

# The Baptism of Fire

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prophetic voices, the Holy Spirit, and seeking God's presence in our lives, highlighting the significance of John the Baptist's message and birth.*

**Duration:** 1:00:37

**Scripture:** Luke 3:1, Luke 3:10

**Topics:** "Baptism Of Fire"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a spiritual awakening and revival. He encourages the congregation to desire this revival with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. The preacher references a biblical story where a man challenged the hosts of Israel to call upon their God to send fire. He highlights the importance of repentance and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. The sermon also mentions the 400 years of prophetic darkness between the testaments and the anticipation of the coming of Jesus as a refiner's fire.

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## Transcript

She said she'd read every one of his books. And to use her words, she said, I almost worshipped the ground he walked on, but I never met him. And I never met anyone who had met him.

And I was glad to hear that you knew him and talked with him and prayed with him. And I feel that that was a great honor. But we were in a meeting recently and I had repeatedly quoted John Wesley.

An old lady came up to me at the end of the meeting, she said, could I ask you a question? And I said, sure. She said, did you know him personally? I said, no, he was just before my time. He died in 1791.

I've mentioned more than once this weekend in different language that God very often locks nations up. He sends them to jail. Sent Israel to jail for 400 years under the pharaohs.

And he sent them to jail for 400 years between the testaments. I've got two texts tonight. It doesn't mean I'll preach twice as long.

But maybe I should warn you, perhaps right now you should fashion your seatbelts. I think there's a little turbulence ahead. The dividing page between the testaments, this white page, covers a period of blackness.

It says nothing, it says everything. There have been 400 years of prophetic darkness without any light. 400 years of silence without any prophetic voice.

400 years of silence without any prophetic voice. And it could be while you're here, they might shoot one of those things off in the sky across the water there. They did the last time we were here and it's fascinating to see a streak of light go up in the sky.

But I want to suggest to you that this amazing man that streaked across that sky, John Baptist, was more incandescent than even one of those flaming rockets. More brilliant than Halley's Comets. More disturbing than an earthquake.

He is in that rare category of being a prophet. Quite recently, a lady told me that in her church, her preacher had been denouncing prophets. They don't exist anymore.

They finished with the apostolic dispensation. Well, hold to it. If that's your theory, at least be honest.

If there are no prophets, there are no evangelists. You better not read the fourth chapter of Ephesians anymore because he gave some prophets, some evangelists, some teachers. And if you cut one out, you'll have to cut the others out if you're desperately honest and biblically and intellectually and theologically honest.

Prophets are God's emergency men for crisis hours. The evangelist tells you to get rid of your sin because it will hurt you. The prophet is concerned not that your sin is hurting you, but your sin is hurting God.

The evangelist says, if you don't get rid of sin, you're going to be in trouble. God says, if you don't get rid of sin, he'll get rid of you. The greatest character reader of all time was Jesus Christ.

And he said concerning John Baptist that there was not a man born of woman that was greater than he. And Jesus, of course, remembered Isaiah and the other prophets. Now, the birth of this man is very wonderful.

His father was a priest by the name of Zacharias, and he was of the course of Adam and Eve. His mother was one of the daughters of Aaron. There were 12,000 priests at that period, and every one of them did one thing only once in his life, and that was to go into the temple and minister at the temple.

It was unrehearsed. And when the trumpeters stood there on the porch of Herod, Herod built it, named it, and they stood there every morning with their silver trumpets and sounded a blast over Jerusalem, and the great doors of the temple were opened. And the priest came first down the aisle.

It was unrehearsed. He was under the burden of those heavy priestly garments and a mitre upon his head. The people were allowed to follow him.

A man preceded him and took the dust away from the altar. And as this man, Zacharias, came down the altar, he came down and the word of God says that there was somebody to meet him there, an angel. I think most of us would be a little shocked if we met an angel.

We've read about them, but we don't meet them. And when he saw the angel, he was disturbed, and the angel said, fear not. It's very precise because it says that the angel, there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side.

That's from the right side of the altar. Does it make any difference where he stands? Of course it does. If he stood on the left-hand side of the altar, he had a message for the nation.

If he stood on the right-hand side of the altar, he had a message for an individual. And here is the man already nervous. There were more than 6,000 people in that assembly because on one occasion there was a riot in the temple and 2,000 people were almost destroyed and another 4,000 people were injured according to history.

Read Josephus. And here is a man already nervous in this situation. And suddenly Gabriel calmed his fears and said, fear not.

I've got a message for you. The Lord sent me all the way from the ivory palaces into this world of war to tell you that your wife is going to bear a son. Going to bear a son.

Oh, come on. I've enough troubles without telling me that. Good night.

She's a wrinkled old woman. She's got rheumatism and I don't know what she hasn't got. And she's going to bear a son.

I think some of us would just be as disturbed if the Lord whispered in your ear tonight, I'm going to answer the prayer that you've prayed for the last five or six or seven or eight years. We might have the same unbelief. You know, the reason that the children of Israel didn't enter the promised land and maybe there were 2 million of them was not because they committed adultery, not because they went after strange gods.

