

# This One Thing I Desire

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of desiring a deep relationship with God and living a life of sacrifice and faithfulness in service to Him.*

**Duration:** 58:10

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:1-122, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 3:13-14

**Topics:** "Knowing God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that we do not deserve anything from God. He mentions that we will be naked in God's presence, but through Jesus, we are covered by the robe of righteousness. The preacher expresses gratitude for the love of God, which cannot be bought or destroyed. He also mentions the persecution of the church in various countries and the unknown number of martyrs. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the Apostle Paul's desire to know God above all else and the power of the Word of God throughout history.

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## Transcript

The Apostle Paul, when he said he was a debtor to all men. Lord, we are debtors tonight, to a multitude we cannot number. As we sung this wonderful hymn, break thou the bread of life.

Lord, unseal the seals on that word tonight. Teach us thy word. Lord, I think of men who were martyred in my own country, burned at the stake for publishing the word of God.

Think of men who were cast out of the country. Think of for the hundreds of years it was banished even from England. But Lord, we bless you this book.

Men have burned it and buried it, but it's had many resurrections. We thank you it stood at the graveside of all its persecutors. And you've told us, Lord, that heaven and earth may pass away, but your word will never pass away.

We thank you for the living word, who is now the eternal word in the presence of God. Lord, as we sang about our liberation tonight, long my imprisoned spirit lay. Many of us were not very unclean.

We were bound with self-righteousness, with our own good works, with our own theology, with our own ideas of God. But we bless you, Lord, that you broke our fetters, but at the same time you became fettered. You left the glory of heaven to be fettered in flesh and blood.

You left the blazing glory of eternity to be shut up in the womb of a woman. No wonder it says, he laid his glory by and wrapped him in our clay. Or as we sang tonight, he left his father's throne above, so free to infinite is grace, emptied himself of all but love and bled for Adam's helpless race.

Lord, you have every right to ask us to leave our homes and go to other countries because you left your eternal home. You have every right to ask that we shed our blood because you shed your blood for us. Lord, don't let us die debtors to this generation.

God in heaven, I think of the minority that went to the upper room. I'm convinced you invited the 500 that were there at the resurrection, that 380 of them didn't bother. How 120 went and received that marvelous endowment with power from on high.

Lord, I think of Peter, that stammering fisherman, and you made him a wonderful author, giving us two epistles. I think of Matthew gathering taxes, and then he started gathering texts and gave us the book of Matthew. Lord, we think of these other men.

We thank you you're still in the business, you still lift the beggar from the dunghill and make him a prince unto God. We rejoice, Lord. Whatever you do in our lives is of your grace, it's of your mercy, it's of your compassion.

We don't deserve a single thing. We will be naked in your presence tonight, but for the robe of righteousness you see over us through Jesus, our Lord. We thank you, Lord, as we sang already, this wonderful love of God, money cannot buy it, and substance cannot buy it, and waters cannot drown it.

We think of the Church of Jesus Christ tonight, persecuted in Russia, in Afghanistan, in China, in other countries, Lord. We don't know how many martyrs have been made today. Rather than renounce their faith, they renounce their lives.

It's so easy for us to sing, we'll give our lives. So easy, Father, in an atmosphere where the guards are not waiting for us to leave this building and take our name and number and report us. We thank you we are free indeed tonight, but our freedom only angers us that there are millions in darkness, in the shadow of death.

We pay your bless your holy work to our hearts tonight, and then give us a spirit of prayer. We recognize a fresh Lord. Without thee we can do nothing, we are nothing, we can be nothing.

And yet the other side of the coin is, with God all things are possible. We thank you you've never known failure, Lord. You've been under pressure from nations, from kings, and yet not once have you failed.

We bless you for your faithfulness. How often we sing, great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father. There is no shadow of turning with thee.

We've proved that again this week in our individual lives. You blessed us in our going out and now coming in. You brought us to this place.

Others are laid on one side with sickness, with disease, with other things. We thank you for the privilege of fellowship tonight. Lord, Lord, kindle afresh our love, our zeal, our desires for God in Jesus name.

Okay, let's be seated. Let's all cough together and it'll be over. Good, that's a good one.

Don't practice, just cough if you have to. How are we going now? The book of Psalms, okay. Psalm 27, excuse me, Psalm 27.

Let's read from verse one. I want to pass a few quick thoughts on, I hope tonight gives more time to prayer. A lot of people needing prayer tonight.

Psalm 27, the Lord is my light and my salvation. How many of you have the King James Version? I thought you looked an intelligent crowd, good. Anybody, anybody at the NIV? Throw it away, okay.

NIV, I'll tell you what that means. It means Nasty Imperfect Version. It's the same text as a Jehovah Witness Bible, remember.

Don't give me one now, Bernie, if you give me one. Psalm 27, verse one. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though a horse should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

One thing of the Lord have I desired, and that will I seek after. And then he has three requests here. One, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Two, to behold the beauty of the Lord my God, and to inquire in his temple. If you were here last week, and the week before, we were in Philippians chapter three, where Paul said, one thing of our desire of the Lord, that will I seek after. Now let me catch you on the spot.

I won't ask you to say it openly. Just say to the Lord. If you could have one prayer answer tonight, what would it be? Don't tell me, just think of it and answer it to the Lord.

