

The Church That Is, Is Not the Church That Was

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the stark contrast between the early church's power and purity and the modern church's shortcomings in fulfilling its mission.

Duration: 1:26:33

Scripture: Luke 13:6-9, Acts 3:1-12, Acts 3:19-21, Acts 4:12, Acts 4:31, Acts 5:29-32

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the lack of impact that the church is having on the world. He references J.B. Phillips, an English preacher, who was deeply moved by reading the book of Acts in the New Testament. The preacher emphasizes the contrast between the bondage of living under the law and the freedom found in Christ. He also highlights the fact that Christianity was born in a time of slavery and totalitarianism, yet the early Christians were able to bring about change. The sermon concludes with a call for the church to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit and live out their faith boldly.

Transcript

Let's sing the last stanza again, His name shall be counsellor, the mighty prince of peace, of all earth's kingdoms conqueror. And that's where it's going to end up. As people say sometimes, we've read the last chapter.

The world doesn't know what it's all about, but we do. We know how it's going to end, we know that we're on the winning side, we know that he has already destroyed principalities and powers, we've just got into our inheritance. So let's sing this with real joy.

I'm sorry it didn't broadcast to Moscow, I wish it was, and maybe get some idea of what it's all about. His name shall be the counsellor. His name shall be the counsellor, the mighty prince of peace, of all earth's kingdoms conqueror.

His name shall be the counsellor, the mighty prince of peace. Let there be a name, let there be a name, let there be a name on the wall. Let there be a name, let there be a name, let there be a name on the wall.

Let there be the name, let there be the name, let there be the name of the Lord, let there be the name, let there be the name, let there be the name of the Lord. Thank you. I want to read some verses from the third

chapter.

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man laying from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. Who seeing Peter and John about to enter into the temple, asked an alms.

And Peter fastening his eyes upon him with John said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold, I have none, but such as I have, give I thee.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up. And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he leaping up stood and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple.

And a long period of wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man with his heel held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch, that is called Solomon's Greatly Wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us? As though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk.

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son, whom he delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. For a number of weeks I have been meditating on the disparity, or if you like the difference between the apostolic church and the church of today. I described it once in a book I hope to write, the church that is, is not the church that was.

We are just about as far removed from apostolic Christianity as we can be. And personally I am embarrassed to be part of a church that I think is an embarrassment to God. There is no way to compare the church today with the church that was.

We can't compare it, we can only contrast it. For instance if I come to my own vocation and say the preaching of today, I think it's just about like candy floss compared to a ribeye steak. To compare the preaching of today with apostolic preaching.

These men have come out of that dynamic experience when the Holy Ghost fell upon them in the upper room. And it seems today that there are many people who are advocating a painless Pentecost. Doesn't cost you anything.

The only thing it does, it changes from poverty to plenty. You get rich within two years. Never have any troubles, any problems.

That is not biblical Pentecostal standards. Pentecost meant for those people in the upper room eventually, it meant persecution and pain. And it says in the fifth chapter, they rejoiced.

Why? Are they been to a banquet? Sitting with a bunch of rotten film stars or football players? Are they been sitting with rich men and distinguishing? No, no, no. They have been threatened that they would go to prison. And it says they rejoiced, and they rejoiced greatly that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name's sake.

Okay, here it says Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour. Now, why in the world they went to the temple, I just wouldn't know. And so if either of those guys, those preachers, really got the anointing of God, if they began to pray in the Holy Ghost, which is something that I don't hear too often.

People say, well, can you tell me something which, which I can really put my finger on and say, listen, that is the assurance that I'm filled with the Holy Ghost. Is it true? I don't believe it is. I believe there's a genuine gift, I don't believe everybody has to have it, or it's the initial sign.

Is it that somehow I'll do miracles? No, that's not the sign. I'll tell you one sign. Nobody mentions it, but the word of God mentions it clearly.

In the epistle of Jude, which is an epitome of the whole of the Bible, it speaks there about praying in the Holy Ghost. And remember, it was as they were praying the Holy Ghost came upon them. They were seated.

They were relaxed. They'd gone through ten tortuous days, that we know no too much about. Do you think that Peter was saying to Thomas, you know, if you'd only quit doubting, the Holy Ghost would have been here three days ago.

Or Thomas saying to Peter, you know, there's still something in you, you old rebel, and if you'd really get straightened, we could have gone home. I don't think they were picking faults. They were all there, slain as it were.

Not just with fear, though they were afraid of the people, and afraid of the hierarchy. But they were there with one common need. They had been told that there was one who should come upon them.

You remember when Jesus gave them the news, he was going to leave them. And as Mr. Tarrasch used to say, love in tears is petulant. They said, we don't want you to go away.

Well, you know, when I go away, another is coming. Now some people think because the Spirit came out of the rushing mighty wind that he was a wind, and he was just a noise. Not so.

He is a person, Jesus said. Not again, the junior partner of the Godhead. Equal with the Father, equal with the Son.

Not Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but Father, Son, equal in majesty, equal in glory. And Jesus said, this third amazing person is going to come, and not only be with you, but be in you. And you know what they said? No, no, no.

Now look here, we're quite satisfied. Don't you send anybody else. Substitute to never any good anyhow.

I once went to preach with a very famous man. He couldn't make it. He called me, and I took a train trip, and I got in a meeting late.

And people, you know, as soon as the door moved, they looked, and some of them, oh, it's only rain now. Makes you feel great. We don't want someone else.

Jesus said, but when he comes, he's coming with power to endure you, with power, power, power. Oh, how we use that promise in Acts 1, 8. After the Holy Ghost comes upon you. Again, it wasn't power just to be miraculous.

It was power to be a miracle, not make one, to be one. But he was going to take their defeated lives, and make them more than conquerors, because the Holy Ghost was going to enthrone them. He won't just be with you, he will be in you.

You should receive power. They needed that power. They needed it physically, because they were going to be beaten in prison.

They needed it intellectually, because they were going to write epistles. They needed it spiritually, because they were on a collision course with the powers of darkness through the most horrible machine on the world, which is religion. And they came out of that upper room.

How? Well, you know, the Lord said, as the words of God it would say, eight of us. Did you hear this story? What story? Those men that disappeared for a few days, they're going around town like a bunch of crazy idiots. And people said, well, what do you expect? They've been drinking.

They're drunk. You know, the church never does anything when it's sober. Doesn't Paul say there in Ephesians, be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.

Why does he compare being filled with the Spirit with being drunk with wine? Because when a man is filled even with that kind of Spirit, he isn't himself. He's released. I remember going down the street in Glasgow the first day of World War II.

A preacher friend I was with, he said, I've got to go in this room here and I have to get a gas mask. And I told him he went because we were free, being a Scotsman. And he said, you stand by this lamppost.

I'll come out of that room and the light will blind me and I'll step forward and when you see me come, we'll go on our journey. He was in there quite a while and a streetcar came up, stopped right in front of where I was and a man got off drunk. Typical man, he got rubber legs, you know, they wouldn't keep up one way or the other and he staggered.

