

The Post Resurrection of Christ

by Leonard Ravenhill

Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus to comfort and reassure them, and to help them understand the significance of his resurrection.

Duration: 1:08:36

Topics: "Resurrection Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of listening to the Holy Spirit rather than relying solely on the words of the preacher. He refers to the Gospel of Matthew, specifically chapter 24, which summarizes the post-resurrection events in the life of Jesus. The preacher highlights the moment when the disciples' eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. He also discusses the tendency for people to talk too much and not listen, especially in the fast-paced and impatient age we live in. The sermon concludes with a reminder to appreciate and not take for granted the blessings we have, while acknowledging the struggles and suffering of others around the world.

Transcript

Glad to see you. As you hear, Brother David's away. I'm not David Wilkerson, so just get that clear in your mind.

Right quick. O Lord of heaven and earth and sea, to thee all praise and glory be. How shall we show our love to thee who giveth all? Thou didst not spare thine only Son, but gavest him for a world undone.

And freely with that blessed one thou gavest all. Help us to recognize again, Lord, that we lose what on ourselves we spend. We have our treasure without end.

Whatever, Lord, to thee we lend or give us to all. We thank you for the word that was made flesh and dwells among us. That majestic miracle of God contracted to a span and incomprehensibly made man.

That the ancient of days became the infant of time. That he who came to destroy death suffered death for us, but rose again in majesty. We thank you for the true testimony to Jesus Christ throughout the whole world today.

In steaming jungles or in beautiful cathedrals. Even in prison cells. Down in ghettos with poor needy stricken people.

Some no doubt ministering in Afghanistan with the rage of war around them. Others in Ethiopia starving literally. Dying while others witnessed to them.

We take our blessings so lightly. We live as though we have a right to have them every morning we wake up. We would be so terrified if we found ourselves in their situation.

You've told us to remember those who are in bonds as though we were with them in bonds ourselves. We come to your word this morning. We thank you that it's as fresh as the manna that came from heaven each day.

We thank you for the bread of life. For the one who is the water of life. We pray you to open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of your law.

We know how much we need to be strengthened with might by the spirit in the inner man. We thank you again over and over that the river of God is full of water. Millions will be drinking this morning from this river and it never dries up.

New every morning at our mercies great is thy faithfulness. Having ears we pray that we may hear not what the preacher says but through the frailty of the preacher. What the spirit is trying to convey to us this morning.

And we give you praise in Jesus' name. We look at the gospel recorded by Matthew in the 24th chapter. Matthew 24.

Okay, thank you. This chapter as you know is a kind of summary of the post-resurrection events in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can't go through all of them obviously.

But there's one of them that fascinates me this morning. Let's begin to read out verse 11. Some had been recounting what had happened.

And it says their words seemed to them as idle tales. And they believed them not. Then arose Peter and ran to the sepulcher.

And stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves. And departed wondering in himself of that which was come to pass. And behold two of them that same day, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus.

Which was from Jerusalem about seven and a half miles. They talked together of the things which had happened. And it came to pass as they communed together.

Now let's remember the whole of this nation had been in some ways devastated by a super miracle. This time of the year preachers usually preach on the incarnation. Which obviously means God coming in the flesh.

Without the resurrection the incarnation was incomplete. Without the incarnation the resurrection was impossible. This again is the most mystified of all miracles.

Again as I quoted a little earlier there, Charles Wesley talks of God contracted to a span. Incomprehensibly made man. The most foolish thing that men ever did was to try and put out the light of the world.

Jesus was life and they tried to put him to death. How can you kill eternal life? The whole of Jerusalem in every shape and form socially, theologically and every other way had been devastated. First of all by the coming of a strange man by the name of John Baptist.

It's amazing how although he was a fulfillment of prophecy nobody believed on him. That shouldn't amaze us. We don't believe in prophecy today.

We try to explain away the things concerning the kingdom of God. We have two men here. I think there were two men.

It doesn't say. He only named the name of one of them, Cleopas. But verse 10, verse 13 says, Behold two of them went that day to a village called Aeneas, which was from Jerusalem about three or four miles or about seven miles.

They talked together of those things which had happened. It came to pass as they communed together that Jesus himself, that's good. Drew near, that's better.

Journeyed with them, that's best of all. Why in the world did he do it? If you'd been in Jerusalem that day you'd have seen like pressing their noses to the gate you'd have seen Cleopas and whoever the other person was. They were distressed, disappointed, despondent, despairing.

All their hopes had died. As you read the story it says, we trusted. When this stranger came they didn't turn round to look at him.

The only thing heavier than their feet was their hearts. All their dreams had vanished. This man was going to conquer the world.

Jesus himself drew near and went with them and their eyes were holding that they should not know. He said unto them, What manner of communication are these that ye have one to another? So as ye walk and are sad, it was obvious on their faces they were sad. One of them whose name was Cleopas answering unto him said, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem? The Greek there would rarely bear this interpretation.

