

The Incandescent Man

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the urgent need for genuine seeking of Christ and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit for revival in today's world.

Duration: 55:58

Scripture: Malachi 3:1, Hebrews 1:1

Topics: "John The Baptist"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a divine intervention in the world. He believes that the world is in a state of crisis and that only God can save us. The preacher highlights the importance of seeking revival and Christ rather than just seeking miracles and manifestations. He also shares a personal story about a friend who asked God to help him get rid of a buzzing bee, but eventually realized that he needed to take action himself. The sermon encourages listeners to take responsibility for their own actions and seek God's help in overcoming challenges.

Transcript

I have to hop around a bit here, I've not got my mind in good shape at present. I've been oscillating between two different messages. I was going to switch to the different one, but I'm going to stay with the older one.

I preached it once before in my life, only once, and you have to preach a sermon twenty times. First of all you have to master the sermon, and the sermon has to master you. There's no other way to preach.

And one of the most fascinating parts of the scripture is that blank between Malachi and Matthew. It covers a period of four hundred years without any prophetic voice. Four hundred years of darkness without any prophetic light, and then suddenly, unexpectedly and unwontedly, there's a break.

At the other side of that four hundred years, when Malachi finishes his message, you remember what he says? He says, the Lord whom ye seek. Do you know why one reason we don't have revival? We're not seeking revival, we're seeking miracles, we're seeking manifestations, we're not seeking Christ. And he's a very jealous God.

But you see the Lord comes suddenly. I was in a meeting last week, I preached to fifteen hundred preachers one night, and fifteen hundred the next night, and suddenly in the midst of preaching I said, if

your heart begins to burn with conviction, if you're burning with lust, if you're burning with problem, and you believe the fire of the Holy Ghost can change it, get up and walk. And while I was preaching, men streamed to the altar, they filled the whole altar up.

And then as we finished, I said, you ladies can pray where you are. You men come, pastors come, teachers come, preachers come, Sunday school teachers come. You've no fire, you've no anointing.

And they streamed forward about a hundred and fifty, filled the altar. The next day it was greater, there were three hundred men sought God. It was wall to wall men.

You couldn't get, I couldn't get off the platform, I was tied out. But you see the Lord suddenly came. If we announce the Lord was coming tomorrow morning at ten o'clock in this church, we'll pack the place out.

But he comes suddenly. What does it say? Well shepherds watch their flocks by night surely. And suddenly there's a sound of the heavenly host.

They were waiting, countdown. Do you think they were stupid? Those men in the upper room knew the fiftieth day. And they were counting down, this is the forty and tomorrow the Holy Ghost will come.

And it says suddenly there was a sound of the heavenly host. Paul and Cyrus were in prison and suddenly. I'm looking for God, the Holy Ghost to come suddenly.

Not any locality, not in any nation, but to fulfill his promise that he poured out his spirit and all flesh. The world has never been nearer to judgment than it is now. There are five billion people in the human race.

That's too many to fill hell. We're not going to cure the ills of America by politics. Only God can save us.

We need divine intervention. We need God to render heavens and come and disturb us. And to do that he'll show us our bankruptcy.

He'll show us that we have to be stripped before he enthralls us, empty before he'll fill us, plead our poverty before he'll make us rich. This is a crisis hour not only in America, it's a crisis hour in the world. One young friend of mine this week has been speaking in the greatest hall in the world, in China, in the people's hall, which holds maybe 7,000 people.

He's speaking there at a banquet. He's a Christian. He said, I don't know if America will kick me out.

I'm going to be a believer. I'm going to tell them what the answer is. After all there's a billion people in that nation.

Many are suffering persecution and hardship and great suffering. And he has gone there with a burden because he wants to see God come. I'll tell you why I went to that church.

A few weeks ago I cancelled all my preaching for this year except here and one other place. I should have gone to a world conference. I said I'm not coming.

I should have gone to two state conferences. I said I'm not coming. And once you say that of course everybody wants you.

But I've held off so far. I went to this conference not just to preach to 1,500 preachers every night, but the church is unique in America. Listen this is America today, not Finnish day, not Westernist day.

There's something happening in that church that does not happen in any other church in America, not even John Wendell's big church or my friend Charles Stanley had a first Baptist there in Atlanta or the first Baptist got to Criswell in Dallas. I'll tell you why. That church has six small churches.

They all operate independently during the week. They meet together on Sunday morning. They meet together Friday night about 1,400 to 1,500 people.

They have five pastors. One of them has a Fulbright scholarship. In England everybody wants the Rhodes scholarship.

In America the Fulbright is the highest. You'll get that. It's open door to millions of dollars.

Open certainly. Well he's left it on one side. He's not going to Oxford for that scholarship.

He's come to work for \$18,000 a week. No that's what I get. I got wrong there.

I mean I earn it but I never get it. \$18,000 a year. Isn't that something? Another young man he took a 500% cut in his wage to take a job at \$18,000 a year.

He had a private car with a telephone. He has a daddy who's a multi-millionaire. He has an unlimited credit card and he put it all on one side.

Frank that's encouraging isn't it? God there are some young men who are gold diggers. You tell the evangelist when he gets ahead and the streets are they'll be digging the streets up. That water is terrible.

But then there's another man in Africa heard that there's a church for five years they've had two hours prayer every morning, 12 prayer every afternoon, 12 prayer every night, plus a night of prayer every week. Well dear God we went and dear Martha and our son David and I and the Lord just moved on the place again. So the Saturday night prayer meeting that goes from seven to nine went for eight hours non-stopping intercession and tears.

