

There Is a Warfare

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of enduring hardships and living a sacrificial life as a soldier of Christ in the spiritual warfare we face.

Duration: 1:01:51

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6, John 14:15, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, Ephesians 6:12, James 1:2-4

Topics: "Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the various aspects of the Christian journey. He compares it to a fight, a race, and a stewardship, highlighting the need for believers to give an account of their actions. The preacher also discusses the concept of talents, explaining that they have a monetary value in scripture. He shares the story of Job and how he lost everything, but ultimately found hope and wrote a book about his experience. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the resurrection of Jesus and the impact it had on the world, emphasizing the personal encounter Paul had with Jesus. The preacher encourages the congregation to be open to surprises and shares some thoughts he previously discussed with others. He then directs the audience to 2 Timothy 2:4, urging them to consider the message in that passage.

Transcript

I wasn't quite sure when I came in. I saw that thing and I thought I got in McDonald's. But then this place is always full of surprises.

I didn't really expect to do this little thing this morning. I'm not going to preach really. I don't think I'm going to teach actually.

I'm going to share some thoughts that I shared the other day with Brother Tony. Tony isn't here. No.

Ed isn't here. Oh, Ed isn't here. Tim isn't here.

Oh, there he is. I thought he was afraid of getting under conviction and they hadn't come, but... But anyhow, it's good to see that they're here because you never know what will happen. Let's look at Paul's second letter to Timothy.

And the second chapter, 2 Timothy 2. That's easy to say. 2 Timothy 2 implies 2 is 4, so it's 2 Timothy 2, 4. Let me ask you this thing. I think one of the nicest and most, I was going to say sensible things, but one

that has real validity and abiding worth.

You know, some songs come and go. This is an old one my grandmother used to sing in. And there's an awful lot of truth in it.

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way. And if we get in darkness, very often it's because we've got out of the light of the Word. So let's sing that.

When we walk with the Lord. We walk with the Lord. Sing quicker.

In the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way. While we do His good will, He abides with us still. And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey. For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than trust and obey. Do you know what the alternative to that is? If we don't trust and obey, we rust and decay.

So you better think about that too. All right, Paul's second letter to Timothy, chapter 2, verse 4. Or verse 3. Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that mourneth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

This is, in my judgment, the advice of a five-star general, battle-scarred and worn, to a kind of a rookie preacher. Here is a man who is finishing his ministry. It's very interesting that he uses three analogies in the reading here.

Endure hardness as a good soldier. No man that mourneth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if any man also strives for mastery, he changes there from a soldier to a runner.

And then he changes again. He says in verse 6, The husbandman that laboreth must be first partakers of the fruit. In the many changes that we have in the Church of Jesus Christ today, I think there's nothing more pronounced than the change in singing.

I was raised on a very strict diet. I had a very godly father and a very wonderful, saintly praying mother. And a dear old grandmother that was a praying woman too.

But in the house, the conversation was always about missions and saving people. And my father's hero was none other than C.D. Studd. As a matter of fact, I saw C.D. Studd once when I was a youngster.

As a matter of fact, I'm so old, I once saw William Boo, the founder of the Salvation Army, but that was in the past century. But when I was a kid, it was always the militant side of the gospel that was presented in the house. And you went to church and they would sing something like, Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross.

Or, Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armor on. Or, Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross. The militant side was always there.

Now we go to church, it's a mansion over the hilltop, there's something about jelly babies and something. It's not militant. It's not the sense of that we're in a warfare.

And I sometimes think, I wonder if we're not dishonest when we say to people, Well, you're saved now, you know, and praise the Lord, your sins are all forgiven, and boy, you've got it all made. You've got a mansion over the hilltop, you've got a mansion on Main Street, as a matter of fact. And in heaven, the streets are paved with gold.

You know who the evangelists are, they've been digging the streets up. But apart from that, you're going to have a mansion on Main Street, and well, you're going to have a permit to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and you're going to wear a five-decker crown, and you're going to rule over five cities, and boy, you've got it all made. Just for about five minutes of repentance, you're going to have an eternity with all these things thrown in it.

You know, five-decker crown, we'll all be saying, Boy, I thought you'd only have three crowns, and you've got five. There are five crowns in the New Testament, but they're sure not for everybody. But again, this militant side is no longer presented.

Now what we should say to people, you've not only got rid of your sins, if you really got what God wanted you to get here, you got rid of yourself. And right here, you've no rights anymore, you've lost all your rights. For as soon as a soldier signs on the dotted line, he's lost all his rights.

They used to say about men in England, they signed up for the king's shilling, because if they were broke, they'd go into a recruiting place and say, I want to be a soldier. And they'd sign up, and the man would give them a sum of money. But that was all right unless war broke out.