Are you the only person in Jerusalem that doesn't know? Don't you realize that this mystery man, this miracle worker, this man who had the power of a God and spoke like a prophet has been put to death? Well you know the women always get in on the act. There they were running up the street screaming, He's risen, he's risen, he's risen. I think this was the most disappointing event in the life of Jesus.

He had told them over and over and over again that he would rise from the dead. Not one of them believed him. We always stick that on Thomas, doubting Thomas.

They were all doubters. If they weren't they would have been lined up there at a sepulcher to cheer him. I saw the angels were cheering.

Yet there was nobody there. Well then the women always jump in and say, Well remember it was a woman who went first to the sepulcher. For what? Supposing you met somebody down the road with a big basket and say, What have you got? Oh I was just coming to embalm you.

Wouldn't that be cheerful? Wouldn't that be a lovely reflection? That's all she was going to do. She didn't expect to see him alive. She supposed.

But he wasn't there and he was. Do you remember when his mother and father took him to the temple at twelve and they came away? Supposing he was in the company. Why? Because to be to the greatest religious performance of the day.

And they assumed when they came from the temple that he was with them. Just like people go to a building with stained glass windows and the priest and somebody swings some incense or nonsense or something. And they think the Lord is there.

I'm not sure if it was Madame Guillaume or it was F.W. Faber. They both write the same. Who said, Could I be cast where thou art not? That were indeed a dreadful spot.

But with thee my God to guide the way, it is equal joy to go or stay. Jesus himself, good, drew near, better, went with them, walked with them, best of all. Their eyes were holding that they should not understand and know him.

What manner of conversation is this that you're so sad? Cleopas said, Are thou only a stranger? Are you the only one in Israel that doesn't know this? In Jerusalem? The whole city's a God. People running here and there saying he's risen from the dead. I wonder why Jesus went to these two folk on that road.

Wouldn't do him any good. Wouldn't it have been a lot better if he'd gone into the bedroom of Pilate and clapped him on the cheek and said, Well, now what are you going to do? Or if he'd gone to the bedroom of the high priest and tapped him on the cheek and said, Well, I'm here. Or better still if he'd appeared, which he could have done very easily because he had no problems with the resurrection body.

He could have gone to Rome and started at Caesar and said, You thought you finished with me. We're only just beginning. Isn't it wonderful that he went to these disappointed, disgusted, disillusioned men on that road and cheered them up? Isn't that just like the Lord? When we're depressed, when there seems to be no way out and he suddenly appears in all his beauty and all his majesty.

One of them whose name was Cleopas. Antony said unto him, Are thou only a stranger in Israel? Are these strangers and you don't know these things as they come to pass? He said unto them, What thing? They said, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people. So altogether they hadn't lost their faith.

I think they'd lost some of their love. But they declared to this strange man that he was a mighty person, a prophet indeed and in word before God and all the people. And how the chief priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him.

Now notice in that verse, he was a prophet. They're talking about the past. Look at verse 21.

We trusted, they're talking in the past tense, that it had been he which would have redeemed Israel. And decided it was the third day when these things were done. And certain women of our company made us astonished, which were earlier the sepulchre.

And when they found not the body, they came saying they had seen Jesus. Saying that they had seen an angel which said he was alive. And certain of them went with us to the sepulchre and found it even.

But the women had said, but then they found not. Would have been disastrous if they had. You can go to the tomb of most leaders.

You can go to the tomb of Lenin. You can go to the supposed burial place of some of the greatest characters in history. You will certainly see Napoleon's burial place.

There's a place in England in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral where some of the greatest men in English history are buried. But the whole gospel of the grace of God is based on an empty cross and on an empty tomb. Down in South America in certain areas they'll say that men took away our religion and they brought us religion, a dead man on a stick.

In other words, a crucifix. Why didn't Jesus do something more impressive? In one of the stories it says he went in the room where they were gathered together and he showed them his hands and his feet. I wonder if Peter kept his big mouth shut on that occasion.

I wonder if he didn't say, this is so prosaic, this is so empty, this is so poor. Why didn't you fulfill your promise? You've told us over and over again, the day will come when all that are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God. Let's go down to the village cemetery and just shout over the wall, rise.

And they would all have risen. I would love to have been under company, wouldn't you? As they walked. Verse 24, certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher and found it even as the women had said, but him they saw not.

Then he said unto them, O fools, or really, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe. All that the prophets have spoken ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to have entered into his glory. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets.

Now why in the world did he teach them history? Why didn't he give them the most superb interpretation of prophecy? Why didn't he say, I'm going to give you a study now for the next two or three hours on the Daniel's image. I can explain the whole thing to you. Why didn't he unveil the future? He goes back to history.

But what history? I wish I could get a tape recording of this. This was the greatest Bible school in the world. It's called the Bible School of the Burning Heart.

I promise you one thing, when you come here each Sunday, you won't get any freeze-dried sermons. David, one of the most wonderful men in America to me today, in the preaching life. He's not the richest.

Oh, in some ways he is. In spiritual wealth. Do you remember perhaps a few Sundays ago, he preached on fresh bread.