They had one terrible disease, which is rampant in the church of God today. They had unbelief. And unbelief caused them to die in the wilderness even if they were the chosen people of God.

And because of his unbelief, God struck him dumb. If the Lord did that tonight, I'd need to turn this into a healing meeting. If he struck every one of us dumb because of our unbelief, it's the most prevalent disease.

I said facetiously, but I still say it again, that we're the most unbelieving believers that God has ever had to deal with. And I remind you again, that if you live another hundred years, God has not got a single word to say to our generation. God hasn't spoken to the world for 2,000 years.

He said his last word in his son, Jesus Christ. And more than one preacher said to me, I've read your book, Revival Taris, and the thing that stuck with me was this. You said that one day, somebody would read the Bible and believe it, and when they did, we'll all be embarrassed.

Well, I still hope, I still look for that thing to happen. It's an amazing thing, but it's to me a very inspiring thing. That in the crisis periods of history in Israel and in the church, particularly in Israel, and on this occasion, the man who was going to deliver the nation was born of a barren woman.

Read the 32nd chapter there of Genesis. What does it say? There came a day when a woman was no longer satisfied with a pretty dress and a nice hairdo and rings on her fingers and bells on her toes and whatever she got. She came in one day and said to her husband, Jacob, give me children or I die.

I can spell out to you, simple as I am, I'm hardly a collegiate, I'm not a seminarian, I'm not a smart man, but I can tell you one reason we do not have revival in America or England or anywhere else tonight. Do

you know what it is? Because we're content to live without it. And when you get a spiritual bellyache, when you get into the place where you say, God almighty, I'd rather see revival come to America than get \$1,000 a day or become the most famous preacher in the world, you'll be getting somewhere near to the place where almighty God might start moving your bowels of compassion.

John Knox prayed that prayer, you remember, until Bloody Mary said, I would rather hear the tramp of an army coming than hear that John Knox is praying. I would to God, people are as much afraid of my prayers, what about you, brother Peter, is that? Do you remember that Samson, the man that pulled the pillars down and wrecked the system of his day, was born of a barren woman? Do you remember that Abraham gave birth to Isaac when he was a hundred years of age and she was somewhere around about 80? Turn the pages back, I don't have time tonight, I just stir up your minds. And here in this situation, 400 years of stillness and prophetic voice, they'd hung their harps on the willows.

Remember, please, John the Baptist came into a world that was a totalitarian world, a sophisticated world. The Romans had it in their grips, the Greek had it in their grips intellectually and the Jews had a monopoly of God, so they thought. And God sends this man.

Jesus said he was the most remarkable man in history and Jesus was never wrong anyhow. And do you know it says something about John that it doesn't say about anybody else in history? Well, it says a lot of things about him. But do you know what it says? The angel said he should be great in the sight of God.

Oh, I like that. That's the only greatness I would ever like. I remember years ago, somebody said to me, boy, you've got a job.

You're gonna be in a conference and some of the greatest preachers in the country are there. They're all great. You know, he was right.

In three days, every one of them grated on me. They had all the decorations you could think of, the degrees and diplomas. Oh, come on, fella, I'm not despising your learning.

But do you think the devil runs in your office on a, once or twice a week to see if you've got your BA degree and your MA degree and your PhD degree from Edinburgh and says, boy, I'm getting out of here. He's too smart for me. You could have enough degrees to paper this house and the ceiling as well and it wouldn't faze the devil that much.

John the Baptist should be great in the sight of God. Oh boy, that's something you might covet with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. And then it says that when his mother had conceived him, she went to see this relative of hers and when she got there, this relative lady was also pregnant.

And it says that John the Baptist was being quiet until then and then he suddenly woke up when he got in the presence of Jesus and got filled with the Holy Ghost. That's dangerous, isn't it? John the Baptist is the only man in history that I know of that was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Well, how in the world could he speak in tongues? If you have to speak in tongues to be filled with the Holy Ghost, a little guy must have spoken in tongues two minutes after he was born.

I'm not kicking tongues. I'm telling you, we've got out of kilter because you see, it says in 1 Corinthians 12, he gave to one and he gave to another and he gave to another the gift of tongues. If everybody had to have it, the Holy Ghost smarter than me, he'd have said that everybody must speak in tongues and he didn't say that.

There is a valid experience in tongues. I don't doubt that at all. But you see, we like to make everybody come through the same cookie cutter, the same theological pattern we were in.

If you didn't get it my way, brother, you didn't get it. That's all the way. I'm sorry for you, see.

What is the proof you're filled with the Holy Ghost? That you have a holy life. That's the one indisputable fact of being filled with the Holy Ghost. When Saul, the King of Israel, had an evil spirit, he did evil things.

Jesus says, when a man has an unclean spirit, he does unclean things and logically, biblically, if you have the Holy Ghost, you'll do holy things. Yes. Did you know that a dove has nine wings, nine feathers on one wing and nine on the other? Can you imagine a dove saying, well, it's a day of economy.

I'll have to get off the ground with one wing. Boy, he'd be in a mess. He'd be going round and round and round.