The morning prayer meetings that start at six and finish at eight went through till half past ten in the morning. The nights of prayer they get 50, 60, 70 people praying the whole night through. They're not praying for the material recovery of the economy.

Of the economy they're praying for the glory of God. You see our generation there are not a hundred people in America tonight have ever seen a holy ghost revival. I mean the meeting where you then put the lights out.

The sanctuary is alive 24 hours a day. One of the greatest prayer meetings in history started on the 21st of August in let me see 1727 in Moravia. The Holy Spirit came down just at the clock went to 11 o'clock.

The Spirit descended. You know what happened to that group of people from 11 o'clock that morning for 100 years the prayer meeting never ended. You could go in prayer meeting at two o'clock in the morning and children will be praying with tears.

Their finest young men went and stood on the slave blocks down there in uh in the Caribbean, St. Thomas and St. Croix and so forth and sold themselves into slavery in order that they might get the gas flowers. Okay let me go back a minute here. Jesus said have done the Baptist what? There's no woman ever no man ever born of woman that was greater than John the Baptist.

Let me tell you how it began. It says in Luke chapter 1 and verse 10 the whole multitude of people were praying in at the time of incense. Isn't that wonderful? They were praying a great prayer meeting in that old temple.

What happened? There appeared unto an angel of the Lord verse 11 standing on the right side of the altar. I won't go into the details there but he says in verse 13 Fear not Zacharias thy prayer is heard thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son and I shall call his name John. He shall have joy and gladness and many shall rejoice at his birth.

He shall be great in the sight of God. It says in verse 32 he shall be great and he shall be called the son of the highest. Oh that's of Jesus too.

But here is a man is what does Zacharias say? Let me quote it paraphrase it. He says look don't talk like that. My wife's old and stricken.

She can't bear children. You've got people in America telling me I'm crazy. I've prayed for revival more than 60 years and I'm more sure than ever now that it's coming.

I'm getting old and frail. If you fight the devil it'll hit you back. I was thinking today when dear Joyce and a precious husband came to see me in the hospital I was dying.

In the last five years I've had three strokes, different strokes of course and uh and two heart attacks. The devil fought back and it's likely to do that. But you see revival comes after barrenness.

Can you imagine uh uh what's his name now Abraham's wife Sarah? You mentioned her this morning what was she eight ninety? Can you imagine her writing up to her mother and saying mother I'm expecting a baby? She said what? You're crazy you should never have married a preacher. They're crazy. Isn't it amazing how often God in the word of God shows us how the impossible is possible and yet we doubt him.

We're the biggest generation of doubting believers the world's ever had. As dear I may quote some other name there. Joyce said this morning it's we're almost arrogant to say we're Christians.

You see what what happens in meetings usually I pick up Christian magazines. I don't buy them. They're not worth anything.

But again again it says know your bible. Take this bible course. Take this bible course.

Take this bible course on prophecy. Take this bible course on the blood. Listen the great need is not to know the word of God.

The great need is to know the God of the word. What does Daniel say? Does Daniel say the people that do not know their bible shall be stung in the right spot? Of course not. The people that do know their God.

Why did Jesus come into the world? They say to save sinners that's what he said. Jesus said I've come that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Anyhow this this young man is like I mean this man is like others.

Sarah brought forth a beautiful son. But you know have you ever discovered this when you try to help God out you get into trouble? The Lord says you don't have a son. And you quoted did the Lord save him? Or

were you wrong this morning? Huh? The Lord tried to take the woman? No no the woman.

Who's the other woman? Did the Lord try to take her? Come on now cough it up. If you're wrong confess your sin right here. Oh that's not that's not the King James version.

Yeah but you know what happened? Actually listen to Sarah. God never spoke to him again for 15 years. One for me.

It's you know NASB NASB that's Greek for nasty. Because in Hebrews 1 I love that verse in Hebrews 1. God who at Sunday times in divers manner spake unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us. These last days 2,000 years ago? The book of the revelation these last days 2,000 years in God's name where are we now? People say it's 10 minutes to 12 on God's clock.

It isn't. It's 30 seconds to 12. We're on the edge of the greatest events in history.

But then it says in the NASB well let me finish that verse. When he had by himself purged our sins. You see there's a propagation one of the popular preachers.

I'll tell you James Robinson says every day almost on tv in Dallas there. Remember we're all to be one. Blunken.

Jesus didn't put his hand on the shoulder of a Pharisee and the hand on the shoulder of a Sadducee and let's all be one. He didn't say that. He uses uh he uses John 17 6. But notice what Jesus says there.

Father them which thou hast given to me they have kept thy word. What did Jesus say to the Pharisees? You white sepulchers, you children of the devil. Do you make legal the children of the devil? Of course not.

I don't believe. I have to accept the Virgin Mary as Chloe Demetrix. What does it say in Philippians? Paul says I weep when I think of those uh how do you use the phrase there in Philippians 3. They had walked with God anyhow he said they are oh there they are they are enemies of the cross of Christ.

You say that everywhere the Catholics have crucifixes. Sure that they're it doesn't say they're enemies of Christ. It says they're enemies of the cross.

And they said that Mary is Chloe Demetrix. That she too brought the sins of people. That's a lie from hell she didn't.

You know the biggest trouble ahead of us is not we're going to run into collision with a communist. We're going to run into collision with the Roman Catholic Church and hell will break loose. And as dear sister said today you better be anchored.