Giving fresh bread each time. Not only when we come to the sanctuary, but also when we come individually to the word of God. Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expanded unto them all things in the scriptures concerning what? Himself.

If we preach the Christ-centered message, shouldn't we preach Christ-centered messages? He knew all the answers. He knew the heart of God like no one else. He knew the future like no one else.

He could have recited everything that was going to happen in the book of Revelation. He didn't. He refreshed their memories.

He went right back to Moses who had prophesied concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, because Moses himself again was a prophet. Beginning at Moses and the prophets, he expanded unto them all things

concerning himself. As they drew nigh to the village where they went, he made as though he would have gone further.

You know, as I ponder that, I don't know, two or three o'clock this morning, I wonder what he would have said if he'd gone further. I wonder what he would have done in your life and mine if he'd gone further. We get stuck in experiences.

We get stuck in excitement. We get stuck on pinnacles of theology. He made as though he would have gone further.

And they constrained him. What idiotic. I wonder what they'll think about it when they get to the judgment seat dancing.

What do you think? That's not his specialty. He's a physician. Great physician.

He made as though he would have gone further. And they have to restrain him. His heart is burning with revelation, with love, with wisdom.

To use a common word, they corral him, they get in his way, they obstruct him. Don't go any further. Stay here.

The trouble with the Church of Jesus Christ today, it's halted somewhere between Pentecostal, probably somewhere between the Resurrection and the Upper Room. We're afraid to go further. The devil being a genius, as he is, he's put a scarecrow in the field of Pentecostal teaching.

Do you know what it's called? Holy Rollers. That's his scarecrow to frighten people. He's put a scarecrow in the field of holiness teaching.

What is it? Sinless perfection. He doesn't want us to go further. He's trying to obstruct every one of us lest we become mature, lest we get out of our theological playpen, of our little doctrinal fields where we love to graze so often.

I think one of the shocks when we get there to the judgment seat will be to look back and see how little we've explored of the grace of God. How little we know of the Word of God. Isn't it wonderful that when they're at the very lowest, he came and St. Paul on that journey, his burning heart was brought over to their heart.

They constrained him. They put some pressure on him. Don't go any further.

Stay here. This is gorgeous. Maybe under their breath saying, if you can deal with history, you can deal with prophecy.

Verse 21 says, We trust that it has been he which has redeemed Israel. I find it's almost agonizing. God knows I do.

I can't prove to you that these two men were disciples. I don't think they were, but they were apostles. Pardon me.

They were not apostles. They were disciples. Steve says that's right, so that's good.

That's true. Can you imagine that they had done what we think? I'm showing my contempt for radio. Right.

Doesn't want to stay on me. Okay. We trusted it would have been he that redeemed.

They'd been four years with him. They'd seen him demonstrate his supernatural power over death, over sickness, over blindness, over idiocy. He had brought everything they needed in the spiritual realm.

They'd had three years of the most marvelous teacher the world has ever known. I'd love to have heard him preach the greatest sermon ever preached by any man that ever lived. That was the Sermon on the Mount, which has all the answers to our present problems in the world.

What's the main problem in the world? In your home, in your office, in your church? It's the problem of human relationship. We can't get on with each other. Husband with wife, children with parents.

Deacons, what have you got? I'm glad Dave's out today. I know one thing, he's going to disturb the devil, the devil and disappoint the deacons, so that's great. We trusted it would be he that would have smashed the power of Rome.

We're tired of being servants. We're tired of being stopped in the street and somebody saying, drop your groceries. Dropped my groceries.

I didn't drop my groceries. This thing needs some help. They were tired of being stopped in the street and a man says, you drop your burden, carry my burden.

And don't just do it under compulsion. Don't just go a mile. When this wicked, hellish man, this cursing man stops you, when you stop and say, well I've done my legal limit, I've done a mile.

Say to him, excuse me sir, can I carry the second mile? It's the only way to kill him. If he compels you to go a mile, go within claim. If he feeds your coat, give him your undergarment, which actually meant they were naked except for a loincloth.

They'd heard the most fabulous teaching this world ever has heard or ever will hear. We trusted he would have come and snatched the power of Rome and made us all free. And he did nothing in that area at all.

Beginning at Moses 27, verse 27, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded, I like that, he didn't just talk about it, he expounded the whole situation. He took every situation and elaborated on it. That must have been gorgeous.

As they drew nigh onto the village where they went, he made as though he would have gone further and they constrained him and said abide with us. It is toward evening and the day is fast spent and he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it.

And their eyes were opened. Why? I guess he could have been opened five miles back but they never looked at him. He brought bread so they saw his pierced hands.

They looked a second time and recognized it was the Son of God. But their eyes were holden. They never, never, never saw him until that moment.

Very fascinating, isn't it? Verse 31, their eyes were opened. Verse 32, they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us while we talked with him? No, rubbish. Well, what? While he talked with us.

Our trouble is so often we do too much talking. Even when we go to pray, we've got our shopping list. We talk and talk and talk and don't listen.

