

The Disciples Prayer

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding true prayer, the significance of the resurrection, and the pursuit of righteousness in the Christian life.

Duration: 1:11:03

Scripture: Matthew 6:9

Topics: "Prayer", "Humility"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes that what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer is actually the disciples' prayer, highlighting the distinction between Jesus' prayer life and that of his followers. He critiques the superficiality of many prayers today, suggesting that true prayer aligns with God's will rather than our own desires. Ravenhill stresses the importance of humility, obedience, and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in revolutionizing one's prayer life. He warns against the complacency of the church and calls for a deeper understanding of righteousness and the need for a genuine relationship with God. Ultimately, he encourages believers to seek a profound connection with the Father, as exemplified in Jesus' high priestly prayer.

Transcript

Again, in case you were not here yesterday, this is the Lord's Prayer. And what we call the Lord's Prayer is not the Lord's Prayer, it's the disciples' prayer. The disciples could not pray this prayer and Jesus could not pray the disciples' prayer.

It is the longest recorded prayer of the Lord Jesus, but, and it's the most comprehensive, but I don't think that it's the most profound prayer in one sense. I mentioned yesterday that Dr. Tozer ceased going to his church prayer meeting because nobody would pray before he prayed. And after he prayed, nobody dared pray.

He prayed in a dimension that was totally foreign. If he prayed in Chinese, they would have understood it just as well as what he was praying in English. He was way out of reach for them.

They were still in waters to the ankles and he was in waters to swim in. And as I said, and it rather amazes me that, excuse me, that there is no record that Jesus ever prayed with his disciples. He prayed for them.

He prayed before them, but I don't think he ever prayed with them. Three of them had a chance to hear the greatest prayer session in history. I've said almost facetiously that to many of us, prayer is merely giving God a shopping list.

Very often we pray what we want to pray. True prayer isn't praying what I want to pray, it's praying what God wants me to pray. There are so many distinctions about the spirit-filled life.

Well, if you get filled with the spirit, this will happen, or that will happen. It depends what school of thought you're in. But so few people talk about the prayer life being revolutionized.

If your prayer life wasn't revolutionized when the spirit came, I don't think you got what God wanted you to have. Maybe the preachers went away because they heard who was preaching, but I like to tell the truth, it hurts. Hurts me very often.

But you see, in Hebrews seven, pardon me, rather in Hebrews five and verse seven, it says of Jesus, who in the days of his flesh, when he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, was heard of him that was able to save him from death. Now he didn't get saved from death, though he prayed that if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. He was able to save him from death and he was heard in that he feared.

And though he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered. I often hear people say, Lord, make me humble. If that's your problem, see me after the meeting, I could help you a lot.

Do you know what the Bible says? It says humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. You have an option as a Christian of one of two things, either to be humble or to be humiliated. And if you pray, Lord, oh Lord, I really want to be humble, then tomorrow or in church or somewhere you get an awful humiliation, don't call the pastor, just as the pastor said, shoot a word to him and say, thank you Lord for humiliating me, I was awfully embarrassed.

See, we think he'll scream us off, he's going to do it privately, come around the corner here, I'll just nip that little bit of something off your life that isn't nice. The Lord says, I'll give you a horrible showdown one day. And if he does, we kind of run for safety, we say, oh Lord, why do you treat me like this? This same writer to the Hebrew says, he spared not his own son.

He spared not his only begotten son. Well, if he didn't spare his only begotten son, do you think he's going to spare his adopted sons? He learned obedience by the things that he suffered. We're cleansed by the blood, we're corrected by the rod.

The Psalmist knew that a long way back because he said, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Now, this 17th chapter, in which again, we said that Jesus is very conscious that he's writing the plan of God. Again, I say, if I could write another beatitude, it would be blessed to they who know God's timetable in their lives.

I was praying and meditating this morning and I kind of put a bit of a binder on the pastor. I don't know his thoughts, I'm not suggesting a thing, but I said, Lord, I don't think he should leave, think of leaving this church for 10 more years. And all the people said, so we got a unanimous vote.

Because I think that there's a work begun which is maturing and it is going to mature if Jesus tarries. You see, we're to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. Some people grow in knowledge and not in grace.

Some people grow in grace but not in knowledge. Now, I've got two legs, not too strong. I broke them both a while ago and broke my back and so forth, but I don't hop around on one leg even though shoes cost a lot of money.

I could hop around on one leg, get awfully tired and I could carry the other shoe under my arm and then I could hop on that leg and carry the other one which would be ridiculous, but a lot of people want to hop on one leg. And the great thing in the Christian life, surely, is balance. Jesus says he knew that his hour had come and again, this is the seventh time he says this in this gospel.

Have you noticed how many times he says in this one chapter, he talks about his father? Verse five, he says, and now will father glorify thy son. In verse 11, he speaks of his holy father. In verse 25, he speaks of his righteous father.

I just give you those and you can think about them later. But in the New Testament, we find that there's a constant conflict in the teaching of Jesus between the world and his kingdom. There are only two kingdoms in this world.

You can't mix them. The kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. My kingdom is not of this world, Jesus says, else my servant would fight.

And if you get opposition from the world, you must be spiritually healthy because Jesus says the world won't love you any more than it loved me. Now, why do you expect better treatment from the world than he got? It kicked him every time it got the chance. It dishonored him, it discredited him, it despised him.

As Dr. Tozer said, ever since the Garden of Eden, we're living in an emergency state. We're living in a disaster area. This very title here that he gives to Jesus, that Jesus gives to the father when he says, oh, righteous father.

There's not much righteousness around anymore. Not even in theology, not even in the spiritual life. I wouldn't go two yards to hear the most brilliant scholar that can knock you down if he touches you with your finger or make goose pimples come on you when he talks if he's just thrown his wife over and got another woman and claims to be filled with a spirit.