And then war breaks out, and you get your draft papers, and they're trying to reinstitute it again here. In fact, I'm wondering if this oil crunch isn't the fact the government's saving oil for war, and there's a lot of other things that suggest there's something bad coming up. But as soon as the man is drafted, he can't say, well, Uncle Sam, you've just forgotten, I've only been married a week.

And my wife can't stay in the home by herself. And not only that, I've just gone into business. Immediately he signs on the dotted line to become a soldier.

He has no priority even with his wife. And if he has to say, well, darling, I don't know where I'm going, or when I'll come back, or if I'll come back, or if I'll be a triple amputee, or if I'll come minus an eye or a leg, or some other, I just don't know. Now, we don't present a heroic gospel.

We present a gospel of almost self-pity, and get out of your rotten sins, and escape a jail sentence, and get out of drugs. All very wonderful, but that's still a negative side of the thing. Now, Paul here is writing to this young man.

He says, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier. Across the page in my Bible, maybe it's in the previous page with yours, at the end of the previous epistle to Timothy, he says in the last chapter, which is what, the fifth or the sixth chapter of the previous letter to Timothy, 1 Timothy 6, verse 12, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life. Now, if you go ahead further into the second epistle, and get into the third chapter of the second epistle, pardon me, it's the fourth chapter, he finishes by saying, well, let me ask you this, what are the last words of the Apostle Paul? Right, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

He's still in a militant attitude, even though he's battle scarred and bruised and baffled and bleeding, but he says, even at the end of the line, now he's saying to this young man, Timothy, you're a good soldier, be

a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It's my guess, and I think I've stripped to a confirmation to it, that when he wrote this epistle, he was already chained to a soldier. Not as at the end of this life of his, he says, I have fought a good fight.

I like his modesty. If we'd done all he'd done, he'd written more than, well, let me transfer it again to a little later, when he says, I glory in tribulations and necessities, glory in them, we run away from them. Who's going to go down the road if there's a lion in the way? Well, Samson went.

And if Samson is a type of a spirit-filled believer, which I believe he is, the lion must be a type of a devil that goes about seeking whom he may devour. And yet he isn't intimidated by it. He says to his dad that, ma'am, you stay here, I've a little business to do around the corner, and he goes and catches the lion and rips it in two and throws it down.

Now, that's wonderful. The only thing more wonderful is the second half of that verse, in which he says, he said nothing about it. Well, bless you, we'd have photographed it at least, wouldn't we? We'd have put it on the front of our church magazine, and, you know, he said, listen, Agape didn't do this.

I did it all by myself. I want you to know that, and I've got to get my credit, you know. It deals with my ego, it deals with my faith.

You can see it then in hell. But this is actually, see, what Jesus Christ left us in our inheritance. Now, let me ask you a simple question.

You push the devil around, does he push you around? A lady in Australia said to me one day, she said, you know, Mr. Raven, I've had an awful day. And I said, you look like it. She looked as though she'd been to ten funerals and lost everything she had all in one day.

She looked the essence of misery. She said, yes, but, you know, when I got out of bed this morning, the devil was standing on the rug at the side of my bed. I looked at her, I said, lady, I seriously doubt that he knows you're living.

What in the world have you done that Satan came to your bedroom? You know what we do? We give Satan the attributes of God. Satan can't be in two places at the same time. He can only be in one.

And if he's been with you all day, shout hallelujah for he's left the rest of the world alone. I think the greatest honor that was ever given to any man on earth was given to the apostle Paul when, you remember, some fellows decided to kick the devil or knock the devil out of somebody and the demons jumped out and beat those sons of Sceva up and said, Jesus, we know, and Paul, we know. Now, do you really believe in your heart you're on the devil's danger list? In all the world of preachers that I know, I don't think I know five men who are on Satan's danger list.

I know men who are oozing with knowledge and wisdom and ability and personality and all the other stuff that goes over big these days. But the greatest thing I would hope for right now is not to be considered a great preacher or a good writer or anything else. I remember walking in Westminster Abbey and somebody said, do you think your name will ever be on the wall there at the side of John Wesley's? I'm not even interested, never thought of it.

Wouldn't interest me a bit. I'll tell you what I would like my name. I'd like my name in letters about as tall as that wall, say, 18 feet, 15 feet high.

Great big neon sign, Leonard Raisman. Where? In Hollywood? No, in hell. I'd like every demon to have to get up every morning and say, is he still living? I kind of figured the day that the apostle Paul died, the devil said, you demons, you're going to have a day off.

There's nobody else like him going to be around for years and years and years. Remember, this man has no criminal record. He's one of the most holy men in the world at the time he was saved.

From the standpoint of being not only a Pharisee, but a Pharisee of the Pharisees. His father was a Pharisee. He was a Pharisee.

