

The Word of Reconciliation

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the profound significance of reconciliation through Christ and the believer's role as His ambassador in the world.

Duration: 1:07:35

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 2:6, Romans 14:12, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:14, Hebrews 9:16-17

Topics: "Reconciliation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses why Christians in Texas don't get overwhelmed by the challenges and uncertainties of life. He uses the example of the apostle Paul, who remained calm and confident even in the midst of a shipwreck. The preacher emphasizes the importance of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ and receiving rewards based on our actions. He also highlights the power of the love of Christ in motivating and guiding believers. Overall, the sermon encourages believers to trust in God's sovereignty and remain steadfast in their faith.

Transcript

2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians 5 reading from verse 19. Oh, we'll go back to 18. All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

I never cease to marvel at the comprehension that the Apostle Paul has of the majesty of the Gospel. I think this is about the closest he comes in this chapter to giving us anywhere a catalogue, if you like, of his theology. You know, the schoolboys always, so we're told, ask the question, what makes it tick? Well, what made Paul tick? I think you'll find the answer in this chapter.

Again, 2 Corinthians 5, verse 10. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. So even though he's writing to believers, at the judgment seat, the reward is going to be for or against us

according to the things that we have done, whether they be good or whether they be bad.

I'm sure that that thing never dimmed in his mind. Is there one thing in this chapter that made him tick? Mostly people select that verse in which it says in the verse 14, for the love of Christ constraineth us. If I had a rope here with different strands in, and a hook, and I put something on there, and I held it up, and I say, now which of those strands is holding that weight? You would say, all of them.

They just twist it together. And I think that that is true of the statements that Paul makes here. I don't think there's one single strand here which is his continual motivation.

As I said last week, this man has a faith unshakable, a joy unspeakable, a courage that's incredible, and a love that's unfailing. He doesn't seem to have known a thing about discouragement, does he? He says we're knocked down, if you take Phillips's translation, we're often knocked down, but not knocked out. Many man has been knocked down in the first round of a fight, and gone on to win it in the end.

And sometimes we get knocked down, but we don't get knocked out. He says we're troubled on every side, not just in front or behind, we're troubled on every side, yet not distressed. Persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, always bearing in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That includes every pope, every priest, every peasant, every person. You know I have a kind of an idea that all those babies that Mrs. Ferraro and Mr. Mondale want to liquidate, in the next four years, roughly four million, she'll meet all those babies at the judgment seat of Christ.

I'm sure a bishop won't tell her that, he doesn't even know it himself, so how could he tell it? But it's going to be very real. I don't think the awesomeness, the vastness, this man has such a panoramic view. What does he say here? In verse 18 it says, all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

Then to which, in verse 19, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Have you ever noticed this? You can give, and I will give the Apostle Paul the 14th epistle, I think he wrote Hebrews, but in all his 14 epistles he never once mentions the virgin birth, does he? Anybody correct me here? Does he, Brother, Brother Dorsey? Where does he mention it? No, he doesn't. In all his, he never mentions it, not as a fact, and yet he condenses it here, God was in Christ.

The whole gospel is shut up in that one statement. Those people that came to see Jesus there as a babe in Bethlehem, don't you really marvel at their stupidity? After all they were the most learned theologians in the world. They were the outstanding rabbis.

They had read over and over and over again the 35th chapter of Isaiah, that when he has come, he'll open the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf will be unstopped, the lame will leap as a heart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing. Well that was the development, but they'd also read over and over again the statement, by a major prophet Isaiah, that a virgin should be with child. And a minor prophet that gives you the address of where he's going to be born, and the village.

Wise men, where did they go? Where wise men go? Follow the stars, that leads you into trouble always. Whatever your stars are, they follow the stars. Where did he end up? In the city of David.

Why? Because that's where kings are born. And he was born in a village miles out of the city. What did they think when they gazed there? The wise men came, how many wise men were there? Good, somebody said three, they didn't know either.

But anyhow, they presented what? Gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and so we figure there are only three people bringing three gifts. It could have been 33 bringing each gift. And yet when they saw him there, did they think, do you think for a moment they thought, as they looked at that little dimpled hand, that one day that little dimpled hand would hold the seven stars in his right hand? Hmm? Did you ever dream that that hand will be crucified to a tree? We get people just as dumb today, they'll stand up at Christmas, drunk or not drunk, and they'll sing, come desire of nations, come fix in us thy humble, and they haven't the slightest interest in him coming.

They go to some big show, and nobody enjoys hearing the Messiah more than I hear it. And they get thrilled as the choir sings then, the government shall be upon his shoulders, his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Here in this day, God is reconciled to man.

Charles Wesley has it in a hymn, God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man. The heaven of heavens can't contain him, and yet he's pressed into the womb of a virgin. He has all the wisdom, he fashioned the world, all the solar systems, everything else, and yet there he lies helpless in the babe of a woman.

A babe born of a woman. He put all the food into the world, and yet he himself were hungry and thirsty. Isn't it incredible, of course you can understand men in the world, surely, that say by one man, dying on a tree, that all the sins of the world are taken care of? Well that's the story.

Paul uses a lovely figure here, you remember sometimes he talks, he's a servant of Jesus Christ. And again and again he takes the, I've got a quarrel with Paul, I'm going to settle it one day. He says he's the least of all saints, no that's my place.