If you're not anchored you'll be shifted around with every wind of doctrine. When they hear it comes this wonderful man. Look what it says about John the Baptist verse 15 of Luke 1. He should be great in the sight of wine.

He should drink not a wine this Sunday. Listen do you hear what it says? It doesn't say this of any other man that ever lived not even of Jesus. It says John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from where? From his mother's womb.

I'm looking at another verse here. Is it verse 23? Or maybe it's in the next chapter. Anyhow it says somewhere in that chapter his pastor Simeon was filled with the Holy Ghost.

It says in verse 67 and father his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost unprophesied. Now what else? From verse 41. He came to pass Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary.

The babe leaped in a womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Is that something? His father filled with the Holy Ghost. His mother filled with the Holy Ghost.

And when she like this precious lady. I prayed to your baby this morning when you were snoring. I did not pray to your baby this morning.

And when the child was in the body of Elizabeth immediately Elizabeth came in into contact with Mary who had Christ in her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. The baby in her was filled with the Holy Ghost.

You better watch your children. Take care. I'd love to hear E. V. Hill.

I've never heard him. I think he's the greatest preacher in America. Dear black man I'd love to hear him.

I heard him say something the other week I thought was wonderful. He said take care of your children. Watch who they marry he said with his witticism of Solomon.

He said remember you don't get raw sausage out of mules. Isn't that good? Be careful who they marry. You all look very sad when I said that.

So he's filled with the Holy Ghost. Oh verse 25 said Bill there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. The last time I the first time I came here uh Joyce uh Rick was preaching and Martha and I were sitting on one side and Rick Joyner came over and he'd never seen me in his life.

He said you're Simeon. I said I'm what? He said you're Simeon. You've prayed for more than half a century for prayer.

You're going to live until a baby's born. I saw a man up in uh where were we three days? Oh yes three. My secretary she's great.

The only thing she can't drive. People ask my dear wife drive. I say no that's why we're here.

Boy one of the happiest days in her life was when they restored the speed limit. She said we can go 65 now. But four different people have said to me in the last year you're Simeon.

None of them knew that the other that said it. You're going to live to see the coming of the baby. The baby being revival.

There are people praying all over America. Young men are calling me all over the nation. They're getting up at six in the morning praying two and three hours for the Holy Ghost revival.

Old people say brother Angel do you know our churches are filled every Sunday morning. Sure for an hour. Our jails are filled 24 hours a day.

Our divorce grids are filled. Boy if they reverse that way draw order America will be a butcher's shop next year and the judgment of God will be accelerated. You can't live in a country with 600 million Bibles and

don't break every commandment you preached about this morning.

You can't do it. God said my spirit shall not always strive with man. You see boy found me Jesus says did you go out in the wilderness to see a reed shaken by the wind? No you went to see a stony man.

He said he's not a prophet. He's more than a prophet. Why? The prophets are the most exclusive men who ever lived.

Let me tell you what an old Jewish Christian said in America years ago. He's a brilliant Hebrew scholar and he says that the prophet by the very nature of his calling is a tragic figure. He suffers for the people.

He suffers with the people. He suffers by the people and he's a tragic figure because he has a fierce loyalty to God and he has a great compassion for a rebellious blind stupid people that are heading for judgment. When God is angry with a nation she has no prophet.

We don't have a prophet in America. The biggest enemy to revival in America is evangelism. Spurious cheap evangelism that brings people to the front and it lets them go unsaved.

They're not born again of the spirit of God. They make a decision and there's nothing. My darling wife and I were in a meeting.

A lady came to the front. She came to the meeting late and she kind of wobbled down the aisle. She's a overweight and she had a great big mop of hair.

But I thought well lady if God gets hold of you you'll be in the mess tonight. Surely enough at the end I preached when he must have gone again. She came to the altar.

I said to the men all you men go in that room. You women come in this room. So I went with the men and out after the altar call was given the pastor came and he said help me with this woman.

I said you stand I will. I won't stay with women alone in the room. So she burst into tears and she said Mr. Ray I want to tell you something.

This is her 14th time I've come to an altar to be saved. And suddenly puts her arm around me and says don't weep dearie. Jesus prayed he told you nothing to do.

Just believe he died and rose again. She said nothing happened. Paul flings in the face of the world the flesh and the devil if any man being Christ.

Does he know what he's talking about? Sure he does. He wrote Romans 7. He had the greatest picture of depravity the world's ever known. And he said you can be twisted and perverted and damned but Jesus Christ you may be incurable to everybody else but he's able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.

And if any man being Christ he doesn't just get his lousy sins forgiven. He's a new creation. He has a new heart.

He has a new mind. He has new language. He has new answers.

All things are passed away. You see we accommodate sin today. I preach with a very brilliant preacher a national broadcaster some years ago in a certain university.

And as he finished the young people all dashed up and said sign my bible. Sign my autograph. I was like cameras.

I pulled his coat tail. I said sir I don't want your autograph. Are you a photographer? I'm not a I don't uh I don't idolize men.

I said I followed you very interested tonight. I said look at the crowd. There was a thousand college kids going out.

I said to him uh your message was interesting that you left a big loophole. I said all the time you talked about sin I was talking about a woman that came to Jesus. A very bad woman.

And Jesus said to her go and sin less. He said what? I said that's what you made out. You can sin and repent and sin you don't.