Just one prayer, the Lord said, I give you one stupendous answer to prayer, what would it be? Sister, no I won't ask you. What would it be? Oh, if you're a preacher, Lord make me more eloquent. I've said this, preachers get mad at me for saying, you don't need to be clever to be preach.

If to preach, if you could, I couldn't do it. You need a good memory, a vocabulary, a bit of personality, very little. But anyhow, we've all kinds of preachers, good Lord, all over the country.

If I could have one thing, what would I have? Remember Paul says, and I remember, remind you of his background, his fabulous background, he'd already written 14 epistles, if you give him Hebrews, and I think he wrote that. And then he's still saying in prison with his back to the wall, his knees on the ground, he's looking through into eternity. One thing.

What was the one thing he wanted? That I may know him. Does it matter who you know if you don't know God? These young preachers come to see me, and you know, they want to impress me. They remind me of a fellow not long ago, he said, I was talking to my friend Joe, the pastor.

Oh, he was so excited. I said, what are you excited about? I went to a big meeting for three days. And you know, yesterday morning I had dinner, I had breakfast with Billy Graham.

Oh, I mean, what's heaven after that? Breakfast with Billy Graham? Come on, you're kidding. Hamlet, what did you have? Well, first of all, we had orange juice. Or was it prune juice? Maybe it was prune juice, but it wasn't juice anyhow.

And then he said we had scrambled eggs, and bacon, and what do they call them? Black-eyed peas? No, blueberry muffin. Did you have breakfast with Billy? Yes, I did. What he forgot to say was, so did 300 other pastors.

You see, it's time to hitch on to, oh, I had breakfast with Billy Graham. Well, I shall count with him. I talked to him once, as a matter of fact.

Isn't that wonderful? I don't sleep much after that, but anyhow. You know, we're so wanting, particularly, preachers have their own temptations. There's no question about that at all.

I believe the condition of America tonight is not due to AIDS. It's not due to humanism, nor Mormonism, nor communism, nor Romanism, nor any other ism. I believe the condition of America tonight is due to the preachers.

Lost vision, lost anointing, lost power. Sraggart says, in a tape I have on my desk, the reason that the nation's in this mess is that the preachers have lost sight of the rapture. Forget it.

He knows, he's dealt with a man recently, a man who would swear on a stack of Bibles that height. He believed in the rapture, but he was carrying on with women in his church. There are millions of people in America who believe in the rapture.

It's not that we've lost sight of. We've lost sight of the judgment seat. That's what we've lost sight of.

That every penny we earn, I was singing tonight as dear Martha was locking the door there, we'd sing that hymn, take my life and let it be consecrated. And I've said sometimes, you know, it says take my silver and my gold, take my life, take my heart, take my love, take my lips and let them move, take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee. Take my heart, it is thine own.

But we don't say anything about time. Yes, we do. Take my moments and my days.

Every minute you've had today was God's. What do you do with it? What you wanted to do? Every penny you have is God's. What do you do with it? What you want to do? Either way, totally his or we're not his.

I don't believe in departmental sanctification. I believe we give him spirit, soul and body. We don't just give him the Sabbath day.

Every day is a Sabbath if you walk in the light. I think it's a great danger. I must have an hour with God before I go to work.

What do you do with the next 23? You live as you like? An hour's devotion can be a trap. Oh well, I've done my duties. At one time when we were wealthy, we weren't wealthy, but we had a chauffeur to offer us everywhere around the nation.

In the morning, Martha would say, we get on the road at seven. You know, that was when there were no speed limits. And so we flew most of the day.

Remember the scripture, lo I am with you. So we went as low as we could. Travelled as fast as we could.

We used to do 300 miles before lunch anyhow. This fellow wouldn't get in the car before he'd read at least three. He read what? Uh, daily light.

Uh, number one, he'd always read that all his life. Daily light. And the second one was my utmost, greatest, highest.

Remember that by who? Oswald Chambers. He read three of them. He wouldn't get in the car without it.

But you know, there's a kind of a due that he paid. I've paid my dues now, the day is mine. Lots of people do that.

It can be a trap. Every moment of the day is Jesus Christ. Loan to me.

Take my moments and my days. Let them flow in ceaseless praise. That's what it's all about anyhow.

But it's, if I could have one request, what I request. It says, one thing of my desire of the Lord, that will I seek after. That word, you know, the English isn't very expressive really.

If you want to hear the Bible read, you'd have to go to Wales. The people sing there, you know, without singing. There's so many cadences in their voices.

You can get a, a preacher there that doesn't believe a scrap of scripture. He could recite the 23rd Psalm and leave you weeping. Just by his oratory.

He says something like this, the Lord is my shepherd. That's all I want. He maketh me to lie down in grief.

He restores my soul. He leadeth me in the past. You think he's a Shakespearean actor? You know, there was a great Scottish preacher one day, got envious because the theater up the road, a Shakespearean theater, was packed every night.

And this church was half full or half empty. I think it was full of empty people actually, but anyhow. He said one day to the actor, he went up the road, he said, people turned their way every, every night from your, your display.

