

Weeping Between the Porch and the Altar Part 2

by Leonard Ravenhill

The key to revival is to weep between the altar and the door posts and have a heaven-born, earth-shaking, hell-terrifying revival.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 34:6, Matthew 5:3, Luke 5:16, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 6:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 11:6, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer", "Revival"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the urgent need for genuine prayer and revival in the church, highlighting that true authority and anointing cannot be bought or learned but must come from a deep, personal relationship with God. He critiques the modern church's focus on prosperity and self-sufficiency, arguing that true revival occurs when believers recognize their spiritual poverty and seek God earnestly. Ravenhill recalls historical revivals, illustrating how prayer and a deep awareness of God's holiness and human sinfulness are essential for spiritual awakening. He calls for preachers to weep between the porch and the altar, acknowledging the need for brokenness and honesty in seeking God's presence. Ultimately, he urges the church to return to its roots of fervent prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit to transform lives and communities.

Transcript

In the city of Leeds, where I lived in England, the revival came. It came because there was a little man there, he was unlettered, he had no degree, but boy, did he have a burning heart. And he labored, and he had three breakdowns, not mentally, but physically. You know why? Because he fasted so much. But he had authority.

Paul says in Ephesians 6:19, "Pray for me, that utterance may be given me." In other words he means, let the Word be endued with that mysterious thing that you can't define and nobody can give. The thing that we call unction. The anointing of God! If money could buy it, my, some of you would sell your house to get it, but you can't get it with money. And you can't get it at the university.

We are trying to marry Christianity

to prosperity,

and popularity,

and personalities.

And it isn't working. Oh, you can preach the prosperity doctrine because that feeds our carnality. Look, why don't those men that preach that go to the third world to preach it where they need it? I know wealthy people, many of them are lovely people and I believe God lets them have a ministry in supplying needs. But when the church of Jesus Christ is prosperous, she never has revival. It's when she's poor. Prayer is the language of the poor. "Bow down Thine ear and hear me, for I am poor and needy."

The self-satisfied don't need to pray.

The self-sufficient don't want to pray.

The self-righteous cannot pray.

But the man who realizes,

"I need something outside of anything that's human at all,"

he wants to bathe his soul in prayer.

I went to a little Bible school in England, there were only thirty five students, but I'm glad that the man who was the principal was a man of prayer - Samuel Chadwick who wrote the book "The Path of Prayer." The weakest meeting in almost any church without exception is the prayer meeting. And when we are not strong in prayer we are saying to God, "We can manage." (Of course, we shall pray if we have an invasion, we shall pray if we have a famine - we have a great "utility" God.)

Very often we say to young people, "Now look, you have to read your Bible and maintain your prayer. You need to maintain your prayer life to maintain your Christian life." No! Not so. Not so. You need to maintain your Christian life in order to pray.

The greatest expositor in the world living today told me personally, "I don't have any trouble. I delight to expound the Word. My books..." he wrote many, many books, but he said, "I've always found prayer so tough. I just find prayer the most difficult thing in the world."

Read the Acts of the Apostles and all you read about is prayer, prayer, prayer, prayer, prayer. When they had prayed the place was shaken.

If you want to read the prayer life of Jesus you would read the Gospel according to Luke because in every instance he gives Jesus as a praying man.

I remember a series of meeting we had in Wales in 1949. After three days a lady, Mrs. Lewis, said to me, "Brother Ravenhill, this is the nearest thing to the Welsh revival that we've had." That was forty years after the Welsh revival. "Mrs. Lewis, what's the point of identification?" "Because we walk up the hill now as we walked then." And she explained, "Last night, the night before, the night before that," she said "it wasn't until we got to the cross roads and bid each other 'good night,' that we realized that nobody had said a word. We were so awed with the majesty and the presence of God."

Our people don't get off the door step of the church - "Hey,

do you think the Cowboys will win today?" It's dribble! It's nonsense!

When did you last tiptoe out of the sanctuary when you dare not say a word?

The church has to rediscover two things.

One, the majesty and the Holiness of God, and

the other, the sinfulness of sin.

Prayer is not the easiest thing in the world,

Prayer is the hardest thing in the world.

Prayer is the most demanding thing in the world.