We'll never in this life be in a place where we're not able to sin but by grace we come in a place where we're able not to sin. Dear joy said this morning you've got the possibility of being the rottenest harlot that America's ever seen. They're the rottenest criminal.

But God has come and intervened in your life. He's taken away your appetite for sin. You don't want it anymore.

You loathe the things you used to love. You hate them. You turn your back on them.

If any man is in Christ he does not commit sin habitually. If he commits sin it's by accident. But he gets up and he runs to the cross for clemency and gets quickened again by the Spirit of God.

But dear Lord I don't think John was very fair. Can I take my coat off do you mind? My son wouldn't ask you to even just throw his coat off. I'm coming apart.

Dear dear. You got me into this joy. But listen.

Have you ever thought about the situation John is in? You see Christianity was not born in a vacuum. Christianity has not been weighed in the balances and found wanting. It's been tried, found difficult and rejected.

The Lord doesn't want your lousy sins. What do you think he does? Stock them in heaven? He wants you. He wants your personality.

Our dear David gives an illustration of seeing a car in New Zealand. A beautiful antique car on the side of the road and the fellow says I'll sell it for so much he takes it home, gets the dirt off the outside, goes inside, takes out the seats, put in a vacuum, gets a stack of dusty pipe, calls his wife and says darling look what we've got on the kitchen table. That stack of muck.

He says I got it for four thousand dollars. You what? Four thousand dollars? He said I had to take that to get the car. The Lord has to take your lousy rotten twisted perverted sin and rebellion to get you.

He doesn't want your sin, he wants your personality. Just as you've been abandoned to the devil you've given your body your soul and spirit abandoning yourself to Christ. If we did that we'd shake the world.

You've been off the hook from condemnation and guilt and you've played around ever since God help you. Do you know where the biggest prayer meetings in the world are today? You won't like this but wait a minute swallow it, it's true. This friend of mine who spoke in the grand hall in China this week, he went to the kings of Saudi Arabia, he went and spoke to, Dan what's his, what's the guy in Guatemala? Ortega, face to face and Ortega said mister come here mister America look.

He took him in the room and the wall was dark and there were about he said about a hundred names and nearly half of them were crossed out. And Ortega says mister America look there, you see those names? Every one of them is a personal friend of mine. And he joked up he said listen here mister America, the names of the crossed out, all those men have died for this country.

And he said you will never win, you Christians will never win Central America for Christ because you're afraid to die for him. He grew a beard because you cannot go into a mosque unless you have a beard. It's a sign number one that you mature, number two it's your pledge to Allah that you'll die for him.

And every mosque in the world is filled, every morning. You know what happened in Saudi Arabia? The attendance at the six o'clock mass as the Catholics would say, the six o'clock prayer meeting in the mosque, it took a nose dive. And the government had an inquiry about it.

Dear God what does our country, our Washington boys care about it. The government said why there's mosques, hundreds of men are not coming. And they investigate and they say we found out the reason.

Because American TV comes in at six o'clock with all in wrestling. We've never seen it. Take the damnable thing away.

They booted it all out. And once they did that the prayer meetings got back to power. You call them terrorists, they're not terrorists, they're evangelists.

They touch the powers of the world to come. It's a strange power, it's a satanic power. There isn't one man of all the millions of Mohammedans in the world that wouldn't die tonight.

God died for Christ, we wouldn't even live for him. You think you're going to heaven because you give God a tithe, forget it. You can't give God a tithe, your money.

He says the tithe, you should give God a tenth of every day, you'll give him two hours and twenty-four minutes. Dear God if you're in love that's not long to be with somebody you love, two hours and twenty-four minutes. That's the legal thing.

Then you give him laughing on top of that. You see our young people, I'm seeing role models. Better rush on here a minute.

What does it say about this fellow here? Okay we're in chapter one still. Verse seventy-four, one of Luke, he said, verse seventy-four, that he will grant us that being delivered out of the hand of our enemies we might serve him without fear. How? In holiness and righteousness.

Righteousness is my relationship with the world. Holiness is my relationship with God. Don't blame the devil because your prayers aren't answered.

It's your problem. You've got a problem in your house. It's a lousy stinking thing, it'll kill you when you kill it and you'll love it.

I'll tell you what it's called, it's called TV. You can call it terribly vicious or terribly vulgar or terrible anything else, but listen, don't you ask God to help you pull down this tongue, help pull him down yourself. I have a friend and he was, I forget what country he was in, had some big monstrous bees, you know, that sting and really make you sick.

And he was in bed and this thing buzzing around his head. Oh Lord, he said, send somebody to kill that thing. And it came past him, and he's fighting, half asleep, fighting, goes.

And he saw it hit toward the light and he thought he got burned or something. And it went round again. He said, Lord, kill the thing.

And it suddenly hit the light above him and fell on his lap, dead. And he said, God, take care of it yourself. You say, help me with my TV.

Kill the thing. Throw it out. Like Moody did.

Moody came to England, he couldn't even speak English like you. But I'm glad I don't speak it, you understand it anyhow. It's a bit of a help.

Well, he laughed at Moody, didn't he? He said, Daniel, one syllable, Daniel. He said, Jerusalem, in one slurring word, Jerusalem. You know what happened? He stayed six weeks in London and the whole city was shaken.

What happened? He preached an hour and somebody sang 10 minutes. Now you go to a gospel concert, they sing 60 minutes and preach 10. Forget it.

He went to Scotland. The greatest preacher of the day was Alexander White. The next greatest preacher was Henry Drummond.