What's the secret? He said, well sir, do you think he could be this? That you have a profession, I have one. In my profession, I make artificial things look real, and you make real things look artificial. You see, we seldom have eternity in our meetings.

We're so conscious of this, conscious of time. But the Psalmist here says, one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after. I think Helen Sparrow says in her translation of this, when she comes to desire, my soul is captivated, my soul is desired, my soul has desired him, is captivated by him.

This I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after. Number one, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord. Remember, this is a man that wrote the 91st Psalm.

How does that begin? He that dwelleth. He's not a visitor, it's not an excursion. He wants to stay in the habitation.

Doesn't Ephesians 2 begin by saying, we were dead in trespasses and in sin? And then it ends with that majestic statement, we're the habitation of God. Do you think anybody's been suspicious about you today, that God inhabits you? Inhabits your conversation? Inhabits your desires? Inhabits your actions? You know, the older I get, and I get old too quickly, but you get old at the same rate, so don't feel so comfortable. Just a day at a time, it's too long.

But the older I get, I realize this, the only thing that matters is that I know God. Didn't we quote last week from the 17th chapter of John, chapter 2, the reason Jesus came into the world was not to save us from hell, that's a fringe benefit as vast as it is. The reason he came into the world is he says that they may know thee, the only true God.

You know, the heathen put us to shame with their sacrifices. Boy, some people, they have to grind money out of people with tithes. But you know, when you get down to it, you recognize somebody like the, what's the Church of God, the big one? No.

No, what's the old fellow that died recently, Martha? Yeah, yeah, friend of Jacob's, but anyhow. God will tell you how much. You know what these people do, they have three tithes.

They pay three tithes, not one. And don't for heaven's sake think you'll be rewarded for paying your tithe, you won't. That's God's income tax, you get nothing for it.

All you get is what you give after that, tithes and offerings. The tithe is his, the offering is yours. Except, of course, if you really sing, take my silver and my gold, you lose all your rights.

You know, some of our meetings are so reckless. One of these days we wake up and we all start shouting and praising God. How vast is, comprehensive is the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. Take my hands, take my mind, take my will and make it thine. Some of the TV boys got that mixed up, they say, take your will and make it mine.

They want you to give while you're living and give while you're dying. They got mixed up, they read the scripture, you know, what it says, feed the flock, they thought they said fleece the flock. That's it.

I think the other scripture, watch and pray, they exchange it to watch and pay. Watch me and then pay. There's going to be a tremendous shock before too long.

You know, once the money value goes down, there'll be a lot of changes in ministries. Absolutely. What about when we can't afford to buy gas, what do we do? Walk, meet in the fields, or what? Well, in other countries they have this horrible situation, and yet we're free.

Out of our freedom, we make a license of it anyhow. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after that, may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. In the next psalm, no, next but one, Psalm 29 and verse two, he says, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Not in the beauty of his holiness, merely, but in the beauty of our holiness. When we're purged, when he's come to cleanse us, cleansed our affections, cleansed our desires, when we have become the habitation of God. Is there anything greater than that in the scripture? I think it was Newton, again, that wrote that hymn we sang tonight.

He has a hymn in which he says, uh, let me get all of this here now. I thought I had it, I haven't got it. Oh, how can it be thou heavenly king, that thou dost us to glory bring? Make slaves the partners of thy throne, decked with a never fading crown.

You think of that? What does he say? He says that I may know thee, Paul said, the only true God. I don't know who this man is, I can't identify him, whether he's a psalmist or not. But it does say at the top of the psalm here, a psalm of David.

But the other versions say, the son of Korah, one of the sons of Korah, they were nothing more or less than what we would call the janitors in the house of God. And later he says, I'd rather spend a day in the courts of God than a thousand anywhere else. Is the house of God as precious to us? You have the great hymn writer, Isaac Watts, gave us a great hymn, uh, when I surveyed the wondrous cross.

He also wrote, joy to the world, the Lord is come. He also wrote, we're marching to Zion. And it used to be that the children of Israel took the last of the Psalms from Psalm 115 to Psalm 150, and they marched to Zion, clapping their hands, marching to Zion, the beautiful city of God.

They love the city of God. What does a psalmist say? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue lose its cunning, let my hand lose its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. They established it so great because it was the habitation of God.

I don't care if I go dummy, he said. After all, deaf and dumb people can worship God too. I'm not facetious here, but it puzzles me.

What, if a deaf and dumb person, uh, gets a baptism, how do they speak in tongues? No, I'm facetious. Do you know the answer to that? There must be a difference. Now you got puzzled.

Don't worry about it, I'll get back on track, hopefully. What's your goal in life? If the Lord says, you're going to have one request in your life, what would it be? That I may know thee, the only true God? Somebody called Brooks, F. Brooks, I don't know if it's Francis or Frances or who, wrote this lovely poem. I've never memorized this, but it sums up what I think about it.

My goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessing, but thee, my God. It is his to lead me there. To where? To God.

Not mine, but his, at any cost, dear Lord, by any road. So faith bounds forward to its goal in God, and love can trust her Lord to lead her there. Upheld by him, my soul is following hard, till God hath full fulfilled my deepest prayer.

No matter if the way be sometimes dark, no matter though the cost be often great, he knows how I best shall reach the mark. The way that leads to him must needs be straight. One thing I know, I cannot say him nay.