He's next to the least. With all his vast knowledge, with all his colossal intellect, with all his experiences, being caught up to the third heaven and he never wrote a book about it. Wasn't that silly? Could have written a bestseller on it, made a lot of fortune.

Picture on the cover. And then here he is, he, as I say on that Damascus Road, he was blinded on that Damascus Road by the revelation that he had. I don't believe he ever got his sight back.

Physically yes, otherwise not. He was blinded. I was singing that hymn again this morning, written by a lovely lady, Lathbury, Mary Lathbury.

She wrote, wrote two great hymns, we used to sing one of them often. One of them is, beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand. A phrase in that hymn, two or three of them choked me up.

Content to let the world go by. Content to let a career go by. Content if need be to let a wedding go by.

Collect, content to let all earthly honors go by. But then when she comes down to it, she says, I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of thy face. Is that right? Or is it poetry? You know when somebody rubs your nose in the dirt.

When somebody scandalizes you, you say, so what? I've got one up on you. I've just been in prayer and the Lord smiled on me. So frown away, bring all the devils in hell to frown on me.

Do I care who frowns on me when he smiles on me? Does it matter who smiles on me if he frowns on me, conversely? She not only wrote that lovely hymn beneath the cross of Jesus, she wrote one that, where's, where's Betty Daphne? I saw Betty creeping in somewhere. Oh there she is. One that Betty likes, break thou the bread of life.

She wrote that beautiful hymn. Here is this babe is the bread of life, he's the fountain of life, he's the water of life, he's the door of life. He says, I am the way, without him there's no going.

I am the truth, without him there's no knowing. I am the life, without him there's no growing. I am the way, that's external.

I am the truth, that's internal. I am the life, that's eternal. Do you wonder Charles Rush, he wrote that great hymn, thou O Christ art all I want.

Come on, again are we singing poetry? Is it really true? Thou O Christ, you're my center, my circumference, you're my alpha, my omega, you're my beginning, but you're my end. I'm not searching for anything, I've found the pearl of greatest price, as an old hymn says, my heart does sing for joy. But again here Paul isn't a servant, he is a servant, but he puts a classic distinction on it.

He says we're ambassadors for Christ. There are some distinctions about an ambassador in the spiritual realm. Sometimes an ambassadorship is a reward for service to a country.

Lots of people grumble that old Joseph Kennedy became the ambassador of America to the court of King James, when I was there, not with King James, but in England. But you see in the spiritual realm, an ambassador is not self, what shall I say, he's not self-appointed. And in the spiritual realm he's not self-anointed.

And in either realm he's not self-supported. An ambassador has what the, you know, if you've been to college you know what this means, he has plenty potential powers. That is when the American ambassador goes and stands in front of the Russian group, whoever they are, he stands there, he doesn't tremble, he has behind him the American government, the American army, the American Air Force, America's wealth, America's wisdom.

Now he's not only self-appoint, not self-appointed or self-anointed, he's not self-opinionated either. He doesn't go and say, well you know, in my judgment, no he has no judgment. Before he goes, he's counseled, he's given everything he has to say, almost the very words.

But at least he's given the philosophy of what his country believes, and he presents it in an enemy country. To be an ambassador is a perilous job. Right now there's a new cry out, that some of these wild people around have said that they'll go to so many ambassadorships of America around the world, and they're going to blow up these embassies.

You know, if we were really on fire for God, we'd be in enemy territory too. The devil would be shooting at us night and day. We can't compromise in our message, it's set down here.

Paul says, I've come, I've come to declare to you the whole counsel of God. I've come to tell you that this babe that came, though he doesn't mention it in that so many words, he says God was in Christ. What a mystery.

You know, a dozen times in his writing, Paul spoke about a mystery, behold I show you a mystery, or he's going to reveal a mystery. I wonder why I didn't start here and say, I want to give you a mystery, tell you a mystery. God was in Christ.

Have you ever tried to imagine the angels going back, after they delivered Jesus into the womb of the Virgin Mary, going back to heaven empty-handed? Have you ever thought of the loneliness of the Father in heaven for thirty years, without his Son in his immediate presence? The cost. God came in a babe. There's an old poem that says they were looking for a king to bring salvation nigh.

He brought a little, he came a little infant thing that made a woman cry. Is this where you come into the world? I was reading what 2nd Thessalonians 1 today, nobody taught, everybody wants to be raptured, eh? We're tired of taxes, so Lord take us home. What's the reason you want to be raptured? To be in his presence, or to get out of this lousy world? But nobody says, I mean you get bumper stickers, you know, the Lord is coming, or if you sit in this car, you do it at your own risk, we may be raptured, you know, some beautiful thing like that.

But nobody puts a bumper sticking saying the Lord is coming with ten thousand of his saints to bring vengeance and judgment and fire. Oh that's something entirely different. Yet it's the same thing that this apostle declared.

I think this man lived in a perpetual ecstasy. I do believe that one of the motivating powers, as I say, there are a number of them in this chapter, verse 10, we must all appear at the judgment. That's great, I love that.