He wrote that wonderful book many of you read, The Greatest Thing in the World. And they sat spellbound listening to another Yankee that couldn't speak English. Why? There's a mystery about preaching.

It's not burning eloquence and of shabby tears. Preaching is not a profession, it's a passion. It's not a passion, it's an obsession.

I would rather preach than do anything in God's earth. It doesn't pay well, except today. There's a bucket at the door.

No, I'm teasing about that. But, you know, one of the greatest preachers in the history of the world was John Owen. How many preachers are there? Let me see your hands.

Preachers and teachers. How many of you read John Owen ever? Good. He was a wonderful theologian.

And he was vice-chancellor of Oxford University. He knew his Hebrew and Greek and I don't know how many other languages. And every parliament that assembled, the King of England, who I believe at that time was Charles I, now Charles II, he always called Dr. Owen.

We've got celebrities from all over the world. Preach a great sermon tonight in the cathedral. And people have gone and said, Owen's preaching.

You can't get in. It's stacked up. You can't sit on the floor.

You can't get in by the wall. Owen's preaching. The King one day called Owen, Dr. Owen, come immediately.

And Dr. Owen went and he said in his archaic English, the King said, Where hast thou been? I hear that thou art listening to a babbling Baptist down the road by the name of John Bunyan. He's a tinker. He's never been ordained.

He had. He went to the same school as Milt, John XV. There's only one ordination.

It's the ordination of the Holy Ghost. And here is a man who makes little kettles and bits of stuff during the day, preaching and trying to mobbing him. And here's this man.

He says to the King, Your Majesty, if I could preach like that babbling Baptist, I would take up my robes and lay them at his feet. He has something I don't have. A diploma won't give you answer.

A degree won't give you answer. You can't buy it. You buy it with grief.

You buy it with bankruptcy. Dear God, I've preached 66 years all over the world. And I tell God every time I come, I don't know anything.

I'm weak. I have no strength. I have no confidence.

My knees don't knock like they used to do, in the sense of physically being nervous. But I tremble at his word. I'm going to be judged at a judgment seat one day.

By what? Your opinion? Forget it. By this word. Every word I've faced in this world, he's going to face me at a judgment seat.

That's going to be an awful thing. Maybe sometime I'll come and I'll preach to him. That'll take three hours.

To preach on a judgment for preachers, a judgment for sinners, a judgment for believers. Yes, everybody loves gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Charles Wesley wrote 6,300 hymns, and his most popular hymn is Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild.

But also he wrote the hymn, Lo, he comes with clouds descending, once for favoured sinners slain. Every eye shall then behold him, listen, clothed in dreadful majesty. When he came the first time, men pushed him around.

When he comes the next time, he'll push men around. Read the second epistle to the Thessalonians chapter one. He's coming with awesome majesty.

He's not stealing through the world through the womb of a woman. He's coming with 10,000 saints. Maybe Milt will be gang.

That's the only reason I like to die quick. You know, the dead in Christ rise first. So the dead in Christ are the Baptists anyhow.

The dead in Christ shall rise first. No Baptists here, all Christians. Let me tell you the atmosphere into which man came now in chapter three verse one.

In the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, after all remember this is Julius Caesar, Caligula. The best known was Julius Caesar. Tiberius Caesar was the most licentious.

He propagated everything that was vile. He financially by state money supported everything immoral. And this man is on the throne.

Now look at the rest of the chapter. Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea. Herod being the Tetrarch of Galilee.

His brother Philip the Tetrarch of the region of Trachonitis. And Lysanias the Tetrarch of Abilene. Annas and Cassius.

That's about as refreshing as a mouthful of sand isn't it? But look at this. Annas and the high priest. You've not only got the Roman powers.

Annas and the high priest. And it's illegal to have two high priests. So he comes on the stage.

Where does he come? He doesn't come down main street. He's in the wilderness. The most difficult place in the world.

When God wanted to lead Israel out of bondage. He had Moses lead them and then were led by what you mentioned this morning? A pillar of fire. If God had put that pillar of fire in the wilderness everybody would have flocked.

He didn't put a pillar of fire there. He did more. He put a man on fire.

This man from his infancy is baptized with the Holy Ghost. You people in the street, bumper stickers helping people go to hell. You've got on one side of your card.

You've got a, what do you put on it? God loves you. Put on the other side. God is angry with the wicked every day.

Forget your sloppy Christianity. Love is stronger than death. Our God is a consuming fire.

There's no fire more terrible than the fire of love. And this man is absolutely inundated. He has no advantages.

Dear God. He comes into the wilderness. There's no transport system to get people there.

There's no hot dogs or anything of the like. There's no water following the people so they can drink. He's totally helpless.

He has no disciples. He has no pillar of fire. He has no priest.

He has no altar. He has no Bible. I can read on my knees, which I do mostly.

I can read the 23rd, no, the 11th chapter of Hebrews. I could read that chapter. And every time I read it, oh, I've been slain in the street.

I'm on the dust. What do you do? With a bunch of people subdued kingdom, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the knives and lions. Women received their dead race to life again.

I read it and the Lord said, read again. I read it and the Lord said, read again. And then as I read it and he said, the voice said, and not one of them ever had a Bible.

What are you going to do? You have the whole revelation of God. What are you going to do? Sure, I'm staggered when I read it. But what do I do when I come to that verse that says some of them not accepting deliverance? They said, if you please God, if we stay in jail 10 more years, we'll stay.

You get into trouble, you have a trial, you get on the telephone, you call your relative. Oh, I'm having a rough time. Pray for me.