And finally he slipped forward and he put his arms around the lamppost and me as well. His breath was terrible. He stepped back and he said, who are you? And I told him, are you a Scotsman? Can you sing? No.

Can you fight? He said, no. He said quite a number of things and he said, listen, I can sing. And he sang Maxwell's Ambrase, a bonnet, where early falls the dew.

He meant dew, but it was near enough for a drunk man anyhow. And he said, who's your father? And what nationality? And he went around a whole string of questions and then finally he put his hand in his pocket and he had a lot of silver there. He pulled this great handful of silver out and he offered it to me.

And you know if a Scotsman offers you a handful of silver, he's surely drunk. And you know, immediately I thought about that man. Everything was characteristic of the man who was really filled with the Spirit.

He's a liberated soul, a son of a soul set free. Romans 7 is bondage. Romans 8 is liberty.

The Lord, the Spirit and life in Christ Jesus had made me free from a lot of sins. These men had gone through that amazing upper room experience. Sure, Pentecost was going to mean persecution and pain and privation and prisons, but also it meant purity.

And love that is pure is passionate. Here are two God intoxicated men. They come out and here is a man at the temple gate.

The next chapter says that he was 40 years of age. And if I know anything about professional beggars, I could go to some countries now and find the man at the same place he was at when I was in that country 10 years ago. They get a place and there's honor amongst them.

They won't steal each other's place to beg. I suggest to you that this man had been at that beautiful gate of the temple 30 years. What was wrong with him? He was crippled.

Why was he crippled? Because the church was crippled, that's why. Why, how in the world did he sit there year after year? I said yesterday, I think, it amazed me when I considered this recently. Jesus must have passed this man a hundred times when he went into the temple.

He'd been there for years. Peter and John must have passed him many times. The high priest had passed him and taken his money out and ostentatiously thrown him a silver or gold piece.

It said he was carried daily. So they brought him from home to the temple. Temple, home, twice a day, 365 days in a year.

That's what, 730 times he was carried. If they carried him 10 years, he was carried, well, what did I say now? 730 times. 10 years would be 7,300.

30 years would be somewhere around 22,000 times he was carried but never cured. He was helped but he was never healed. And when he saw Peter and John coming, of course he was quite sure that since they'd had a revival a day or two before that they were loaded with money, they got some big love offering and he wanted a share of the pie.

And he cried again, silver and gold, he wanted them. To give and give. Peter said, silver and gold, I have none.

Do you need any other proof that he wasn't the Pope? Do you need any other proof that the Pope today is not in apostolic succession? Why don't people take them to the Pope instead of going to Lourdes? If God has put all his, invested all his power in a man like that, he ought to be living around as a peacemaker and doing the miraculous every day. He does nothing. Here is a crippled, twisted, tormented man, day after day, living as he lived yesterday, anticipating tomorrow, in the same chronic condition.

And there's a great monstrous system of religion that let him stay there. And as far as I'm concerned, the man at the gate, beautiful, is the world. And the Church hasn't the power to heal him.

And tonight the Church hasn't the power to do it either. There's a gulf between apostolic Christianity and Christianity today. Far greater than the gulf of the Great Grand Canyon.

God never designed his Church to backslide. God never intended the Church to stand at the side of the road while Communism and others paraded in the middle of the road. It cost us too much.

The writer says the Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord. She was his new creation. By water and the blood from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride.

And these men are intoxicated because they have witnessed the most amazing thing the earth has ever seen. Remember when they had trouble in the first chapter there? Peter always got something to say. And he says it again a little later in the same book.

He says you crucified the Lord of Glory that him hath God raised up whereof we are witnesses. And in case you want to isolate that and say that just belonged to the days you know. It all ended at the end of the Bible which is a nice alibi.

I want to tell you tonight almighty God doesn't need any alibis. I want to tell you tonight God is not looking for sponsors. The guy you listen to on TV maybe but almighty God isn't.

He is a crippled, tormented, distorted body. How did he get deliverance? He got deliverance through two simple, consecrated, cleansed, committed, confirmed disciples. That's how he got it.

They were totally yielded to Jesus Christ. They obeyed the commandment ye shall receive power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. Peter no longer runs away when a girl points her finger.

He points the finger at the whole nation and says you crucified the Lord of Glory. We don't do that so much in the days in which we live do we? Everybody comes up with the same idea. If you say anything that's a little disturbing well they say well of course you know we're not to criticize.

Or if you want it scripturally we're not to judge. But I read here in John 7 it says we're to judge righteous judgment. You know I read the scripture I almost feel an orphan.

I'm not disagreeing with my brother talking about liberty and joy praise the Lord for it. But when it comes down to the nitty gritty how much of it gets under the door into the world? How far can we touch a world that's lost and never never nearer to judgment and never never nearer to another bloody war than the moment in which we live but what does the church do? The finest summary that I've ever read of this amazing church was given by J.B. Phillips. An English preacher not just because he's English who one day a little weary turned round on his swivel chair and grabbed for a book.

It happened to be the New Testament in Greek. He happens to be a brilliant Greek scholar. He read Acts chapter 1, Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 3 and about to chapter 5 and the book exploded like a bomb in his hand.

He made this amazing summary. This is the church of Jesus Christ before it became fat and short of breath by prosperity. Now think a minute.

Are the organized branches of the church Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal are they fat and short of breath by prosperity? This is the church he says before it became fat and short of breath by prosperity. This is the church of Jesus Christ he says before it became muscle bound by over organization. We talk about liberty and love.

We get liberty in any denomination these days. You have to talk a lot and you'll get a lot of them headquarters. Somebody's spoken tongues in your church.

They think it was the end of the world but the devil had invaded the place. One of these days we're going to be smart enough to let God do the teaching instead of us do it. The church before it became muscle bound by over organization.

This is the church he says before, another before. Not only before it was muscle bound, muscle bound by over organization. This is the church he says where they did not sign articles of faith.

You know you go to a church usually and they give you a sheet of paper and say, Well if you can say yes, yes, pick it all up, sign at the bottom, we'll take you in. Well that doesn't demand any moral power or spiritual power does it? Spirit says this is the church where they did not sign articles of faith, they acted in faith. This is the church where they did not gather together a group of intellectuals to study psychosomatic medicine.

They just healed the sick. This is the church he said where they did not say prayers. But they prayed in the Holy Ghost.

And I've heard the greatest preachers in the world in the last 50 years. And yet the outstanding experiences of my life are not in hearing these amazing memories into a journey. I can almost blind you with their theological science.

The greatest memories I have are of praying with men who were anointed by the Spirit of God. And we prayed until 2 or 3 or later hours in the morning. Do you think you can find a church on earth that fits into that pattern? Does your church rule in that liberty? Not in bondage to headquarters, not studying psychosomatic medicine, but having power.