The only thing that keeps me sane in an insane world is this, shall not the judge of all the earth do right? There isn't a court in the world that isn't corrupt. There's no justice in the world anyway, you can't rationalize it, reason with it, not all the philosophers and lawyers, but there's nothing just. But there's one who's just.

The judge of all the earth. This man has such a consummate passion in his heart, he stands before a heathen king in a heathen, in a pagan, a pagan king in a heathen court. And Felix trembled.

I love that. Doesn't say Paul trembled, he'd been healed. He never trembled before anybody.

Felix trembled. Mercy, mercy. If Felix trembled standing before Paul, what in the world will he do when he stands at the judgment seat? Huh? Why was Felix so bold? Because he was an ambassador for Rome.

All the marching armies of Rome were behind him. The decisions were made in Rome. He merely interprets the things that have already been done in the councils of Rome.

Paul says all I do, this is not a philosophy I have, thank you, this is not a philosophy I have, I'm giving you what the Master himself has revealed to me. I'm laying the law down in the name of Jesus, of God. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

By one man's sin, disobedience, sin entered into the world and because of that death came. By one man's obedience, just one person, he can do what Isaac says in a lovely old hymn, Jesus shall reign wherever the sun does its successive journeys run. His kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moon shall wax and reign no more.

And then he goes on to say that in him, in Christ, the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their fathers lost. Whatever was lost by Adam's transgression is restored to us through the obedience of Jesus Christ. I believe with all my heart that this man, this Apostle, had such a concept of the redemptive work of God in Christ, he saw death destroyed, that Satan had been bound, that Jesus had risen from the dead, led captive, to be captive and given gifts unto men.

There was an old preacher years ago, I never heard him, he died just before I was born. An old preacher in England by the name of Joseph, what was his name, Martha, we'll know. Thank you, Joseph Parker.

My secretary earns her money, I'll tell you that. She hasn't been paid for 45 years, but that's all right. Joseph Parker has Jesus buried, you know, there's Jesus in the tomb, and they roll the stone again over the tomb, and then they put wax over the stone so the air won't get in, it's airtight.

Then they put wax over the seals and the seals on the tomb, and then the devil rolls all the sin of the world against the stone. And then every demon in hell puts his shoulder against the stone. So you've got every demon with all their satanic power, digressing, I hope I won't get off the line there.

You know, people puzzle how those pyramids were put up there, you know, some of them were blocks as big as this room. How were they put up? Did they put a, you know, did they put soil up there and then roll them up on logs? Well you could have done that if every man was Hercules, but every man wasn't Hercules. Do you know what I believe they did it? I believe they did it by demon power.

I believe it was hypnotic demon power in them, and they lifted those stones, like people do today. You can put somebody on the chair, put a finger under, under their knee at each side, and just press and think, and you can lift them off a chair without any pressure, pressure. Well here you've got all the demon power that hell has, holding that stone, all the sin of the world, and the stone, and the wax, and the seed, and the soldiers, nothing left to put there.

And Satan thinks he's got Jesus where he wants him. If we can hold him here, we can damn the whole universe. Now Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

He came to do good, he came to heal the sick, but he came specifically for one purpose. The birth again of Jesus theologically is called the Incarnation. But the Incarnation without the Resurrection is incomplete.

The Resurrection without the Incarnation is impossible. You take this awesome factor again, that the God who inhabits eternity with all his majesty and glory, lays his glory by. Charles Wesley wrote that too.

He laid his glory by and wrapped him in our clay. Again God is contracted to a span. You know men who are unsaved are idiots.

The only thing is about the most stupid thing that ever men tried to do. What was Jesus? He was what? The light of what? The light of the world. And they tried to put the light out, by fixing him in a cave, or a tomb.

The light of the world. They tried to put the light out. He was eternal life.

And they tried to kill eternal life. Do you know of anything more insane than that? If you do, you know more than I do. After all the whole struggle in the universe tonight, or America or anywhere else, is not the struggle between the different politicians.

It's a struggle between life and death. Again let's reduce it to the irreducible minimum. There are two kinds of people in the world only.

Not black and white, not rich and poor, not free men and bound men, not intellectual people and ignorant people. Just two kinds of people here in this meeting tonight, anywhere else in the world. Being all the tribes of the nations, and there's only two kinds of people in the whole world.

Which are you in? Here they are, two classes. Those who are dead in sin, or those who are dead to sin. Those in whom sin has dominion in all its perverse and strange ways.

And as struggle as they may, and they can have all the psychology in the world they like, they're still bound. And yet there are those living now, who have victory over sin through the finished work of Jesus. Well, what's that? He who knew no sin was made sin for us.

Now it's not incredible. He tasted the pangs of death. He tasted damnation for us.

The most awful thing that I can imagine is to be separated from God for all eternity. And yet there came a moment when Jesus took upon him the sin of the world. And in that moment he cried, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Oh, I notice Peter isn't around here.

John, the others are not here. But my God, why have you forsaken me? There are God-forsaken people walking in the world tonight. There are people who once walked on the highway of holiness tonight.

I know, I'll give you the names of some of them. Creatures, who are tonight down in the gutter, away in the flesh pot, away in uncleanness. Because they trifled with a little, little thing called S-I-N, sin.

But here is the ambassador. Here is a man with the power of God upon him. He has the right to go.