This is a scientific age. It's an age of great wisdom. I would label it for Christians and everybody.

It's an impatient age. There's no time for anything. Tomorrow night at six o'clock these ladies will be tied up pushing buttons for them.

No longer bending over the old rubbing board your mother used to wash with. No longer stewing in a big hot place baking bread. Now it's not only baked, it's sliced.

Next it'll be buttered for us. But we still have no time. What's the constant excuse? Oh, I don't have time.

But if there's an accident tomorrow and somebody's beating your door down and says, your son John has been knocked down by... Oh, I'm sorry. I have an appointment at the country club. I'm paying Susanna's golf.

Now I have to pick up an order at Dillon's. You see, I've no clothes. I've only 32 dresses so I need a new one.

We can always make time for the things we want to do. My old granny used to sit in the chimney corn in England rocking away there. Wonderful old lady.

One of her favorite songs was take time to be holy speak of thee thy love. I used to love to sneak in the house smell something your precious children would never smell. Fresh bread baking.

Wasn't that gorgeous? There she was sitting, dear old saint take time to be holy speak the time factor. The biggest cheat we have is time. The picture says there's a time for everything.

Their eyes were open. In verse 31. Verse 32.

They said one to another did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us? Not while we talked with him. What could they tell him? They couldn't tell him they'd been faithful because they hadn't. They couldn't tell him they believed that all he had said would come to pass.

Again, why did he go talk to a pair of despondent, disgusted, disappointed, depressed, disillusioned men on the road? He could have done something more wonderful. He could have shaken Jerusalem if he'd gone to a cemetery and raised everybody from the dead. Why didn't he slip back to heaven and come with 10,000 of his saints as it says in 1 Thessalonians he's going to do before too long? Why didn't he go to the bedrooms of these outstanding persons and say you got away with it but judgment's coming? Pilate, I had to stand before you and you really killed me but you know what? There weren't many people there.

There were about 800 people, a thousand. Do you know one day you're going to stand before me with trillions of people looking at you? Won't that be interesting? To see Pilate standing before Jesus or Caiaphas or the high priest or for that matter Winston Churchill or General Eisenhower or all the great characters in the history. The poor world out there thinks we've sold out enough.

Oh, we don't go to a dirty old nightclub where you can breathe in stale beer and tobacco. No. We cut ourselves off from excitement, sensuality.

Listen brother, we've got it all coming. We've got it all coming. I'm going to heaven.

I don't know where you're going. And let me tell you something, I'm not going for the weekend. I'm not gourmet.

Doctors can tell you a lot about good food. I like good food of course. But wouldn't that be something when we sit down with Abraham and Isaac and all those marvelous things of all the ages? I don't like many modern choruses.

Some of them are like the one that says it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small. You know we used to say the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and face.

I'll tell you something, at the judgment the things of earth will look strangely grim. We wonder why we invested so much time in sawdust and tinsel and perishing things of clay. We wonder why we were not magnetized by the Son of God.

After all, I can't tell you anything fresh this morning. I can just try and pinpoint this miracle on this road. And again, the Son of God does not try to prove his resurrection.

He doesn't try to shake the Roman Empire. God knows, I wish he'd gone on the Wednesday afternoons because every week the Sanhedrin met in the temple. I wish he'd walked in the temple when the high priest and the Pharisees and all that other rigorous, stuffy group were there.

Wouldn't that have been wonderful? They'd have needed a hundred ambulances to get them home. They'd have been shocked to death. You see what's here? I thought we killed him.

How can you kill eternal life? Ridiculous. Their eyes were open. Did not our hearts burn within us? While he talked with us, by the way, and while he opened the scriptures.

Notice he opened their eyes before he opened the scriptures. If he doesn't open your eyes, you'll get nothing out of the word of God. It's a nice history book, but it won't stir you, it won't burn you, it won't quicken you.

And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem. Isn't that wonderful? The Pharisees, where they'd been humiliated, where they were embarrassed, where people pointed the finger and said, you gave up your business career to follow him. He told you he'd lead you down the garden path.

Is that any way to start a kingdom hanging on a cross? It's amazing, isn't it, that he never appeared to anybody except his own. That's why people go to church today and get nothing, because they're not his. They're going through a ritual, a formality, a theology, a doctrine.

They're saying amen to something the preacher said a hundred times. It never sparks light. It never creates hope.

It never stirs them down in the inner being. See, not our hearts burn with it while he talks to us. This is our one petition to God, that every time you come somehow the finger of God will come into that heart of yours and kindle something.

I believe as Phineas said that when the glory of God fills the temple, the most exciting place in the world is the house of God. When God is present, he pulls people in from the world. When he's not, the world pulls people out of the fellowship.

And he goes up the same hour and returns to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together and men that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen and appeared unto Simon. And they told what things he had done in the way. These are the same two pieces.

Cleopatra and whoever the other was, whether it was a man and wife, we don't know. And how he was known to them in the breaking of bread. There's an old hymn that says, Be known to us in breaking bread but do not then depart.