He can only use one wing. He uses two. Well, there are nine fruits of the Spirit and there are nine gifts of the Spirit.

Why try and get off the ground with one wing? In the second branch candle, candlestick, in Israel, there were nine buds on either side. Again, evidence to me of the nine gifts, the nine fruits of the Spirit. They're all very beautiful.

I'd like to go to a real Pentecostal church and I put the emphasis on real. Sure I would. They went to church every day.

They broke bread every day. They had prayer meetings every day. I've been to church every day.

And people were saved every day. You know any churches like that around? That's not my standard. That's God's standard.

I'm quite sure that church is near being born. I don't personally believe it's born yet, but I'll tell you what I do believe. I believe as we go down into the sorrows and agonies, people say, you know what? We have so much distress of nations.

We have so much iniquity and everything's collapsing. Don't you think that this is a sign of the end time? No, I don't. No, I don't.

Why? Because the Bible doesn't. Do you know what the Bible says? It says these are the beginning of sorrows, not the end. These are the beginnings of sorrows.

The travail is yet to come. I said the other day, you know, when the ship was going down and they'd thrown the cargo overboard and thrown everything overboard except the people, then they handed the ship to a preacher. Wasn't that great? This nation is going to get to the place.

England is going to get to the place. The present civilization is going to get to the place where they'll be glad to hand the wreck over to the preachers, the anointed of God anyhow. Oh, what a man this was.

Ah, well, of course, people aren't born like this these days, are they? Do you know what it says? It says, it says it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary and the babe leaped in her womb, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Isn't that lovely? And it says that Zacharias, verse 67, his father

was filled with the Holy Ghost. That's good going, don't you think so? And it says they went into the temple and there's a man by the name of Simony was devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Ghost was upon him and he had some discernment.

It was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost and the Spirit came on the temple. Boy, there's an atmosphere to be born in, eh? Your mother filled with the Holy Ghost, the father filled with the Holy Ghost, the temple filled with the Holy Ghost. Hey, there's not much room for anything else and John Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost.

I've been in a Quaker meeting for a long while. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, isn't that something? Thank you, sir, thank you. That was the preacher salvaging his congregation.

He was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Again, I remind you, as a prophet, he wasn't an evangelist. How could he be an evangelist if he didn't have a mailing list? He didn't take any offerings.

He didn't have an advance man. Man, if he'd been smart, he could have been selling pet rocks on the very place where Abraham offered Isaac. He could have been taking tours around Israel and saying, this is the spot where Moses divided the Red Sea.

Would you like a bucket of sand for 50 bucks? He was filled with the Holy Ghost, and you know what? He never did a miracle. I'm almost getting weary of miracles, and I've seen most of them except raising the dead. All they do is stir up a lot of controversy and curiosity often.

John did no miracle, the Word of God says. Nobody ran after him saying, have mercy on my son, he's a lunatic. Nobody said, can you raise the dead? Nobody said, can you unplug my deaf ears or touch my brother's eyes that are blind? Nobody said that.

He never raised a dead man, he raised a dead nation. Only a Holy Ghost filled man could do that. You see, somewhere behind those rocks where he'd been along with God for 30 years.

If you saw the steam rising, it would have been his hot tears when he'd said, oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, and then God sent this strange man. At the other side of the 400 years of darkness, you have the man of prophet by the name of Malachi. Do you remember what he said looking through that 400-year tunnel of darkness? He knew this condition of the nation.

I remind you again, God Almighty was married to Israel, but she played the whore. He put her in prison for 400 years, she got out and he sent her to prison again, and she's in prison again for the second 400 years. And then he left her for 2,000 years because he hasn't bothered with Israel since anyhow.

Do you think a few dollars are keeping the kingdom of heaven together? Do you think the high and lofty one who inhabits an eternity is wringing his hands in case America lets him down? Forget it. We're possibly nearer judgment than Russia. But after all, they've had no Bibles.

Last time I was in Australia, there were three ladies sitting in front of me, beautiful-looking ladies. They just had a scarf around their heads, tied under their chins, their hair parted in the center, and they sat there looking like three Madonnas. They were really beautiful.

And I figured that woman must be 90 years of age, that must be her daughter, that must be her daughter. And after the meeting, the daughter came up and said in broken English, oh, so beautiful tonight.

Beautiful, beautiful atmosphere.

God, very near. I said, well, you speak pretty good English, but kind of broken English. Where are you from? Russia.

Russia? How did you get here? We escaped over the border and got through China and got into Hong Kong, and some people graciously got us down here. Well, I said, you must be very thrilled to be in Australia. Plenty of food, plenty of clothes.

No response. It must be nice to worship in a sanctuary like this and feel God's presence and hear the singing of the choir and these lovely hymns, and it must be nice. Yes.

She translated it to her mother and to the old lady, old lady shook her head, no. And then she came out with a torrent of words. What did she say? She said, I'd go back to Russia tomorrow if I could get there.

What does she mean, she'd go back to Russia? Because she said, when we meet in secret, God, she said, I don't want food, I don't want clothes, I want God. Yes. And she said, hidden in the mountains, in a cave, I felt more of God than I've felt in any meeting I've been in Australia.