I had the pleasure of praying very often with Duncan Campbell, a man God used in the Hebrides revival, 1950 onward. I asked him one day about a certain event, he said, "Yes, that's right. When I was ministering the place was like iron; it seemed as though God was a million miles away. And my message was like throwing a rubber ball at the wall, my words came back on me." In front of him were all kinds of ministers, but he didn't say anything to the preachers and the deacons and the elders. He pointed to a boy sitting over there, called him by name and said, "Laddie, will you pray?" A sixteen year old high school boy! And he stood up, and he said in his Scottish way, "Ach, what is the good of praying if we are not right with God?" And he began to quote Psalm 24, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and pure heart." and so forth and so on. "And when he'd finished," Duncan told me, "The stillness of eternity was on the building." And the boy prayed 10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 40 minutes, 45 minutes. And then, when he prayed as though he could see the invisible he said, "Satan."

Oh, I've heard people say this almost facetiously

in some meetings, "Get the Devil out of this place."

The young boy stood there and said, "Satan, I rebuke you. Get out of this territory! In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. I plead the blood of Christ, BE GONE!"

And just as though a switch was pulled in heaven God came on the meeting,

He came on a tavern at the end of the road and people left it.

He came on a dance at the end of the road and people left it.

We have to drag people to the altar; there are no altar calls in the New Testament if you want to be REALLY scriptural. Altar calls are an invention for when the Holy Ghost doesn't deal with people. This boy prayed, the Holy Ghost came and that whole community vibrated with God.

You see preacher, you've only two things to do, not twenty two. You are not supposed to be the janitor and running a business and finding about the church's bank balance and all that junk. If you are going to be a true Biblical preacher you got two things to do according to Acts 6:4, give yourself continually to prayer and the Word of God. That's all you have to do. Who is going to visit the sick? The deacons. Who is going to bury the dead? The deacons. (The Scripture clearly says, "Let the dead bury the dead." - I like to tease, you know.)

You see, we want the church to function our way. "God bless our plans." "God bless what we do." When Alexander McClaren went to that great big church in Manchester, England - and I've ministered in that church - seats maybe a couple of thousand or so - the deacons, great bearded fellows they were in those days, asked him a host of questions which he answered. Finally they said, "We've asked you to be the pastor of this great church. We'll give you a new house, we'll furnish it, we'll buy you a carriage and pair," as we say in England, "and we'll give you a large salary." After they went on, and on, and on, they asked, "Will you accept this?" And he said, "All right, I'll accept it - that is if you accept my terms." "You have terms?" (You know most churches think when they get a pastor they are renting a Hertz car. You better come and fit in!) "And what are the conditions?" And he laid some down, but one vital thing that he laid down was this, "I shall do no visiting."

Dr. Tozer, I loved that precious man and talked with him often, just the two of us in his office and prayed with him. Dr. Tozer never went to Bible school, he never went to the seminary. Yet he was one of the most learned men I ever met. I stayed in the house of a member of his church and she said, "You know what? I have gone to his church twenty five years and he has not been in my house five times." But I'll tell you what, he spread the table, and that's all you have to do.

You know brethren, you never have to advertise a fire. You don't have to advertise it in the news paper, forget it. You let the glory of the Lord fill the temple; people will come from hundreds of miles. Because it's starvation everywhere.

My phone rings constantly, "I'm going to move here, I'm going to move there. Do you know a church that really is on fire for God? A church where they have all night prayer meetings?" No church should function these days without a whole night prayer. What do you want... social standing? Do you just want numbers of people? Do you want to fill the pews? Or do you want fire?

I said last night, I think the greatest honor that was ever given to a preacher in history was not given by men, it was given by demons. When those demons said, "Jesus I know and Paul I know." Come on preacher, do you think if the devil has a danger list of the ten most wanted men in America you are one of them? I would rather be the last man on the devil's danger list than the first man on any honor roll you could give us about preaching. I'll say it again: brother, if you are not known in hell you are not worth a hill of beans.

We must realize we are not just fighting a local situation, we are not fighting drug addiction, we are not fighting massive pornography. We are surrounded by an arrogant, militant paganism. If you told your grandfather forty years ago that forty thousand homosexuals would march down main street, he would have said, "Not in America."

You know what? Adultery and divorce is getting to plague proportions even in the church of God. We don't have decent morality in some churches, never mind spirituality. We don't elect deacons because they are full of the faith and the Holy Ghost - we appoint them because they own two Texaco stations and a hot dog stand.

Another thing Jesus did, He prayed all night before He chose His disciples. If we prayed all night before we chose our deacons, I guarantee half of them wouldn't get in... if we had to get the witness of the Spirit about it.

You see, I have people saying, "Why don't you write a book about some methods of revival."

No, no. I can't do that. We don't need to find the formula for revival. The formula for revival is in the Word of God or else there isn't one.