Say, Do abide with us and spread thy table in our hearts. If ever there's a manifestation of God, I think it should be in the breaking of bread. It's too easy to do it mechanically.

Too easy just to do it ceremoniously. Too easy to do it faithfully because he told us to do it. But so seldom are we overwhelmed with the majesty of the event.

But this little thing in our hands is typical of that body which is broken for us. How exciting it must have been to suddenly realize the stranger that they'd ignored, he doesn't rebuke them. He doesn't say, You dumb creature.

I've walked with you for two hours and you never said a word that was intelligent. You didn't turn around. I could have been the bandit ready to club you.

He doesn't rebuke them. He didn't come to rebuke. They were loaded already.

They were broken with disappointment and dissatisfaction and despair and despondency and disappointment. They couldn't carry anymore. How thrilling it must have been when he took that bread and broke it and suddenly they said, Well, Mr. Lord, does the Lord ever reveal himself like that to you? You get a scripture that hadn't meant much to you before and suddenly it bursts open it becomes alive, it vibrates and you wonder where you've been so long.

And as it may, they just think Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said, I don't understand this next verse, that they were terrified. Why should they be terrified? They just sat down with him for a meal. What does it mean the other people that were there? The people mentioned, I guess, in Acts chapter 1 and verse 14, that company that waited there in Jerusalem.

They were already there. Jesus himself stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you. He said, Why are you troubled until thoughts arise in your heart? Verse 39, Behold my hands and my feet.

It is I myself and handle me and speak. A spirit, if not flesh, and what? Bone. No blood.

He left all his blood at the cross. He has a resurrection body. He can go through, into a room without opening the door or through a window without in any way damaging it.

The final gift that we have from God is a body likened to his glorious body. That may not seem much to you athletic guy. It means a lot to me.

What about you Steve? Steve, God healed that precious brother of cancer and all kinds of problems. I've been through the valley of the shadow of death so many times it's a wonder I haven't got a traffic ticket. And I tell you, it's not a pleasant experience sometimes.

I was, 1950 when I jumped out of a burning hotel. I broke my back in three places. My left leg was in three pieces.

My feet were broken. Took me to a hospital covered with blood and smoke. And the doctor said throw a sheet over him.

I'm one of few people who's rehearsed this funeral. I had my hands like this. I was praying actually.

Poor, agonizing pain. They threw a sheet over me. The doctor said he won't last long.

I knocked the sheet down and I said, Me? Oh! Oh! He said, I didn't know you were, I thought you were dead. No. I said, Doctor, you won't understand this.

You talk about God coming to you on, on Emmaus Road when you're disaster and despondent. When I was dying and distressed and my dear wife 4,000 miles away. I had no insurance.

I didn't want any denomination. My bills were piling to sky high every day. I said to the doctor, when I leapt out of that window before I hit the ground, Jesus said, What? I said, Oh, you were dreaming.

No, I wasn't. He not only came, he spoke. What did he say? He said, I cannot die but live.

Three hours after as I lay in that hospital ward, I'd been meditating, opened my eyes, felt the toes at the bottom of the bed as pale as death. He said, Len, I don't understand this. I said, Doctor, it's pretty bad, but you know, I've got a pair of crutches.

He said, What? Crutches? You can't walk. I said, No, I can't. I've got a pair of crutches.

What are they? The promises of God. One is, I shall not die but live, and the other is, ask for God, his ways are perfect. And right in the sense of God's will, here with a body that's destroyed almost, with the doctor giving me no hope, with the doctor telling me that even if you recover now in 12 years, you'll be just twisted, your whole body will be twisted with arthritis.

You've got a very dim future. How can a Christian have a dim future? That's a contradiction in terms of hierarchy, isn't it? Can't smart doctors be dumb? Excuse me, can't the doctors? Smart doctors can be some dumb in something. This man is very precious to me.

They were terrified and afraid, and supposed they had seen a spirit. You know, it doesn't pay to go to church late, and everybody's excited. What are you all excited for? Uh, well, just the greatest thing in the world.

Jesus was standing there a few minutes ago for a photo screening women who were there. No, he was here. Wasn't he, Matthew? Wasn't he standing there, John? You're seeing visions, you're excited.

Don't you believe? No. I'll tell you when I believe. When I put my finger into the nail thing.

When he moves his robe and lets me put my hand in his side. Boy, was there ever a man that was caught in a trap. The next time he went to church, that was their church, here it is, Jesus himself comes.

Thomas? Yes. Come here. Give me your finger.

No, it's all right. I know, I know you, I know who you are. You're my master, you're the son of God.

No, no, no, that's no good. You won't accept it. Come on, you asked for it, now you get it.

Once I've asked, you shall receive. Give me your finger. Put it in the hand.

Here's my side. Put your fist in my side. And be not faithless, but believing.

There's a bunch of men trying to climb the most difficult side of a mountain, Mount Ararat, that's supposed to be at the top of Noah's Ark, it's supposed to be there. They're going to bring some pieces of wood back, and then they say, if they bring wood and prove that the Ark is really there, people will believe, indeed. They believe in Noah's Ark, and therefore they believe indeed.