People say, praying God will take this off. Forget it. God put it on you.

What did the fire do for the three Hebrew children? They heated it seven times more. They tried to starve them to death and they were fatter and fatter on a rotten diet than the others were. But what happened? When they threw them into the fire, they tied their wrists and tied their feet.

What happened? The fire burned off the fetters they all put on them. And sometimes God after that circumstances break our fetters, burn our fetters off. Sure as our sister said this morning, maybe you'd like a better husband or something.

I was going to teach her until I was talking with, I was talking with Joyce's husband this afternoon. You say, well, you talk to the dead. No, I just preach to them.

What do you mean you talk to her husband? Well, because he said in Isaiah that the Lord is your husband. That's why she's preaching so well these days. She's got a quickening from God.

I rejoice in it, Joyce. And you're going to get more. So cheer up.

Oh, well, let me just prove a point to you here. Do you know the difference between revival and evangelism? In evangelism you have to stir people emotionally and sing a song. You know, like there's room at the cross for you, forget it.

I will never sing that. I never have choruses when I make an appeal. I saw a hundred men hit the deck.

Do you know what they did the second day? They were side by side, doctors, all kinds of intellectual people. And they were saying this, help, help, help, help. You think they were drowning or in a fire? But conviction does that.

Conviction of sin. The least work of the Holy Ghost that's emphasized today is conviction of sin. Boy, dear God, we expect to plough the fields, sow the seed and reap the harvest in half an hour.

You don't get that in revival. Sure, the young man, I've been in Wales, I've met people who knew Evan Roberts. Evan Roberts had revival.

He was 26 years of age. But wait a minute, at 26 years of age he had already prayed 13 years for revival when others played ball, when others went visiting. It didn't bother him a hoot.

He was determined to get the prize that God had put before him. It didn't cost a million dollars. You can have Robinson and Will and Billy Graham and those guys spend a million dollars in crusades.

Revival doesn't cost anything. It's broken hearts. You get to a place, I can't live.

The reason we don't have revival in America is we're content to live without it. So when you have children going to hell, when do you shed a tear over them? My dear wife says to me, Leonard, you get too much burn, you stay too long, I can't. Have you noticed it doesn't say Jesus was a man of tears? It says he was a man of sorrows.

Sure, he was a man of tears. He prayed with strong crying and with tears. But you can pray tears occasionally.

Sorrow is something you have. I liken it like this precious lady. It's not convenient at times to have the little bowls you have.

You've got to carry with it six more weeks. Blessings. I hope it's not longer.

But you know it's the same with revival. You can't live until something's born. Christianity is life.

It's not theology. What did Jesus say? I'm come that I might have life. What is St. John's epistle? He that hath the Son hath what? Life.

I don't care how big a man's head is, how big his fortune is. If he isn't born of God, he's dead. Ruskin, a hundred years ago in England, said that preaching, I thought he was facetious.

I chewed it over for fifty years and I found it wasn't. He said preaching is fifty minutes to raise the dead. I thought that was a joke.

I'm in a big church no longer, over a thousand people. I said every role there is death role. You're dead in trespassing and sin.

You may wear a hundred dollar suit or a thousand dollar suit, have a five thousand dollar ring, but you're dead. Alive mentally, alive socially, alive emotionally, alive physically, but dead. You've no living communion with God.

That's why you wonder why we clap and get happy sometimes. Because we're alive. We were dead in trespasses and in sin.

We weren't just bad, we were dead. And lots of people in the world are better than Christians. I know some people who have more integrity and more honesty than Christians and yet they're dead.

They have high idealism. They were brought up with daddy's mummies that believe in the old virtues of America used to believe in. Anyhow, John Baptist comes to this situation.

Again, listen, there's no pillar of fire. There's no dove upon his head. He has no altars.

He has no sacrifice. He has no financial backing. Dear God, what's he going to do? Isn't it terrible when you've only got? You'll hardly believe this.

Do you know he didn't even have a newsletter? Nobody raised funds for him. He was evangelist. No, he's a revivalist.

Evangelists raise funds. Revivalists raise hell. You go to a meeting when there's a breath of revival and you won't sleep.

Some of you won't sleep tonight. I'll be driving home. Somebody else will drive us.

But anyhow, I've been praying all the way. Some of you won't sleep. You're better to have one sleepless night here than a million in hell.

You're better to get a burden for your children who may be lusting and lying and cheating right now, or mucking around with drugs. You're better to get down to business now. Do you know what the penalties of hell will be? The man in hell could see into the bosom of Abraham.

That lost daughter of yours, that lost son of yours in hell will see you at the marriage supper of the Lamb and say, that's my daddy. He gave commissions and he went to church and he helped to take the offering and he did a lot of nice things. But he never once said to me, darling, what were you doing last night for an hour or two? You came in at one o'clock.

That's a rotten time to come. Do you ever check on your children? I stayed in a home. The woman never knew where her daughter was.

She knew where her cat was. She'd say to the maid, the maid who always dressed up, you know, with a little thing on her head, and she'd say, well, dear Margaret, where is the cat? Lock the door. Don't let her.

There's a cat. It's a thoroughbred pedigree. She'd give him \$200 for a cat.

I won't give you \$200 for all the cats in America. But she knew, you love dogs, but she knew where the cat was. She didn't know where her daughter was.

I've had two tragedies last week. Two of the most charming girls I could ever imagine. They both got pregnant, one's 14 and the other's 18.