He looked on Peter and John and said, would you help us? He was asking for arms, A-L-M-S, phonetically it sounds like this arm. And the Sunday school teacher was teaching a class of girls. And they read the scripture that this man asked for arms.

And one of the girls said, why did he ask for arms when he needed legs? I wonder sometimes if the Lord doesn't wonder the same thing about us. We ask about something secondary instead of asking about the real thing. But in the end of days if we are going to have an appendage off, it's going to mean persecution.

It's going to mean hardship. It's going to mean sacrifice. It's going to mean that we're rejected and considered maybe fanatical even by the nearest and dearest.

And I think when the scripture says that a man's friend should withhold from his own household, it means spiritually as well as physically. So time and time again God has come on people and what happened? There was a split in the church. For what reason? Because some of the old rascals wanted to stay there and they did it grandfather's way.

But listen, we're living in a new age. There has to be something come on the age in which we live or we're doomed. And every political society and every other society is leaving no mark on this generation except a mark for evil.

Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. The man sat with his eyes on Peter. And Peter said something very wonderful I think.

He said I've no silver or gold. Look on us. Look on us.

Can your church say that in the region you live in? Not being arrogant about it but friend you won't get your problem solved. You won't get an answer to your situation anywhere else but you come to us. Look on us.

And he not only saw the man's need but he reached down, he touched him and immediately touched him. I'm sure that man felt as though he had, he touched an electric current. The resurrection life of Jesus, the power of his spirit went into that twisted deformed body and immediately his ankle bones received strength.

Well then they got a crowd round. This was at the beautiful gate of the temple. Again I say the high priest had passed a thousand times past the man.

Jesus must have passed him many times. But you see there's a timing in the affairs of men. Wasn't it even Shakespeare said there is a tide in the affairs of men which is taken at the flood lead unto her feet.

And there was a timing here. It was for the glory of God that this man's body was going to be miraculously delivered. Every bond that was locked would be unlocked.

He's going to stand and leap and praise God and do what the apostles dared him to do apparently go running through the sanctuary. Now I reminded you last night about central hell more than six thousand people. You see Christianity is something you can't really bottle it up, you can't get it into shape, you can't squeeze it into a theology.

We said last night that Jesus on the last day, the great day of the feast, he stood in that temple, he had no right to be there. For six days a priest had stood there in his gorgeous garments of beauty. And they remember the time when the rock was split.

And Jesus stood in that very place and said listen I want to tell you something. If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. And they were celebrating the feast of tabernacles.

I think this is one of the most courageous things Jesus ever did. He's got six thousand enemies. He's got high priests and others around him.

He's got six thousand pairs of eyes upon him. And he stands there sublime and majestic in holiness and authority. With the eyes of a multitude upon him.

And then he stands and delivers that word. If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. They'd hardly got out of that situation when they saw a bunch of Christians come along and start upsetting things.

You know people pray for a revival. They say well of course we don't really want to be disturbed. Well why don't you order an earthquake from Sears Roadblock and see if, well they wouldn't have one but should you have an earthquake without being disturbed? You can't have a revival without being disturbed.

You can't have a revival without some people being cut down. Peter and John stretched forth their hands, or Peter did, and touched the man. And his ankle bones received strength.

And the multitude came around with a, oh, oh, a wonder. And Peter said, look not on us. He said to the man with his knee, look on us.

In other words we've got the answer to your problem. But when they wanted to glamorize those two men and give them praise and adoration. He stepped out of the way and said no, no, no.

Don't put any halos on our heads. Don't attribute any greatness to us as though by our power, our own holiness. We have made this man to walk.

Listen you may be the greatest saint on earth. But there's no power of holiness through you to someone else. It must be the Spirit of God.

He's jealous. The Holy Spirit of God has the power. He has the authority.

I'd like to have been in that situation and seen that man. Sure one thing, he's not going to be just a pew dweller. He's not going to sit down and just be very rigid and careful.

No sirree, he's received the wonder working power of God. It's evident to everybody else round about. As Wesley says, my pain fell off, my heart was free.

I rose, went forth and followed thee. From that day forward he became a fanatic I'm sure. But who in the world wouldn't be when he sat there for forty years.

He heard somewhere the temple he could hear the old priest chanting away. When he has come the eyes of the blind shall be open and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Maybe many times he says to people wherever you're going.

Oh the miracle worker Jesus is up there and he unplugs the ears of the deaf. And he puts sight in blinded eyes and he straightens with the limbs. And the poor fellow must have thought for years and years.

The three years in the life of Jesus. Why did he do it to me? Why did he leave me here in my bondage sorrow night? Why didn't I come out of sickness into his health and out of my poverty into his wealth? Because there was a timing in the situation that's why. This was going to bring more glory to God than if he'd been healed with a multitude who were healed one day.

Yes it's going to get these men into trouble alright. After all it's very rough to shatter the religion of your father or your grandfather isn't it? What did they do with Peter and John? Well they just got them together and said we've had enough of this. We're going to have a high court tomorrow.

So in the next church you'll find that they gather together the intellectuals and the hierarchy of the church. And Peter and John are brought up to give an account of what they've done. And these poor fellows were trying to get out of it one way and the other and they couldn't get out of it.

And so they whispered to each other and then they said well ladies and gentlemen and this distinguished company. There's no way we can get round this. This is the man that sat at the beautiful gate.

We all know him. And only that we know he's been liberated. We don't know how it's been done.

It's got us pretty shot and it's burst our theology open at all ends. And we can't sleep at night for thinking that he's been at our doorstep all these years and we could never do anything but give him a bit of money.

The thing he didn't need.

He could not supply his needs. And then came along these two men. But we wanted to know this.

Number one. They're not ordained preachers. Neither of them has a preacher certificate.

And they're not well trained. And they're not good theologians. And we're kind of figuring that this thing might die off pretty quickly.

We do hope your trouble doesn't come back to you old fellow. But this man, we wanted to know this. But both these men by our standards.

You know. We've got certificates. First class certificates in paralysis.

We can't do anything. We can't say anything with any life. And this fellow's come on like a stick of lightning.

You see these men were filled with the Holy Ghost. Oh they're not only filled with the Holy Ghost. It says they filled Jerusalem with their doctrines.

It says that they were filled with joy. We just want to say this before we dismiss. These men Peter and John.

They come from the working class. Really they're good fishermen but bad theologians. And all we have to say to you is watch it.

Watch it. Because they're both unlearned and ignorant men. Well they missed it by about a million miles didn't they? Dr. Kaufman says the gospel of John.

Or rather says John was the placer of the New Testament. He's the most profound thinker. Ninety-two percent of the gospel of John has not been mentioned by Matthew, Mark or Luke.

He introduces us to new characters. He had an intimacy with Jesus Christ that no one ever had. He was there on the Mount of Transfiguration.

He was there on each occasion when Jesus raised the dead. But keep this in mind. That Jesus fellow's gone anyhow.