I can't recall the hymn. It's an old hymn. It talks about pardon of an offended God.

As I lay in my bed this morning, I don't think I slept ten minutes last night. I was thinking again about manifold transgressions, our countless sins. If God gave you the list of, you know like when you go to a shopping center, or shopping and they run the bill down, you come out with a piece of paper like this.

Wonder what you got for it. Supposing God ran off the list of your transgressions and mine, that now iniquities, now disobedience, now rebellion. I have an idea we might die of shock.

Oh I forgot all about that, I forgot all about that. Sins of youth. There's a castle in Germany, I think it's Wittenberg Castle.

There's a mark on the wall, a great big black splash, shapeless splash. Martin Luther was sitting there one day writing and he said the devil paid him a personal visit. And he said, Martin what? He said he wrote all my sins all around the walls, all around the walls.

And when he had no more room he wrote on the ceiling. And then he stopped. Martin said, I said why sir, why do you stop? He said this is the record of your sins.

Sins of youth, sins of manhood, sins of the flesh, sins of the spirit, sins you remember, sins you've forgotten, they're all here. There's nothing else to write, I got your total record. Martin said, I just relaxed a minute and said, Mr. Satan write something else.

Nothing to write. Yes there is, what is it? He said right across them all, on every wall and sin, right across them all, the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin. It was a feeble praise God, but it's the best I got anyhow.

Didn't John Bunyan say, his pilgrim went up a hill somewhat ascending, there was a wall on either side. And then he said, I saw a cross. When I saw the cross the burden, the burden of this sin rolled, he said from off my back.

And it rolled down the hill and it went into an empty sepulcher. And I beheld it no more, and I gave three leaps for joy. I think one for the Father, one for the Son, one for the Holy Ghost.

Three leaps for joy, why? Because all is accumulated iniquity, and some disappeared. And they can't be recovered by the devil, anybody else. They've gone forever, and forever, and forever.

Look where Paul went. He goes to the intellectual capital of the world. He goes to the religious capital of the world, Jerusalem.

The intellectual capital of the world, Athens. He was born in the historic capital of the world, Tarsus. He finished in the military capital of the world.

And in every place he has an unbearable message. He comes to a God who could have snuffed us all out, and cut you off, the night you were lusting, and sinning, and lying, and damning yourself. He could have stopped you there, to shorten your record of misery in hell.

Pitched you into a lost eternity. But in his infinite mercy, he didn't do that. And Paul says he can go to all men, whether they're bondmen, or free men, rich or poor, kings, somebodies, nobodies.

I can go to them. So the God who has been offended, isn't it amazing that with all your sin and iniquity, you didn't seek God, he sought you? Huh? Why did he leave you to go burn in hell? You'd, you'd cast many slurs on his name? Done despise to his name? And yet he makes the approach, the offended one. And Paul says, look, you hurt my God.

Every time you sinned, you hurt the heart of God. So you Christians, when you backslid, you drove the nails through the hands of, you crucified him afresh. You didn't just feel bad, you didn't just let somebody down, you didn't just temporarily backslide, you crucified him afresh.

Remember last week, I quoted that, where Paul says, I travel in pain again for you, this, the Galatians. They'd been born, but they backslid, he has to go through the birth pangs. I talked this afternoon with two very lovely men.

Dave Wilkerson sent them over. I looked at them, I said, well you must be brothers. Oh yes, you must be twins.

Boy, were they so perfectly alike, from Poland. Keep this in the back of your mind, pray for it tonight, if God leads you. David is going to Poland in May.

The Polish government is going to grant him something that no man, not even Billy Graham got. Billy Graham went in Catholic churches and priests. They're going to set up the equipment in four different cities for David, in a Catholic and a communist controlled society.

They're going to set up the major equipment that they have, so that David can preach in the streets, in four different cities in Poland. They've already taken his lovely little book, that's translated now into about 20 languages, we're crossing the switch break, and they're translating into Polish, and it's compulsory, required reading for every child in the schools. Isn't that something to praise God for? I had the Bishop of Brooklyn, as I called him in my office today, we were talking.

He had seen a film that's going around this country, just a horrid film, the worst he's ever seen. It's about a plan that was hatched in India, amongst the senior gurus, to come to this country and saturate America, with their rotten religion. You've got some precious folk here, I've a great love for India.

I think it's safe to say, brother Ray, and sister, brother Ray and Robbie, at least all the cities I've been in, that Calcutta is the lousiest, dirtiest city in the world. Bodies lying in the streets, dead babies all over the place. And they want to bring their marvellous gospel to our country.

There's a film, I hope eventually we can get it and bring it here. This brother had seen it, he said, it shook me to my boots. I sat and cried.

It shows this guru up in, where is he, up in Oregon. What did he have, about 10 Rolls Royces? People all dancing around in lovely suits. They're not people from the gutter, they're intellectuals.

They clap their hands, they fall down, fall at his feet, worship him, then they jump up and shriek and scream. For what? For what? Part of the film is showing a school in Iowa, where the teacher says to all the children, sit down, put your hands on your head and let your mind go blank. Throw it all out.

