

# What Is Your Life - Part 2

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*Leonard Ravenhill's sermon challenges listeners to reflect on the fleeting nature of life and the importance of living with eternal purpose.*

**Duration:** 9:44

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:6, James 4:14

**Topics:** "Eternal Significance", "Fleeting Life"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the profound question posed in James 4:14 about the brevity and uncertainty of life, emphasizing the fleeting nature of our existence and the importance of reflecting on life's purpose and destination. It explores the concept of life as a vapor, drawing parallels to various poetic expressions and biblical references that highlight the transient nature of human life. The sermon challenges listeners to consider the eternal significance of their actions and choices in light of life's fleeting nature and the ultimate importance of living for God.

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## Transcript

in the fourth chapter and verse 14. Maybe we should read from verse 13. Go to now ye that say today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain, whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.

For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then it vanisheth away. Can you think, can you think of something that was on earth before Adam was here and it was removed and it's in heaven now and it may come back to earth. I thought you were waving, a lady putting a sweater on.

Well the tree of life, oh did you, were you raising your hand? I can't see very well. The tree of life was there before Adam went into the garden and now we're told the tree of life is in the the other garden, the paradise of God. And you know this is about the most fascinating study that there is and you will never face a more challenging question than this text.

What is your life? Now notice what it doesn't say. It doesn't say what is life because if it did nobody has an answer. It doesn't say what is our life, otherwise we could fool all our thinking.

It says what is your life? And it replies, gives the reply here in the text, it is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time. There are three main questions that come up in life. Children ask this question, where did I

come from? And somewhere sometime you better give them the right answer because if you don't somebody will give them the wrong answer.

And then maybe at your age right now you're asking another question, why am I here? And then when you get further up the road, which I happen to be, you say where do I go from here? So there are three basic questions about life. Where, where did it come from? Why am I here? And where do I go from here? I was thinking of what the different poets have said about this. One of them said this, life at its best is very brief, like the falling of a leaf, like the binding of a sheaf.

Be in time. Francis Henry Light, he lived in Ireland near where we used to live, a long while before we were there. And there's a big memorial to him in the Royal Pretoria School that my boys went to.

Francis Henry Light wrote this great hymn, Abide With Me. And in that hymn you may recall he says this, swift to its close, ebbs out life's little day. Another poet says the lives of great men should remind us that we all may be sublime and departing leave behind us footprints in the sands of time.

Another one says about great men that, how did he put it? Life is fleeting, life is earnest, and the grave is not the goal. Thus thou art to thus return us was not spoken of the soul. Now if this book is about anything at all, it's about life.

I was looking while I was away this past weekend at a fairly recent issue of National Geographic, and it certainly has some fantastic photography. Part of it was about Somaliland, and there were women there lying on the floor with a bit of a rag around them. Their ribs were standing out, and there were corpses of babies all over the place.

And the country right now is in a terrible grip of famine. And while we today couldn't make up our minds what kind of ice cream we like, I mean you know we've got 28 varieties but surely there must be another one. And 48 different types of, what do you call the things with a hole in the middle? Donuts? There must be some other kind of thing to eat besides donuts.

And you hear people say, well life isn't just, life isn't fair. One man said life is a feast, another wise man said life is a fast. One man said life is a paradise, another man says life is a prison.

You see the question here is very pointed and maybe it's very personal. It is impersonal and maybe it's very painful. Maybe you could answer the question.

What is your life? You say it's a failure. What is your life? A success. What is your life? It's a disappointment.

But actually it's showing to us by the very context that life is like a vapor. It's like the steam that comes off the kettle and you try and get a handful of it and it's gone. And in every case in the Word of God where life is referred to, that is this physical life, it's likened to something that's very swift.

It's likened for instance to a weaver's shuttle. It's likened to a tent that men wrap up and move on in the night. Isaiah likens our life to the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven.

Now you know there's a saying that it becomes almost facetious to say, but it said amongst many Christians, only one life to soon be past and only what's done for God will last. But that's exactly what the poet did not say. What the poet said, only one life to soon be past and only what's done for God will last,

and when I am dying how glad I shall be if the lamp of my life has been burned out for thee.

As I said tonight again it's easy to say the things of earth will grow strangely dim. You feel very pious when you say that. But you know when you get to eternity and look back the things of earth will look very grim.

We'll possibly discover we've been as earthly minded as the reprobates outside who are dancing and lusting tonight. Oh we're trying to put umpty dumpty together again you know. I used to ask what that was about when I was a little boy.

I never found an answer to it. Oh you can get an illustrated book of nursery rhymes and Humpty Dumpty is an egg on a wall and he falls off and breaks himself into a hundred pieces and all the king's horses and all the king's men can't put Humpty Dumpty together again. Or the old argument anybody can scramble eggs who can unscramble them? Life? Men have been trying to manage it, direct it.

They kind of consider that if you made the environment better we would produce better people. That's not true. You know there's nobody go around in circles more than the politicians.

I can remember in World War I, before World War I, so I'm not too young, there were a group of supermen around at that time. George Bernard Shaw he wrote a fascinating play called Pygmalion that sent him bankrupt and so they changed his name to My Fair Lady and it made millions after he was dead, which I think is what he deserved. But George Bernard Shaw ganged up with a bunch of fellas that were called the Fabian Socialists.

George Bernard Shaw again was there, H. G. Wells was one of the leading spokesmen. Aldous Huxley was there and all the top-notch guys you know. And they suddenly came to a realization that they had solved the problem of inequality, injustice, a way to empty prisons, a way to make this world a utopia.

After all, Christianity's had two thousand years they said, it hasn't done too well. So we don't need the church, we don't need the Bible. And they began to tick off things they didn't need.

In 1912, two years before First World War, these fellas made a kind of outline of their philosophy and what they were going to do. They were going to pull down the hills of wealth and fill in the valleys of poverty and make the crooked places straight. They said we can have a new race of men by intellectual and biological processes.

They didn't talk about repentance and sin, man alive, that's too theological. They talked about the...

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