And these fellows are trying to live in the afterglow. They've worked something up. But listen I want to warn you.

They're unlearned and ignorant. And John gave us what? Well Peter gave us two epistles. Man I get so much out of the first epistle of Peter.

The first chapter. I think it's a fantastic. It's worth a whole Bible in itself.

How many millions of people have been blessed through Peter's writing? He wrote one epistle. He wrote two epistles. He didn't gather any royalties for them yet.

He's going to get those when he gets up there. And this fellow John. He wrote the gospel of John.

The first epistle of John. The second epistle of John. The third epistle of John.

And then to really prove that he was ignorant. He wrote the book of the Revelation. Well all you like to be. Would you rather be the high priest. That sat there in splendor and lived like a king just for a few years. And then you don't even know his name.

Or a man like Peter and John. Imbued with power from on high. But having authority over the power of sin and the power of death.

And liberating a man who'd been a captive all these years. What do you want to settle for? The church has never had more intellectualism than it has today. And I'm not knocking it.

Scholarship on fire. As in the case of Wesley and some other men. Is a marvellous thing.

That scholarship by itself. When it sits there just splitting theological hairs. And deciding to call a few cronies together.

And have a conference which of course the poor and needy are not invited to. Well brother keep it. Peter looked on this man.

And he not only looked on him. He touched him. He put his hand down.

And immediately it seemed as though life was transmitted into the body. And a man jumps up and he leaps and he praises and he magnifies God. And the whole of Jerusalem heard about it.

And again I say the pastor almost as it were a sentence of death. Give me some money. It seems safe to say that when the church is rich.

Financially it is always poor spiritually. And usually when it is poor financially it is rich. The greatest revivals in the last ten years.

Have not been in cultured civilized countries as we think of it. They've been in Indonesia and other places. Where the New Testament has been relived again.

In every manifestation of the power of the risen son of God. We've been in our comfortable pools. And we're so satisfied with our portion.

Spirit and gold I have none but such as I have did I unto thee. What a difference between the apostolic church and the church today. You read as, if you read as I read the whole book is, is full of the supernatural.

It's branded right through there. There is no explanation except that God works for men. They heard his voice.

They moved in the power of the spirit of God. The end of the hedonism. Again let's get out of our minds.

The idea that we're the most, you know we deserve more pity. Because we live in such a terrible age. There's communism, Mormonism, Moonism, all the other devilish things.

This monstrous monolith of a thing called communism. I remind you tonight that Christianity was not served up to the world on a silver plate. Christianity was born in a sophisticated totalitarian age.

There were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Jesus never spoke about slavery. The apostle Paul never spoke about slavery.

And yet these men are learned and ignorant. Reminding you again as my wife and I and a friend stood on the southern end of the Grand Canyon. I read the legend there, maybe you've read it.

That yellow ribbon across there 7 miles away is the Colorado River. It gives you the statistics. I think it's 450 feet wide and about 45 feet deep.

It's 7 miles away, it doesn't look so far. The floor of the canyon is a mile deep. So that if you're down there you'll have rocks to climb a mile high on any side.

And you can't get up that way because there's the river and then there's a great tremendous cliff. As I looked at that I thought to myself, or the Lord reminded me of it. Say, how would a baby get out of that canyon? A one year old child, a two year old child could never get out of it.

Sure couldn't swim the river it goes so far. It couldn't climb the crags, they're far too steep and difficult. And just as I thought of that I thought of the early church.

It was walled in on this side by the greatest military machine in the world up to that day. It was walled in on this side with the intellectual greatness of the Greeks. It was obstructed away there by the Jews who believed they alone had the monopoly of God.

Remember bit of this, they were studying bloody sacrifice every day. There was a gift now when the priest went in his royal robes there into the temple. And they believed he alone could speak with God and he alone spoke with God once a year to one people.

You know what, I think the marvel and the mystery and the majesty of prayer of this takes us. Because if you had been a Jew in that dispensation even today, only one man could meet God. And you and I could meet him anywhere at any time that we wanted to go.

He has made us a kingdom of priests unto God. And Peter and John are exercising their royal prerogatives. Not only did Isaac watch right when I surveyed a wondrous cross, I guess his best known hymn.

But he also wrote the hymn Jesus shall reign where'er the sun that fits its record journeys round. His kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moon shall wax and reign no more. Blessings abound where'er he reigns, the prisoner leaps to lose his chains.

The weary find eternal rest and all the sons of want are blessed. And then he goes on, he finishes it by saying in him, Christ, the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their fathers lost. You can tell me as much as you like and butt it in my ears a million times a day, if you like, about the total depravity of man.

And tell me about sin and tell me about the tide of iniquity running against us. And I'll just shout back in your face that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. But the thing is we don't speak on that power.

All we need is a bit of grace to get through today. Lord don't let anybody hurt us while we're driving. And don't let us hurt anybody else.

And isn't it awful, gasoline's going up five cents. We can say all those things and forget. Do you know what? We lie.

We lie the way we live. We try to tell God we believe him. We kneel in front of him.

We believe he's the Lord God Omnipotent that reigneth. We believe that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and forever. And the church is in a state of bankruptcy tonight.

The glory doesn't fill the temple anymore. As I asked you the other night, did you come here tonight to meet God or hear a sermon about him? Can you remember the last time the glory of God came in the temple and you couldn't speak going home? And you felt the cloud upon you for days and days and days after that divine invasion. That's what happens in, that's what happens in revival.

Do you think Jerusalem is different? Every time people look at that spot they say, you know that's where he used to sit, that's where he used to sit, that's where he used to sit. Have you seen him now? He's a healthy man, he has a family, he has a business, he has this. The very empty space was reduced to the emptiness of a sanctuary.

The early church, I say, was a supernatural church and we're a superficial church. It began in the upper room with men agonizing. My God, I'd love to have heard them pray those ten days.

Not only praying because they were delivered, but praying that they would have the strength and the wisdom because Christ was going to invade their lives. And he has made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. And I say to some people, if I preach in Pentecostal places, I say to them, well look, let me remind you of this, that there are no gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Oh boy, that makes everybody see that. You say, well prove it. I can prove it easily.

Because it says in his resurrection, or in his death and resurrection, what did he do? He led captivity captive. And he gave gifts unto men. There are no gifts except gifts that have been purchased by the blood of Christ.

The Holy Ghost is the executive of the Godhead. It's like a man who has left a will and you go and sit in the office and some man of fishery, he says, well look, this has been left to you and that has been left to you and this has been left to you. They're not his gifts, but he dispenses those gifts.

And the Holy Spirit dispenses the gifts. They were purchased by the blood of Christ. The hymn writer says, the purchase of thy death defied, give me with all to sanctify the heritage of love.

So this early church, shining brilliantly with the power of God, persecuted. Why these fellows spent more time in prison than they spent free, at least some of them. So it was a supernatural church and now it's a superficial church.