Now you can't read the Bible in the schools, but you can bring a lousy stinking religion like that and nobody objects to it. Why again? Why in God's name? You know if we had had this intoxication, I think that Paul was what? I'm going to tell you the name, it slipped by me now. One man talks about the great need is somebody intoxicated with the holiness and majesty of God.

I think Paul was that man. You can whip him, he won't squeal. Throw him in a stinking prison, he won't complain.

You can cast him out of the city. Try and whip the gospel out of him, you can't starve it out of him, you can't threaten him, you can't. You talk about being an example of your own teaching and every man should be that.

Here is a man who is steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the love of God. In a hell hole, he writes three of his greatest epistles about singing to God. The epistle to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Hebrews.

He's cheering others up. Why? Because when you really get there, oh it's so easy to become singing slang, isn't it? How many of us have, I'm sure we all have sung, when the things of earth grow strangely

dim. Have you sung that? In the light of his glory and grace? Suppose you turn it around.

Don't you think when we get up there to the judgment seat and we look back to this stinking hole we live in now, the things of earth will look strangely grim? Huh? We've invested our time in sawdust. We've invested our intellect in rubbish. We've been slaves but not of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Paul says, I beseech you in the name of Jesus Christ be ye reconciled to God. He's made the first move. He laid his glory by, laid his vestments by.

The angels must have wondered when they'd nobody to fall down in front of and cry holy, holy, holy and look down in the world and see somebody slapping the face of Jesus and somebody gets a mouthful of phlegm and spits it on his cheek. Somebody gets a rotten old robe and puts it around him and bows the knee and says hail king of the Jews. What a day when we all stand there redeemed out of every kindred and nation.

You know one, the many things about God, one thing he's never failed. If you think he's going to fail you, well you're getting a better book than Guinness's book of records. He'll be the first person ever failed in the history of the world.

Won't that be something to leave in a note to your grandchildren. I say the ambassador goes not with his opinions. He's not opinionated.

He goes to declare the whole counsel of God. He's not self-appointed. Paul remembered the place.

I can remember the place in a factory. Nine thousand, eight thousand people there. Five thousand were Jews, the other were Catholics and Communists and all kinds of stuff.

I remember the night when at five minutes to five, I can tell you to the crack in the road, floor where God called me to preach. I put my, I had a tape measure around my neck. I used to cut soot, put my tape down, put my shoes down, put my hands together and said, Lord I heard your voice.

I thought about him. Jesus calls us all the tumult of our lives while restless say, see. Day by day his sweet voice sounded saying Christian follow me.

I put my hands and I said Lord as I shut my, I not only will not go back, I won't even look back. I never forgotten that moment when he called. Now that did Paul, he had a thing in his pocket, a vest in his way, in his coat.

What was he going to do? He was going to murder everybody who named the name of Christ. He would have been one of the bloodiest men in history, but God intercepted him. Instead of that he becomes the super saint.

He becomes the most outstanding Christian in history, outside of Jesus Christ himself. He goes on breathlessly almost, and he's got hope for everybody. Hebrews 7.25 he says, he is able to save to the uttermost, and to the guttermost, and to the uppermost, and to the muttermost.

Take it anywhere you like. There is no despair in the gospel. F.W.H. Myers I think wrote maybe the greatest poem outside of the Bible.

It's a marvelous thing if you can find it. It's just called Saint Paul. It gives you the most amazing insight to the life of that man.

And then he says, God will forgive thee all but thy despair. When you stand before God friend, or I stand, listen you haven't got one reason to have despaired in this life. He's solved out every problem for our sin.

He's solved every problem for our doubts. He's given us an infallible, indestructible, infallible, indestructible book. What is the Bible? It's a map from earth to heaven.

What is the Bible? It's the last will and testament of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know when we get to heaven, I think it takes about two millenniums, maybe it won't for you. Dear friend, let me let me pick on my sister down here again, Melody.

She may get over it in the first thousand years. It may take me two or three thousand years to realize how poor I lived on this earth. How weak I am when I can have so much strength from him.

He has freely given us all things. Can you comprehend that? I can't. We're called to be heirs, heirs, joint heirs.

But Paul makes it plain in Galatians doesn't he? That because the boy is an heir to his father's estate, he can take all the proof he likes, all the photographs, get the lawyer, get the doctor who delivered it, and here's all the credentials. He's something you know, and a few sports cars, and a private airplane. It's all there in the will.

There's nobody in the world can dispute it. But there's a clause in the will that says my son is not to touch a penny of this 18 million dollars, or touch your beautiful cars, or our home yacht, and our mansion, not to touch anything until he comes to maturity. Come on, do you know what's keeping the church of Jesus Christ in its infant state? Still, I'll use the phrase whether you like it, still wearing diapers? God can't trust us.

We're children, we're heirs, but we can't inherit. Why? Because we're playing around with little toys in our own life, and in church life. We haven't seen the vast horizons of eternity.

Come on be honest, have you been to the judgment seat of Christ since you were here last Friday? Hmm? Have you tried to see all the saints of all the ages at the judgment seat of believers? All the criminals, all the others that will come at the judgment of sinners. I think one of the chronic things about us today, is we're too earthbound. We think, live within the limits of our little society.

We live in a little glass bowl all of our own, God pity us. I preached last Sunday, at least I tried to, on Mount Truck with Wings of Seagulls. Pardon me if I'm honest and blunt, but I think most of us live like sparrows.

