing.

And I think if you'd got near enough, you'd have heard Jesus saying, darling I'm doing it all for you. He's the King of Kings, he's the Lord of Lords, he's the Bridegroom of Bridegrooms. What did Rockefeller give his bride? Tinsel.

What is Jesus going to give his bride? He is the King of Kings, he is the Lord of Lords, she is the Bride of Brides. And all heaven is going to break out. Man alive.

When you hear that a choir of what 10,000 times, 10,000 what a hundred million plus thousands of people, and the orchestra has 144,000 playing their hearts, and singing and shouting, worthy is the Lamb that was slain. The voice of many waters, and thundering saying, Alleluia. Alleluia.

That's a great word. We're the only people in the world that has it. Not the earth has it in their language.

I don't mean in the English language, I mean the language of the Word of God. You, you, you, the Jews had it sure in the Old Testament. But you won't find it in the Buddhist language, you won't find it in other languages, not in the way that it's expressed here.

Remember in the previous chapter, when the whole system had collapsed. You see in the, in the 17th chapter there's a woman, a dirty rotten woman. She's the whore, she's the harlot church.

She rolls over on seven hills, her garments are full of splendor, beauty, flashy, dazzling. You notice the bride here has no colors. You know this book is called the Book of the Revelation, the Apocalypse as the smart boys say.

Which really means the unveiling. You know what troubles me about this book? It's what isn't unveiled in it that gets me. When you say, it says here that there is a bride.

That's all it says, it doesn't say who she is. It says there's a marriage. It doesn't say how long it lasts.

There's going to be a feast, but I don't know what we're going to eat. It's the things that are concealed that, that stir my heart and stir my imagination. You see that old harlot in the previous chapter in the 17th, she's been liquidated, she's been destroyed.

Religious Babylon has been destroyed. In the 18th chapter, commercial Babylon has been destroyed. And when poor old Rockefeller sees the, what does he own? I don't know, half America, but anyhow, he owns so many oil companies, and he's multiplied millions are going to perish in an hour.

And all their investments are going to go up in smoke. And the harlot has been burned as well. And in that moment, these men in panic, they throw dust in the air, and they scream, and it says they howl.

They forgot they went to Harvard and Yale. They're so crushed and disappointed that all they invested, and their fathers invested, and their grandfathers invested, it's all perishing, and they howl. And at the moment they howl, the saints say, hallelujah, now what? We've been waiting for this all our lifetime, to see the end of dominion of all corruption, and lying, and cheating, and deceiving, and impurity, and unholiness, and iniquity.

And in the moment of their grief, the saints are shouting hallelujah. Oh yes, this is, this is the, the day for which creation and all its tribes were made. How will I get into it? Well as I said on Sunday, the only, you've got to be sure that the kingdom of God is in you already, because that's the only way you'll get in the kingdom there.

Jesus says the kingdom of God is within you. We received a new nature, a heavenly nature. He was made partaker of human nature, that we in his infinite mercy and grace, might be made partakers of the divine nature.

We used to sing a hymn, I remember in a church where we had some stirrings of revival about 40 years back, nearly anyhow. And one of the hymns the young people liked was, I feel the throbbings of immortal

life grow sweeter as the days go by. Boy they used to sing that.

I feel the throbbings of eternal life. Life has to express itself, and the life of God in us will express itself. Sometimes he might share his grief with us over a sin-sick rebellious world.

Sometimes it may be the mere ecstasy of knowing again that we have indeed passed from death unto life. But don't let anybody fool you, you're not going to get into, into the kingdom because somebody sprinkles holy water on you. You're not going to get into the kingdom because you're on the pastor's shoulder, and go through the tank within 24 hours.

You know, no no no, nothing ritualistic, nothing but the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing but the fact I've renounced all known sin, and I'm walking in the light as he is in the light, is any way a permit to enter into the into the kingdom of God. Now it's wonderful here that again, it says, let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for fine linen is the, is the, is the righteousness of the saints.

Now, now that's very beautiful. I don't know whether that's why brides still like to be dressed in white, usually they do, they like a beautiful white outfit. I remember once going past St Margaret's, it's the classic church in London after Westminster Abbey I guess, or after St Paul's, I don't know whether people do get, yes Queens get married at Westminster Abbey, but I remember going past St Margaret's, and it's what we would call in a society wedding.