There are hundreds of them around right now. There's a plague. In the town near us, we live about 45 miles east of San Antonio.

Two of the outstanding men, pastors, have recently thrown over their wives and taken another woman. One of them bought an empty church and a whole crowd of people go. Sure, all the divorcees will go when you've got a divorced pastor.

What can he say? Righteousness. Did you get filled with righteousness? People say if you, Jesus talks there in that massive Sermon on the Mount, which we may or may not get to in a few days, the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest person that ever lived. And you remember that in that prayer, he says blessed are, he mentions the righteous there.

Let me look at the verse. I can't quote it for the moment. Blessed are the pure in heart, oh say.

10, blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, not after the filling of the spirit. They're not necessarily one and the same thing.

People are getting a pseudo, an imitation experience in many degrees. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, in other words, hungering and thirst after holiness. Is that what we're after, or are we after power? Or are we after purity? Are we after gifts or the giver? Dear old A.B. Simpson wrote that lovely hymn, once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord.

Once it was the feeling, now it is his word. Once the gifts I wanted, now the giver own. You see, people get a gift and backslide and still retain that gift.

Like a fellow who's engaged to a girl and they have a row and she says, well, I'm gonna leave you anyhow. And she goes and she takes the wedding ring. Or takes the engagement ring.

The gifts and callings of God are without repentance. And you can retain a gift, you can retain a ministry and be as backslidden as it's possible to be backslidden. And except our desire is for righteousness and for holiness, then we're pursuing the wrong thing.

All right, here is this high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus. Again, a pattern prayer in this sense that in verses one to five, he prays for himself. In verses six to 19, he prays for his disciples.

And in verses 20 to 26, he prays for the world. You know, this is one of those, what shall I say? Awful and awesome periods in the life of Jesus because as I said yesterday, from chapter 14 into 15 into 16 into 17, it's like Ezekiel's river, it gets deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper. And yet this amazing chapter, this chapter again in which he prays.

As I said yesterday again, I would rather have heard Jesus prayed than seen raise the dead. I would rather have been at the side of Jesus when he prayed than when he preached that marvelous sermon on the mount. You see, Jesus knew what was ahead of him.

He's moving into this area, it's already come when the whole world around him is collapsing. And the disciples are going into the same thing. And so this 17th chapter is preceded by the most complete and most comforting discourse that Jesus ever gave.

He promises them the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Again, the comforter is not a nursing mother for spiritually sick children. The word comforter is a Latin word, *comfortis*, with strength.

There's one coming to dwell in you, I can only be with you, he will be in you with strength. That's why men could go singing and smiling even to the scaffold. That's why Gilmore could go to Mongolia and there in the heart of Mongolia suffering incredible hardships and never see a person come to Jesus Christ.

That's why Judson could go to Burma and work hard and labor for seven years without seeing a convert. Why, that would tear some preachers up if nobody walked down the aisle every Sunday. For many of them, they may as well walk backwards way.

Anyhow, it doesn't make any change in them. They're still as carnal when they've done. They're still as prayerless, still as powerless.

Jesus, at least this is what I thought of this morning. This may seem terrible to say, but I'm quite sure of it. Jesus knew the disciples didn't believe him.

Isn't it amazing, after preaching for three years and seeing great crowds of multitudes and waving banners and saying, Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, that when it came down to the crunch, one day he went to

preach and there were just 11 there. And I don't know how he said it. Maybe he said it with a wonderful beatific smile on his face, will he also go away? You see, they followed him as long as they got socialized medicine and free food.

And as soon as he laid down the laws of the kingdom, woo, he might as well have dropped an atom bomb. Well, really, the Sermon on the Mount is to religion what the atom bomb was in physics anyhow. They did not believe him, why? Oh, I can prove that very easily.

Why? We've just passed through that magnificent, incomparable experience of the resurrection. Even Strauss, one of the greatest German high critics said, the resurrection is the center of the center of Christianity and you're getting near the middle when you say that. It's the center of the center of Christianity.

Sir Ambrose Fleming, the inventor, he wasn't the inventor, he was the recent discoverer of penicillin. Pharaoh had penicillin 5,000 years ago, they proved that. But Sir Ambrose Fleming said this, that the resurrection is the best attested fact in history.

Again, the resurrection is not a part of my theology, the resurrection is a personality. Jesus says, I'm the resurrection. I think while we make a lot of ecstasy and we should do, we should sing one of these marvelous hymns, low in the grave he lay, oh Christ the Lord is risen today.

Every Sunday we should sing it. It's the unique thing about the gospel, it's incomparable. It never happened in the history of the world.

You say men were raised from the dead, they never raised themselves from the dead, Jesus did that. Nobody takes my life, I lay it down, I take it up. The father helped him because you see, whatever you say about Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit, it's all out of the riches of Jesus.

Because before the anointing of the Spirit or the sermon, on the day of Pentecost, you know what Peter says? He said, ye crucified the Lord of glory, but God hath raised him up. So God raised him up, Jesus took up his own life, and in the eighth chapter of Romans it says what? The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead. Now when you've got the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost working together, you've got problems.

Nobody's going to beat those three. Not even the world, the flesh, and the devil, you and your failure, and your mother-in-law. Doesn't make any odds.

The resurrection, bless that dear woman. My, I want to shake her hand when I see her in heaven. She hurried there and she says, I'm going to take him away.

You know, that word supposed only occurs twice in the whole of the New Testament. And she got there early in the morning, and somebody rustled in the trees, and she, supposing it was a gardener, she supposed that Jesus wasn't there, and he was there. Do you remember they took Jesus up to a big convention in Jerusalem? Everybody went to that great jubilee.

And as they came home during the day, Mary goes up tired and says, Joseph, oh, how did he get on today? Oh, terrible. You know, we read the Bible as though they could stop and have a hot dog when they wanted, and those are Howard Johnsons, and you could put up a holiday in, or days in if you hadn't enough money or something. Nonsense.