A lot of us live like parrots, we're always quacking about something. A lot of us live like peacocks. Oh my ministry, do you know how many countries I've preached in? How many books I've written? How many sermons? Do you know who I know? I know one thing, you don't know how to be humble.

Are we living in heavenly places? I turned it over to another day. I said, I said last Sunday morning, one of the great features about the eagle, is not only the strength of its wings, the strength of its, what do you call it, talons? It's the strength of its eyes. It can see further than any other bird.

Okay, we're to live in heavenly places. If you're risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Well then let me ask you, how far do you see? Don't carry the figure too far, you, you do it the opposite way.

I'm supposed to live like an eagle, I'm supposed to see what, no, sparrows can't see what, sparrows peck around in the dirt down there. The old hen goes clucking around the, you never find eagles having fellowship with ducks. Never find eagles going around with all the scruffy birds around here, these, what do you call these things in the country? Buzzards.

When I pass them, I want to throw up. Well it's a man's up with wings as eagles, why do we feed on rubbish? You never find an eagle in a garbage can. He won't eat scum.

He won't eat the dead things that buses run over on the, on the, on the road. Buzzards will, eagles will not. Read what Job says, the eagle goes and it takes a lamb or something, takes it to its nest, rips the belly open, and all the little eagles suck up the blood.

You can't do that from a dead thing. And Jesus says, except ye eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you've no life in you. You can't live on theology or church history, you live on him.

But that thing came afresh to me today. Here is a man, four thousand years before Jesus comes, he's renounced the kingdom, the greatest kingdom in the world. He's the richest young man in the world.

Takes off his royal robes, goes on the backside of the desert, doesn't get any men's seven course dinners anymore. On the backside of the desert, there he is with smelly old sheep. A shepherd is an abomination to an Egyptian.

Smelly sheep around him, whereas he'd been living in a royal palace. Why did he do it? Well, Hebrews give you the secret of it. It says Moses, what did he do? He forsook the royal palace, choosing, which is the privilege of children of God too.

It's a royal privilege of human people. Sheep and animals don't choose, we choose. And he chose to suffer affliction with the children of God, come on, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

For what reason? Esteeming the reproach of Christ. Dear God, that stops my breath. What is a man sitting on a rock here, he hasn't had anything but washed his feet in a stream, he hasn't had a decent meal for months, his clothes are getting worn, the sheep stink, the weather isn't good, the dust is blowing in his eyes, and there he is, esteeming the reproach of Christ who is 4,000 years away.

Should that disturb me? No. Again, another feature to wind this up. The eagle is the only bird I know of, the only creature that when it sees a horrible storm coming up, flies right into the center of the storm.

Everything else, owls, all the other things fly for safety. They hide in the woods, find a crevice in a tree, a hole in a tree. Here comes his majesty the eagle, he says, oh look at this storm coming up.

Boy, this is a humdinger, I'm going to get in the middle of this as soon as I can. So off he goes, and he goes right into the eye of the storm, and everybody else has gone away, scared to death. And he rides in that storm.

So good old Isaac Watts wrote a hymn, he died just before Wesley died. Isaac Watts wrote that great hymn, God is the refuge of his saints. When storms of sharp distress invade, e'er we can offer our complaint, behold him present with his aid.

Let mountains from their seats be hurled down to the deep and buried there. Convulsion, shake the solid earth. Our faith shall never yield to fear.

An eagle has never been beaten in fight. It's the king of the heavens. It rides in magic.

The whole heaven is its territory. Come on, the whole of eternity is my territory. Why do I get cramped up in Texas as big as the state is? Why do I get buffeted one way or another by changing circumstances, the threat of world situations, and what have you got? There used to be an old song sung, roll along with me, the best is yet to be.

You know that's true for the Christian in more ways than one. There's going to be a day, you know, when people are going to turn to us just like they turn from us now. To wind this up, I was thinking this morning, and maybe talk about it one day, you know, when Paul got on board that ship, he was a prisoner.

When he finished, he was a pilot. Everybody went to pieces, even the ship went to pieces, everybody went to pieces except Paul. Oh, everybody's screaming and worried.

Nobody slept last night. How did you get on? I had a great time with my visitor. What do you mean a visitor? Oh, he said about 3 o'clock this morning, somebody knocked on the door and I went to my cabin door and there he was.

Who? Don't mention it to the captain, he'll get mad. An angel of God. A what? A who? What colour were his eyes? Never mind.

An angel of God came and stood by me. The angel stood by me and he said, fear not, everything's going to be okay, you're going to make it, everybody's going to make it. They didn't want him, but he became the saviour of the ship and the saviour of everybody on the ship.

You know what, this old world's going to get broken and battered and beaten, old world systems, just like that ship, and the only people who'll smile through the storm are the believers. That's the hour to sing, my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest phrase, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

So here this man goes from country to country, in season out of season, in willingness, in painfulness, in fastings, in perils of the deep, in peril of his own countrymen. There wasn't a person on earth who loved him. In his revival party they got filled with the Holy Ghost and ran home.

They were relaxing before they were raptured, you see. It doesn't matter at all to that fellow. Every account is settled with God.