One thing I do, I press toward my Lord. My God, my glory here from day to day, and in the glory there, my great reward. Do you want to meet God? Do you want to be a stranger when you meet him? I've told you more than once, and I mean it.

I want to so live that without a minute's notice that all can come into heaven. I won't be embarrassed when I get there, and he won't be embarrassed that I've arrived. I'm walking in all the light God has given me.

See, that's why this man will say, you've got to go back into the text. You don't need to be smart as I've told you. What does it say here? One thing of our desire of the Lord, that will I seek after.

Well, let's expound it from itself. You know the old saying, a text without its context is a pretext. That's a special one for my friend, but anyhow.

But what's it saying? One thing I desire of the Lord, that will I seek after. Why does he desire the Lord so much? Well, look at verse one. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Come on now. The Lord is my light. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him.

He appears on the Damascus road and the sun looks gray. He's so brilliant, the blinding glory. When he goes to the heaven, it has no use sun, because he is the light.

He can, just with this sun we have, he can shine all over the place. Can't he take this little cramped, shrunken heart of mine and fill it with light? We're no longer children of darkness really. If we've been born again, we're children of light and we're to walk in the light.

You can't step in and out, in and out, in and out. You can't be dead and alive. You're either alive or dead.

I told you a lady asked me one day, do you pray for the dead? I said, no, I preach to them. Sure I do. Every time I go to the average church, every row is death row.

Because they're dead in trespasses and in sin, and I'm not being facetious. Deacons, who in the world are they? They're dead. In fact, Ruskin, the great English man you may remember, he was a great art critic.

He defined preaching as 30 minutes to raise the dead. Did you ever doubt that before? You didn't hear it? Well, remember it's all next week when you're preaching. 30 minutes to raise the dead.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night. I was dead in trespasses and in sin. Did you think about that today? Or did you just read your bible and pray for the mysteries and say, Lord you're so good.

Oh, I've got such a nice new car and I've got new other things and you're so gracious to me. What about when he pulls all the props away? I have a message I like to preach. I got called away to preach today.

I wouldn't go, but I'm getting very choosy now. I mean, you've got to go to the biggest congregation to get the biggest offerings. So that's why I don't go.

They asked me to go preach to a thousand preachers a few days ago. Well, I knew they'd no money, so I didn't go. No, it was too far to go and stay away so long.

I can't afford it at my age. I need my time. I can't spend a day traveling a day.

Preach three times a day to preachers, and then the next day. Then another call comes. Preach to a thousand young preacher pastors, and I didn't go.

Next, a week tomorrow I'm going to preach to all the black preachers in this area. Down in, where is it Martha Day? Pastor Walker's pastor. Pardon? Yeah, Tyler Christian.

Thank you so much. So you pray a week tomorrow. I'm going to preach to all these black brothers.

I'd rather be a black man with a white heart than a white man with a black heart anyhow. Then on the Tuesday after that, I'm going to preach to a bunch of Baptists. Boy, they need grace.

That's at, where is that? That's at West, West Irwin Baptist Church at 10 in the morning, a week Tuesday. I don't know, some kind of a little conference they're having anyhow. You know, usually when I go to a church, someone will come up and say, Brother Raymond, you talk straight enough.

Don't, don't rock the boat. I say, that's my commission. I'm here to rock the boat, not to sink it, but to rock it.

You might think, you might think it's sinking when God gets going, but anyhow, don't jump overboard until you get through. Sure it's right. Do you think I'd tell you if it was wrong? I wouldn't have.

Let me skip to Psalm 84 for a few minutes, and we're going to pray. Because you've got the same strain here. Remember when we quoted from the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3, what were we talking about? If by any means I may reach it, I press toward the mark.

There's energy there, there's effort there, there's obstruction, there's difficulty. You have to sweep every blessed thing on one side, your affections, your interests. Again, in the Christian life, the good is the enemy of the best.

The devil won't tempt you to get drunk tonight, or go on with some whore. He'll get you to waste your time, and think, oh I have plenty of time, I'm young, are you? Somebody called my wife the other day, and said she's lovely, and she is, she's beautiful, and she's going to have her birthday soon. And she said, no, only the, only the, only the good die young.

She said, that's why I'm still living. Of course, that's a reflection on us too, isn't it? No, God takes us when he wants us. You can't die a moment before your time, forget it.

I got hold of that in an aeroplane one day, when the thing nearly was going to turn over. I said, the Lord has the keys of death and of hell, so I'm okay. Not that I like flying, it's for the birds, but anyhow.

What's Psalm 84 say? Psalm 84 verse 1, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord. The other translation says, how lovely are thy dwellings. A tabernacle.

My dear old granny, Methodist grandmother, she was rather oversized, and she had a huge rocking chair, and she used to wear, always, a blue and white check apron. And I'd go in, she'd say, Lenny, put her hand up, and I'd sit, and I knew what she'd do. She'd sing, Take Time to be Holy, or something else.

She'd reach the corners of that apron, and throw it over her head, and put her arms in like this. And then she'd sit and rock, and meditate, sing hymns, or pray. I said, Granny, why do you throw that thing over your head? She said, this is my tabernacle.