Some of you must have met Nicholas Bengu, wonderful man of God, when I talked with him, and he was out at Ralph Wilkerson's place not too long ago, I have a tape on it. And he said, I want to get back as quickly as I can to Africa because I don't feel God's moving in America. And he's a thoroughbred, bloodstocked Pentecostal too.

I guess the most awesome thing in the world is when God comes down on a people. Brother Bill had us sing this morning and the pianist played a little bit tonight, that lovely Welsh hymn, Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah. And as we sang it, I thought of that phrase that said, let the cloudy, fiery pillar.

Listen, when the pillar of fire was on the sanctuary, did you think they had to go ringing doorbells to tell people the glory of God was hanging over the temple? You never have to advertise a fire, whether it's physical or spiritual. And I prayed with all my being this afternoon, Lord, I know this church has had a wonderful ministry, but from tonight, not because I'm here, will you put the fiery, cloudy pillar over this beautiful thing that stands over the roof here so that everybody in Florida and even to the West Coast will know that God abides here. Not preachers with a better standard, but the Holy Spirit of God broods here.

I don't care if there isn't a miracle that you can see with your eyes. If men come here who are defeated by sin and crushed by sin and deformed by sin and they get cleansed and filled with the Holy Ghost, the greatest miracle God Almighty can do on earth is this, that He takes an unholy man out of an unholy world and makes that unholy man holy and puts him back in an unholy world and keeps him holy. It takes all the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the power of the Holy Ghost to do that.

You can't do it by shaping him up theologically and straighten him out to that little thing that you hang on in your petty little group anyhow. John the Baptist was a prophet and prophets are usually terrible men. They so fear God, they don't fear either men or devils.

They don't borrow sermon outlines and get everything that Spurgeon's ever written. They get them in the secret place of the Most High and they spend their hours alone with God. I have a boy that I think has a prophetic ministry.

He's in South America right now trying to build a Bible school and an orphanage in Paraguay where every letter is censored that comes out of the country, where things are about as difficult as you can get them. But after dinner every day, he knows he goes into his room at about two o'clock and he waits on God till five o'clock before ever he'll go minister. I wish every preacher did that.

Sometimes I think books have become a curse. You borrow your sermon from Sword of the Lord, well, it can't be yours anyhow. You know, God's gonna do a new thing in this day in which we live and he'll have to find some new men to do it.

John Baptist came onto the scene in a very difficult day. Listen to this a minute, will you? The third chapter of Luke, chapter one, verse one. Listen to this, how interesting it is.

In the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being the governor of Judea, Herod the Tetrarch of Galilee, his brother the Tetrarch, his brother Philip, the Tetrarch of Arcturia and the region of Trachonitis and Lysanias the Tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of the Lord came unto John the Zechariah. Isn't that interesting? It's about as refreshing as a mouthful of sand. Do you care who was the Tetrarch of Galilee? Do you care if Philip was Tetrarch of another area? Tell me which Caesar was on the throne, was it Tiberius or which Caesar was it? Julius Caesar or Caligula, who was on the throne? You don't know.

Well, why does God put it there? He puts it there to show you that this man isn't coming to a group of people that were simpletons. They were living in slave conditions. They were compelled to carry a burden for any man that called them, if he were a Roman, leave their bundling and take up another bundling and go on their way.

They were under dominion to an invading power. They had no rights. And God Almighty found a man, he hid him away there year after year after year.

I'm gonna tell you when I get to eternity, I'm gonna ask John Baptist some things about what happened. I marvel at the way God makes men. I marvel at Moses on the backside of the desert.

I would have been saying, oh mighty God, why don't you move? 10,000 people die every day in Egypt. You're chosen people, they perish. Why don't you do something about it? And God says, hold your tongue and stay here another 10 years.

And he shaped him up in 40 years. How do you think Jesus felt when they told him there's a man called John the Baptist drawing thousands of people and Jesus is hammering nails and making a yoke for an ox or an ass, making a coffin for somebody to be buried in. And here is a man with ministry drawing the crowds.

But you see, the man who's in the will of God has perfect peace. It doesn't matter if there's an earthquake outside. As I reminded you this morning in John 17, Jesus says the hour has come.

That's the seventh time he said it in that gospel. Jesus knew the divine timetable. He knew when to move and not to move.

And John the Baptist is there in the wilderness. People were going up to the temple. It must have been marvelous to go to the temple one afternoon.

And as you went, you saw the high priest and the word of God says he had garments of glory and beauty. He had a breastplate with 12 precious stones with the tribes of Israel on. He had a beautiful thing on his forehead and it was woven in fine gold and it said holiness unto the Lord.

He had Psalms hanging on ribbons from his wrists. He had the commandments written in a belt that he wore around his body. And everybody saw his excellence in the high priest and they bowed.

And he had about as much unction as this rug. They were sick to death of going to the sanctuary and hearing a form of godliness. And when they'd seen the high priest in all his garments of glory and beauty, they went down the road to see a rugged, rugged Baptist.