The formula of revival is:

Preachers need to hit the altars and weep because they have no tears.

Groan because there is no moving of the Spirit of God.

Apologize to God that we've kind of manipulated the supernatural.

Now, I am not just thinking of miracles of twisted limbs and other things.

I think the greatest miracle that God can do is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that unholy man holy and put him back in an unholy world and keep him holy. But we are more afraid of holiness today in the church than we are of sinfulness.

If an unclean man with an unclean spirit does unclean things, if a man that's vile does vile things because he has a vile spirit,

surely the man who has the Holy Spirit in him will live a holy life.

I don't ask people if they are saved anymore, forget it, everybody is "saved;" it doesn't mean a thing. Don't ask a man if he is born again, just look gently at him, it doesn't matter who he is, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Methodist or Mennonite, just say, "Brother, does Christ live in you?" Well, isn't that the standard of the New Birth? Isn't that what Paul says, "Christ in you the hope of glory"?

I hear an awful lot about gifts of the Spirit, that's all right.

I hear less about the fruit of the Spirit.

I hear less still about having your fruit unto holiness.

I hear less still about bringing forth fruit meet for repentance.

You know why some people don't believe in our converts? Because they don't go back and clear up the dirty mess that they've made as far as they can. Restore the stolen money...maintain the baby of the girl they got into trouble... some other thing they should do. Bring forth fruit. A healthy tree doesn't bring forth fruit. It's the tree that has all the flowing life that brings forth fruit.

One day Napoleon ran his index finger round a great country, he was talking to his generals and he said, "There lies a sleeping giant, LET IT SLEEP!! Because," he said, "if that country ever wakes up and harnesses it's man power to it's mineral power it will shake the world." The country he outlined, in case you are interested, was none other than China, our biggest headache. See the devil standing there, he isn't running his finger round a map, he is running his finger round the church of Jesus Christ and he says, "There is the church of Jesus Christ asleep, LET IT SLEEP!!" "Because if it ever rediscovers the power of the Holy Ghost, if it ever rediscovers the resurrection power of Jesus, it will shake the world."

I wonder how much of our lives is dominated by the Spirit of God.

No, no, no, we can't go to the congregations. Let the priest weep between the altar and the door posts. I walked round the front of the podium one day, in a distinguished, wonderful college, fourteen hundred students listening. I just walked round and said to the professors, "Gentlemen you are teaching young men to be preachers. In one sense, they are going to guide the church in the future days. Tell me this, do you have for them a course on weeping? And if they graduate, do you have a course on howling?"

An old professor came and sat at the back in one of my meetings. He believed in old blood and fire, hell-fire preaching and holy living and a church being something which God deposited in the world just to show people how He can redeem us and get a bride for Himself. And you know, all the other professors in that university say, "That old man is senile."

I like an old statement that was made I think by Montgomery, "All earthly things with earth will fade away, but prayer grasps eternity." And if we're going to see as God sees... Praying, just recently, the Lord seemed to say this to me, "If you claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit the things that grieve the Spirit will grieve you." Who does the Lord cast His burdens on? Does He roll them away into the oblivion? No, no, no. He says, "My yoke is easy, My burden is light."

We don't want people to think we're depressed. I mean, everything is depressing outside, why cover it over? We are heading for judgment faster than you could ever think unless there is a divine intervention. And the key, again, is the priests weeping. The priests howling.

We sure need

a heaven born,

earth shaking,

hell-terrifying revival.

And it only comes through brokenness, it comes through honesty.

It comes when we admit, which is true of most around these days, that we just have a form of godliness - thank God we are not filthy and we are not dirty and we are not drunkards and we don't have a spare woman or something, we are pretty good. Ha, yes, that's just like Israel. They got out of Egypt and they got to Kadesh-barnea and instead of going to the promised land they got stuck.

Kadesh-barnea was supposed to be a gateway and it became a goal.

It was supposed to be a thoroughfare and it became a terminal.

It was supposed to be a stepping stone to something else, it

became a stumbling block.