He's of the tribe of Benjamin. He's of the seed of Abraham. He has everything that everybody else is reaching for.

And then he did what we sin and don't do. My richest gain I can't have lost. What things were things that I struggled for and I loved them, he says, what things were gain to me, I counted them but dross.

One interpretation makes it rather offensive. It says, I counted them but dung that I might win Christ and be found in heaven. Not have any righteousness of my own.

Now Paul again, I say, is writing here to a young man who's just starting on a course that Paul is finishing and he looks back over that exact course and he doesn't say, you know what, I want to tell you this. If you're faithful, you know what, you may write more books than I've written. You may go to prison more often.

I was lashed once with forty stripes, say, five times. That's five forties is two hundred minus. I was lashed 195 times.

I've been in tribulation, distress, famine, peril, nakedness, sword, in perils of my non-countrymen, in perils of the deep. And he goes on and he says, you know what, I hope you'll break my spiritual record. I just say to myself, you know, after all, since Jesus, there's nobody in the world been like me.

He doesn't say that at all. What does he say? He says, I glory in necessities, in reproaches, in adversity, in calamity, and in tragedy. Well, that's quite a bit, isn't it? It doesn't sound like strawberries and cream.

It doesn't sound as though he lived in Edensburg. He loves this young man. In the first epistle, he calls him the, Timothy, my, what did he call him, my beloved son in the gospel, somewhere here.

All right, 1 Timothy 1, 1 Timothy, first chapter, verse 2. Unto Timothy, my own beloved son, he esteems him as a son. He wants to see all these amazing qualities of his own life reproduced in the life of his spiritual offspring. And he says, I want to tell you this, you're going to have to fight the good fight of faith.

I've fought a good fight. I've finished my course. I've kept the faith.

So he interprets the Christian life in three ways. It's a fight. It's a race in which you run.

It's a stewardship. You have to give an account. You know, we say about somebody, you might say about the young lady who played the piano, she's a lovely talent.

That's not a talent. We say about somebody who sings or somebody that does something else, well, he or she has a wonderful talent. But if you go down to the scripture, you'll discover in the scripture that talents

always have a monetary value.

There's a talent of silver and a talent of gold. It is not a talent. It may be a gift.

It is not necessarily a talent. Now Paul wasn't an over-talented man. I think he's a great genius, Demolition, put Socrates and Plato and all the other Greeks in there.

I think he was the wisest man that ever lived after Jesus himself. And he's trying to instill into this young man here that you've got three things to do. You've to fight the fight.

You've to run the race. And you have to give an account for your stewardship. Now he kicks off right here in saying, Thou therefore endure hardness.

I can't deal with this thing altogether. Let me just give you some tips here on what it means to be a soldier. First there's a total surrender.

The man has to surrender all his rights. He surrenders his freedom once he becomes a soldier. He's manipulated by the government.

They say, well, we're going to send you to So-and-so. And he says, it's not very healthy. No, it's not very healthy.

Reminds me of an oil company sent their executives out to the Middle East, or representatives. Not one of them lasted more than a year. They all came back.

Finally they got a toughie who had been to Oxford or Cambridge or somewhere, and he was athletic and strong and smart. He had everything needed to do the job. And after he'd been there about six months, he wrote to headquarters, and oh boy, he had a string of things to say.

He said, the climate here is unbearable. The people are inhospitable. The food, it's not eatable.

The water is undrinkable. The hedonism is unbearable. And he went down and down the list like that, and finally they turned the letter over and on the other side he said, I'm not complaining, I'm explaining.

A lot of us do a lot of complaining, I think. Let's settle for this right now. Immediately I sign on the line.

I have, that God has every right to show me that I'm expendable. I read something the other day that I thought was interesting. It said, if you begin to think you're important even in the kingdom of God, here's a good test for you.

Fill a bucket with water, and push your hand down to the bottom and then lift it out, and the hole you leave is the impression you've made on life or on the world. Not too thrilling, is it? But anyhow, you know, ten minutes after you're dead, apart from one or two relatives who may weep for joy or sorrow or whatever it is, you'll be forgotten. I don't think any of you sat down this morning and said, well, praise God for John Wesley and Charles Finney, and I was just singing one of those great hymns of Charles Wesley.

He wrote about 3,000 of them. We shouldn't pass away. We pass out of memory.

It's great to recognize this, that I'm not here to make a name or fame or anything else for myself. I'm here to do what this blessed man of God did, to say at the end of the journey, not I'm a good fighter. Most men would have said, I'm a good fighter.

You don't know how many people I've destroyed. That is, destroyed their theories and destroyed their horrible hedonism. He doesn't glory in all the things he's done.

He doesn't say, listen, I've written 14 epistles. He had, if you give him Hebrew, and I think he wrote it. He doesn't say I've traveled more than anybody else.