A leathern girdle about his loins, bit of an old dead camel over his shoulder so he wouldn't get sunstroke. And here they saw this unpredictable, unusual, unlettered, unscholastic man. He had no price tag.

There was nobody who could silence him. There was nobody who could buy him off. They refused to sign a contract not to ruffle the feathers of the Pharisees or disturb the people in the synagogue.

They couldn't hitch him up to any political wagon. Don't you think it must have been, come on, come on, are you in the meeting already? Okay, come on now. Don't you think it must have been an awesome thing for that one man to know he was the only man in the world that had the truth of God? As God's in heaven, I tell you, that would just about shatter me.

They had their new moons, they had their Sabbaths, they had their altars. Did you think at Easter that we'd just pass through that the Jews were celebrating the Passover at the very day they crucified the Son of God? And he was there and they didn't know? John the Baptist was in the school God takes all his students to. A lady asked me one day what university I went to.

I said, I went to Bush University. She said, Bush? Bush University. Do I know anybody that went there? I said, well, maybe you do.

Moses. She said, Moses who? Bush University, where God takes all the men he's gonna handle. Oh my.

He took the greatest intellect the world has ever known, the Apostle Paul. God revealed himself to him on the Damascus Road. God revealed himself in him, he says, when he got on the road.

He went along with God. Trouble with most of you preachers here is not that you don't know enough, you know too much. You're too smart, you have too much knowledge, too much psychology.

You're being told how to do it. God uses bankrupt men. The bunch of men in the upper room haven't got a degree between them.

You could have 32 and still be frozen anyhow. No. But do you know what it says? Oh my, what a wonderful thing.

I say again because I get a kick out of this. This man was no evangelist. He'd have had a mailing list.

He'd have had, you know, got a radio program. He'd have got something. He'd have had bumper stickers on the cars.

You say, they had no cars. Well, he could have stuck them on camels, couldn't he? Every camel going with a thing on his tail, every time he wagged like this. Come and see John the Baptist.

Come and see John the Baptist. Listen, I want to tell you, preacher boy, if you don't have the Holy Ghost, you'll need every dime you can scrounge out of widows and everybody else. But if you don't, you know the difference between evangelists and prophets? Evangelists have to go looking for work.

People come looking for profits. You get the anointing of God and people will come from the ends of the earth. Now I'm not smart.

I'm not a brilliant man. I'm an ignoramus and I gave all I had to Jesus and he took it. But my darling wife's somewhere there and she'll tell you I've got a file at home like that, invitations to a 10,000 seater conference in Sweden and a big conference in Australia and I don't even bother to go to them.

Why not? Because I don't think the Lord wants me to go. Told me to comfort the feeble-minded, so I came. But isn't it wonderful that there's a man in the desert? In the desert, good nighty, no seating accommodation.

They didn't have a soloist or a three-priest combo. They have revival without guitars. Can you imagine that? No records to sell.

Isn't that amazing, Brother Peter? Poor fellow, he, you know, it's really bad, he's nobody but God. You know, when you get there, you'll get some place. People say, Brother Raymond, sign my Bible.

Oh, what's your favorite scripture? Oh, I've got a scripture nobody else wants. God gave me it about 50 years ago. I hang on to it every day.

Not it is, the Lord preserveth the simple. That's my taste. You don't want that, you're too smart.

I can't even look after myself. The Lord preserveth the simple. And you know how he's done it? John the Baptist was in the wilderness, scorching, horrible wilderness.

Nowhere to sit, no miracles to attract them. But you see, for 400 years there had been no voice, and suddenly there's a booming voice. Where did it begin? It began where every revival began.

He began preaching where Jesus began preaching. He began preaching where Peter began preaching. He began preaching where we're afraid to start preaching.

I hear a little bit now and again, I hear a lot about gifts of the Spirit. Occasionally I hear something about fruits of the Spirit. I don't hear much of Romans 6, fruit unto holiness.

I hear far less about bringing forth fruit, meat for repentance. Now I baptize, I don't know how many schools or hundreds of people in my day. But you know what? I started putting people on probation for three months before I baptized them.

Why? Because I got to bring forth fruit before I know if they're really through with God. And if I brought them into the meeting publicly, into the church, I denounced them publicly too. I said, listen, I'll accept you publicly, but if you leave, I'll tell the congregation why you left.

But cut the trade down a little bit, you know, but that's all right. Oh, I'd like to have heard John Baptist preach. Preaching is the greatest job in the world.

If it wasn't, I wouldn't do it. But really it is. It's the greatest privilege.

It's the hardest job in the world. Everybody's going on strike for more money. I figure I get about five cents an hour for preaching.

That's a lot, isn't it? The hour I get paid, I get paid five cents an hour. The hours I put in prayer and fasting and waiting on God and the nights I don't sleep. I don't say that bravely, I'm just telling you a fact.

That's about what it works out at. You pay all your expenses, you do the other things. Oh well.

I get a lot of comfort. My books are sold pretty good. They're in about 12 languages and I don't get a penny royalties out of any of them.