One of them, the daddy's a multimillionaire. He's got everything. She's got everything.

He had time for business. He had time to read, take the, what do you call it, New York Times and read the stocks and shares every day. And his daughter's going to hellfire.

What will he do now? His family name is in the gutter. His wife's paralyzed with fear. Our beautiful daughter, we bought her the richest clothes.

We bought her the best of everything. And here she is now, as long as she lived. You know what she did? She had a baby and she murdered it.

So the parents had double agony. The poor girl panicked. They say their mother never suspected that she had, she was in nine months of pregnancy.

I don't know how in the world she did that. But anyhow, that's what's happened. But you know what? I live in, I live in Smith County.

At Tyler's in Smith County. There are 21 ministries round about us. And you know, Smith County has the highest rate of 14, eight, 40 year old pregnant girls in America.

How does the devil set up business in the middle of meeting houses? Churches that profess to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The devil laughs at us. He doesn't laugh when there's a Holy Ghost revival.

There's panic in hell. I love that phrase where some preachers are trying to drive demons out of, what the sons of Siva, Siva, trying to drive demons out of a man, demon-possessed. And the devils have some respect.

You know what they said? They said the greatest thing ever said God, I wish it was two of me. The demons wanted to stay and hold that person captive. And they looked up and there was a half-deformed man who'd been stoned and his body broken.

And they said, Jesus we know and Paul we know. Isn't that something? To be known in hell. There's not one preacher in 500, 5000 America wants to be known in hell.

They want to be known as the best preacher in their denomination. They want more money. To hell with it.

Okay, we're in chapter 3 now, verse 6. I'm going to shut it down a bit in a couple of hours anyhow. In verse 3 of chapter 3, it says, Anascaphas, no let me get to verse 3. He came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. As it is written in the words of Isaiah, the prophet saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Isn't it amazing? You know the loneliest men in the world, prophets. God didn't say to Elijah, go to that other great brilliant preacher that you have by the name of Elijah and pray with him. He says, go in a cave by yourself.

I think you want to emphasize this morning, God said, I have called Abraham alone. He said, I've called Moses alone. Don't offer to be, don't offer to be a prophet.

It's a lonely business. It's a lonely business. If you really love somebody, you'll unburden them.

And if God loves you and you get very intimate with God, he'll pour his burden on you. You say, my yoke is easy. Or you say, cast your burden on the Lord and he shall sustain.

Who does he cast his burden on? He doesn't need to. He's omnipotent and he does. The prophets in the Old Testament, when they saw the sin of their nation and God, it wasn't a fraction like our sin, turned the century.

We'll have the biggest dilemma we've ever had in history. It'll be worse than the bubonic plague, the way that AIDS is going. And now this new disease has come out, which is worse than AIDS.

And it's traveling more quickly. And this new disease has come on, what do you call it, VHP or something, which is only transmitted by sexual contact, but it's more tragic and terrible than any other disease. We've got that.

Plus the fact we've got the outrageous crime, what do you call it, plague in our history. I've heard a bunch of prophets last week. They told them, I said, don't ever call me a prophet.

I'm not a prophet. I speak with prophetic urgency, prophetic anxiety. My nation's going to hell.

This world's going to hell. Who's going to stop it? Nobody. You can't legislate righteousness.

Dear God, those guys in Washington can't legislate themselves. How can they tell anybody else what to do? And dear God, we're not much better in the pulpit. People sneer now.

Look at Jimmy Swagger, look at PTL. So what? Let me tell you something very deeply. I never like to say that, it's as though you're not listening.

Do you know what? If you're a true Christian and sin of the Holy Spirit, it's very difficult to sin. Swagger says he battled with pornography for three years. That's a life from hell.

He didn't. He's telling me that the Holy Ghost didn't convict him. He's telling me he fought the Holy Ghost and won.

You resist the Holy Ghost, you grieve the Holy Ghost, you resist the Holy Ghost, and then what? You quench the Holy Ghost. I know three men. I had a man come in a gorgeous three-piece suit in my office, began to tell me he's burning with lust.

I said, well, what's your problem? Are you married? Oh, yes, I've had two wives, and they got tired of sex, and I now have another woman I'm into. I said, brother, you need to go. He said, I'll ask God to help me.

I said, he won't. Go to the cross, take it to the cross, nail the damn little thing down. Don't say, help me, I'm weak.

Say, I'm vile. I almost preached tonight, I'll preach some other time if God says we come back, on Isaiah 6. What did Isaiah say when he saw the holiness of God? He said, what? I'm behind in my tithing. I'm behind in my prayers.

No, he said, where is me? I'm undone. I'm unseen. He's a major prophet.

You see, when the Holy Ghost comes and starts up digging up your life, I don't know why I thought of this, but this afternoon as I was meditating, I thought of a time I preached at Great Methodist Church in Dublin. They have a saying there, Dublin's fair city, where the girls are pretty. My precious wife comes from South Island.

And I preached that night on the 51st Psalm, and God was present. I could tell you other celebrities that were there, but I don't name drop. So, anyhow, three years afterwards, I went to a conference in Northern Ireland, and a man said to me, do you remember me? I said, no, I don't.

He said, do you remember preaching on Psalm 51 in the Great Methodist Church in Ireland, you know? I forgot the street in Dublin. I said, sure. I said, my wife and I, we're good Methodists, we tithe, we take communion, we help, we give permission, we do everything we can do, but Mr. Abel is not saved.