Well, I've got news for you, do you know what Jesus said? Jesus says they won't believe even though one rose from the dead. He's risen from the dead. He led captive and He's given gifts and all hell had gone into pandemonium and all heaven was excited.

All the words of all the prophets, the ancients of days, whoever had predicted the birth and the resurrection of Jesus, they were all there in heaven in a great celebration and hell was mad. Scripture says He led captive and He gave gifts unto men. An old hymn says on that resurrection morning concerning the devil and his works, He threw their empire down.

The biggest noise in hell was when Jesus brought the powers of death and the gates of death and the gates of hell and the power of the devil. The disastrous thing about it is the church doesn't believe it even today. Don't point the finger at these.

Do you have some smart boys in town telling you they don't believe in the physical resurrection? When I hear of men saying, you know, the story of Jonah, I was reading it this morning in the 12th chapter of Matthew, it's just a fish story. They're blaspheming because Jesus says, as what? Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and nights. So was the son of Nambi.

Are you going to try to correct Jesus? I'm glad I believe the truth. I the truth. believe the truth.

I believe the truth. I believe the truth. truth.

I truth. truth. I reverses everything of man.

He was born without a father, that's a contradiction. He walks on water, that's a contradiction. He ascended to the sky, that's a contradiction.

He defied the law of gravity. He's coming again before long, that's a bit of super-contradiction. The disciples despondent head in it, gradually, gradually, gradually, it's a progressive revelation.

They've seen his hands and it sparks them hope. And then as he's talked with them and he says, a spirit of not flesh and bones as ye see me have. Behold my hands and my feet, handle me and see a spirit of not flesh and bones as ye see me have.

And when he had thus shown them his hands and his feet, while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered and said unto him, have ye any meat? And he gave them a piece of broiled fish. And he took it

and he did it before them. And he said unto them, these are the words which I have taken to you while I was yet with you.

For all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the prophet. Verse 31, he opened that eye. Verse 32, he opened the scriptures.

Verse 45, he opened their understanding. Come on, don't be smart, don't think because you've read the Bible every day that you can open it yourself that you'll get understanding. Your eyes may be opened to know he's the son of God, we need more than that.

This book is sealed, unless his spirit opens it. The book of the revelation is sealed to most people. I confess I don't know a lot of it.

But there's a promise in it that whosoever reads that book there will be blessed. He opened their eyes. He opened the scriptures.

He opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. And he said that it is written, unless it be, behold Christ shall suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.

And behold I send you, I send you the promise of my father upon you, tarry in Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, till ye be endued with power from on high. In one breath he says go, in the next breath he says tarry. I wasn't here when dear brother David ordained those precious men, one of the best sons.

I wasn't two of his sons, one son-in-law, somebody I forget all. We had discussed this before, and I said, David, of course, you know something more than other guys in this. The only reason you can ordain a man for public ministry is that the Holy Spirit has already ordained him in John 15.

I have ordained you. It's an ordination of the Spirit of God. There's no substitute for it.

It's our initiation into the revelation of God. He opened their eyes, he opened their understanding. How much we need this.

The Scriptures can be so blind. But when he opens the Scriptures and opens our eyes and opens our understanding, they vibrate with eternal life. He is the way, without him there is no going.

He is the truth, without him there is no knowing. He is the life, without him there is no going. He is the way, that's eternal.

He is the truth, that's eternal. He is the life, that's eternal. What did he do? He opened up the Scriptures to them.

He led them step-by-step through history, beginning at Moses. If these guys knew anything, they knew their Old Testament, they knew Moses. But what of it, you know, today it's getting fashionable to say, oh, the Old Testament isn't relevant to today, isn't it? When I was a little boy in England, I was taught of the Testament, the new is in the old concealed, and the old is by the new revealed.

That's how the children learn. In another 20 years, the King James Version will be a museum piece. We'll have all these trivial little NIVs.

Somebody love the NIVs. That means not the International Version. Do you know that there are 500 words that are in the King James Version that are not in the NIV? If you could get a copy of the Jehovah's Witness New Testament and compare it with the NIV, they're almost identical.

As they say, the Jehovah Bible is heresy, so is your NIV. And they're saying, take \$2.00 and leave it on the shelf, forget it. It's the Word of God which is quick and powerful and wouldn't be a, oh God, how could you describe it? Here is the living Word handling the written Word.

Never anything like it before or since, until the Holy Ghost comes. And he comes to us and opens our eyes, and then he opens our scriptures, and then he opens our understanding, and you wonder what you've been all your life. I didn't get too thrilled this morning.

I got thrilled all the night meditating this, but I'm struggling here. Jesus took them step by step. I noted it this way.

He revealed he was David's king, and Sarah and the children of men. He revealed that he was Isaiah's child king, who would have a shoulder so big the government of the universe would be upon it. He revealed he was Jeremiah's.