They went up roads without any blacktop. You could have your lunch all the way you walked. Chewing grit, the other folk were kicking up.

Oh, it was a hot day. I didn't even get a drink of water at the well. Neither did I, all the selfish people.

The greedy got there before the needy, and so I didn't get anything. Well, how did Jesus get on? Oh, Mary, don't ask me silly questions. You know how he got on, he's been with you all day.

No, he hasn't. He has, he hasn't. He's been with you all day.

I've never seen him all day. Do you know why they went and left Jesus? They supposed he was in the company, and he wasn't there. She supposed he wasn't there, and he was there.

Some people think if you put four walls up, stained glass windows, and get an organ, that the Holy Ghost comes. Nonsense. We were in a great cathedral in England one day with a friend, and oh, it was massive and beautiful.

But it looked much more like a cemetery to me than a church, and a friend of mine says, they've taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. She supposed he wasn't there, he was there. Sometimes in that situation you've been in, you thought he was a million miles away, and he was right there if you'd only had enough sensibility to know it.

Sometimes people ring up and say to the pastor, will you pray about this? And you know what we try to do? We try and pray a burden off a person that God put there. You know God is kind enough to afflict you? That is, if he can trust you with it, if you're gonna sit down and cry for six weeks, he wouldn't bother with it. Jesus learned obedience by the things that he suffered.

The disciples did not believe him, why? Well, I'll tell you why, because not one of them went and waited for him at the resurrection morning. I think the most disgusting, disappointing, disastrous thing to Jesus was that when he burst the tomb, and it shattered hell, and he'd led captivity captive, and he came out, there was nobody there. How would you have felt if you'd arranged a wedding with that sweet wife you married, and when you got there, she didn't turn up? I would have thought Nicodemus would have been there.

I would have thought blind Bartimaeus would have said, man, I don't care where anybody goes or not. It could be, it might happen, you know. See, everybody else was suspicious.

Even the heathens thought it would happen, because they put wax over the stone, and wax over the stone, and seals over the wax, and soldiers over the wax, and the seal in the stone. Do you remember that when they went and told Herod that the things that Jesus was doing, he said, this could be John the Baptist risen from the dead. They've got more belief in their unbelief than the believers had in their belief.

One of our big problems today, we're the best bunch of unbelievers the Lord's ever had since the day of Pentecost. We all believe the book from cover to cover, and you ask your pastor about gifts of the Spirit, and he says they're not for today. Well, then take a pair of scissors when you go to church on Sunday and say, pastor, would you cut that out of my book for me, because I keep reading it.

As you say, it's nonsense. I meet so many men who say, I don't believe in healing. Most pastors spend half their time in hospitals.

What do you go for, pray they'll die? If you pray for somebody and they die, nobody worries, you expect that. Oh, if they get healed. Do you think he's been to a healing meeting on the part? I preach a lot to preachers, and I'm always telling them, they wear themselves out.

And you have no claim on God if you're doing something outside of the word of God. You have no claim on it, it doesn't matter how zealous you are. And as a preacher, you have only two things to do, give yourself to prayer and the word of God.

That's all you have to do, read Acts 6. Many churches, many Baptist churches, the deacons run the church. The deacons have no voice in the church. They're the errand boys for the church.

The elders work in the church, the deacons work for the church. They go after the sick and they bury the dead because it says, let the dead bury the dead. But you see, we've got things mixed up so much, haven't we? We want to do things our way.

Part of the job, let them call for the elders of the church. I believe that every church should have one meeting in the week, not a public meeting, but in which you say you can meet in room 12 any night before the prayer meeting or after, if you're sick, and there'll be at least three of the elders there, they'll anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord. We used to have big city-wide crusades and after the meeting, we'd say if anybody feels they need to be anointed, come forward.

And we let the crowd go, a lot of them dead, and we anointed the sick. That's a divine institution, God hasn't taken it away. As I said last night, if you say there are no prophets in these days, well, be consistent and say there are no evangelists because they're in the same verse in Ephesians four anyhow.

No, there was nobody there at the resurrection. I say that this 17th chapter is preceded by the most complete and comforting chapter that Jesus ever gave. You see, he loved his own, and I can't help but stress this again, that after Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four gospels, as we say, after Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the whole balance of the New Testament is to the church, not to the world.

God's problem in the world today is not communism or otherisms, God's problem in the world today is a sick fundamentalist church. That's his problem. His problem in the Old Testament wasn't the Amalekites, Hittites, Perizzites, and all the other items.

His problem was Israel, the bottleneck. The thing that's frustrating God in this hour, I'm convinced, is the church of the living God, as we call it. Mr. Chadwick used to say to us often, brethren, the chief sin of the church is a laziness after God.

As I said to you two or three times, there's no man that ever lived, Sturgeon Finney Wesley ever had a bigger Bible than you have, he just used it better. That if the church exists another 1,000 years, God has nothing to say to it, as a matter of fact, he hasn't talked to the church for 2,000 years, he quit talking in the book of the Revelation. And he left us a book of treasures, of jewels, and we treat them as though they were marbles out of a dime store.

Jesus warns these disciples in the first verse of the 16th chapter, he says, these things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended, they shall put you out of synagogues. Any of you been blessed like that? Now, sweetheart, we'll tell you, a man came to our house the other week, a very fine young man, all the way from California. He was gonna try and drive it, but it was an awful long way, and the money, the cost of gas, the cost of motels.

He said to his wife, I've gotta go see Brother Ravenhill, but don't you tell a single person. And if God sends us the money in three days, we'll know where to go. Somebody phoned just after that and said, does \$50.25 mean anything to you? He said, yeah, it does, it means a lot.