He said, we got home past midnight, and he said we had a cup of tea, and biscuits as we say. He said, went to bed, and my wife sat on one side of the bed, I sat on the other, and we sat there for an hour. And he said, I said to my wife, why don't you go to sleep? And sweetly, you know, like wives do, she didn't get to sleep herself.

And he said, I can't. Why can't you? Well, that fellow upset me tonight. When he was speaking, it's as though a gob touched my mind, a trap door opened, I saw all my sins, sins of youth, sins of manhood, sins of the flesh, sins of the spirit, they marched round the bedroom like an army.

And he said, I got terrified. And he said, after an hour and a half, my wife got down to the side of the bed, she got up laughing and rejoicing. Why? I'm born again, I'm saved, I have the witness of the spirit.

God now doesn't condemn me, he's cleansed me and lifted me, and he's living in me. Boy, he said, that made me angry. She got into bed, left me to get rid of my load of sins.

And I'm walking round the room tormented. She's ignoring, she's dreaming fairy tales. And he said, here I am going round, and finally he said, it suddenly hit me right there.

He remembered that Martin Luther one day, he was in prison where at Wittenberg, and he said, the devil got a record, and he said, he wrote all my sins on the wall, and he wrote them on the other wall, and he wrote them on the ceiling, and he said, go on, Satan, keep going, keep writing the sins. And he said, Satan said, there's nothing else to write. He said, there is.

He said, there isn't. He said, there is. He said, your record is here, every sin you've ever committed since you were a child is on record on the walls.

There's nothing else to recall? He said there is. What shall I put on? He said right over all of them, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleansed us from all sin. If you had a hundred pounds weight on your back and somebody took it off, do you think you'd know? If you were in debt for fifty thousand dollars and somebody gave you fifty thousand, another fifty to spend, would you know? Well, sin is a burden.

Sin is a disease. Sin is rebelling against God. When the fire goes out and the fire of the Holy Ghost comes in, it's a total transformation.

Let me rush through this. So here this man's preaching his heart. Look what it says.

In verse seven it says, the multitude came to be baptized. And this is nice language, isn't it? It says, O you generation of vipers. That's like me going in Westminster Avenue and saying, you swine, you need to be saved.

What do you think they'd do? Vote me the best man of the year? Not on your life. But listen, while he's pulling this, you see this man is on fire. I used to say he has a tongue like the tail of a scorpion.

I'll tell you what he had. He had a heart and a tongue like a laser beam. Every time he spoke, he left blisters on people's souls and minds.

He dug up their past. They saw every damnable thing that was hindering them from coming to God. Then he says, verse nine, the axe is laid to the root of the tree.

Every tree therefore which bringeth forth fruit is hewn down and cast into the earth. Listen, you notice this now, keep hold of this. This is the cloud.

It says, here in verse ten, the people asked him, what shall we do? Verse twelve, the publicans came and said, what shall we do? Verse fourteen, the soldiers who came from a heathen country listened to him and they said, what shall we do? You see, you don't make an altar call, people get so convicted. When you realize you've got death in you, you may be a good Methodist, a good Baptist or something, you've never been born. How often do you talk to the lover that you love? Jesus, you're the lover of my soul.

Do you talk to him? Do you worship him? Do you adore him? Of course not, because you're not alive. Let me quote one thing here and pass on. You see, this measure of salvation is not for bums and cripples, moral cripples and folk that fill the prostitution places and read Prayboy more than the Bible.

It's for very fine fellows. Here's two of them, the greatest men in England, the most famous brothers made in England, John Wesley and Charles Wesley. And Charles Wesley was born again of the Spirit of God.

How? His mother, his godly mother, came with a copy of a book called The Life of God in the Soul of Man. Dear God, these men got up to pray at four o'clock in the morning, weren't even saved. They spent all night singing songs.

They were so anxious to find God. In one of his greatest hymns, Can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? He says in the second verse, this is a gentleman, a scholar, a man of impeccable morality. You can find a thing wrong with his life.

He gave alms to the poor. He built homes for the poor. He did every blessed thing he could to prove his love for humanity.

And then he wrote this verse, Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused a quickening way. I woke the dungeon flame with light.

My chains fell off. If a man's chain does he know when the chains go off? His chains have gone. He'd been imprisoned in what? Legality.

Doing good works. Taking communion. Beating his body by fasting.

And yet he never found the living Christ. But when he found him, do you know what he wrote later? Oh, for a trumpet voice on all the world to call. But he wrote, before he wrote that, he wrote this.

My heart is full of Christ. Listen, not my head is full of theology. My heart is full of Christ and longs this glorious message to declare.

No wonder he could say, honestly before God, thou O Christ art all I want. Is that true of you? Or do you want Christ plus something else? I'll tell you what Christianity is. Christianity is Christ plus nothing.

It doesn't have to do wonderful things for me. It snatched me from hell. My body, soul and spirit belongs to him.

He gave his all for me. I give my all to him. Okay.

We've got to rush on here a minute. Do you mind? Let's go to the second chapter. Where do we want to be now? Let's go to the second chapter in John.

I think it's there I want to be. Then the Malachi said, there's somebody coming. And who shall abide the day of his coming? Do you know the most dangerous place in the world? It's to be in a church where the Holy Ghost is in residence.

You feel your uncleanness. You feel like vile. You wonder why God hasn't taken you off years ago.

You rebelled against him. You vowed and you broke your vows. You made commitments and commitments and never kept them.

And then you suddenly realize what a merciful God he is.

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