I give it all to mission. You give me a couple of thousand dollars this week, it'll be fine. I put it into a new book I'm publishing and I won't get a dime out of it, it'll go to mission.

I enjoy doing that. Do you know why I do it? Because the Apostle Paul wrote 14 epistles, if you include Hebrews, and he never picked up a penny royalties. But boy, he's gonna get it one day.

That's why you tell the difference between prophets and evangelists. You tell the evangelists in heaven they'd be digging the streets up, they're made of gold. John did no miracle.

Oh, I'd like to do the miracles he did. I was reading the other night at home, we live out way in a quiet spot in the country and I hadn't pulled the curtains over and when I looked there, there must have been 50 or 60 different types of moths and bugs, grasshoppers, everything you could mention, fighting to get into the light. And you know, once the light was struck there in the darkness, heathen darkness, compounded with religious darkness, he was living in an icebox, he was living in a, if you like, in a cemetery.

And God says, you go there, and John went. And you know, they came north, south, east, and west. And he began to preach what? Repent! We don't hear much about that anymore.

Much easier to give somebody a little tract called Four Laws, eh? Four Spiritual Laws. I wouldn't give it to anybody. I'd give it to somebody who was safe, but not somebody unsafe for two reasons.

Number one, the blood isn't mentioned in it. Number two, repentance isn't mentioned in it. By design, Bill Bright himself said, I don't want people to think that Campus Crusade is negative.

Well, that's his business, but it's not scriptural. Oh, repentance is to leave the things I've done before and show that I in earnest grieve by doing them no more. I've seen people come to an altar.

We say to people, come on now, you just tell the Lord you're sorry, and then go put things straight. The Bible doesn't say that. It says you go and leave the altar and put things straight, and then come and straighten it out with God.

Do you know why? Because after we've shed a few tears, and we feel happy, and we've got rid of the Lord, we forget that we have to go and humble ourselves to a neighbor or somebody we've wronged, and injured, and hurt, and crushed. We can't change God's order. But I'll tell you how effective this man's

preaching was.

Oh my, it must have been wonderful. Do you know what the soldiers did? The Roman soldiers, the heathen, when they had a day off, they went ahead. They didn't go to the lousy leper houses.

They didn't go to the flesh pots. They said, have you heard the news? Oh, there's a man, some people say fell out of the sky, came from heaven. He's a strange man in his dress.

He doesn't wear a clerical uniform. He has no double knits, and no alligator shoes, and his hair isn't teased. He's a very common kind of a fellow.

He's not like the modern flashy, fleshy evangelist. But man, when he preaches, people cry out. When John Wesley preached, people fell to the ground as though they were Polacks, and they didn't get up two minutes after, like they do in modern meetings.

They stayed there four or five hours. And they carried them into another room, and covered the women up, and carried the men in another room. And after three or four hours of spiritual convulsions, where often they vomited, the pains of hell got hold of them.

We live in a day of the cheapest, shallowest evangelism the world's ever known. It stinks. We're so determined to get somebody at the altar for something.

One big shot said, if you have a Sunday school class, come forward, and I'll pray for you. Why come forward? He could pray for you sitting out there anyhow. You see, this man had been baptized filled with the Holy Ghost, and a spirit-filled man is an awful person.

Those Roman soldiers had breastplates on, and the words of that man, full of fire, went through those breastplates just like a hot needle would go through butter. I'll tell you how effective. I've got a few notes he left behind here.

It tells me how effective his preaching was. Then came publicans to be baptized, and they cried, Master, what shall we do? And the people came, and when they came, they cried out, what shall we do? And the soldiers, the heathen, the lesser breeds without the law, when they heard John Baptist preaching, they cried and said, what shall we do? And he said, do violence to no man, neither accuse anybody falsely and be in contempt with your wages. That's preaching.

That's preaching. We're so fundamental. All right, you're fundamental.

Will you show me a verse in the Bible, New Testament, where there's an altar call? Come on, you know your Bible, whether it's a Schofield, an Amplified, or this horrible thing here, this living thing. This dirty thing that it is, but anyhow. Now, I won't handle it except with my handkerchief.

There are no altar calls in the New Testament. It's a convenience for the time when we couldn't wait for the Holy Ghost to convict men and women, and we wouldn't let them go until they were there in agony. One of the greatest preachers of this generation in the past 50 years was a great Irish evangelist, W.P. Nicholson, and I met him, I preached with him, I preached with him under my nose.

Some nights that man would preach on hell until people sat there and their knuckles went white and the sweat went off their noses and off their chins, and they'd be sitting like this, and he'd say, stand up, God save our gracious King, long go home, he said. Fish on Fridays. That was his benediction.

And do you know what happened? Drunkards went home and could not sleep. One of the outstanding men in Ireland told me, he said, I listened to Nicholson from the back seat of a great Presbyterian church, and when I came out, he said, I cursed him and God and said, a team of horses wouldn't get me back to hear that man, but I was there the next night. And when I came out, I cursed him, but I went back the next night.

And when he made the altar call, he said, I got up and there was a stampede and my drunken companions and harlots were rushing to the altar, and we didn't stay there a few minutes, we groaned. The pains of hell got a hold of us. We realized we were not prodigals needed, we were rebels.