He sees the world, a bag of deterioration, a filthy system, devil control, demon control, where people love lust more than they love purity, they love lying more than they love truth, they love death more than they love life. Isn't it pretty insane? Don't you sometimes think you're crazy when you're unsaved? I know people think you're, if people think you're crazy, now I think you're in pretty good shape. If they can put up with you, there's something wrong with you.

I'm not thinking about husband and wife there either. Oh, how marvelous to have everything settled with God. And to have nothing but a consuming love that the gospel should get out in our generation.

It's getting terribly late, there's not much time left. Not politics notwithstanding, science notwithstanding, who cares? The destiny of the world is not in the hand of politicians or scientists, they can talk about their rockets and their laser beams and how they can shoot a rocket within half a mile, 5,000 miles away, they can shoot a rocket and hit a ship in the middle of the ocean, they've done it. They fired a missile not long ago at a plane in mid-Atlantic.

How did it come off? They said it was a bad shot. A bad shot? Yes. Why? We only knocked the tail off the plane.

If I were in that plane, I think it was a pretty good shot. Oh, how accurate they're getting with their devilry. And in a wrong sense, we're content to let the world go by.

Let it go to doom, it's been going to hell for years before I came on the scene before. But what are we going to do? I mean, we are, this generation of Christians is, is responsible for this generation of long lost people. There are more lost people tonight than ever have been in one phase of world history.

They're lost in the gutters, they're lost in the universities, they're lost in the churches. We've got dead men giving out dead sermons to dead people. I wonder how many of us would graduate if Paul took a class and we were in a class for a week.

Do you think we'd graduate in his class as Christians? Hmm? Have we got this same consuming love, constraining love that takes us to the last at any cost? Do we see the judgment seat of Christ when men that die multimillionaires won't have a thing? When men die with big swollen heads because they built massive churches and God Almighty will say you're responsible for the damnation of nearly every person that you've preached to in the last ten years. No wonder there's going to be a weeping and a wailing and a gnashing of teeth. We need to get this script down in our hearts.

There's no exception, we must all appear. Wouldn't I love to talk to Mondale and Mrs. Ferrara for a little while? Ask her if the priest ever told her this. Then there's one thing we skipped there, but there it is, it's awesome.

Verse 11 he says, knowing the terror of the Lord, knowing the inflexible righteousness of God. In this court there's no corruption, there's no lawyer can plead your cause, you stand there. You've never had justice, well say your peace.

With a thousand billion eyes looking on, all the saints of all the ages, all the apostles, when I stand alone at the judgment seat of Christ, knowing the terror, it doesn't mean terror in the sense that we cringe, it means knowing the inscrutable righteousness of God, the holiness of God, the justice of God. It won't be moved for Billy Graham or Oral Roberts or anybody, it will be the same inflexible rule and law in your life and mine that he exercises. You know I think sometimes we wish we never had a whole Bible.

We're inexcusable. I'm not trying to lay a guilt trip on you, I'm trying to get you to the place where you say, Lord I'm tired of being a toddler in a theological playpen. I'm tired of writing out prescriptions for worldly vandalism when all the time I've no burning consuming passion in my life.

I can't honestly say to God I'd rather die with an anointing of the Spirit in the next six months than live another sixteen years without that anointing. I'd rather be considered the greatest fool in my church or my relatives, the greatest fool walking and know that I'm obeying God and every day he finds pleasure in my life. All these brothers could tell us something, I almost, I said I wondered if they'd like to come and speak

here tonight but they had a, they're making a plan for the months that David's going to be in Poland and I think he's going to Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

And this awesome opportunity that these men have been redeemed, they're just delightful men. I spent about two hours with them in my office today and it was wonderful, the ecstasy. They said you know if a person gets genuinely born again in Poland they laugh.

They say well we've been good Catholics all our life but there's something in your life that's so different. Oh you're so changed, you're so new, there's something beautiful about you. They begin to testify before the man can testify, they see the fruits of the Spirit in his life and they say we've never seen anything like this.

What have the priests been telling us the last 25 years? Nothing. They say and I believe it is true that this is the crisis moment for Poland, the next six months will be the most tremendous months in the history of that nation. The same is true for Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Our precious friend is going to India before long again, let's keep that in mind tonight, somebody might have a burden for India, I don't know. What are we going to do in our own country? A guy called me Wednesday in tears, choked up, brother I'm so and so, I mean he calls me every month to see if I'm healthy, if I'm still around. And he said I've just turned off Vincent Peale, I said oh, he said yeah, he said he was just telling us you don't need to be born again to go to heaven.

I've sensed God in a Shinto temple as real as I have in a Christian church, I'm sure he has because he doesn't know God anyhow. So if he feels a bit of emotion he thinks it's God. Blind leaders of the blind.

Oh for some men to come with a holy anointing that when they say you feel they're saying listen, I'm an ambassador for God, I've got conditions from the almighty God to tell you I've ever twisted and perverted and unclean and unholy and impure you are, that he is able to save you to the uttermost. That fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners any size, any quality, anywhere, anytime. Because doesn't he say back in that time, if any man be in Christ, I love that, any man, anywhere, at any time, in any circumstance, he may be rotting in a prison and he's never had the light.