He's taking them through the prophets. He revealed he was Jeremiah's branch of righteousness. He revealed he was Ezekiel's plant of renown.

He revealed he was Daniel's stone, cut out without hands, who would fill the whole world. He revealed that he was the ideal that Hosea spoke about, the perfect one, growing as a lily. He revealed he was the hope of Israel that Joel speaks of.

He revealed that he was the plowman overtaking the reaper that Amos speaks of. He revealed that he was the son of righteousness that Malachi speaks of. He revealed that he was the one publishing good tidings of Peter at Nahum, the man of prophets speaks of.

He revealed he was the one who is sung of in Habakkuk as going forth for the salvation of men. He revealed he was the refiner of fire, which is mentioned by Zechariah. Can you imagine all that history packed into about less than three hours journey? Do you wonder that they fabricated a volcano inside of them? Do you think they ever doubted after that? Don't you think that prayer became a link with eternity? Don't you think they read the prophecies concerning his coming with excitement? He didn't come into the New Testament.

I'll come into it for a minute. Remember they despised Jesus. But they clapped on the cheek and spit in his eye.

And last and last said his back was like a plow field. And took flogs and dabbled them on his head. Put him on a cross.

I think he was stark naked. That was part of the humiliation. It was a wonderful place.

Everywhere he looked there were skeletons of men who had been hung there days and days before and the birds had picked the flesh off them and the sun had baked all the skeletons. If there was anybody moving around there, there were lepers. That's where the lepers went.

All the outcasts went. It was a drainage center. It was a swamp.

And they took the holiest man that ever lived and put him in the midst of all that corruption. He never complained. He brought his back to the snipers.

Come on, friend, don't you ever dare tell me you've been in trouble and ridiculed and despised. You've never been a scorn to everybody that passed by wagging their heads and said to you, the son of God, come down and save you. Do you know that to me? That is the perpetual temptation of every believer who's walking with God.

Come down from the cross and save yourself. Why do you fast and pray? Your pastor doesn't do that. Why do you weep over a loss? The deacons don't do that.

Why is it trimmed down your lifestyle so you can invest for eternity? Other people don't do it. They live ostentatiously. Why don't you? For the simple reason God is teaching to you, that's why.

He's maturing you. Why did he go to a couple of, again I say, of despondent, despairing, despised, distressed, disillusioned men on that Damascus road? Because their need was so great. It was a supreme act of mercy.

When I saw it this morning, I wept over there. I'll tell you These poor men's feet dragging all the way. And the heart heavier.

He let us down. Look, there's one of the captains of the Roman crown. Here's another man, he's going to make us slaves today.

He didn't do a thing about it. Come on, haven't you sometimes wondered why he didn't deliver you more quickly than he does deliver us? Hmm? Why doesn't he interfere in the game plan of the devil in my life? I don't believe demons live in Christians, but I do believe that God sometimes invites the devil to straighten us out. I tried to say to Peter, Satan has desired thee.

He didn't say, I sent him back to hell. I said, go ahead Peter, go ahead Satan. Peter will come out refined from this.

He'll be a stronger man, he'll be a greater man after this. All these amazing things that I'd like to take time to go through them, but I won't. I've just read them to you.

Do you remember what the blessed apostle Paul, who knew Jesus as well as anybody, remember what he said? He calls him a title that I very seldom hear quoted in the public. He calls him the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings, and the lord of lords. Oh, maybe I do get a little imaginative.

My dear wife says, Len, sometimes you get a bit too imaginative. People say to me sometimes, your wife has a, oh, I like the things in your house. We have a very simple, modest house.

I like the things in your house. Your wife has good taste. I say, sure, she chose me.

So what a day it's going to be. I'm going to hunt these folks up when I get to heaven. Clear cut.

I say, who was your partner? My name isn't mentioned. Did you ever go to a celebration and your name wasn't mentioned? Is it disappointing? It's almost like being humble and nobody knows about it. Here he is, the son of God, going up on a dusty road.

They kick him the dust up, get it in his mouth, and he goes on and he walks and he talks and he comforts and he strengthens him. He doesn't do it all at once. It's a progressive revelation.

Again, then he goes and breaks bread and they see him and their sons, they're amazed. And then as the revelation becomes more wonderful to them, their despair and darkness is turned to joy. Remember Jesus said in John 16, my joy I give you, and no man taketh it from you.

If you lose your joy, nobody steals it, you surrender it. I read an article this week where a fellow did a great job, so he thought on that scripture in Revelation. He had a bold caption at the top of his article, you've lost your first love.

Tell me whether that is in scripture, I never saw it. It doesn't say you've lost your first love, it says you've left your first love. He found another love that suited this love.

At one time you loved the word of God and read so much, now you read all the newspaper trash. One time you took time to be holy, now you spend your consolation watching TV. Half the folk in church in Dallas today will be irritated if the preacher goes to your 10 past 12, they won't be able to see the cowboys.