Can I ask you to have some common sense? And if you've got a sticker on one side of your automobile that says, smile, God loves you, will you put the balance of the other side of the coin and say, God is angry with the wicked every day? You might smile your neighbors into hell. Ah, we've lost all sense, it seems to me, brother Peter, we've lost. You see, if you've got sin in your heart tonight, you haven't got a little disease that the common evangelist will put a bandaid over, you've got a cancer in your breast.

And it will damn you for all eternity. If I were to ask you, what is the greatest sin in the world? Some would say adultery, some would say this, some would say, the greatest sin in the world, you know what it is? Why did Adam get kicked out of the garden? Did he get drunk? Did he commit adultery? Did he beat his wife up? Did he blaspheme God? He got kicked out because he said, I'll run my life, not God. And the greatest sin in the world is to say, I will not let God rule my life.

Oh, I can imagine these men who'd been to heathen temples and bowed to Jupiter and other strange gods when they saw a man flaming with righteousness. I remind you that this country was not born on the 4th of July, 1776. It was born 34 years ago in the greatest revival that swept this country.

The 4th of July, 1776 is merely the birth certificate of a nation that had been born. And when that great political scientist came from France, Tocqueville, he went back to France eventually and he said, I searched in the universities. I went to the libraries.

I even went to Congress. I read the records of the government. I could find no secret for America's greatness.

I could find no reason to explain why little dwarf America got out of the grip of a giant called the British Empire three times in 30 years. And then he said, just before I was going to take the ship, somebody asked me to stay and catch the next ship and go to church and I went. I was so excited in that church.

I stayed another week and I went to another church. I stayed a little longer and I went to another church and I discovered the secret of America's greatness. And he said to the French people, put this down in your history books.

America is great because she's good and when she ceases to be good, she ceases to be great. Well, brother, take the stars and stripes down and put a black flag up there like I do for my country, though I live in this country. Pay all the taxes you pay too and everything else.

But I say, listen, America's in the greatest crisis. Do you know what I believe with all my being? That if we were as spiritual as we think we are, we'd all have come to church tonight in sackcloth. We'd all have come to church with a handful of ashes that we took out of the furnace and we'd be anointing our unworthy heads with ashes.

Mourning in the sight of a holy God. I have prayed with tears and brokenness, asked my sweet wife, with two or three fellows, Lord, I see America like a tree, the tree in the Bible. And the men were gonna cut it down.

And the man said, please spare it. Spare it just one more year that we may fertilize it. And then if it bears no fruit, cut it down.

You know, I prayed that about a year ago, a little less, with a group of men and women. And I see that those days are running out. There's no salvation for America, brother, just by pumping money into the dollar.

They put a \$2 bill out, it's just a trick of the economy. It's worth \$1.15. 12 years from now, the same rate of inflation, it will be worth one cent precisely, the present rate of inflation. The \$2 bill is worth \$1.15. It was worth \$2 in 1966.

In 10 years, it's lost 85 cents. We're crumbling on every hand. We're still living in the aftermath of the Watergate.

I wonder now, Richard Nixon, put up with all that preaching he got every week. I found the answer. I preached in a fine Methodist church a while ago, and the preacher told me that his bishop was invited to preach for Nixon.

The condition was this, that before you come, you send us a word-for-word record of your sermon. And everything we don't like, we shall delete. And then when you get it back, you have to rewrite it, minus all the deletions.

Boy, John Baptist would have gone for that, wouldn't he? He hit Herod on the throne as well as the prostitute. Somebody said, Brother Abner, would you have gone to the White House on those conditions? I said, I sure would. You would? I'd never thought it of you.

You'd submit your sermon and let them take all the thorns out, all the parts that would hurt Nixon and the others? You'd really let them cut them out? And then you'd preach? Yes, I would. Mm, well, you're not the man I thought you were. I said, well, hold it a minute.

When I preach my sermon, I'd say, let us pray. Then I said, everything I missed in the sermon, I sure hit it during the prayer. Boy, I'd have come down with all the unction, almighty God, till Nixon would have been rolling on the floor and Kissinger and all the rest of them squealing.

That is, if God anointed the praying. A lot of our preaching doesn't have any teeth. It has a lot of lovely information and illustration.

But you see, John was very conscious of this. Oh, I would to God we were as conscious of this. Do you know what John knew when he came out of the school of silence? He knew that he'd only six months to minister.

Preacher, look, if God told you you'd only six months more to minister, how would you minister? Do you think you'd change your style? All right, they came from north, south, east and west to hear John preach. They were amazed. And then what do you think happened? Oh, they came on and said, master, you know that man that came the other day? No wonder John was the greatest man that ever lived.

He did what Isaiah never did. Isaiah saw it, but he never did it. He did more than Moses, though Moses saw it.

He was preaching one day and he anointed some old harlot and pardon me, baptized some old harlot and she got up. And then he baptized the drunkard and he got up and then he baptized the criminal and he looked. And then suddenly every organ in his body burst out.