He doesn't say I've stood before more kings than anybody else. He doesn't say I've been to more countries than anybody else. He doesn't say I'm the most remarkable man around.

He never lists any of those things at all. He says I glory in tribulation and in necessities and in reproaches. Now I say the first thing, let's say, involved in being a soldier is their surrender.

And with surrender somewhere, both in the immediate context of the word there, when we start off and right down the road, surrender means there's going to be sacrifice. Now, let's, we can't do it. If you could put all the achievements of the apostle Paul there.

Think when kings used to tremble in front of him. That's a joke as far as I'm concerned. I don't mean it.

It's silly in that sense. I get a great lift out of it. At the top of my Bible it says, for instance, in Acts 26, Paul before Agrippa.

That's pure nonsense. It was Agrippa before Paul. Paul hardly got going when he says, hey, oldie, you're going to persuade me to be a Christian.

He stands up before King Felix and Felix's knees began to knock together and he says, hold it, hold it. Felix trembled. Well, why does he come to this fantastic conclusion? Why did God get out of this life so much? Famous last words.

The most famous of all, the words of Jesus. When he said it is finished, the second most famous, I think, of these of the apostle Paul. I've fought a good fight, I've finished my course, I've kept the faith.

Now, those are the famous last words. What was the first word that Paul said? Because you can't have the last without the first. What's the secret of his life? Fun.

Good. What will thou have me to do? That was his constant theme right through his life. You can't have that without this.

That's why he said, I die daily. There was a time when he died, he went to the cross himself. If you come further down in this chapter, in the, which we were looking at there, the second chapter of 2 Timothy, it says there in verse 11, it is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also, pardon me, if we're dead with him, we shall also live with him.

Well, you remember in Romans 6, he says we are crucified with Christ. You can't do much with a dead man. I mean, he may have been a miser while he lived, and you go shake some shekels of gold at the side of him when he's dead, he's not going to grasp them.

He could have been the greatest virtuoso the world has ever known, playing the violin, and you go and play something on the violin, he don't move it. The man is dead. In other words, he does not respond to anything that previously he has magnetized him and fascinated him and mesmerized him.

And Paul turns his back. He's already got a record in one sense. He says there in Acts 26 again, he says, well, with all my religion and piety, and I passed off as the number one hero in my community, and yet he says, when I think of it, I hailed men and women to prison.

I chased them to a strange city. He had destroyed homes and that other thing. And now God has brought that fantastic miracle of grace in him.

I think there's nothing more wonderful to me than reading the 26 of Acts where he testifies that on that Damascus road, he says, I was really now threatening. You can almost see the fire coming out of his nostrils. He hates this cult that's written up, this Christianity, that dares to stand against a background of Judaism with all the prophets and the law and the mighty works of God and a bunch of scattered, tattered people come and say that they have a new revelation and they have a power to turn the world upside down.

I was reading, I am still reading a book which is a bit of a toughie, but I suggest you read it. And read it slowly, digest it. It is called The Sky is Red.

It's by Jeffrey Bull, and it's printed by Moody. You know, a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument.

And the reason I can listen to Jeffrey Bull or the Apostle Paul is Jeffrey Bull went to China to learn Chinese and he learned it. And then he slipped into Tibet. And then the communists came later and he was put in a communist prison and they just did about everything except break his faith.

They almost broke his mind. And he was in a terrible state of affliction. And out of it he has, well he wrote, what, When I Engage Yield and I Think God Has the Key.

And this is something a little more advanced than his first book obviously. You know, he says this in the book that, and this really got a hold of me, I'm going to work on it. But he says there are some people content to watch the grave close.

Remember the angels were still watching the grave close. And he says we have a lot of people content to guard the grave close. But the world even today is asking the question where is he who says I have seen the Lord.

And you know, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 he gives you a list of all those people. Jesus was seen of Peter and he was seen of Mary and he was seen of these. And he was seen of 500 brethren and he says that's alright.

But I want to tell you something that changed the whole world as far as I'm concerned. He was seen of me also. And that makes all the difference.

Going down that Damascus road he said the light shone on me and he was blinded. Well I'm going to play on that and tell you that I suggest to you that seriously this morning I don't think he was anything else but blinded to the rest of his life. He never saw anything.

All he saw was a cross. All he saw was the finished work of Jesus Christ. He could go to any hell hole he liked.

You could send him down into Corinth. After all, who has a life like the apostle Paul. He began his life in the ancient capital of the world which was Tartus.

He finished his life in the military capital of the world which was Rome. In between he went to the religious capital of the world Jerusalem. He went to the intellectual capital of the world in Acts 16 when he went to Athens.

He went to the immoral capital of the world which was Corinth. And it was there you remember where he said I'm not going to philosophize anymore. Oh, he got a colossal intellect.