And you know, I went back to see this bride, she just looked so gorgeous, she looked so beautiful, and she had what they call a long train, you know, and I don't know how many attendants were holding it, and she went in, and oh she walked so dignified, so beautiful, so lovely. Oh my, what do you think this bride's going to look like? Don't look too close at most brides because, well anyhow, but do you know this bride won't have either spots or wrinkles, or any such thing? Now, somebody says you see, you know what's going to happen? Well the process is really as simple as this, that the church is going to be raptured. This is it, this is a theory, the church is going to be raptured, and then she's going into the presence of the Lord, and she's going to be judged, and she's going to be made clean, and those who are worthy are going to be part of the bride, and then there's going to be a great display.

Of course you read, what, you read the sixth chapter of the Song of Solomon, and you read Psalm 45, and you put them together, it says there are queens, and there are concubines, and there are virgins, and well, you see, there's a redeemed company, and then they say the tribulation saints are going to join, and then there are those that the, was it John Baptist talked about, those friends of the bridegroom, the friend, just the friends of the bridegroom, you see, because it's very obvious at this wedding that everybody isn't going to the marriage supper. Why are they called to the marriage supper, if they're already, why didn't all the virgins get in, when, when the, when the cry came, the bridegroom cometh, he slipped in, and five were left outside, and five went inside. Why? They didn't all get there.

Now of course, you read the book of revelations, it's all mystifying with numbers, there's 144 on the sea of glass. Somebody says they're all converted Jews, and somebody says get off here. The 144 thousand are Mormons, somebody says get out of here.

The 144,000 are Jehovah's Witnesses, and they're all pushing each other off the sea of glass. They're all so sure who the 144,000 is. And then you've got four and, and you've got all these mystifying numbers,

and yet it does not say how many make up the real bride, or the wife of Christ himself.

You see, there are some who say, well let's see, there are the friends of the bridegroom. Well they're the saints from the time of Moses to John the Baptist. They're the friends of the bridegroom.

Because Jesus says that he that is least, in the kingdom of God, is greater than John. And therefore they say this, that I'm giving you other interpretation, not that I agree with them, I'm just telling you. But they say well, you see Jesus says that, that he that is least in the kingdom, is greater than John the Baptist, who didn't get in the kingdom.

And therefore he's not going to get into this little select group here, that really make up the bride. So the friends of the bridegroom are those who were, came to know God, and they were saved under law, they say from the time of Moses, or even before the law some of them, until the time of John the Baptist. And then of course you have the, the virgins, which some people say again, are the tribulation Jews.

And then you have the guests, and people say well they're the, well they're really tribulation Gentiles. And then you have the folk who, who make up the millennial saints. But you know when I think of all that number, now somebody else will turn the whole bunch round, don't, don't worry, don't try and memorize it.

Do you know how I settled the whole thing? I, I turned up Timothy there, where it says in, in 2 Timothy 2 19, and it gave me real peace, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Isn't that great? You know he knows everyone, everyone! And nothing is going to happen until the bride is perfect. I remember once going to a, the only, well I'd never been to a great orchestral display, and I went to hear the Messiah sung in, in Manchester England.

And there were hundreds and hundreds, you know they all had their beautiful tuxedos on, the ladies were in white, and they had the sopranos here, and they had the basses here, and they had the tenors here, and they had their contraltos here. And I thought well it's good night, it's time they started. Won't start yet, why not? Well there's a busload of choir members should have come, they're missing, and they're up there, well he's got 150 other sopranos, I mean does it make a difference if they're 50 or missing? Oh well yes, you don't understand it technically, it would upset the balance of the music.

He'll start us up, they're coming, they're coming, and they came in in a hurry, and he turns around, now your voice may not sound too good down here, but cheer up, you'll have a wonderful voice up there. And you know what? The conductor isn't going to start that heavenly choir, till the last person is sitting in his place, or in her place. He's not going to start until all the stones are in the building.

Because again, this is not only a bride as a person, but later remember a little further on, it says that we saw the new Jerusalem coming down from God, out of heaven. And we are the stones in that new Jerusalem, we are the building's stones, fitly joined together, perfected in Jesus Christ. As I said Sunday, if you say that New York has voted democratic, you don't mean the buildings, you don't mean Woolworths, and those shops voted, or the skyscrapers, or the horses voted, and they may as well I suppose, have voted in Central Park, you say the city, the people.

Well the new Jerusalem is a city, it is a habitation, it is the holy city. That's why I argue with people say, you put holy water on that, there's no holy water, there is nothing holy, except God makes it holy. You say, well the Bible says holy on the back, because the Holy Spirit wrote it.