This is a dwelling place. The habitation where she met with God. She was a precious, marvelous, wonderful old lady.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. Now look here, this is concentrated for you. My soul longeth, even fainteth, for the courts of my Lord.

My heart, my flesh. What's he got there? My soul, my heart, my flesh, cry out for the living God. You can't get much more depth than that, can you? My whole being.

I don't think we have the hymn. There's a hymn, a beautiful hymn. Again, it's Methodist, but there you are, written by a Presbyterian.

Fill thou my life, O Lord my God, in every part with praise, that my whole being may proclaim thy being and thy ways. Not for the lip of praise alone, nor in a praising heart, I ask, but for a life made up of praise in every part. Praise in the common things of life, its goings out and in.

Praise in each duty and each deed, however small or mean. So shall no part of day or night from sacredness be free, but my whole life in every step be fellowship with thee. And that's what God wants.

He doesn't want some erratic, he doesn't want us zealous in meetings, as cold as ice outside. He doesn't want us fervent in spirit, just because there's a bunch of us around together, which is good, because we should spark each other off. But by the same token, he wants my whole being.

And I want my whole being to proclaim his being and his ways. You see, the symbol of the Church of Jesus Christ is not a cross. The cross is pagan.

The symbol of the Church of Jesus Christ is a tongue of fire. I told you maybe, we're in Gillingham, which is about 70 miles east of London. We had a day of conference.

If you've read Brother Andrew's book, what's it called now, The Smuggler, I gave him the title for that, and I got no fee for it. I gave him the title. In that book he mentions a man called Uncle Hoppy.

Uncle Hoppy was in that meeting that night. He's a man that gave, he asked God, let me make a million, wasn't he, Martha? A million sterling, which at that time was five million dollars. He made it and gave it to missions.

Uncle Hoppy was in the prayer meeting. We let the people go home, and the others, the team of us, six of us, we knelt at the front of the communion ring, and we prayed from, I guess, around nine till maybe two in the morning. And there's tremendous breathing of God.

There's an old lady at the back of the building in a wheelchair. And as we went out, we said, Granny, so gracious of you to stay at this terrible hour. It's after two o'clock.

Wasn't it wonderful? I said, yes. But wonderful presence of God. I said, yes, I, yeah, I felt the presence of God.

Didn't you see it? I said, uh, I thought, what, the old lady had visions or something. I said, see it. She said, yes, just about half past one.

You remember there's a urge, a surging of power, yes. She said, a tongue of fire went to the first brother and went on the head of every one of you, right across the front. The six of you were praying there.

That's a symbol, a tongue of fire. What were we going to do? Our God is a consuming fire. His ministers are a flame of fire.

Where is the fire? Where is the fire? William Booth put his banner up. I have a little Salvation Army, uh, flag in my office. It has on blood and fire.

Remember he was kicked out of Methodism. He was a half Jew and a half Gentile. He had a brilliant wife, a praying wife.

She was the power behind the throne. He was the orator. He was the hellfire preacher.

But he has on his banner blood and fire. I talked one afternoon with, uh, with the closest friend that, uh, old William Booth had in a place called Rue Banner on the hills of Wales. And he told me about the marvelous prayer meetings they had in those early days in the 1870s and 1880s.

This guy was 80 years of age and this was 1930, 30, 30, 31, 1932. And he was as buoyant and vigorous. His eyes almost lit up like fireballs.

He told me about the prayer meetings. He told me about being in a meeting where there were a thousand people and at the back the prostitutes and over here the thieves and drunks and rough-looking men. And an old Booth had preached and nobody moved.

So he turned around and he says to the officers, pray! So everybody looks down and prays. They prayed about 10 minutes, nothing happened. So he turned again and says, pray! And he said, Mr. Ramel, people will not believe this when you tell them a few years ahead.

If you get to be my age. But he was 82 then, so I have two to go. And he said, you know what? When men wrestled with the spirit, they had small hymn books and they would shred their hymn books.

They were so nervous, they would shred their hymn books. Where those men sat, there were piles of, uh, of, uh, what do I say? Pages, thank you. Torn up.

They were instant. The same thing happened with Nicholson in 1926 when they had revival in Ireland. I don't believe there are six people in America ever seen revival.

Holy Ghost revival. Oh, the Holy Spirit's brooding and five minutes after the guy shuts the meeting down. The difference between evangelism and revival.

In evangelism you make an article, they go out smiling, they light their cigarettes when they get outside, or rush for some coffee, or rush home to TV. They don't do that in revival. They stay two or three hours or four hours.

What about that book, uh, Welsh Revival? How much? I want to sell it. How much can we sell it for? A dollar fifty? No, that you have. I want you to order some.

Yeah, that's, uh, two dollars, uh, forty percent off if you order twenty. One fifty, it's worth ten dollars. So, will we get some? You can't get them for next week.

We will get them. And read about the Welsh Revival. Where the preacher would sit on the front pew and then open his mouth for four hours.

Anyhow, this dead man of God said, look, the preachers will get together and nudge each other, pray. The old general's getting angry. And he said, he'd pray, and suddenly the Spirit would lift men from the back of

the auditorium over the heads of a thousand people and drop them at the altar, groaning in conviction.