I'd like to have sat down with the stoics and poets and philosophers and teachers and they saw this little semi-hunchback man come up and sit there and they were startled. They said, wow, this man seems to know everything. He counted their philosophy with philosophy, poetry with poetry, history with history, religion with religion.

God, this guy is oozing with wisdom. And then he led them up the garden path and then finally, as I think Dr. Stuart of Scotland said he sounded the trumpet that only the Christian can sound. Do you know what it was? It was the trumpet of the resurrection.

He said your Moses and all your other people they're still in the dirt but you know what? The Jesus I preach he went down in the dirt and you know what this morning? He didn't say it's alive in him. He says it's alive in me, not in heaven. The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

The most insane thing that men ever did was try to put eternal life to death. After all Jesus was eternal life and they thought you could nail eternal life to a cross. Aren't wise men idiots? He's the sum and substance of all our needs.

Buddha died saying he was searching for life. Jesus said that he was life at the beginning of his ministry. I am the way, the truth and the life.

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.

In other words, he would have embraced with joy the words of Charles Wesley when he said in that lovely hymn, Jesu, lover of my soul, thou, O Christ, art all I want. Now if Christ isn't everything to you, before you get out, before long you'll be smitten with self-pity and sorrow and hardship and you'll be complaining that somebody's riding a better bus than you that our bus always breaks down and they got a new one and we didn't and we've been in a gap longer than someone else and boy, you'll soon have a lot of problems. But if Jesus Christ is the center and the circumference of everything, it doesn't make that much difference anyhow.

Sure there's surrender, sure there's going to be sacrifice. Not only sacrifice, there's going to be strategy because we're against an adversary. And yet the word of God says we're not ignorant of his devices.

Personally, I don't believe the devil can engineer any new thing against you. He's had 6,000 years of practice with human personalities, pretty skilled at it. Don't you get conceited and say, you know, I'm going through things nobody ever went through.

Well, make yourself a medal. I mean, if you're so heroic, make it. Make it as big as a frying pan so everybody will see, you know.

You're not going through anything that somebody hasn't gone through before. Supposing this morning you're in the gulag archipelago. I don't believe that this baloney God wants you to be filled with the spirit and be rich.

There's nothing appeals to people more than selfishness. God will make you rich. God will make it easy.

Praise the Lord. I listened to a testimony this morning. That was great.

But what when God doesn't deliver? Hebrews 11 is wonderful. The first chapter, pardon me, the first part of it baffles me, humiliates me. Why? Because it says those people in the Old Testament subdued kingdoms wrought righteousness obtained promises stopped the mouths of lions.

They even raised the dead. You know, I read that for about 50 years, maybe 60, and then one day just like that as I read it, I said, Oh my. Subdued kingdoms wrought righteousness obtained promises stopped the mouths of lions.

And yet not one of them ever had a Bible. How much they did without it. How little you and I do with it.

It's awesome when you think that God has not spoken to this world for 2,000 years. Oh, he speaks down again to a prophet. We go to a meeting and somebody has a word of prophecy and we all come excited and you've forgotten what it is before you leave the place.

It was a momentary blessing that the men of the caliber that we have here in the New Testament are extremely right. You do get a C.P. Stone here. You do get a Hudson Taylor.

You do get a Jeffrey Bull. You see, God never designed that any of us should be weak in the sense that we see the manifestation of weakness in this day in which we live. There has to be strategy and there has to be suffering.

Now we're in a warfare. And sometimes we stack up all the things that are against us. Do you know what's against us? The world and the flesh and the devil.

You're dead right. That's true. That part of the hostility against us.

The world, the flesh, the devil. But there's a scripture that says that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. Against us is the world, the flesh, and the devil.

What is there for us? Well let me tell you what's for us. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, all these exceeding great and precious promises, 2,000 years of Christian history, when Satan fell he took a third part of the heavenly host, so 2,000 years and two thirds of them are still left on our side. Now what more do you want? You've got against us the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We've got for us the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, two thirds of the heavenly host, all the promises of God, the fellowship of the saints. It's all stacked up on our side, not on the enemy's side. Now I say I can listen to this man because again he has an amazing record.

He's writing to this young man and he's saying, listen, if you look at me there's nothing very charming. I'm quite sure that one of Paul's eyes was slanted like this and his jaw was a bit withered and he limped along like this. He'd never have made it in our day, he didn't have the personality, you know.

When I was a kid nobody talked about personality, they talked about character. Now you've got, you can make a man of personality, all you've got to do is tease his hair, put him a charming suit on and a nice tie or something else. You know, like you fellas, you see a girl at night coming down and go, oh, isn't she a dream? Later you find she is.