That's why, it's a holy book. It began in the heart of the Eternal Holy God, it was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Holy men of God, spakers of the moon, by the Holy Ghost, God is very particular.

And he says, I saw the holy city coming down from God, out of heaven. And then he says he, he saw the bride. Well I, I sure would like to know who all the other characters are, wouldn't you? You know the ladies-in-waiting, who are the guests? Who are those concubines? Those characters in the sixth chapter of, which is such a beautiful chapter, I can almost smell the fragrance, I can almost see the bride with a marvellous, oh she's so beautiful.

You see it tries to get us into, into the stream of thought. Here is the most perfect female you ever saw in your life. Her teeth are like sheep that come up from the washing.

Her eyes are blue like the pools of Heshbon. Her face is lovely, her neck is like a pillow of marble. She, she'd make you swoon if you saw her anyhow.

And you know that's exactly the bride that Jesus is going to have. Now people say, well don't, don't be too worried you know, about your faults, and your failures, and your sins, because you're going to be washed when you get there at the judgment seat. Well I, I can't figure that one out.

I don't believe that's it. Why? Well let me tell you what Jesus says. Excuse me.

Revelation 3 and verse 4, Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments. And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. Now they have not defiled their garments.

Well if they could walk pure on the earth, why couldn't everybody else walk pure on the earth? Look what it says in the 15th, pardon me, the 16th chapter and verse 15. Oh pardon me, before that chapter 7, and verse 14. I said unto him, Sir thou knowest, and he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

And then in 16 and verse 15. Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. He keepeth his garments.

He doesn't walk into temptation. He doesn't say well the Lord will have mercy. He doesn't say at the judgment seat he'll take that stain out, and iron out this wrinkle.

No, no, no, no, no. He doesn't say that. What does it say there in, isn't it in James? Somewhere James.

Yeah James chapter 1. I remember it comes back now. What does he, what does James say? James is very practical. He says listen, you know, let me put it backwards a minute.

If you went into a theological seminary, or a Bible school, and said I give you all a sheet of paper, and I give you a pencil, and I want you to write in less than a hundred words, what you think true religion is. You know what they'd start with? The virgin birth, the resurrection, a dozen other things. You know God wrote the Bible, and men invented theology to muddle it up.

Do you know what Jesus says? The Holy Spirit says through James, pure religion and undefiled before God is this. What? Right. You're jumping ahead of me there, but that's all right.

Pure religion undefiled before God is what? To visit the orphan, and the widow, and the sick, and the oppressed, and to keep yourself unspotted from the world. There isn't a religion in the world there say that.

You're asking man to lift himself by his bootstraps.

But Jesus says, yeah we didn't sing it tonight, I'd thought of it. We used to sing it quite a bit. There is a fountain filled with, I love that hymn, filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

And sinners plunge beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. I've heard people say sometimes you know, I think sometimes the best thing is let your kids go to the devil for a while, and come back and taste it. Well I don't think that.

Some people go that way. You know that's like saying there's a bus coming down the road. Throw yourself in front of it, and prove what modern surgery can do for you.

Because you'll never know what surgery can do, till you have a broken back, and legs, and you're a pile of jelly, and then they give you antibiotics, and sit up with you for 45 nights. That's ridiculous. You know I say this with reverence, it's comparatively easy to get saved, but it's not comparative, it's not easy to keep saved.

In this sense that you keep in the place of direct obedience to God. Keep yourself and spot it from the world. And in one of those churches at Laodicea, it says I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment.

You see you don't have to be too worried about getting there, if he's going to purge you from your sins. Quoting first chronicles 3, pardon me, no first corinthians 3, and where you remember it talks there about, the fire shall try every man's work. But the fire's trying his works.

What he's done, not what he is. Oh that's going to be a day surely, when our works are tried. But you see God has made provision in Jesus Christ, that you and I can walk in this filthy hell hole of a world, and keep yourself unspotted.

You see that's what, that's what made everybody mad about Jesus. They could never pin anything on him. He lived in the world, and yet he never got jealous that somebody had a lovely home, and he didn't have one.

Some of the wealthy people had donkeys. Some of the very rich people had horses. Jesus had nothing.

There was no way of provoking him. I'll tell you how I know that, because he says the prince of this world cometh, and he findeth nothing in me. You know that makes the devil blazing mad, when he can't get you jealous, and envious, and mad, and suspicious, and covetous.

And you say, Satan you're wasting your time. Because Lucifer's pretty clever. He's had six thousand years of studying human nature.

But there is a place of victory. It isn't a plateau, beyond which there is no more victory, or no more development. Oh no no, it's not that.