Dear Lord, we think we've seen revival. That would scare the Pentecostals. Why not? We talk about an omnipotent God, and dear God, he's a plastic Christ that we have.

He's not a risen, resurrected, glorified Son of God. Do you wonder, this man says, I'm thirsting for the house of God. He's in exile.

He's been shut away. The enemies are taunting him. Let me look at my Bible and my testament here.

My soul longeth, verse 2 of Psalm 84, longeth, even fainteth, for the courts of the living God. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. He only uses that in all his psalms, again, once, that's in Psalm 42 and verse 2. A living God.

How often do you leave the sanctuary, wherever you go, saying the living God was there? He touched me with life. I remember the first time I heard that in an auditorium with Miss Kuhlman and Dave Wilkerson, a packed audience, singing. She had a terrible voice, and she struck up, sounded like a bass drummer.

He touched me. I thought, oh, mercy, she's clairvoyant or something. But did he touch me? Did he touch me? Am I alive in him? What are you seeing tonight? Long thy imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night.

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I woke the dungeon flame with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free.

I rose, went forth, and followed thee. You have to be quick and do a dead in trespasses and in sin. But this man again, here, listen, he's got everything in this.

My soul longeth, yet even fainteth, or I go pale with exertion after God. For the courts of the Lord, my heart, my flesh crieth out for the living God. Going back to 27 a minute here.

One thing I've desired of the Lord, I want the Lord. Go back to verse 1 a minute, let's run through this quickly. Chapter 27, verse 1, the Lord is my light and my salvation.

He is my light, so I don't need to walk in darkness. He is my strength, he says, so I don't need to walk in weakness. I will dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord.

We used to sing often, and you'll remember it. It doesn't need to be too old to remember, I used to sing so often, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. I spoke once, I told a class, I said, next week I want to speak on spiritual cosmetics.

That got the ladies. The king's daughter is all glorious within. Her garments are what? Beautiful and pure.

You know, that's a lost word, purity is forgotten now. We're so used to mixture, we're so used to filth. Even in the house of God, there are very few places where there's any purity anymore.

Purity of doctrine, purity in prayer. This man says, my heart and flesh cry out for the living God. One thing about this side of the Lord, what does he desire? To be liberated? He's a captive, no.

For his enemies to be subdued, not just there. He says, I'm starving. I remember the glory that used to come down in a sanctuary, and here I am amongst these heathens, among these who would tear me

apart.

But he says, the Lord is my light, the Lord is my strength. Well, isn't it true, he's everything I need? We used to sing that. He's everything I need.

Wesley got into it, he must have done, because he wrote a hymn called, I don't think we've ever sung that. And then he has this phrase, I turn it over in my mind almost every day, thou, O Christ, art all I want, plus what? Plus nothing. He is my all, he is my everything, he's my alpha, my omega, the beginning and the end, everything in between.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in thee I find. Can I exhaust God? I can embarrass him by my unbelief and foolishness and disobedience, but there's no way I can put a strain on God. He's the essence of everything, life, power, wisdom, and transferred to us, Paul says, he's made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Makes you wonder why there's so much stupidity in the church, so much unbelief, so much uncleanness. Thou, O Christ, art all I want. Sing that a bit to you, we'll sing it next Sunday now, next Sunday, I mean next Friday.

Well somebody told me now, they said, Friday is my Sunday, so it is mine. It's my Sabbath, I come here. They say, do you have a congregation? Yes, good, good congregation.

Rich? Yes, we're rich evangelists, we're poor people, and others come and you get a good offering, they say, yes, we offer praise. That's all I can get out of Jacob anyhow. Thou, O Christ, art all I want.

Then what about that other beautiful hymn, I sang it as a kid in England at four years of age. Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand. I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place.

I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of thy face. Is that true? Or do you want his face plus? Hmm? If you could pray one prayer, think of it before you go to bed tonight. If the Lord said, I'll give you one, one tremendous answer to prayer before you, what would it be? Lord, reveal yourself in your glory, in your majesty.

Unfold the mystery of godliness to me. I don't want to be an average Christian. I'm told time and time again, I'm sick of mediocrity.

I'm believing God is going to raise up men out of this fellowship different, different anointings in prayer, different depths. In prayer we need to go from water to the ankles, to the knees, to the loins, and waters to swim in. We don't touch the immensity of God.

I think we're an embarrassment to him. I've said often enough, I'm embarrassed to be a member of the church today, because it's an embarrassment to God. Where is the supernatural? The church isn't stuck with the supernatural, it's stuck with the superficial.

And supernatural, I'm not just thinking about miracles, physical, they're all right. I've seen all kinds of them, hundreds of them, under different minutes. There was no money to buy it.

It was a day of terrible lethargy, spiritually, death, and unbelief. Remember, there'd been a big revival in 1859 in Ireland. There was a revival in Wales.

I have a book on my shelves called *This Year of Grace*, written by, I think it was a bishop in the Church of Ireland in 1859. You see, I was going to say Westley, pardon me. Spurgeon came to this country in 1857, and it was then that they started praying.

Was it Lanphier? Come on you, say hello. Lanphier, a businessman, got three people to pray with him, three men. Within a month there were 3,000, praying every lunch hour in New York.