You say he yelled till they heard him at the end of the Jordan Valley. He yelled till they heard him at the end of every corridor in hell. This was a day of days for all creation.

Behold, the Lamb of God had taken away the sin of the world. Every nerve in his body tingled. You come to me to be baptized.

You see, Jesus took the place of sinners on the cross and he was identified with sinners right down here. And he says, suffer it to be like this. And then they came a few weeks after and said, John, have you noticed your crowds are getting less? Yeah, they sure are.

You know the man you baptized? Well, he's not too far away. He's getting far bigger crowds than you're getting. Well, we can't always be number one.

Just try harder, that's all. He said, is that right? Hey, you go check on him tomorrow. Master, his crowd was bigger today.

Mine was less. Check on him tomorrow. Master, the crowds, it seems the world has gone after him.

Look, this is what John knew. Here, this is John Baptist. Jesus came and eclipsed him.

That's hard to take. No, this proves my ministry. He must increase, I must decrease.

You see, when Jesus came, John was eclipsed. He was not only eclipsed, he was exiled. He was put in jail.

He was not only exiled, he was executed. And he was thrilled to death about the whole thing. Why? Because it proved his ministry.

He said, this is the Son of God. Ah, but he said one other thing. I've got through my introduction.

Am I a bit late? Okay. He said, you've marveled at my ministry. I'm just a novice.

I baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I. I'm not even worthy to carry his sandals. And I want to tell you something. He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

I don't like that slick phrase, have you had the baptism? What baptism? I don't like the phrase, have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost? Do it as God says. I don't like that slick phrase. Have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire? Did you get a baptism that destroyed your carnality and your lust and your pride and your jealousy and your anger and made you a saint? Or were you just after a gift? He should baptize you with what? The Holy Ghost and fire.

I like the fire part. Oh, I like fire. I was born in a fire.

So I'm never comfortable outside of it. Some of you are content with smoke, but you can't beat the fire. Just skip back a minute in your thinking.

Let me say this while I think of it. Do you know the reason America goes to hellfire tonight and the world goes to hellfire? Very easy. I say, number one, the reason we don't have revival is because we're content to live without it.

Number two, the reason the world goes to hellfire is because the church has lost Holy Ghost fire, that's why. Go back to the Garden of Eden, man sinned. He was pushed out of the garden.

What happened? They put an angel with a flaming sword, so he couldn't back out. The fire of condemnation. You go into Exodus, you see a burning bush.

Go into Leviticus. Go into the third chapters of those books. They're very interesting.

Come down to Malachi three, and there you have a picture again of a man standing on the other side of the 400 years of darkness, and he's saying, who shall abide the day of his coming? For when he cometh, he's like a refiner's fire. Sure, there was a gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Yes, there was.

There was also a Jesus that got hold of the money, changed his tables, and whipped them. There was a Christ who came and cleansed the temple, and if he came back tonight to America or England, he cleansed the pulpit. 400 years of stillness, and Matthew comes.

Read Matthew 3.11. And he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire. John 3.16 is the message to sinners. Luke 3.16 is a message to the church.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. His fire is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. Have you noticed how many of the great hymns that were born in revival are firing them? A man stood out on the street, stepped out of a church in Leicester, England, and his wife had a curvature of the spine and some little kids.

And he said, what are we going to do? She said, what are we going to do? He said, we're going to the gutter most. And William Booth stepped out into the gutter. And he wrote a song.

He put it on the banner, that's still on the banner of the Salvation Army. He did that in 1865. And his battle cry was this.

Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flames, send the fire. Thy blood-bought gift today we claim, send the fire. Look down and see this waiting house.

Give us the promised Holy Ghost. We want another Pentecost. I don't know whether we want it tonight, but God in heaven knows we need it.

We need a Pentecost that will break out of the walls of the sanctuary. I said, I asked God to hang a pillar of fire over this church from today until Jesus comes. And I said to God tonight, is there any reason there'll be more than 120 people? Why we shouldn't go out full of the Holy Ghost and all of the Florida know that God touched us tonight? It's got to happen somewhere, why not happen here? It's got to happen with somebody, why not happen with us? But man, you've got to want that with all your heart, soul, mind and strength more than you want money or breath or popularity or any other thing.

Look down and see this waiting house. The other stanza says, to make these weak hearts strong and brave, send the fire. To live a dying world to save, send the fire.

Oh, see us on thine altar lay, our lives are all this very day. You see, when that man challenged the host of Israel, Abel, he said, you can have all day, I'll give you eight hours and you can build your altar and put your bullocks on it and you can pull your hair out and tear your breast and shriek and cry and do everything you like. But listen, I'll tell you what the deciding factor is.

When fire comes, and then he mocked them. He said, your God's on a journey or he's gone shopping or he's visiting his mother-in-law or somebody. He says, your God barely isn't there.

Now listen, you watch this. And he didn't say, Lord, vindicate me. He said, let it be known this day there is a God in Israel and the fire fell.

And the fire doesn't fall on the altar, as people say. The fire, no, the fire never falls on the altar. The fire falls on the sacrifice.

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