It was a living church, now we have a languishing church. It says that they went and when they went they were all amazed. How often have you been to church and had to rub your eyes when you went out saying, was I really there or was I dreaming? Such an invasion of divine power, such an invasion.

It was a suffering church. We're a sufficient, a sufficient church. Peter stood up, lifted up his voice, spoke to the man, the man stood up.

And there was a whole chapter written and they started in a new sphere of power and authority. Silver and gold, I have none, I have none. But such as I have, I give.

He didn't even sell healing cloths. He didn't ask you to subscribe to his magazine. Freely you'll receive, freely give.

I can't give you any money. You know, it's a great joy in having nothing. One thing if you have nothing, you can't lose anything, can you? If you have no opinion of yourself, nobody will ever hurt your feelings because you've already got ahead of them.

See, I'm a nobody. As soon as you respond to something, it shows there's something alive in you. You know, if somebody rubs your nose and immediately you resent it.

Oh, well, well, well, then you've got something in there that causes the resentment. If I give three men a glass of water, a glass of milk, a glass of oil, and I tell them to run and one of them stumbles, what comes out of the glass? Well, obviously if he's got oil in it, he's going to spill oil. If he's got water, water will spill it.

If he's got milk, milk will spill. Jesus said, the prince of this world cometh and he findeth nothing in me. And then the scripture says, as he was, so are we in this world.

Now listen, what's your weak spot? What's your vulnerable spot? When you go down and retire and feel hurt and miserable because somebody kind of punched your nose. You know, said she's not very smart. Or, you know, I don't think he's so spiritual.

Or, that fellow's arrogant. Or, this woman has temper. Again I say there's a great advantage in having nothing because you can't lose anything.

There's a great embarrassment in having nothing. There's a story there where in Luke 11, the story of a man whose friend came at midnight and he knocked on the door and he said, well, well, well, you told me to come anytime. Remember I did you a favor and you said, now listen, you've got me out of a hole.

I don't care where I am. I went. Yeah, I did.

But the wife's in bed, you see, and we haven't been for groceries. Well, but come in. And the man goes down the street and he knocks at the door.

Gets no answer. He knocks. He persists.

Finally the guy up there opens the window and says, what do you want? He says, a friend of mine has come on his journey. And I've nothing to say before him. And I believe speaking generally right now, the church has nothing to say before the world in which we live.

We can't display our power. We can't display authority. The scholarly Francis Schaeffer says, I believe that in this day, the preachers are not saying as much as they could.

Well, brother, if Pentecost meant anything to these men, it meant that they lost their fear of man. For the fear of man bringeth us nith. And God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind.

We need to display that we're intoxicated to the world. Let them think we're idiots. If only God's glory fills the temple.

If only again people come in and say, listen, there's a man down the street, the biggest rose in the world. And see if we have in terms. And he's been marvelously changed by the grace of God.

You see, this man's healing was delayed because God was going to get glory. Peter and John were not going to get glory. Surely people would say, well, I remember Peter.

Boy, he used to be a bad tempered, roaring fellow. And there's something very different about him now. But the ultimate was that Jesus Christ was glorified through the healing of this man.

Who for all these years had been there in bondage. Samuel Chadwick said, when he was a young man, he spent all his time making sermons of exegetical exactitude and homiletical perfection. And they were grammatically correct.

And he erased certain words and put better words in until they shone, you know, like a diamond flashes. And people were saying, this man's going to be one of the greatest preachers in England. But there was no breathing of God in the sanctuary.

He said, one night I knelt down in my little room and it had a fireplace just about that size, that's all. A bedroom fireplace in England isn't more than two spans wide. And late at night as he prayed, he said, God, I'm sure my theology is correct.

I wouldn't do anything to grieve your spirit by a false interpretation that the atmosphere isn't instinct with God. People don't tiptoe out of the sanctuary saying, God is in this place. The disciples went to the upper room and the Holy Ghost came upon them.

I want the Holy Ghost to come on me. And God said, burn your idol. Burn my idol? What's my idol? Your sermon.

The monuments of perfection, theologically, grammatically, exegetically, and you glory in your own ability, burn your idol. He said, I got them all out of a drawer and I put them on the fireplace and I set fire to them. And he said, they did burn, they were so dry.

And he said, as the smoke went up the chimney, the fire of God came down on my spirit. Now Lord, he said, there's a key to revival in this area, what is it? And the Lord said, read a certain scripture and he read it. They came, not, I note here, not to see Jesus, but to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

They'd seen Jesus very often. But here is Lazarus, he was bound and there he was. And you remember Jesus said, you take away the stone, you see, that's something we have to do.

We want God to send us a painless Pentecost. Something that I don't have to fast for and weep for and pray for and disorganize my life. God said, no, you roll away the stone, I'll bring him to life.

They rolled away the stone and Jesus stood with a loud voice and cried, Lazarus come forth, and he came forth. Oh, he was alive alright, I'll show you how much alive he was. He was alive like this.

Why? Because he was still bound. Ninety-five percent of our church members in the country, if they're saved at all, they're still bound. He was alive, otherwise he couldn't have moved out of the grave.

And he's coming out with a cloth over his face and over his hands and over his feet. And Jesus says, loose him and let him go. But I mentioned that earlier in the meeting tonight.

To be loose, to be free from all the bondage. The Lord said to Chadwick, you'll find a Lazarus in town. A man that everybody knows, he's not only dead, but he stinks and he's dead, he's corrupt on top of his death.

You go find him. Get everybody to target their prayers on him. That's exactly what they did.

They all ganged up in prayer. A few weeks after, Chadwick went to see the man. Now he doesn't say, Lord, you send Gabriel, like somebody else.

He went to see this man who was notorious for fighting, drinking, and his wild living. And he said, I want to tell you something. I'm the pastor now at the Methodist church down in town there.

And I believe that God wants you to become a Christian. You're the worst man in town, and God wants you to be the best man in town. And the man told him, go to hell.

Get out of here. Chadwick says, well, I'll go, but I want to tell you something. Every day before you get up, I'll have prayed for you.

You're going to be one of the outstanding men in this community, ransomed and redeemed and liberated by the power of God. The nun again cursed him. But one night, to the surprise of everybody, in came this ragged man, this rude, rough, rebellious man.

And as soon as Chadwick told him he could be delivered, that men could be delivered, emancipated, he staggered down the aisle, he knelt there, and cried out in his sin. Do you know what happened? Next Sunday, the church was packed. There wasn't a seat empty.

God fulfilled his word. They came not to see Jesus, but to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They came not to hear Chadwick with his brilliant, marvelous oratory.

But they came to see the miracle. They came to see the man who had been delivered from his bondage and sin and his uncleanness, and now was restored and in his right mind. The power of God unto salvation.

Isn't it embarrassing that we have nothing to set before the world right at this time? If we didn't put signs outside of our churches, folk wouldn't know they were churches. When they legislate in Washington, do you think they take notice and say, now what shall we do, the churches may rise up against us? Oh no, they know the teamsters will rise up. They know the union leaders will open their voices, but all the church won't say a single thing.