The lady said, the Lord just told me to send it to you. He said, thanks. His wife went out, and the lady said, you know, the Lord burdened me today to do something, and I feel a bit embarrassed to do it.

He told me to give you \$120, would that be all right? You know, I drive that red fire truck, Chevy. I met a man some years ago, and he said, I feel the Lord wants me to loan you a car every year. And I said, he said, I feel I should let you have it.

And I said, well, I feel I should take it. And so every year, he's loaned me an automobile, and this man needed money. Somebody else phoned and said, you know what? I've been praying, and the Lord says, I have to send you \$100.

And by the time the three days were through, he said, well, Lord, we're gonna have to eat too. And he got the two plane fares from California, Los Angeles to San Antonio, we live about 45 miles east of that. And they got that exact fare, plus enough to buy lunches in three days, and never said a single word to anybody.

Isn't it wonderful to listen to these boys on radio that have faith ministries, please write to me. Send them a postcard, that's all they ask for. You, you, you, you've got a bad mind if you thought they were begging for money.

They just want you to write and say, I'm praying for you. Would you sing Mansion over the Hilltop again tomorrow morning? They should put you out of the synagogue. This young man that flew over to us came for this reason.

He had met God in a new way. And people in the church, and it happened to be Baptist, said, hey, come here, I want to ask you a question, a lady said, there's something different about your life. So he told her he'd had a new encounter with God.

And as he talked with her, he found she wasn't even saved, and she got saved, and she was like the man that leapt for joy, and she started telling people. Isn't that awful? I mean, she was an accepted member in the church, she'd been through the tank, and she'd, you know, she'd had all kinds of wonderful things, and now she got saved. And somebody said to her, hey, you're different, what happened? You'll never believe it.

I got saved, saved. I remember the night you got baptized. Yeah, but I wasn't saved.

You know, that baptism is a fantastic thing, really. If this represents you, and this is the level of the water, you know, when you go under that water like that, what happens? You can't breathe the air above, you can't look above, you can't get interested in the things above, you can't talk about what's above, you're cut off. Now, if that didn't happen to you when you went through that tank, all you did was accept a tradition.

If you were not buried with him in baptism, how in the world do you expect resurrection life? Oh, you don't look a bit cheerful. All right, this thing spread in the church. In about two weeks, four of the best-known people in the church got really born again.

Boom, boom, boom, pastor comes up, want to see you after the sermon. So along with the deacons and a few of the wise men, they went in a side room and they really grilled him. What do you think you're doing? I'm not thinking about anything, I'm just telling you about this marvelous miracle of regeneration.

As I said the other night, I believe in the total incapacity of the Holy Spirit to do anything small. Regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God. Justification is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, or you might say of the Father.

Through the blood of the Lord Jesus, it's a three-person action in our life. But regeneration, think of it this way, and this is astounding, at least as far as I'm concerned. That when the Holy Ghost brooded on the matrix of the Virgin Mary and conceived Jesus Christ, that same Holy Spirit brooded over you when you were dead in trespass, and he conceived Jesus Christ in you.

If Christ doesn't live in you, then you're not saved. He that hath the Son, not he that hath theology, not he that's been baptized, not he that went through the tradition of his church, but he that hath the Son. Again, Paul didn't say I'm saved and I'm filled with the Holy Ghost, he said Christ liveth in me.

That's the most supreme thing you can say, this side of eternity. I don't care if you can raise the dead. Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

Did you notice, I have you notice, I guess you have let me remind you, that after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the elders of the church wanted to put Lazarus to death, and they hadn't done a thing. Except every time they saw Lazarus, oh, he was dead, and Jesus raised him up. And you know, you'll just be as rough on people, they'll see you and say, hey, he was once a good member of our church.

What do you think he did? You remember hearing Billy Graham say one day that years, years, years back, somebody said to his father, are you a Christian? Christian? Certainly not, he said, I'm a Baptist. Well, afterwards, he really did get saved. They wanted to put Lazarus to death, and they hadn't done a single thing.

Except walk around in town, and every time they saw him, they said, hey, that's the man that was dead, and Jesus raised him up. And it wasn't Lazarus, it was the connection. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus did it.

Now Jesus says, here, you disciples, you're gonna be persecuted. Your world is gonna fall apart. But he said, hold it a minute.

And he says, they're gonna have much sorrow. And yet, he says in verse 20 of chapter 16, your sorrow shall be turned into joy. He says in verse 22, your joy, no man taketh it from you.

And he says in verse 24, and your joy may be full. Isn't that wonderful? I think it is, you don't seem to, but I do. They're going to put you out of the synagogue.

Well, that's bad enough. But he says, if they kill you, they'll say, hallelujah, we did that for the Lord's sake. We did that for the Lord's sake.

Isn't that something? But as you go out into that world of hostility, of adversity, of trial, of testing, I'll balance it out. Did you read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress? I've got my church group, my big church. I have two dozen members in my church, two dozen people I preach to each week, just in a house meeting we have.

We've got a little place now, a little. Ah, it's nearly as big as this platform. We're getting real progress.

But I got my folk to see this, that every one of them have a family altar, which is new to some of them. And that they read their children a book. Lift the dishes off the table, put them in the sink.

And you read the children a chapter from a book, as well as the word of God. Read them part of a great life story. Read Sammy Morris' life.

Read a missionary life. Read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and it's caused a lot of excitement amongst the children. They don't want to go to bed.

Well, Daddy, please read another chapter. Well, just that other little bit, because they're quite excited about it. And if you remember that Bunyan gets his pilgrim going to the city of God, and he comes to many strange experiences, but one of them was, there was a lion in the way.

And he discovered there was a chain on the lion, and you could just get past its nose. It couldn't even bite you. You know, you could brush the whiskers on its chin if you like.

It came so near, but it couldn't bite. That's what God does with Satan very often. He lets him come so near, but he won't let him bite.