But there is a place of purity. Excuse me. Because as I've said before, there are no degrees in purity.

I think it's pure or impure. Now there's a difference between sinfulness, and unworthiness. You see I, I feel more unworthy every day I live.

I don't feel more sinful, because as far as I know, I don't commit certain acts of sin. I don't do that. But I feel my unworthiness.

I happen to have turned 45 a while back, quite a while back. And when I look back now, I think my, you know, I could have done this, I could have done that, I could have done the other. And you know, the less time you get, the more you want to seek, how can I best invest it for God.

Some of you, if Jesus carries, have years, a lot of years. I don't. A few months I'll pass my safety margin, three score years and ten, and then I've had it.

I'm living on borrowed time as it is. I've died twice previously in accidents. So I've, I've had a good innings, you know really.

But you see, there is no such thing as finality to the Christian life this side of eternity. You better swallow that hard. You know one of those days when you feel you, well you just wonder if there's really anybody as spiritual as me on earth.

I, you know, I sometimes wonder. I just think I'm the Apostle Paul and Gabriel all in one. And I'm having such marvelous victory that, you know, you wonder the Lord doesn't take me to heaven and say, look at this exhibit for Sigi.

Well anyhow, you know, when you feel on top of the world like that, let's remember there's a lot of land ahead to be possessed. Now I'm not concerned who those concubines are. I'm not concerned who those queens are.

I'm not concerned who's on the outside. I'm not concerned who gets to the marriage and isn't right up there with the bride. In one sense I'm not for this reason.

They're not vital to my salvation. And you can get a lot of headaches worrying about things that ought not to bother you a bit. The Lord knoweth them that are his.

And I say hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. You see somebody says, well you don't have a chance because you happen to be a Methodist and your mother didn't know any better. She had you sprinkled.

And somebody else says, well you got sprinkled, but goodness you'll never get in because you got, you did it in a tank and they warmed the water to make it comfortable. And you should have got baptized in a nice cold stream, you know, where you get up and shiver and wonder if you're really alive. Oh we've so many methods.

We've so many little idiosyncrasies. Now the only thing that's really vital to redemption is this, that I have renounced all sin. I've not only renounced my sin, I've rejected a sinful world.

I've taken up my cross and because of that it rejects me. You know, let's face it, we don't all pay the same price to get saved. It cost him the same price.

And sometimes when I got with some of those criminals in New York, when we were at Teen Challenge, and I sat and Martha said to me one day, you know that man so and so, he serves our lunch. I said yes, he said, I think he's a marvellous fellow, he's so quiet. I called him after lunch one day, the others had gone.

I said sit down a minute, I want to ask you some questions. How long have you been in crime? Oh well brother Ravenhill, he said. I said well tell me how long you've been in crime.

He said well, I'll tell you. I carried a 38 when I was eight years of age. I shot a man.

I was in my first murder when I was an eight, eight years of age. I was in a double murder when I was 12 years of age. And I accelerated.

I've had so many wives, I couldn't count them. Had all kinds of women, black women, white women. I've done so many things that, well I said, I'm sorry to hear about that.

And I said you know, it's, he was saved, but I said it's comparatively easy for me to say the law can save you from all that. But you see I've never had a biting fever of lust in my body, like that man had worked up. I've never had a craving for liquor that drives you crazy at three o'clock in the morning.

I've never had to fight against smoking. There are sins that I never participated in. I was born on the clean side of the road in a godly home, and I thank God for it.

And unless I'm careful, I don't have too much compassion in that area. At least I didn't until God dealt with me about it. You see it doesn't cost, it isn't the same for everybody.

I don't know why, but I thought of a darling girl that came to a church we passed in 1932. That's a few years back. She stopped after the Sunday morning.

Now remember I preached that Sunday morning on Romans 8 37. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. She's one of the most beautiful girls I've ever seen.

Big blue eyes, lovely red cheeks. She had a lovely tailored suit on, and I remember a little mink collar, and she said can I talk to you? And I said well sure. She said when everybody's gone.

All right. Just came inside the church, said now unload. What's your problems? He said Mr.Ramiel, is that scripture true that you quoted this morning? We are more than conquerors.

You said it was victory with a margin. You get victory, you're not exhausted in it. There's still a reserve.

Is it true? I said yes, it sure is. Well I've got a battle on my hands. Tell me, I'll pray with you.

I'm 20 years of age. I lived in a very beautiful home. People had money, everything.