They'll just hide in corners and have prayer meetings. There's a time when we've got to stand and be as brave as lions, and stand up against the powers of darkness. It's embarrassing to have nothing.

The man has come at midnight, well isn't it midnight now? Doesn't darkness cover the earth and gross darkness the people? We're caught in a web of unclean spirits. I read in a paper today that the pastor

takes, I think it was Jerry Falwell's paper, that 60% of the fellows who meet, who are joining the Hare Krishna cult, are Jews who are dissatisfied with the Jewish religion. 40% of the Mooniites are young Jews, intellectual Jews.

I don't know how they get trapped. But the question is, why hasn't Christianity fascinated them? How is it that somehow we haven't displayed that power, that people know that we're ransomed and healed and restored, forgiven, that we don't love the world of flesh and the devil? That we become habitations of God by His Spirit? Come on, narrow it down. What has your church got to offer in your community? Do people ever say, well if you want to know what apostolic Christianity is, did you ever read the Bible and think it's a kind of a museum piece? Can it tell people to go to that church? Because if there's somebody in bondage, you have a group of people who get together.

And I'm convinced with all my heart, if we spend the time training people in prayer like we spend them for training the choir, and I'm not against singing, I believe there should be departments in the church, different departments of prayer. Some people have a gift of faith for money, and if they have you don't need to beg. Some people have a gift of faith for one particular disease.

There are healings. I think of a man that I knew in England, who almost every time he prayed for a cancer patient, that cancer patient got delivered. I have an old friend in England now, every time he prays for somebody with deafness, they get delivered from their deafness.

Well, you can say I don't think every gift should operate in every church. I believe it should operate in every community anyhow, if not every church. I believe we should go to some Methodist brother and say, you have a gift of wisdom, and boy we need some wisdom in our church.

And say pastor, could we have this brother come to us for a month? And they come to you and say, you have a man who has a particular gift for people who are demon possessed, will you loan him to our church for a month? You see, Paul says that my preaching is not in word only, oh we excel in words, these boys pour torrents of words over the radio, but he says my preaching is not in word only, but in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. But somehow there's a bottleneck, that power is not coming through, that demonstration is not there, why? Is it because we're fat and self satisfied? A man is coming in his journey, it's midnight, and I have nothing to set before him. We watch the world crumble, we watch these systems go down, we see Africa falling like a bunch of dominoes.

We think of the race of Cambodia, we think of the hellishness that Laos has gone through, and Vietnam. That's all now, what a million, more than a million men on the Chinese border with Russia. And you know if they get into a jam, somebody's going to release one of those atom bombs, that's what they're going to do in my judgment.

It's a terribly late hour. And when Jesus said, I give you power, he said I give you power over all the power of the enemy. The poor David spoke on it this morning, binding the strong man.

You know in the early days of the Salvation Army, they had some fantastic meetings. I talked with a man who was 80 some years of age, and that was in 1930, let me see, 30, 31, 32. He'd been the right hand man of William Booth in the Salvation Army, and he told me about those early days of revival.

You know, I wish I'd had a tape recorder, they weren't out in those days. It was the most exciting thing I think I've ever heard of. But the condition of being in the Salvation Army was, every Salvation Army core,

as they call each church they have, I call it the Salvation Army Church, it was a law that they had a prayer meeting Saturday night until midnight or after.

And as that man told me of the power of God that used to come over communities. You see, revival changes the moral climate of a community. We don't have revivals.

We get some guy to come in and give us a little pep talk. Somebody to come in and sing nicely for us. And a week or two after, we've gone back to the old routine, as cold and lifeless and unconcerned as we were just before.

But I'll tell you what, when these men, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, I don't find Peter running away from anybody else. They ran away from him. I don't find him warming himself at somebody else's fire.

He got the fire. And I don't know where that 120 went out of the upper room, but I know where some of them went. And they said about them, these men have turned the world upside down.

There's no way of measuring their power. We can't find out their secret, but this we do know. But they're more than conquerors.

Let's take it down to the church. In the book of the Revelation, the third chapter, there's a church. The church is always revealed as a woman.

A man has a hundred sheep. A man has two sons in between. There's a woman and she's digging in the dirt, type of the ministry of the church, in the silt.

You know a lot of us are afraid to get our hands dirty. I've said, and I say it wherever I go, I've said if there's 30 buses, and some of them have 30 buses outside of the church. I don't believe any church needs a bus to gather people on Sundays.

How would we get them there? Fill all the empty seats in all the cars that come. I see big cars come with one person in. Another car comes with two.

They could get three or four or five other folk in if they like to do it. We don't need all that money. We're draining money that could be used for other things.

Compassion. The Salvation Army used to sing, except I'm moved with compassion, how dwelleth thy spirit in me. In thought, word, and deed, burning love is my need, and I know I can find it in thee.

And if they're going to reach the twisted, deformed, and despised, they're going to have the compassion that Jesus had. And those who can't go out and reach them, can stand behind and be in prayer, and pray the power of the Spirit of God on the ministry. The early days of the Salvation Army were some of the most sensational days in the history of the Church.

Maybe I mentioned it before, I think it's in the first volume of Begbie's Life of William Boo. He said when the old general had preached, and boy he roared his head off, and then at the end of the meeting he would say, Boy ahead! Everybody ducked down nervously, you know, when he shouted that. And then he'd start telling them to come and leave their sin.

Come on you prostitutes, get up to the altar. Come on you thieves, come on you liars, come on you drunkards, come on you life beaters. He named them.

He said some nights the meeting was like iron when he finished. And then he'd say to the officers behind him, Pray! They'd all start praying. And Begbie says the Spirit of God would take men off the back row, nearly all the old drunks and thieves ran down the back two or three rows, and the Spirit got all of them by the back of the neck and carried them all over the congregation and dropped them at the altar.

My goodness, if that happened in our churches, we'd beat it to the door. We'd say this is demon power, wouldn't we? You know, God is welcome to come as long as he doesn't disturb us. As long as he doesn't do something we can't explain to our children.

I mean, we're going to lay a track down like you lay a track for a train, and then Holy Spirit, you come down there, you see. Because in our church we don't happen to believe in gifts of the Spirit, and our pastor says he doesn't believe in healing. A lady told me that one day.

I said, I saw your pastor in hospital the other day praying for somebody. Was he praying she'd die? Every preacher in the country prays for the sick when it comes to it. He may not anoint them with oil, but he prays.

That's part of his job. But oh, when the church of God is healthy, it's productive. When the church is healthy, she has power.

When it's healthy, she has authority. And these men exercise it. But here is a church like a woman, beautiful woman.

She says, there never has been a church like me. I'm the most perfect, beautiful church. And I've etched it before.