And then the other thing was that there was a fire. And there it was burning fiercely, and demons had buckets, and they were throwing water on the fire, throwing water on the fire, throwing water on the fire. And the more water they threw on, the more fiercely the fire burned.

He couldn't understand it. So he went round the back of the fire, and he found at the back of the fire, there were angels, and they had bigger buckets throwing oil on the fire. See? But it's a bit scary when you think the devil's there with the big bucket, he's gonna douse you and get the fire out, and the Lord says, you know what, as I said yesterday, you go pursuing this, and he sends that.

We sang that hymn, somebody requested it Sunday night, George Matheron's hymn. A lovely phrase in it, I trace the rainbow through the rain. You can't have rainbows without rain.

Lord, I want your joy. All right, he says, I give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning. What do you mourn over? You mourn over death.

Well, you say, do we die every day? Well, Paul did, you may be a bit more advanced than he was, but he did. Well, how can you die if you're dead? Oh, that's easy. He did.

Galatians 2.20, I am crucified with Christ. And then afterwards, he says, I die daily, I die daily. How do you die daily? Well, Mary Jane called her this morning maybe, or some other morning, and says, hey, doing anything? No, kids are going to school, husband's away till seven o'clock.

Come around and talk. And the Lord had just said to you, be quiet, be still, and know that I'm God. Let me say this very kindly to you.

I can be kind at times. And, but you know, when I came in this church this morning, it sounded like a supermarket. Now, I tell my folks, once you come through the door, you don't say a word.

Who did we talk about last night, John Baptist? What did he do? He prepared the way for the Lord. Not Gabriel prepared it. Not Michael the archangel.

John Baptist prepared the way of the Lord. You say, ah, I know you said it. I love my pastor, I'd do anything.

Well, keep your mouth shut till he starts preaching, except when you sing. Get a hymn book and meditate on these matchless hymns. I tried to do that, memorized them.

I don't like the business of shaking hands, to be honest, turn around. Do you know why? Because a lot of you see somebody, oh, hey, see you after the meeting, and your mind's spinning, spinning, spinning on something that I've been trying all my time to get you to forget anyhow. You see, you have three problems.

You have to get people to church physically. Second, you have to get them there mentally. Thirdly, you have to get them there in spirit.

And you just get them settled down in a lovely hymn and shake hands. Now, old Dr. Fuller started that, I think. I don't find it in, is it in the epistles? Maybe it's in the Amplified, I haven't seen it.

But anyhow, I think it's just a custom we put on. I'm not saying it's not nice, but the church isn't a club. The church isn't, I don't want fellowship with people when I come to God's house.

I want fellowship with the Father. I say to my people, don't talk after the meeting. Talk outside.

Somebody may want to stay and meditate. There are not many places in the world where it's quiet. Surely we can be quiet.

Oh, I know, I go to meetings and somebody gets up and says, well, you know, I want to read you a psalm. It says they praise the Lord with music and they did this and they did that. And then he reads about Daniel where the, you know, the sackbut and the dulcimer and all the other thing.

Reminds me of a little man in England. He couldn't read them and he stumbled through the verse and it's mentioned three times in that chapter. When he came the second time, he said the band played.

Well, you know, we like noise. But you see, God balances everything. He says, be still and know that I am God.

Do you know the dew never falls when there's wind? The dew only falls when there is no wind. Do you know what God says? He will be as dew unto Israel. You remember Whitcher's great hymn? Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways.

Reclothe us in our rightful mind. We ought to sing that every Sunday when we go to church. But do you remember the other stanza that says, drop thy still dues of quietness till all our strivings cease.

Take from our souls the strain and stress and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace. Breathe through the heats of our desire thy fullness and thy balm. Let sense be dumb and flesh retire.

Speak through the whirlwind, speak through the wind or the wind, the earthquake, the wind or the fire. You see, we live in a world of agitation, of restlessness. Should be when you enter those doors, you enter with a spirit of calmness and if somebody nudges you, ignore them.

No, I want to get my spirit ready. John Baptist prepared the way of Jesus. Jesus could have blasted the way.

Why did John have to pull down the hills and make the crooked places straight and lift up the valleys? Every valley shall be exalted. But God sent him to prepare the way of them all. Now I admit singing, this brother's one of the masters in the job, I'll admit that.

I talk about him often. So I may as well talk about him while he's here. I think he has a masterly touch God has given to him of getting a stillness in the meeting.

But in my feeling, it should not be broken. Have you noticed how often Jesus retired into the quietness? The disciples didn't, Jesus did. All right, he's promised them the comforter.

He's promised them that balanced with their tribulation. In the world, ye shall have tribulation. But he says, wait a minute, don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid, fear not. I have overcome the world. He had overcome the world.

He'd overcome the military world of the Romans because they were in subjection. Remember, Jesus came into the world, again, a totalitarian, sophisticated world. The Romans had conquered it and he never preached against slavery.

The intellectuals were there. He never called it Socrates or anybody else. The Jews were there.

They'd monopolize religion and only occasionally he blasted them. He was surrounded by cults like the Pharisees and the Essenes and the Sadducees and other people. Occasionally he gave them a crack too.

But mainly he was concerned, as he is in this chapter, that they may know his father. Sure, he emphasizes the world. He mentions the world in this one chapter.

Pardon me, in this one gospel, John mentions the world 78 times. It's mentioned in the New Testament about 185 times. You see, he's concerned that we get a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by many a foe.

It amazes me the word faith is mentioned in the New Testament about 340 times. Only twice in the Old Testament. Isn't it fantastic? You read in Hebrews about those marvelous people in Hebrews.

Preached on them last time I was here, I think. What did they do? They subdued kingdoms, they wrought righteousness, they obtained promises, they stopped the mouths of lions. Women received their dead race alive and not one of them ever had a Bible.