Then suddenly somebody comes to him and brings the message, I'm an ambassador from God and instead of casting you forever into an eternity where you'll fall forever and ever and never reach the bottom, burn forever and ever and never be destroyed, he sent me with a relief. See what Paul said, look every man has a sentence of death and look here I brought a note here from the governor of the universe and it's cancelled the death sentence in you. Come on, when did you last thank God for doing that? I mean friend you weren't just bad, you were dead.

An offence to God, offence to everyone else. And Paul says I'm an ambassador, I have, the powers are invested in me as though Jesus Christ himself was talking to you, that's what, I stand in Christ's place and say be reconciled to God. You've nothing to do but bring your rottenness, there are no fees to pay, you've no righteousness to produce, you just come as you are twisted, tormented with a hideous past.

You don't like to think about it maybe, nor should you, accepting gratitude. God will forgive thee all but thy despair, you don't have to despair over your chronic sinfulness, over a habit that's bound you and you've prayed about it and others have found and yet there's no deliverance. You have to come with one great burst of desire and say Lord I don't just want to come to the cross, I want to get on the cross, I want to die.

Instead of being dead in sin where it has dominion I want to be dead to sin. There's a man, he's been a miser all his life, you jangle some money and the first thing he does is reach out for it but now he's dead he doesn't reach for anything. And we can live in the world and yet be not of the world, that's the glory of the message of Christ.

And when we're emancipated surely a man who has found a cure for cancer isn't going to be dumb, he would be everywhere saying I've found the answer, I've found the answer, I've found the answer. This is why this man says and I'm through with this, yes he's a brilliant preacher I'm sure he is. The most profound theologian the world has ever had but do you know how he sums it up? I'm a debtor, I'm a debtor.

I'm a debtor to every man in the world as long as there's one lost soul. C.T. Studd said if there was only one man in the world who was damned Jesus would have come to save him, hell is so bad and so terrible. I'm a debtor, I have an obligation to tell men who are lost that they can be found, men who are dead that they can come to life, men who are blind that they can see.

Men who are tormented with a thousand devils if you like that there's one who was able to save to the uttermost. As soon as I repent and hate my sin and loathe myself and turn on my hideous record and say Lord Jesus I'm unworthy. There isn't a grain of goodness in me, there's nothing you should desire in me but here I am with my massive corruption, take me as I am.

And he comes and does a super work, a miracle. I'll tell you how great it is, with your self-righteousness, your religiosity, if you're not saved tonight, if you're not get saved here. If you cry out in your sin, it doesn't mean much there's a lot, 120 people or more here.

Come on you got it all wrong. As soon as you cry out for mercy and cleansing and the indwelling, all heaven will get excited, isn't that something? All heaven, there's joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repented. One less in hell, one less victim here on earth.

One other who's become part of the bride of the son of the living God. He offers you that grace, that mercy, that peace tonight. And if you're going to be a missionary keep this clear in your mind, this is your job.

What kept this man going? Compassion? No. Not in itself, that's an offspring of love. Zeal? No, zeal will die down.

Enthusiasm? Boy you get in a foreign country and the first day you're there there's a tornado or something and the first meal you get you think this should go to the dog. Well take it friend, take it, sniff it, enjoy it, you're going to have this kind of mush for the next five years. Hmm, you like that? You're not quite sure, okay don't say yes because the Lord may take you to the worst mush in the world anyhow.

But isn't it amazing how we can change all our attitude to our softness and our petty appetites, now we like such nice comfortable things. And suddenly he turns us because this man also is an ambassador, as an ambassador he's a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He's running a race, he's a servant that has been trusted with commodities he has to give an account for at the judgment seat.

And all that has come back on us. Let's pray, let's pray, let's pray for Dave. The scripture that came to me earlier this morning, the preparation of the heart is of the Lord.

It's time to pray now for these countries into which Dave and the team are going. To pray for our friends as they go shortly over to India again. To pray for our nation which is teetering on the edge of, well I don't think there's any exaggeration what Mr. Reagan said, this is the most important election in 50 years, it's the most important election in 200 years.

It's critical. And yet the biggest stumbling block is a paralyzed church. And some of us have to admit that we're part of it.

If you don't have that fire, pray for it tonight, say Lord I'm like an iceberg. Put out the ice and come with all your holy fire, burn up, consume my self-pity, my self-righteousness, my self-seeking, my self-interest, my selfishness, consume it. When God's fire upon the altar of my heart was set aflame, ablaze my ambitions, plant and wishes at my feet in ashes ray.

But you know he'll do more with the ashes than you can do with the totally entire personality under your own control. My prayer again is that hell will suffer because of this prayer meeting. That somebody tonight will feel the fetters are burned off and they're liberated.

The burden is gone and they're loose. The self-interest is gone and for once they have a circumference as vast as eternity. And say Lord I want to live every day, it's the only way to live, in the light of the judgment seat of Christ.

I want to know that love that constrained you to come from the glory, the ivory palaces to this sinkhole we live in. I want that consuming love in my life. The love that drove Paul to prisons and persecutions and privations and everything that the flesh would never choose.

He chose it, not only chose it, he gloried in the tribulation, necessities and reproaches. And that's possibly in our lives. Come on let's kneel and pray.

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