It spread to Philadelphia. There were 2,000 praying at the same time the 3,000 were praying. It spread down to, thank you dear, Cincinnati.

Bother you, history is good to me. Cincinnati, 2,000 were praying. Can you imagine 7,000 men all praying in Cincinnati? And Spurgeon caught the drift.

He said, listen, when he got back to England, he said, the wind blows nine months of the year. It does, from New York to England. And he said, the wind of the Spirit is coming this way.

They're praying for revival. That was in 1857. He said, revival will come to this country for a bit.

So people got praying. 58, there was a little breath, 59 revival came. Burst like a bomb in Ireland.

Burst like a bomb in Scotland. And even in this country. But in Wales particularly, they're very fiery people by temperament.

They're like the Latins. They get very excited. It's great to go to a Welsh meeting if it's really anointed.

It's good to go to any meeting if it's anointed. You go to the jailhouse or White House, it doesn't make much difference. Same thing, but anyhow.

We know so little of God. I want to quote a poem to you quick. Canting wrote it.

I'll tell you how it starts. Thinking of God as a fire, see how great a flame has sparked. What did Jesus say? To bring fire on earth am I come.

But it's not given yet. It's withheld. Why? Because Pentecost had to come.

And the symbol there was a fire that came upon them. It wasn't just speaking in tongues, miraculous as it was. And remember the tongues there are not the same as quoted in 1 Corinthians.

They were languages. The brother that runs the tabernacle in Brooklyn, he was in Lima, Peru a few months ago. Maybe I told you.

They had street meetings. Instead of getting an auditorium, they went round the streets. They talked with groups of people all over at parks or street corners.

And a man's shaggy beard, poor guy, had hardly any clothes on his back. And he just kept saying to Jim, symbol of that precious pastor, uh, baptism, baptism. He did this.

So Jim put his hands on him. Oh, he said, you Christian? Yeah. He was from the bush.

He could hardly speak English. He couldn't speak English. It was a cross between, I don't know what they are, Portuguese and Indian.

And I don't know what he had in his blood. But Jim put his hand on him and prayed for him that the baptism of the Holy Ghost. And like that, he poured out a torrent of pure English.

He didn't know a word of it. Hudson Taylor said, if you're going to the mission field, claim the gift of tongues. A man told me his father was going down the Yangtze River.

And on those boats, that big yellow rotten river they have. And instead of putting seats this way, they put them lengthway. And so you could sit near the edge of the water, watching the water go past.

I could sit on the second row or the third row. He said, my daddy was on the second row. And he was talking about God.

And he said an old man behind him put his hands on his shoulders and prayed for him. And he said immediately he spoke in tongues. Who was the man that did it? Hudson Taylor.

He never spoke in tongues in his life. But God used him to communicate a blessing to this man. I don't think tongues is a total answer.

Good Lord, you've hundreds of Pentecostal churches as dead as mutton. The secret is the Holy Ghost. We'll sing it next week.

We'll sing the other side of that hymn there. We sang tonight, Thou the Rose of Sharon. We'll sing the other one next week.

Once it was a blessing, now it is the Lord. Once it was the feeling, now it is his word. Once his gifts I wanted, now the giver own.

Once for self I labored, now himself alone. You see, that little guy that wrote that, didn't he? When money was money at the end of the last century, he had a five-figure salary. He had carriages and a horse to drive him to the church.

He gave it all up at Presbyterian. He got filled with the Spirit of God. What did he do? He founded the Christian Mystery Alliance.

They have 1,400 mysteries tonight. Out of one man, they gave up a wealthy pastor and settled down there and just called Christians Sunday afternoon. It was to be an alliance of Christians to pray for the mission field.

He never intended it to be a denomination, but it became a denomination. But you see, God gave every part of him. He gave his spirit, his soul and body, my heart and my flesh.

Is it true? Is your number one desire tonight to say with the Psalmists or with Paul that I may know him, my heart and my flesh, cry out for the living God more than anything else, more than any creature comfort, more than any power to preach, more than any knowledge of the Word? I want God. My goal is God himself and I won't let go until I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And remember what it cost that fellow.

And I'm through. Went to pray. What happened? He went in there, a wealthy man.

He went in, an upright, strong man. How did he come out of the night of prayer? He came out with a limping leg, dragging a leg the rest of his life. That's his legacy.

You can't have the full total blessing of God without suffering somewhere. Something's going to suffer. Maybe a friendship, maybe business.

It may be throwing your theology on one side. You may have to drag a withered leg, as it were. But what a blessing.

What did he become? The father of the patriarchs? One of the most amazing men in history. He didn't let go. The first part, he tried to get away from the angel.

The second part, the angel tried to get away from him. And he said, I won't let you go. Again, Wesley has a lovely hymn on that.

Find an old Wesleyan hymn book, read it. The tune is called Wrestling Jacob. I'm trying to think of the start of the hymn, I can't.

But one stanza says, Wrestling, I will not let thee go until I thy name and nature know. It not only changed him physically, it changed him spiritually. He went into the place an ornery herdsman with cattle.

He came out a prince with God. He's no longer Jacob, but Israel. And then Wesley should get proud in the 41st chapter of Isaiah, you have it there, where God says, Jacob, fear not thou worm Jacob.