That knocks me into a tailspin. The only time they could hear the Bible read was when they went to the sanctuary and an old boy unrolled a scroll at this end and he tightened it at the other end and somebody read through those amazing figures that didn't happen to come off a printing press. Everyone was made by hand.

That's why you had scribes. That's why I'm amazed that a colored man, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Queen Candacy came all the way from Egypt to Jerusalem, why? Because they told him God was there and he spent a fortune buying a copy of Isaiah. He must have been an intellectual because he lived in a foreign country but he could read Hebrew.

He was rich because he bought a copy of that marvelous book that Martin Luther called the Gospel of Isaiah because it has such a perfect revelation. You see, again, as I said yesterday, quoting the illustration of wine, that when they make wine, crush the grapes in the same vat, make the wine at the same temperature, put them all in the same type of bottles and every bottle has a different taste. You cannot, you cannot in any way equalize the taste.

It's totally impossible to repeat it. And you can feed people the word of God and some people accept it and growing grace and others it just goes like the proverbial water off the duck's back. The whole secret, again, is given by Jesus in the fifth chapter of Matthew where he says, blessed are they who hunger and who thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

Joy is a byproduct of obedience. This clock of mine runs very quick for some reason. So let me say emphasis and emphasize and pass on here that Jesus yesterday, as we said yesterday, Jesus said, what's the main burden of this prayer in this section? Though the first five verses are about himself, nevertheless, he says this.

This is life eternal. What is life eternal? We have all kinds of definitions of eternal life. What is life eternal? That they may know thee.

If you know God, you could lose your church, lose your Bible, lose the fellowship of the saint and mature in a concentration camp like that, hell hole of the Guac archipelago and you could just be as fine a Christian there without a Bible, without a church, without fellowship. Why? If you know the Father. That's his all desire, that you may know the Father as I know the Father.

All right. The other thing in that same verse, pardon me, the next verse. This is the one supreme thing we should shoot for in our lives.

I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do. Are you doing the work the Lord gave you to do or did the pastor put it on your shoulders? Did they send news from headquarters, you've just been voted onto a board? Because you'll soon be bored if the Lord didn't get you there anyhow. Now, I've quoted often a lady that nursed when my wife was supervising a hospital in England, Molly McPherson, a lovely Scottish girl.

I remember she came to the prayer meeting on Wednesday night and she really burst out. She'd had an awful day. She had a rich Scottish burr, you know, they always say the world.

And she started talking to her father about the difficulties of the day and she said, Lord, I refuse to carry any burden the devil puts on me. And I won't carry a burden the church puts on me. And I won't carry a burden other people put on me.

She went right down the list about this burden. But she said, Lord, I'll carry any burden you put on me. And I've been to conferences and heard preachers and dry vote sticks, they never said as much as that anyhow and they preached half an hour.

She said in five minutes, one of the things that stuck with me for so long, but again, remember, if you sing burdens are lifted at Calvary, burdens are given at Calvary. I'm gonna suggest to you that one of the heartbreaks of God right now is the fact that we don't want to carry his burden. Notice how often in the Old Testament, the prophets talk about the burden of the Lord.

And yet that lovely hymn writer that wrote, when I surveyed the wondrous cross, Isaac Watts said this, if I had to look after six sheep without the strength of God, I'd fail in the task. But if you give me six universes, not six worlds, six universes, I would gladly embrace them if it was God's will because there is compensating strength for the burden he gives. Indeed, he makes a paradox of it.

The Bible's full of paradox. The most illogical thing in the world in one sense, doesn't it? It says in the Bible, if you want to go up, go down. He that exalteth himself shall be abased.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. If you want to lose your life, keep it. If you want to save it, lose it.

If you want to get, give. Oh, it's a strange, paradoxical word, isn't it? And yet Jesus is the pattern in everything. Now, God has some burden.

His yoke is easy. His yoke? What is it, Deuteronomy 22 or three? Or somewhere around there, where it says you can't get two beasts to work together in a field? You can't put an ox and an ass together. Why? Well, you'd say the yoke would, a little thing, would pull its neck out.

That's not the reason at all. The reason is one has a split hoof and the other hasn't. One is unclean and one's clean.

You know, we isolate scriptures. For instance, if somebody says you're not to take the name of the Lord in vain, you say, boy, I'd never do, I'd never, oh, I may say an odd word. I'd never take the name of Jesus in vain.

That's not what it says. It says every time, since you say you're a Christian and you do something which is substandard, you take his name in vain. Because somebody says, is that Christianity? And immediately, you've taken his name in vain.

Now, by the same token, if you say, we're not to be unequally yoked together, you say, yeah, I'm worried that young man's gonna, you know, get married to that girl. She's, that's not what it says. It may mean that.

You know, many a pastor is strangled because he's unequally yoked to ungodly pastors, to ungodly deacons and elders. He's tied up with people in his church who are not spiritual and they drag the life out of him. I think one sign of spirituality is how much of his burden God can place on you.

And you don't run and take it to the pastor. You carry it. It's your load.

There are times when God will burden you and you don't know why. I got a kick out of what Paul said when he said that having done all to stand and then you withstand, and I said, when you don't understand. When the Lord wakens you up and for some reason, he puts Africa on your mind and you don't know why.

We may get through this chapter this week with a struggle, I'm not so sure. But anyhow, I was in a conference a few years ago with a very wonderful Christian educator who was the head of Wheaton College. And Dr. R. R. Brown, who was conferencing with him, said, tell Brother Ravenel about your experience in Africa, pardon me, in South America.

He was a very learned man. He had a good command of the word of God. He had a good command of languages.

He was fluent. And he got down into this section of the world where everything was as native and original as when the Lord made it nearly 1,000 years ago. And there were no shops, there was no medication.

It was way, way, way, way out in the jungle area. And he contracted a disease and he began to fold up and the color left him and sweat came on him and they laid him out to die. His wife was a typical missionary of that time.