But anyhow, you see her at seven o'clock at night, she's so beautiful, you don't want her to slip around at seven o'clock in the morning and see her. You say, they lied to me, they told me that she turned to a princess and she's still Cinderella, she never changed back, she's still got her rags on and doesn't look so good. But the accent today is on personality, it's a cult.

I don't think there was one iota of attraction about the Apostle Paul, all the magnetism in it and he wanted it that way that he gloried in the cross of Jesus Christ. Sure he prayed, he had some marvelous answers to prayer. But he didn't always get through, you don't, don't, don't put a hail on his head, he didn't always get through.

He says, lest I be exalted above measure, this is in Galatians 12, pardon me, it's in 2 Corinthians 12, he says, lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations that were given unto me. Ooh, he could have gloried in the revelations, nobody had them like he had. I say, the secret is this, if you see the Lord every morning in his risen splendor and power and I'm sure that he did that, he not only saw him on the Damascus road, do you remember on one occasion he was caught up into the third heaven, boy that would have made the book, wouldn't it? The Lord would never give a woman a revelation like that because the condition was he hadn't to say anything about it.

But, remember what the Lord said to him, I can't prove this but I think that somewhere maybe that just like John had that revelation on the, on the Isle of Padmas, that one day God gave exactly the same revelation to Paul but he wouldn't let him write it, this is just between you and I, there are some things God will never let you share. You say, I want to testify this week, God gave me a secret, well as soon as you say it you insult God. If you gave me a secret and I said, I was talking with John there, he told me a secret, he likes that girl over there with the blue eyes and the dad's rich, but anyhow, do you think he'd trust me again? Sometimes we remember God said a thing to us, we should have kept it secret, like Mary, she pondered, have you ever thought of Mary and Joseph says, I don't know, I don't understand Mary to me, she looks pregnant but boy, she never said a word to me, I'm a bit baffled, it must have been pretty difficult.

She kept her mouth shut, she didn't say a word about it. The secret of the Lord is with them but fear him, Paul had his secrets, Paul had revelation beyond anybody else, he had ministry beyond anybody else and yet he says in spite of all my revelation, in spite of all my heroism as you think of it, in spite of all my achievements, he says, I prayed for a form in the flesh and it didn't go away and I prayed again and it didn't go away and I prayed again and it didn't go away and you know why it didn't? Because God was going to get more glory with that form in his flesh than if he took it out for the times when God will not answer your prayer, you can't twist God's arm as we say. I received a tape the other day from a lady teacher and a lot of it is very good but she says in John 15 it says that we are to abide in the word and there is only one reason prayers are not answered we don't abide in the word we've got other motives in asking and I thought sister that fits in the American economy but if you were stinking in a hole like again

the Gulag Archipelago or in a prison in China this morning would you dare put that over to the folk who've been there? What about those guys still in Korea from the Korean war? They've been there 25 years there's something like 600 American boys that never came back.

I have a paper this week that says they know the names they know where some of them are the government won't do a thing. Are you going to suggest nobody's prayed with sincerity for them? The older I get the more I realize that great is the mystery of godliness. God can't be explained and God can be experienced.

God says to Paul my strength is pardon me my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Now listen to this for a catalog he says therefore I take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches in necessities in persecutions in distresses in tribulations for Christ's sake. Now can you and I can you really say that you embrace them? You get hold of that particular trial that hardship that difficulty that misrepresentation that thing which has been hurting so long and say Lord I'm not just bearing and saying oh I'm glad there are not twenty five hours in the day I would have died under the pressure.

You say Lord I glory in tribulation I rejoice in it. Why? What does the scripture say? Whom the Lord loveth he makes them prosperous and they have servants and live in easy streets and don't know anything. It doesn't say that in the Amplified even.

What is the scripture? Whom the Lord loveth he and scourgeth every son that he receiveth and the heart is cleansed by the blood the mind is cleansed by the rod Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth the question is what's your breaking point? Can you say to God Lord put a burden on me that nobody else wants to carry? I glory in it. Listen to this word this is from J.B.

Phillips it's a good translation it's English but it's Paul's letter second letter to the Corinthians chapter 6 and this is the way that it's translated by Phillips indeed we want to prove ourselves genuine ministers of God whatever we have to go through patient endurance of troubles or even disasters or floggings or imprisonments and being mobbed and we have to work like slaves in hot weather painting that fence up there but being flogged or imprisoned being mobbed having to work like slaves having to go without food or sleep all this we want to meet with sincerity with insight and patience by sheer kindness and the Holy Spirit with genuine love speaking the plain truth and living by the power of God our sole defence our only weapon is a life of integrity whether we meet honour or