She paints a picture of herself. Wavy hair, lovely eyes, lovely cheeks, lovely teeth. Neck like a pillar of marble.

Teeth like a flock of sheep coming up from the washing, the Word of God says. And then when she's got that picture painted, she writes underneath it. And as she moves off, I shout to her and say, come back a minute.

She says haughtily, why? I don't care what you think. I say, you don't need to care what I think for sure, I'll tell you that. But you better take notice of what God says.

Sit down. Let me unveil this picture and I unveil the picture. What do I see? What does she see? A beautiful woman like the one she's painted.

No, there's an old hag. Here the hair is wavy, there the head is nearly bald. There the eyes are blue, there the eyes are bloodshot.

There the face is round, here the face is shrunken. There the face has colour on it, lively, vitality. Here the cheeks are shrunken and hollow.

There the teeth are flawless, here the teeth are rotten and yellow. And underneath she says, I'm rich and increased in goods. I have need of nothing.

And God says of the same person, I'm naked and wretched and blind and poor and miserable. The church never had as much organising as she has now. She never had less agonising.

We lost this equipment and duplicators. And we were in a church not long ago. I was amazed.

The staff, the staff, the staff they had there. It's almost like an insurance company. There are churches now with computers in them.

And they say, well we're really efficient. Efficient? Dear Lord, they're as deficient as anybody on earth. They've got everything which is spectacular to the eye.

And it's making the mechanism of the church go. And they know your name and they know your number. And they know your social security number.

And heaven knows they've got you tabulated as a church member. They know your income. They know you're tithing them out.

They know, know, know, know, know. Oh they know so much. What they don't know is they're bankrupt.

What they don't know is that while they're pleading their severs, the world is going to have fire. A simple thing. Very shortly we're rushing quickly to Easter.

The week before Easter obviously is Palm Sunday. You remember they spread their garments in the way. And then Jesus finally went out of the city.

We usually say T.E. It was a triumphant entry. I changed that round. I don't think it was a triumphant entry.

I think it was a tearful exit. They didn't want him. And he wept and he said, Oh Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets.

How often would I have gathered thee as a hen that gather her brood under her wings. But ye would not. Your house is left desolate.

They didn't kick him out of the city. He left them. Two thousand years ago and they haven't had a prophet since.

They haven't had a revival since. Do you think almighty God dare not leave America? Do you think our books are keeping the kingdom of heaven together? We've had more light, more gospel broadcast. We've got more Bible schools than the rest of the world put together.

The rest of the countries in the world put together. We've five thousand gospel broadcast every day. We've more than a hundred thousand hours of broadcasting through the week.

And yet tonight we're drunken and immoral and broken. We flaunt our sexuality. We boast of our immorality.

We put in God we trust and our coins to hell with his commandments. We've abolished the death penalty. We've legalized prostitution.

One state, Nevada, has it. We've legalized abortion. We're more drunkards at this moment than ever we've had.

We've more kids, more girls under sixteen, pregnant last year. Unmarried girls than ever in our history. Wouldn't you think that somehow we'd go and say, Listen, this machine's running wrong.

We're only operating on two cylinders instead of eight. What in the world's wrong with us? But we're just about too proud to admit that. You know the road to revival is paved with tears.

Paved with groanings and sobs. And my fear is this, that we say so often, Oh, God keeps all his promises. Well, there's one promise he made to the church, and that was this.

Because he was in that state, and he would not come and repent and seek his faith. You know what he said? I'll spew you out of my mouth. And people say, you know, Oh, they get in big conventions and get thousands of people and raise money.

What have you done? We put millions of dollars on the mission field. And we don't move them one inch. Scarcely.

Why? We're trying to do it in the energy of the flesh, that's why. We're trying organizing instead of agonizing. God says, I'll spew you out of my mouth.

He said to Israel, your house is left desolate. I was in a meeting a good while ago, and I quoted this scripture. God says that he'll spew it out of his mouth.

An old man, an old preacher on the front row, said in a stage whisper, I don't know if others heard it, he said, I think he's already done it, and we don't know. He's already done it. Does your church have any sign of supernatural power on it? Are there times when we drop everything and say, listen.

Because it's true of all of us here tonight. Not many of us need new life. All we need is obedience.

We've enough light, brother, to deliver a thousand times more folk than we have here. With all our obedience, we're so stiff-necked and hard and rebellious. And when it comes down to the issue, a man has come on his journey and had nothing to set before him.

Sunday school teacher, do you really set something before those children that will make them think and stir their heart? Or are you just a storyteller? Father, have you anything in your home to set before your children? A godly life? A praying life? A devotional life? Peace? You say, I've nothing in that line. Power? I've nothing in that line. Prayer? I've nothing in that line.

This won't take me a minute to say, my daddy, in his early days, he moved around with society in England, with dukes and lords and ladies. Now remember, this was being discussed once at dinner. After he'd married, of course, and we youngsters were around.

Now remember, plainly my daddy saying to some folk who were at dinner with us, I'm glad I wasn't born to nobility. The cattle where he lived, the king used to come and they had solid gold dinner plates and solid gold knives and forks. And all the waiters wore their knee breeches and pure silver buckles on their shoes.

And they served everything with white gloves, lest they should defile your dinner, your plate. And everything was done, you know, bang up to the last law of etiquette. My daddy said, I'm glad I wasn't born in society like that.

And somebody said, why? He said, because all the years I was there, I never heard the gospel. They live in that artificial realm of, we've got everything, we wear the best clothes. They went to Paris to get the gents' suits hand tailored.

The ladies wore the latest fashion, the biggest rings, everything else. It was all show style. Our yacht is bigger than your yacht.

Our castle is bigger than your castle. Our estate is bigger than your castle. And he said, they never, never once put anything out in the way of the gospel to the family that met around the table.

I'm glad my daddy came out of there. He was the first challenge to my Christian life. And then he told me about a man called C.T. Studd.

And then he took me one day. I went to hear C.T. Studd. He told me about the Salvation Army.

And I guess I, I just remember faintly seeing a man with a beard who I'm sure was William Booth. And I remember other men came along, Paddick Wilkes and some of these men who founded missions. And I began to stir inside, even when I was a youngster.

There was never any sports magazines in the house. All the literature in the house was spiritual. Every bit of it.

And if I picked it up, I got to read something about some missionary. I got to read something about somebody in Japan with a Japan rescue mission. I got to read about somebody up the Congo.

And the books all on the shelves were all books of spiritual matter. Daddy set things before us. And he not only told us, he did it.

He put a ragged coat on on a Saturday night and went out down by the tavern and waited till men came out staggering and put his arm in them. And he took them down in the basement of the church and gave them hot coffee and led them to Christ. And the next night we had no automobile.

Next night we, Daddy would go off and I'd say, Where's Daddy gone? Oh, he, he, he met a man last night. And he'd bring the man into church, you know, scruffy and his collar all torn and disreputable. My dad would go and see him during the week.