Hmm? Wouldn't it be exciting if you happened to discuss with angels how many times the cowboys won? How easy we lose our love. It's easy to sing my Jesus, I love thee, he says prove it. If you love me you keep my commandments, if you love me you read my love letters, that's what these letters are.

When I've been travelling somewhere the other end of the earth, I might get to Australia and they say, there's a bunch of letters for you. Yes, thanks. What are you looking for? A letter from my wife.

Before I came home and said, well darling, I'll be on the long trip this time, once I was away 8 months. But sweetheart, I've got all the, would you make me some nice tea? I've got decent tea, you know as in America they can't make tea for nothing. And in England they can't make coffee, so there you are.

Now I'm out of trouble. Darling make me some tea and good toast please. I've got all the letters here.

You've got what? Your letters. 25 of them. When we're away usually we write to each other every day, we're used to it.

Oh not 25, I've got 55. I don't want anybody to think I'm going to sit here by the fire and read all the love letters. What? Do you know I had two of the children sick and I didn't go to bed till after midnight when I'd written that letter to you? And you didn't bother to read it? Darling I was keeping up a busy schedule and I had to thank you and a lot of other urgent things, but I brought them all home.

Come on, what about when we get to the garden and speak in the Lord's place? I left you a bunch of love letters. How many times have you brought them? How often was your heart strangely warm? How often did you say God loved the world, Christ loved the Church, but something more wonderful than God loving the world and loving Jesus, he loved me and gave himself for me. How can I shortchange him? I believe you could go to bed every night saying I've won a hundred people to Christ and disappoint him, because you didn't worship him.

Worship is speechless adoration. I say this in closing, some of you have heard it before. Dr. Chaucer told me you could lay on a rug for four or five hours to worship him.

Never say one word of prayer, never say one word of praise, just gazing on the beauty of Jesus, his faithfulness one day, his mercy another day. Do you ever marvel that God didn't cut you off when you were in sin, when you were a drunkard and a liar and a thief and a wife-beater and all the lousy things you did? Why didn't he cut you off there and send you to hell? He loved us. He loved these disappointed, disgusted, despondent, despairing men on the Damascus Wall to forget everybody else and go behind them and encourage them and then stay and would have stayed longer.

God help us. If you promised me just one thing this morning, not a thousand dollars, it wouldn't interest me. I'll give it away anyhow.

But if you said by the way, I'm going to make up my mind by the grace of God that every day I live in 1985, I'm never going to restrain the Lord. I'm never going to get into the middle of blessing and say, oh that's a psalm, oh it's Mary Jane. Yes, Mary Jane.

No, I'm not doing anything important because I'm only reading the Book of Eternal Life. Yes, I'll meet you at Dillard's. I've mentioned Dillard's twice.

I don't get anything commercially though. Isn't it easy? My darling wife, won't anybody interfere when I'm praying? I don't care who can. Billy Graham, Orville Roberts, anybody.

I don't want anybody to sever my love relationship with the Lord even in that moment. I can't lay back on one side because there's a sale of pennies. You've got to give somebody a break.

But how easily we push eternal things on one side because they're not burning. People tell me I've a beautiful wife. She's beautiful.

When I first met her, when she'd just come from Ireland, she had those red cheeks, Irish cheeks. Extremely beautiful. Often I would take her by the shoulders and just look at her and say nothing.

I won't have a love relationship with Jesus. I don't come to pray because you say in prayer we're preoccupied with our needs. In praise we're preoccupied with our blessings.

In worship we're preoccupied with God. My goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessings. If we vase in his presence, in his glory, in his majesty, I'll tell you if you did that your children will know by the end of the week.

You'll be a different personality. You'll be a different daddy. You'll be a different mummy.

I don't know what they're going to call our politics. I thought this morning I'd like it to be called the politics of the burning heart. I want to hear the soul of inviolableness that you've got something you can hang on to for the next week as we go through the dark, dark ways of life.

The difficulties of life. The opposition of life. The trials of life.

Maybe the persecutions of life. Maybe like these people, the despair and the darkness and the disillusionment. You put so much in the church and what is it now? It's a playground.

By the grace of God we're determined to keep this little fellowship that we have pure, clean, holy. The Lord isn't coming for brilliant people, he's coming for pure people. He's coming for a bride.

Yes, people say the Holy Spirit is preparing it, that's what the Scripture says. Well who's doing it? He says the bride has made herself ready. She's renounced every unclean thing, every unholy thing, every useless thing, every material thing.

She's the bride of the greatest person that the world has ever known. What a privilege to be part of the bride of Christ. Did not our hearts burn within us as he opened our eyes, opened the scriptures and then opened our understanding.

That wouldn't be a bad idea if you prayed and I prayed that every morning. Again there's such a difference in knowing the word of God and knowing the God of the Lord. Well there you are, didn't get too far, but I enjoyed it, so that's all that matters.

Did our pianist organist go? Do you want to see, if you don't know this sweet lady, it's Dave Wilkinson's wife. I've known her 20 years and she still looks young and beautiful. I'm not sure if it's existing folk I'm always faithful.

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