dishonour praise or blame call impostors call nobodies never far from death here we are alive always going through it but never going under isn't that nice previously he said we often get knocked down but we don't get knocked out now if this fight we're in a fight Timothy you're in a fight I want to tell you something it's a fight to the death it's a fight till the end of the line here I am I'm an old veteran here I am I'm worn out my body's limp as you say and I feasted and I fasted I don't always understand him he said I know how to be abased and how to abound I can't I can't find where he abounded he seems to have been abased he's in trouble he's in prison he's in adversity and yet he says they're all grist to my mill they all do something for me it's a very simple maybe it's not quite

the right illustration to give here I'm not sure but I was talking with what we call a health nut not long ago and we were talking about eggs I said well I don't take them I understand they're pretty bad for cholesterol he said no they're not they're good for you there's no cholesterol in eggs well everybody says there is well he said not in the real egg well I don't eat ostrich eggs what kind of eggs do you mean he said well those

eggs that you buy in the shop those white ones are always all white they come from battery heads oh they'll give you cholesterol like mad but if you get hen eggs where the old hen scratches and takes the mineral out of the ground you'll have no trouble with cholesterol you see you're getting the right stuff you're getting the right mixture a lot of us want

heroism but we want it kind of serving on a plate we want maturity but not with hardship not with affliction I want to be clothed but don't strip me look we're up against a relentless foe God not only imputes righteousness to us he imparts righteousness because he says he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous and I'm a righteous man you're a righteous woman and we live in an unrighteous world we're truthful people in an untruthful world we're pure people in an impure world now when the enemy has come in like a flood and if he hasn't come in now well when in God's name is he coming just because we're not in concentration camps America has never been more broken than it is this morning we're more broken homes we're more kids broken with venereal disease under 16

years of age we're more girls broken with babies under 16 years of age we've more homes broken we've more people broken with alcohol we're a broken nation except we've no broken hearts over the broken nation when the enemy has come in like a flood the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard the standard bearer goes forth saying listen we're declaring war as Jeffrey Bull says we're not going to change this materialistic age we're not going to change the world by the time he goes to bed tonight communism will have gained more ground than the Christian church we're not going to upset it with clever dialogue I'm quite sure in my own mind this detente will come to an end I'm quite sure in my own mind this detente will come to an end I'm quite sure in my own mind this come to an end I'm

quite sure in come to an end theatre of the absurd.

You know, it seems to me that the Christian life, or the life of most people who are professing Christians, could be explained in three words.

This is where we were when he founded. Degradation, and then salvation, and then stagnation. We've been lifted out of the pit, praise the Lord.

Isn't it nice? I'm so glad. You know. Paul is saying to this young man, listen, you're a soldier of Jesus Christ, I want to tell you something, you've got a foe, he'll try every trick.

Against you is the world, the flesh of the devil. In you, he will assail you this way, he'll assail your mind. Therefore put on the, as Paul says in Ephesians, put on the helmet of salvation.

What does the helmet do? It guards the mind. Keep your mind staid on him. If your mind is staid on him, the enemy can't get in the same.

I've used the illustration of putting a phonograph disc on, and if I don't press the button and it goes round, well what happens? Well I can take some sugar or sand and pour it on. But supposing I do that, and then I, I take the disc off, the platter off, and I, I throw off the sand and I clean it and I put it on again and I press the button and the thing goes round. Pour sand on now and see what happens.

It'll fly in a thousand directions. If my mind is staid on him, I can't have a vacuum of the mind. My mind must be staid on him on his exceeding great and precious promises.

After all, the goal that God has for us is not just to be saved. The goal is the kingdom of God. He wants his kingdom setting up in the hearts of men and women, not just to rescue them from hell, but to establish the principles of righteousness and holiness in their lives.

That's the goal of God. We're in a warfare. The equipment is this.

He shall receive power. The Holy Ghost is coming upon you. He's going to attack my mind.

He's going to attack my spirit. He's going to attack my body. And yet I have covering for it through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, it doesn't mean, after all, this is a fight to the end. It's a fight with no holds barred. Satan is no gentleman.

He's not going to give up. If he can't attack you one way, he'll attack the other. If he can't come with subtlety, he'll come openly.

If he can't come openly, he'll come through the last chamber you thought of. You know, what there's a psalmist saying in Psalm 1 where he talks about, Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. And then he goes on and so forth.

Well, you know, I don't have much problem with the sinners. I can stand the contradiction of sinners. It's the criticism of saints that gets you down.

It's those folks that you thought were just a little bit more spiritual, and then suddenly with subtlety, something comes that, ooh, it hurts, doesn't it? Let's just say this, maybe I'm, time's up, but let me say just one thing here. This doesn't matter, it goes on film or not. I said I think the greatest honor that men can receive is that given to the Apostle Paul.