Some of them these days take a wardrobe with them and I don't know what in the world they don't take but she only had an extra dress and it was a wedding dress. And so she got some berries and things and she made a kind of slush and she dipped her wedding dress in it and hung it on a tree to dry because she thought like people do, you have to wear black. Don't know why.

Most joyful experience in the world, really. We ought to wear white and ring bells and shout hallelujah and show the heathen round about that we saw another soul to have no hope. But anyhow, she was gonna have to wear this dress.

And she went back to her husband and the sweat was on his brow and he had a death rat in his throat and he was in a horrid condition. And she took a handkerchief and wiped the sweat off his brow. And she was just thinking, well, all these years of training, all the expense of coming here and now he's going to die.

And suddenly he sat up. He said, I feel fine, bring in my clothes. Then she nearly died.

She looked, she could hardly believe it. But he got his clothes, never had any more trouble. Came home on solo, was somewhere up in Massachusetts in a meeting and Dr. Raymond Edmund was telling the story.

After the meeting, the proverbial little old lady came up with a dog-eared book she'd bought in Woolworths, a little notebook and she said, well, Dr. Edmund, what day was it? Well, my dear, it was the year so-and-so, the day so-and-so and she'd come through this thing. And what time was it? Well, there, yes, but what time was it here, so-and-so. Dr. Edmund, and there she had a scrawly little handwriting in which she said at the hour, three o'clock in the morning, pray for Edmund, the devil is trying to kill him.

Now, why does an almighty God need a little old woman in Boston to help him get rid of the devil? And he said, you prayed for me? She said, yes, but look underneath. She'd written one little word, assurance. Most of us know more about insurance, but assurance.

Well, I got back in the bed and said, praise the Lord, he's done it, he's done it, he's done it. You talk about bouncing something off a satellite to go over here. Very rarely, we've talked with our boy down in New Zealand, he's been in Papua, now he's in New Zealand.

And you know what they do? They don't send a landline, they don't flash it ready, they bounce it off a bit of something that they threw up in the sky, maybe around here. But you know, it's far more wonderful to know that this same God that had, you see, the confidence of Jesus was this, he says, Father, I know that thou hearest me. Now, if you don't believe God's gonna hear you, if you don't believe when you kneel down that the God that heard Jonah cry when he was wrapped up there in that, lying on that waterbed and surrounded with reeds and weeds and rushes, if you don't think that same God can hear you, the same God who heard Elijah on Mount Carmel, the same God that heard the prayers of his son, you may as well pray.

He says, Father, I know that thou hearest me. The little old lady knew that God had heard her prayer. I said to Dr. Edmund afterwards, now when we get to heaven and God opens the book on your life, I think he's gonna turn back to that day and that hour in the morning and say to the assembled millions there, Gabriel, just read this to me.

After this day, Raymond Edmund trained 1,000 ministers, 500 missionaries, led 2,000 people to Christ. Now, give him half of the spoil. Half? Why? Well, the other half are going to the little old lady that raised you from the dead.

You'd have been dead but for her, so you've got to share the spoils now. The sower and the reaper rejoice together. Oh, it's gonna be wonderful when we get to heaven and you know, it's the only place you get a fair deal anyhow.

The thing that keeps me saying is that, that word shall not the judge of all the earth do right, he sure will. He'll not cheat you out of anything. No, sure he won't, he remembers everything you say.

Yeah, you stood up and said you spoke in tongues and he said yes, and you spoke evil of your neighbors, not long after, so the one cancels the other. You spoke some wonderful things, yes, but you had a lot of bitter criticism and you hurt people. Inasmuch, Jesus said, I'll use an illustration off of this nice suit that's getting a bit warm.

Told my wife I was gonna take it back, the button's coming off, I've only had it five years. But a man gave it to me and I said, thank you so much. I said, how much is it? And he said, I'm not charging you for it.

Well, that was much better. And he said, you take it. And I said, no, I'm not taking it.

He said, you're not gonna take the suit? Oh, he said, I'm giving you a suit. I said, no, you're not. He said, you gotta pay for it.

I said, no, I'm not. You're not gonna take it? Yes, I am. Well, how can you take it if you're not buying it and I'm not giving it to you? I said, for this simple reason, that immediately you gave it to me, it was registered up there.

This brother gave Jesus Christ a suit. How do you work that out? Very simply, in as much as you give it to the least of these, my children, you do it unto me. Jesus came here this morning and you saw him sitting there with his foot up in a hole in his sandal.

You'd all be fighting there to get and say, listen, you come to our house and we'll buy you a pair. I tease the pastors about the bus ministry. I don't believe that the church in America needs a bus ministry.

You know why? Because I go to some churches and they say, you know, we pick up 300 people by bus every Sunday morning, fine. We have 1,300 in Sunday school. We have 700 automobiles out there and in those 700 automobiles, they had seats for three people, for three, sevens of 21.

They had room for 2,100 people in their automobiles without taxing the church with a bus service. You see, brother, if they sit in your car, they could make some noise. Might smell.

People might get sick in there. It is pretty down to earth, isn't it? We're not swinging on the chandeliers this morning. We're getting right down to the nitty gritty, the working out, the working out.

You can't work for your salvation. Sure you can't, but I'll tell you what the word says, you work it out. Work out your own salvation.

Don't try and work it out in the past for us to work it out for somebody else. Work it out the way God is speaking to you about it. You know, it's a comfort, I'm sure it must be this to me, to know that as long as we're in the flesh, we've never arrived in the spiritual life.

We've never arrived. I told you, I've heard Dr. Campbell Morgan many times, and I was astounded when he said one day, with no modesty, he'd already written over 50 books, about 60 books on the Bible. And he said, brethren, I know so little about this book.

I think that's nice. What are we going to spend all eternity doing? We disappoint a lot of people that are not going to heal the sick. Because there'll be nobody sick.