Oh, we hate that, don't we? Baptists in the new hymn book, they've taken that hymn. What's the hymn? Would he devote that sacred head for such a worm as I? Me, a worm? I'm a Ph.D. Me, a worm? Oh, mercy, I graduated in the greatest seminary in town. Such a worm as I? Come on, it's the picture of Jesus, isn't it, Psalm 22? I'm a worm and no man.

If you ever get above that, brother, you're sunk. As long as you can stay in the dust and reckon that... I've never seen an attractive worm, have you? You have? Where, in some other country? I don't mean the girl you once called a worm, I mean a real worm. A worm, attractive, it has no legs, it has no feet, it has no eyes, it has no hands, it has no wings.

It's the most helpless thing in the world. A little boy can take it and tear it apart. And yet God says, fear not thou worm Jacob, for thou shalt thresh the mountains.

I don't have a blackboard. If you had a blackboard, eh, you could make a mountain here, draw it. Well, you can have your lions and your tigers and every other creature under heaven.

Here's a mountain, this is a mountain. A worm is the only creature that can go in one side of the mountain and come out of the other. Elephants can't do it, lions can't do it, a worm can do it.

And not only that, not does it, pardon the pun, it worms its way, it worms its way through the mountain, it leaves a hole. What happened? The wind blows in it and dries it. And then that context of that is, fear not thou worm Jacob, thou shalt thresh the mountains.

We want to thresh them with Adam-Bond. We want to thresh the mountains with opposition. We're never going to move communism or these devilish isms in this world unless we become worms and get out of God's way.

And let him give us the anointing and give us the endowment and give us the vision and give us the power. That's all he asks for. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.

Well, we've travelled a bit away tonight. My goal is God himself, is it? Not just a prayer line, not just an anointed ministry. I want God.

I want to be filled with all the fullness of God. How do you explain it? You see a man like the apostle, God turns him inside out, gets rid of his old theology, throws away his birthrights, throws away all his labels of distinction, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and goes on. What did he say? Of the tribe of Benjamin, of the seed of Abraham, a Pharisee.

You couldn't have any more honours than that. And he says, I count them but done, stinking done, that I may win Christ. Our preachers are loaded up with degrees.

Nobody knows them but themselves. The devil doesn't know them. God's going to get his men.

Don't you worry about that. And I want him to get men out. I want people to do what they often do.

They write back and say, I was at last days for so many weeks, and the outstanding thing was God spoke to me on Friday nights in the prayer meeting. I want us to pray tonight. Pray for last days.

They're going through a crisis. Pray for our precious brother Spencer. He's gone to the Indians, that full-blooded Indian brother.

That man has anointing on his life. I like what he says. Almost every time he prays, he says, he quotes from the Apostle Paul when he says, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

That guy has a capacity for God like few men. And he's gone up to his own people for a few days in Oklahoma. Let's pray that God will anoint him.

Dave Wilkinson will be going in a month and taking, he's going anyhow, and some of them are going up to New York. Let's pray for them. Let's pray for that wonderful prison ministry that Joe Force has.

Little, humble guy. Boy, he doesn't get much publicity, a million dollars or anything. But he does a great job.

He's rescued the perishing and cared for the dying. Let's pray for him. Jacob's going over to a heathen country.

He's going to California. Let's pray he'll get over some of those sinners out there. You know, they're hours late.

God isn't going to be put up with this mischief and foolishness much longer. You see the prediction twice this week, by 1993, that happens to be six years ahead, that every family in America will be in one way or another affected by AIDS. Doesn't say have it, but will be affected by it.

Six years ahead. It's the most devastating disease ever, except the bubonic plague. And we can't stop it.

We have no answer to it. Some of these guys must be learning now, as they're suffering hell before they get to hell, that it's true the wages of sin is death. They sneered at it.

They went into their wild rotten sex life, and now they've got their wages. They got it. They got it.

But we're living in a dangerous day for our children. Children have been taught all the foolishness that we have in the schools today. Corruption.

It's time to cause sound and alarm in this holy mountain, as Joel says. Now, I don't know how long you'll pray, but pray. Don't pray too long now.

Pray twice rather than one long prayer, because it gets a little tiring. And if you pray too long, somebody else won't get a prayer in. Moses don't give me a warning.

Hope we'll do if we had Aaron as well, but anyhow. I'd love to hear these fellows pray, but let's remember tonight. I'll tell you what.

You say, I don't know when to stop. I'll tell you when to stop. Not by clapping my hands.

I'll tell you when to stop when you start repeating yourself. If you start repeating yourself, you've prayed already what God wanted you to pray. Forget it.

Believe you prayed it in faith. We need to pack something into these prayer meetings. Don't leave it to four or five.

Women, you can pray. I don't care. They were in the upper room, so why not be here? Let's pray for what? Last days? Pray for Spencer with the Indians? Pray for Calvary Commission and their job in the prisons? Pray for Wilkerson as he goes up there? And pray that somehow God Almighty will get a fire lit somewhere in Thailand.

It's time we had one. It's dry enough, I'm sure. It only needs a spark.

Don't report me at a minister's meeting. Just tell them I said it. I don't care.

So let's go to pray. Let's really pray. Let's believe God.

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