When demons said, Jesus we know and Paul we know. When God can look down and say, that girl in Agape, that boy, that fellow in Agape, a few years ago he was the most twisted, corrupt, debauched, lying, deceitful, cheating character, and I just can't get a finger hold on him now. He's walking in God, he's walking in grace, he's obedient to the heavenly vision, and he's pressing on to a certain goal.

For after all, there has to be a goal for all of us. That's great. That's wonderful.

When Satan has to pay respect and say, Jesus I know, and John I know, and Jack I know, and Mary I know, and Kathleen I know. The other thing is when God can put me on exhibition and say to the devil, hey come here a minute, I want to show you something. After all, that's what he did didn't he, with Job? It isn't the challenge of Satan to God, it's the challenge of God to Satan.

Hast thou considered my servant Job? There's nobody like him in the earth. And in what Satan did, he told the truth to us. He didn't ask them, but he told the truth.

What did he do? Well he said, I want to remind you of something God. Do you know the reason why that man is such a good man? He said because his piety is tied up with his prosperity. Now listen to what Satan said.

You, God, you've put a hedge about him. Isn't that an admission? You don't think so? Well cheer up, it is. I believe with Hudson Taylor that by the time a thing gets to you, however devilish it looks and the pastor doesn't have an answer and nobody on the staff here has an answer, that by the time that thing gets to you, it's God's will for you.

Are you suggesting that apart of me, I'm more precious than the crown jewel? So are you. Are you suggesting Satan can come and kick me that way if he wants or push me that way if he wants? Am I a dead leaf that's blown in the wind? Satan says God, you've put a hedge around about your child. Isn't that great? I've got a hedge around me.

I've got the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ around me. I've got the promises of God. I'm well insulated.

I'm not impervious to the world, but I'm not kicked around by the devil. He says, you've got a hedge around about it. You take the hedge away and let me get at him.

And you know what? And I'm so glad of this. God never takes advice, not even from the devil. He doesn't take it from me.

I've tried it often, but he doesn't take it. He doesn't even take it from Satan. You've put a hedge.

All right, this represents Job. Here's the hedge. Take it away and let me get at it.

And God says, I won't do that. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll pull it in a bit nearer.

And go on, do your worst. And he goes and what does he do? Job goes to bed a multimillionaire. He gets up in the morning broke.

Everything's destroyed. Satan goes to report to God. I guess he does this every day, but anyhow, he goes to God.

And God says, how do you get on with Job? Don't know where with him. You take that hedge away. God says, I won't do that.

I'll pull it in a bit nearer. Now the first stroke, he took all his properties, multimillion dollars went down the drain. So he took what? His first stroke was bankruptcy.

He comes again. The hedge has been pulled in and he goes and destroys all the children. He destroys everything in the way of the family.

And he goes back to God. And God says, how did you get on? He says, well, I made it bankrupt yesterday and he didn't scream. And today I killed all his children.

Fancy seven in a row. I know sometimes you said, I wish all you rats would get out of the way, but if they all died, you'd be pretty sorry, wouldn't you? You'd say, I wish they were back again. But anyhow, he lost them all.

All died. Well, now what do you say to this loving God of yours? Job says, well, I'll tell you. The Lord gave and the devil said, eh? What did he say? Oh, oh, I see.

So when anything good comes in your life, you say, the Lord's been so good to me today. It's my birthday and I got a new watch, or my dad wrote and sent me five dollars. My dad called me this week and he said, listen, can't you send ten dollars home? Oh, the Lord only gives good things, eh? We blame the devil.

Job didn't do that. He's like Paul. Paul never said, do pray for me, I'm the prisoner of Nero.

He wouldn't even give the devil credit for Nero. He said, I'm the apostle Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ. Boy, it's nice when you can snub the devil like that, isn't it? He's bankrupt.

He's bereaved. He says, I don't quite understand it. It's a mystery, but the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

And then we missed something important there. Do you know what he says? He shaved his head in worship. Huh? He didn't cry and say, Lord, everybody's criticising me and I'm very puzzled about it.

I feel like giving up and going home. Oh, no. He said the first stroke was bankruptcy, the second stroke is bereavement, and he says, you take that hedge away and let me get out of it.

And he says, all right, all right, there you are, take it away now, go on, get out of it, what are you going to do? And he's smothered with boils from the top of his head to his feet. He couldn't stand, he couldn't sit, he couldn't walk, he was as uncomfortable as ever he could be. And Satan says, I think I've managed it.

Bankruptcy, bereavement, boils. Job's lost everything, he's sitting there on his ash heap and he's itching and so he scratches where he itches the most and in come his friends, very real friends too. Eliphaz the demonite builds up the shoe height, he's a little guy who only has shoe height.

And then there were a lot of others came in and they ridiculed and then his wife came storming in, oh, just like the devil, took everything he had and left him with a...

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