Not going to raise the dead, there'll be nobody dead. Oh my, what's it going to be in eternity? I believe a constant, progressive revelation of God in his holiness, in his majesty, and do you know what we'll do with it? Oh, to think I'd missed it when I was on earth. You know, you got so near to it one day, and then Mary Jane called up for me and said, sure sweetie, I'll come over, I'll be glad to come, I'm not doing much, I can do it tomorrow anyhow.

And just at that moment, God was going to give you one of the greatest treasures you'd ever have had in your life. And he doesn't come again with his basket, he doesn't have to. He gave you a caution there.

Wasn't it Paschal that said, yeah, Paschal said that the heart knows reason but reason doesn't understand. Somebody said to Wesley, what do you mean by the witness of the spirit? He said, it's an impression God puts on my spirit inside, I can't express it to you. There are things you can't express.

And a fellow, a young fellow asked me the other week, I was speaking at a conference of ministers and deacons, which I like to, no, no, not deacons, no. Ministers and seminarians, draw the line somewhere. But, and this young fellow said, well, listen, Brother Rayner, could you just talk to me a little after lunch and explain to me what faith really is? I said, are you married? He said, oh, you've got a beautiful wife.

You love her? I sure do. I said, well, listen, we have a few minutes before lunch, let's sit down. I'll sit here and you tell me what love is.

Well, it's a kind of a feeling. Oh no, that's no good, a feeling, it's always headache. What do you mean, love? What do you mean by love? Well, God is love.

All right, explain God to me. I can think of a God that never has any end. I can't think of a God that never had any beginning.

One of the things in eternity, to our dismay, will be to realize how little gratitude we've had that Jesus did lay his glory on one side. Angels fell down and worshipped him. They covered their faces because of the blinding glory of his life.

And then he let man spit a lot of rotten phlegm on his dirty cheek and pull his beard out. I don't think a God that never has any end. Again, that we meditate much of, consider the loneliness of God for 30 years, 33 years in heaven.

Nobody took Jesus' place in heaven. If you talk about Abraham offering Isaac, we all get concerned about Isaac. Well, the little fellow didn't know what was happening.

His father's heart was broken for day after day after day going up the mountain. The heart of the father watching his son go to the cross to crucifixion, seeing them boot him out of the synagogue. They're seeing them lying about him and saying he was a demon and the king of the demons.

And God sits in patience and does nothing about it. But by the same token, they'll take the name of Jesus in vain a million or 10 million times in America today and God Almighty will ignore it, but he'll keep account of it. Oh, it's gonna be wonderful in heaven.

We won't all be in the same class. We won't all wear the same clothes. And you say, well, I just hope the Lord's good to me.

Well, I hope he is. If he isn't, you're in trouble. But I wanna tell you something else and finish right here.

I hear people say sometimes, you know, I took God in my business, he's a partner. Well, he doesn't wanna be a partner, he wants to be an owner. But I wanna tell you something.

Do you know God has a marketplace? Do you know why part of the reason you're spiritually stultified and not making progress? It's not God's fault. You see, in this prayer, Jesus says, Father, keep them, he talks about keeping. Do you know what God says? Keep yourself in the love of God.

Keep yourself from idols. Do you know what else he says? He says to a church. You see, everything is free.

Grace is free, mercy is free, salvation is free. The gifts of the spirit are free, everything's free. No, not by a long way.

Some things you've got to buy from God. I counsel thee to, what? Buy of me gold tried in the fire. I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment.

We buy by obedience, that's the coinage. As I said the other day, one of the greatest hymns ever written, as far as I'm concerned, is trust and debate. There's no other way.

You don't trust and obey, you rust and decay. So you better trust and obey. There is no other way.

That's why I say, in dying daily. Oh, it looks so innocent. Somebody says, Pastor, you don't have a funeral today, do you? No, I don't.

We're just going out with our boat. Would you like to come out fishing? You know, some good fish. And you know, these days it's expensive and we got some beauties yesterday and the pastor doesn't have to sign a card and say he's gone, he's free to go, or you're free to go.

And you feel a check in your spirit. Well, obey the check and forget about the fish. Fellows say, well, I'd like to take two or three days off and get quiet in some retreat and then advance if you can find one.

And that would be great. But you know, I don't have time. And a week after, Johnny Jones says, hey, could you take a couple of days off? We're going duck hunting.

Yeah, I can do that. I've got a deacon who's great at prayer meeting. That's not much.

I mean, I pray meeting, you can take that. We're going duck hunting. And he goes hunting something else. He's no time to pray. He's no time to fast. He's no time to work on, but he's always time to do the things he wants to do.

And in those situations where you die, I die to my desire. I die to people's opinions. I die daily in that situation.

And then God lets me buy something in my obedience. And I find the riches of his grace for fuller and deeper as I obey him. Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered.

And you know what? If you skip a lesson here, God will make it 10 times harder for you up the road. We say sometimes the FBI always gets its man. Well, I'll tell you this, the Lord does.

The Lord does. And his treatment isn't always easy. All you have to do is read how the apostles died and you'll be amazed to think what amazing lives they had, particularly the apostle Paul and think how he ended up.

It was rough weather all the way. Jesus says, in the world you shall have tribulation. The world will try and kill you, but cheer up, I have overcome the world.

And you're going to go in the world without my presence. You can't see me. And I'm going into the world, he said, and I can't see you, but my father is with me always.

So you have the abiding of the spirit to sustain you and I am the presence of the father to sustain you. We thank you, you haven't overlooked any situation you've been around for. You haven't forgotten the fears of times.

We thank you for the one who trod the path before us. He was tempted in all points, like as we are, and he did not fail. We pray that we may pursue more and more this amazing revelation of his life and do the will of God.

We submit this with thy blessing, we ask in Jesus' name.

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