And he'd go for him the next Saturday night. Next Sunday night. And about two or three weeks the man came with a clean shirt and a new suit and everything else.

And I'd say, Well, who was the man you came with tonight, Daddy? Oh, oh, it was the man that came last week. No, no, no, no. No, you came with a nice man tonight.

Not, not the ragged man, the dirty man, the smelly man, the man with the rank. Same man. You see, that's what Jesus does when he comes into, into the life.

Somebody said, You expect me to believe Jesus turned water into wine? He said, I'll tell you something he did better than that. He turned beer into furniture in our house. Do you know why we put on so many programs in the church and so much entertainment? Because we've no real joy.

And do you know what? Even angels get excited when folk are redeemed. And brother, if they get excited, we ought to get excited about it. And when the Holy Ghost comes back on the lives of the individual, there's one thing for not, you, you, you like.

A thing that's boring to most people now is the prayer life. But you know, the day's too short for the man who wants to pray. It's the greatest engagement in the world, this side of eternity.

To wrestle in prayer. To set the captives free. To pray for people that you've no idea who you're praying for.

God will lay maybe Tanner one day on your heart, or somebody else, or somebody else, or somebody else. I was in a meeting with Raymond Edmund, and he talked about going to South America as a missionary. He was the president, you know, of Wheaton.

And when he got down there, he had a chronic illness, and he was dying. They dug his grave. His wife was mopping his brow.

The sweat was there, and the death rattle was in his throat. And she'd dyed her wedding dress and hung it on a tree, because she hadn't a black dress to go to the funeral in. And she said, I was puzzled.

Why should my husband, a brilliant mind, knows his Greek and Hebrew and Latin and language down here, ready to start the missionary work, and here he's dying. And she said, I mopped his brow, and he sat up straight. He said, bring me my clothes.

Then she nearly died. He never turned back. Years after, in Boston, he told me this himself.

Years after, in Boston, a little old lady came after he'd testified, and said, could you tell me the date? And he said, yes, so and so. And he said she had a little notebook worth about ten cents. It was all ragged around the edges.

And she opened it and went back a bit and said, it was the year so and so, on a certain date. What time would it be in Uruguay, I think it was. In Uruguay.

What was the difference in the time? And he said, so and so. She said, that's right. That's right.

What's right? I was in bed, and the Lord told me to get up and pray for Raymond Edmund. The devil wanted to kill him. Why did God need a little old woman to help him? After all, he's omnipotent.

But he says, I want you to pray for a little woman, for a man thousands of miles away. Little old lady prayed, and she'd made a note, got into bed in victory. But only, not only was he in victory, she was in victory.

Huh? The spirit of discernment, the spirit of wisdom, hearing his voice, obeying his command. Peter and John unlearned, an ignorant man. Do you know what? If Jesus had said, if you receive brains, the Holy Ghost coming upon you, there'd be a line from here to New York of young guys wanting new brains.

And they sure need them, but anyhow, he didn't say that. If he'd said, if you receive the miraculous touch, they would be lining up for it. But he said, you should receive power.

And power is preceded by purity. And purity is preceded by repentance and sorrow for sin. Look, there's nothing in your hands you can bring, as the songwriter says, nothing in my hands I'd bring.

He's looking for brilliant men. Somebody asked Hudson Taylor, why did God choose you to go to China and establish the China inland mission? He said, because he'd been looking for years for somebody weak enough to use. And at last he found me.

They were unlearned and ignorant men. The Holy Ghost came upon them. And the world hasn't yet seen what's going to happen as a result of that.

I can paint a picture as black as hell, I sure can. And you can contradict it, if I gave you a lot of statistics and stuff tonight. But I'm not hanging my harp on the willows.

God's going to bypass organized religion and systems before very long. I believe that many denominations are breathing their last right now. They're struggling to try and plug the hole up and stick the hole up here and stop something else.

And the world says, but you've got nothing real and vital and living and powerful. So what's he going to do? He's going to fulfill his word like he always does. Pour out his Spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy to its young people. Not the old greyheads. We've had our day, we missed it.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions. And all men dream dreams.

And on my servants and handmaids. Not intellectuals and bishops and presidents of colleges. But he says that your young men see visions.

And all men dream dreams. And on my servants and handmaids. Where did he go the first time? Did he not go to the Sanhedrin and say, Hey, I've got some very likely prospect.

I want a man with a sharp intellect. Did he go to the high priest and say, Well, who do you think is the finest young priest you've got around? He ignored the whole bunch. He went to some smelly fisherman and said, Come on, follow me.

He went to a man making insurance out of a tax thing. And a shadow fell. And he looked up.

And the man heard Jesus say, Follow me. And do you know what? I think that's one of the greatest acts of faith in the New Testament. Nobody talks about it.

He just looked down and Matthew said, All right. And he dropped his pen and left the master. And he didn't know that much about him.

And you and I know this story from beginning to end. And yet we hesitate to be obedient. We hesitate to go out on a limb, as we say.

We hesitate to say, Lord, come and burn out of me all my selfishness, and all my pride, and all my weakness, and all my excuses. Then shall all bondage cease. All fetters fall.

And I shall find my peace. My all in all. Let's sing a verse of a hymn before we close.

Do we know, Spirit of God descend upon my heart. Do you know that? No? Hmm? Oh, okay. 1 3 8. Let's sing 1 3 8. The altar's open if you want to come.

I'm not going to beg for you to come. Thank you that you've not cut us off, either as individuals or as a nation. We surely test your patience.

You said your spirit will not always strive with man. Lord, maybe if we knew, the alarm signal is already ringing out for this nation. Maybe we're almost at the end of our pedal, as it were.

Maybe you said, for us as a nation, the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and you're not saved. But yet, Lord, we would stand in the gap tonight, and plead as thy servants of old. We would plead like the man whose tree was to be cut down.

And they prayed, Lord, you'd give just another year that he might fertilize it, and get it all in good condition. And then if it bear not fruit, then he said, then cut it down and take it away. Lord, some of us tonight have very unfruitful lives.

We have nothing to offer to our children. We have nothing to offer to our church. We have nothing to offer to our community.

And yet there are all these riches in glory by Christ Jesus, which can be ours if we're obedient to thee. O God, we know that the cripple at the gate is the world. We can't bind up its wounds with politics.

We can't heal its diseases with any intellectual power. It must come through the body of the church of the living God. As we have sung this week, revive thy work, O Lord, revive every heart here tonight.

Grant, O Lord, that nobody shall leave this house in bondage, nobody shall leave it tattered, nobody shall leave it in failure. That, Lord, we may touch that spring which is in thee and invite the fire of God to come in consuming power and burn out the draughts and burn off the fetters that hold us and liberate us that are going out like this man who is leaping and praising God. There'll be something so different in our spirits, in our attitudes, in our words, that they'll have to say a verse as they said with them.

They took knowledge of them that they'd been with Jesus. And for this we'll give you praise in Jesus' name.

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