The only child. Mother never told me a thing about the facts of life or anything at all. And I went to college, and I met a fellow, and he told me a story.

And she said well I'll tell you. I was 18. I landed up with a baby.

Well I said my dear God has forgiven many people. Oh well that's all right. That's all right.

But she said you see, I had never thought of that area at all. My ambition was in other areas. But she said you see, that man woke desires in me, that often I have to fight like mad.

Now there's nothing wrong in a woman having children. It's a natural thing. But when she asked on the other side of the fence as it were, somebody wakened desires in that girl.

She said I have to fight. I have to get out of bed at night and pray. I long to be in a man's arms.

I long to hear him say I love you. I long for a husband. He hasn't come along.

And she said you see, we don't all have the same temptations. I don't know why I thought of that today. Something came back to my mind.

I thought well, well how true it is. I thought I met a man who said listen I've never been, I've never lived a day of honesty in my life. I've stolen money every day of my life and I've lived well.

And now I'm having to rough it. And often Satan says hey boy you missed a chance there didn't you. Look what you could have got today.

You see. This is why we need, as the good old book says, we need to support each other. We need to love each other.

You may have had a rough day today. I don't know. You don't look any worse than usual.

Well maybe I'm sorry, put it the other way. You don't look any better than usual. And maybe you've had a bad day.

But please, please, please don't let Satan buffet you on the ground. Which he does come often, particularly to young people and say you know what, you'll never make it. You're too ignorant of the Word of God.

But I want to tell you something. Every man on God's earth is ignorant of the Word of God. It's so profound we'll never fathom it.

God himself declares that great is the mystery of godliness. And there are things God is never going to divulge to us. But I'll tell you what, if you and I are walking in the light.

If you've kept yourself unspotted from the world. If you've obeyed him in every detail that you know. If you've taken up your cross and followed him.

You can be sure of this. You can't be sure of it anywhere else perhaps. But one thing that keeps this little head of mine just balanced is this.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? And you know what, if God gives dear Herb 10 million times more reward than he gives me. I'll shout hallelujah. If he gave him it now I wouldn't have any envy.

But I'll tell you what, when you get into eternity and you see somebody that you thought was a little further behind in the track. And they've six stars in the crown and you have only three and a half. You won't be a bit envious about it.

Man you'll go up and love them and say oh I'm glad you made it. I see the king appointed you for this. You see me going down the street and say brother Raymond is it true you're going to rule over 10 cities? I'll say yes.

Do you want to live in my city? Of course I may be living in a city with somebody ruling over me. I don't know. But you see the prospect for the Christian is so wonderful really.

I don't know who's going to rule over all those cities. The Lord knoweth them that are his. In his foreknowledge I believe God knows every man that's going to rule.

He knows every position we're going to have in eternity. Man I'd be glad to lead the choir. Maybe you've heard that job.

But that choir of a hundred million, wouldn't that be something? And you turn to the orchestra and they all come clattering. I mean they all come in at once with their music. And you say you know what the wonderful thing about this is it's never never ever going to end.

I like that Messiah song that says and he shall reign forever and ever. King of kings and Lord of lords. There's going to be a government in heaven.

Did you know that? That he's going to rule it. Nobody's going to be elected. Nobody's going to make promises.

They won't say we're going to bridge, build a bridge over the river in the middle of the city. Forget it. They'd lose the plan.

He's going to, the government shall be upon his shoulder. Won't that be wonderful? He's going to reign on the earth for a thousand years. I suppose people will die in the millennium won't they? Because death hasn't been abolished yet.

But I'll tell you what. It's a bit hackneyed to say it again is it? Isn't it? But it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Maybe you don't feel so bad if you pulled off a good business deal today.

But it'll be worth it Bill. What do you think? Amen. When we see Jesus life's trials they'll seem so small when we see Christ.

Just one glimpse of his dear face all sorrows will erase. So the song says bravely run the race till we see Christ. Father we're glad tonight for this important place on the dusty road of life.

We thank you that we are marching to Zion, the beautiful city of God. And even now we can truly say then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee. How great thou art.

You've made it all possible. Without you we'd be lost tonight. Without your blood to cleanse we'd be polluted and unclean.

Without your strength we would have fallen and be downcast and outcast. But we thank you you reminded those people at Corinth when they looked at all the filth around them such as some of you that ye are washed, ye are sanctified. We'll keep looking to thee.

We'll keep running the race and fighting the fight and obeying your commandments. And in a world that's hostile to thee we pray that we may bring joy to the heart of God. We give you praise in Jesus name.

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