Let me wind this up. I was reading, and I guess I read it every week or I recite it to myself, that amazing chapter that we call the Faith Chapter in Hebrews 11. Faith is mentioned twenty four times in that chapter. I believe the key is not just the word faith, I believe the key is the 6th verse - "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." He is what? He is everything that He said in this Word. And then, you know, I read Hebrews 11: "They subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, women received their dead come to life again." I read that and I knelt down to pray in my office and

it's as though the Lord said, "Say that again." And so I said it, "Lord, these people far off there, they subdued whole kingdoms, they wrought righteousness, they obtained promises, they stopped the mouths of lions, women received their dead come to life." And, as somebody said this year, "and not one of them had a Bible." Did you ever consider that? Let me take you back to a time when God's chosen people wondered around in sheepskins and goatskins! Now we've a land flowing with milk and honey - and churches flowing with milk and money. As though God looks on the outside. Forget it! He looks on the inside. Those people never had 66 Books. And you know what, if the world lasts another 100 thousand years, which it won't, but if it did, God doesn't have anything to add to that Book. He's said all He is ever going to say to man.

In my youth, I used to go listen in a Bible class where Dr. G. Campbell Morgan used to preach very often - a fascinating Bible teacher. And I remember in my early teens I thought, "One day I'll stay behind and ask him what kind of a Bible he has because all that stuff he has isn't in my Bible." I don't care whether you are thinking of Finney or Wesley or Booth, or any great majestic figure that has ruled in the church of God and seen revival, not one of them had a bigger Bible than you and I have. It's the same Word. Again, we better make our minds up whether it is absolute or obsolete. I'll tell you what, if this Book doesn't have the answer for a rotten, corrupt, stinking world, there is no answer for it. We've out sinned Sodom and Gomorra. Do you know there are 600 million Bibles in America? Would you try to guess how many millions or billions of Bible cassettes there are in the nation? Would you like to try to estimate how many seminars there are? Or seminaries there are? Or Bible schools? Or how many Gospel messages are preached throughout the nation? And that we've got 500 radio stations that broadcast something of the Gospel.

Let me give you the other side and I quit.

We are the most broken nation that we've ever been in history.

We've more broken homes,

We've more broken hearts over those broken homes.

We've more broken little kids because of those broken homes.

We've more minds broken by drugs,

We've more bodies broken - over a million girls last year got pregnant under 17 years of age. And people were marching a few years ago, "Stop the war in Vietnam, stop the war." "No right to kill people," and yet it's estimated in the last nine years we've put more than 10 million babies to death before they left their mother's wombs (in a Christian country. My Lord, what happens in a heathen country!) Do you think God Almighty is going to wink at our sin much longer? I don't.

And the legislators can't help us,

and the banks can't help us,

and the government can't help us,

and money can't help us. Our help cometh from the Lord. And the only way is in submission and brokenness. That we get and say, many of us,

"Lord, I don't have the vision I used to have.

I don't have the passion I used to have.

I don't have the concern I used to have," not for America, for lost souls.

Lost souls first, America second.

I am convinced the key is in the ministry. Maybe the way to start revival in your church is to stand up next Sunday morning and say, "Look, I want to tell you, I've had no passion for the lost. I shed no tears for lost mankind. I've so many other things I am interested in."

I believe one key to the apostle Paul's life was this, "This - one - thing - I - do." He lived God. He thought God. He prayed God. That's all.

You can lash him, you can't whip it out of him.

He can float on a piece of wood in the Mediterranean a night and a day -

thirty six hours, you can't wash it out of him.

They tried to starve him, you can't starve it out of him.

He'd had a vision of the cross, he'd had a vision of the resurrection power.

He'd realized the greatest thing this side of eternity is to be a God filled man. And goes out and proclaims that message, whether he goes to Jews, to barbarians, the Greeks, the intellectuals. He is as at home in the intellectual capital of the world, Athens, as he is in the religious capital of the world, Jerusalem.

God never, never intended His church to backslide. God never intended His church to function with anything less than Apostolic Christianity. And it's time to call the church to prayer. I believe if we were as spiritual as we think we are we would have gone to church yesterday in sackcloth and a handful of ashes to put on our heads and mourn that the Glory has departed.

I can almost hear Duncan Campbell saying how they cried in Scotland, "Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heaven and come down."

You see, we've never seen God move 'til He's stopped the traffic.

'Til people in the shops are singing.

'Til the lights don't go out week after week.

'Til the Holy Ghost is moving in factories. He's done that in other revivals.

He has called us to stand in the gap.

To be the repairers of the breach.

To bring the powers of the world to come on this materialistic blind day in which we live and this sleepy Laodicean church. When He was on earth He cleaned the temple. I feel it needs cleansing again, from worldliness... from materialism... May the Lord help us to search our hearts as well as search the Scriptures. Help us to be honest and admit that we've failed, seek the place of prayer, and the place of cleansing and the place of anointing.

May we be a vital link between His Eternal Spirit and this troubled, lost world outside.

May His glory shine forth again.

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