

Worst Thing to Happen to a Preacher - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill warns that the worst fate for a preacher is becoming civilized and losing the spiritual fervor necessary for true ministry.

Duration: 10:21

Scripture: Malachi 3:2-3, Matthew 16:24, Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16, Revelation 3:16

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for a revival of true, uncompromising Christianity, challenging the modern church to return to the radical commitment and power demonstrated by figures like Leonard Ravenhill and the Apostle Paul. It critiques the lukewarmness and lack of spiritual fervor in today's church, calling for a genuine encounter with the Holy Spirit to ignite a transformative fire that can impact the world. The speaker highlights the importance of personal devotion, prayer, and a deep care for the spiritual well-being of others, echoing the sacrificial dedication of early Christian leaders despite their hardships.

Transcript

The worst thing that ever happened to a preacher is he becomes civilized. It's worthless. Worthless.

One thing I noticed about Leonard Ravenhill, and I take a Leonard Ravenhill over 20 dead Calvinists. One thing I noticed about Leonard Ravenhill, he was dangerous. He was dangerous.

Today it's considered sadistic if you say people have to take up their cross even. Don't tell young people about the cross, they'll be discouraged. Well, am I suggesting Jesus wasn't smart? If you're going to be my disciple, kiss the world goodbye.

You see, when people are born again these days, they don't get separated from the world. Most likely their pastor is the most worldly guy that is around. I heard of a local preacher saying not so long ago, the story of John is a fish story.

Well, sure it is. It isn't about a donkey, is it? But all he meant was something a bit fishy about it. That's what he meant, which is not true.

Because Jesus said, does he deny the word of Jesus? A man that denies scripture should renounce his job and go sell hamburgers. He came in as a fundamental believer and he becomes a liberal, he should

get out at the back door. I'd fire him if I had any power over that guy.

I say this in all due respect. You know, it's not very difficult to make records and stir people. It's not very difficult to make books, write and write books.

But tell me, where is the man who can bring fire from heaven today? Anybody will buy our records. Almost every day people write, are you writing another book? Are you going to give us a book on legitimacy? Are you going to give us a book on worship? That doesn't take much moral courage to sit in a swivel chair and reach for my Bible and look through some references and find a lot of things come crowding into my mind. But what if I meet Ahab in the way? You say we've no groves to ash troughs.

What about the Roman Catholic Church? We have no false priests. What about Mormonism? What about Jehovah's Witnesses? We have more false priests in this country or England today than these guys have anything about. They tell me that out at Berkeley there, there's a guru who goes out on the lawn there every lunchtime and gathers 2000 students around him.

Come and sit around us for a year and listen. How is it men with unbelief and heresy can magnetize crowds and we with the truth of the living God can't? Paul says my preaching is not in word only, much about it, but in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. You know when Elijah, before he called down the fire, he went back and he built the old altar.

We don't want to go back to old altars, to old vows, to old commitments. We're always trying to make new things and God knows they'll be broken down anyhow in a few weeks. Christianity has not been weighed in the balances and found wanting, it's been tried, found difficult and rejected.

Some of you haven't been here before but I'm glad to see you. Let me say this, I say it often. I don't know where you are spiritually.

There's not a man who's walking with God that doesn't know he could have been further up the road than he is if he'd really taken care. If somebody had taught him when he was born again. You know what happened? He was born and he was put in a refrigerator.

There's a dear old, the last of the line amongst the Baptists I think, Vance Havner, he wrote the foreword to my last book. He's a great character. And he said some people where he lives up in Greenville, where is that, South Carolina? Oh, he said they're still living in the last century.

He said the man came selling refrigerators, they didn't know what they were, they still had iceboxes. And he said, well this is what you do with a refrigerator. You take this plug and stick it in but they didn't have any electricity.

So it didn't help very much. But in his draw I couldn't imitate. You know he said, you know, oh in my country, we've got the biggest refrigerators in America.

They've got steeples on them. Now I didn't say that, the Baptists said it. Mr. Chadwick used to say to us gentlemen, wind soles, don't bring them to birth and put them in a refrigerator.

The church never had more equipment than she has now. She never had less power. Never less anointing.

Never less of the miraculous. Never less than the omnipresent God. As I've said before, when did you last tip to out of church Sunday morning breathless? Awed by the awesomeness of God's majesty, God's glory, God's omnipotence.

We know what's going to happen. Stand up, sit down, stand up, sit down. Now the choir will sing.

Sing a bit longer. Now the box is coming. Drop some offering in it.

And now we're going to have another song. You know if we'd spent as much time teaching people to pray as we've taught the choir, we'd have set the world on fire. What's the good of having all the machinery in the world if you've nothing to drive it? I don't care whether you've come on a, I was going to say a skateboard.

No, if you've come on a Volkswagen tonight or a Rolls Royce. We're all dependent on one thing when we're sitting in a car. We turn the switch and if there is no spark there, you're finished.

Your car may be insured. It may be the cleanest car. It may be in wonderful condition, but it needs a spark to drive it.

But look at all the equipment in the church. If the fire of the Holy Ghost really came upon the church today, we could shake the world in six months. Without a shadow of doubt.

I get a bit hot about deacons and pastors always deploring the Bibles thrown out of the school. But I go in deacons' homes and never see the Bible brought out once all week. And some of you come from pastors' homes and your daddy never took the Bible out every day and read it round the table anyhow.

So why throw stones at the Russians or somebody else? Judgment must begin at the house of God. It begins, as the old song says, it's not my brother nor my sister, it's me or God standing in the need of prayer. Now this man is tied to a whipping post.

He was lashed 195 times. Well, it says five times I received 40 stripes, save one. So it's five thirty-nines.

195 times. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. Once I was stoned.

I don't think he had any smart, wonderful personality. He says even to the Corinthians, they said, what will this babblers say? I think he's pretty ugly. I think he limped.

I think his face was creased. He'd been stoned so many times his cheeks had been split and his jaws broken. In weariness, in fasting, in painfulness, in perils of the deep, in perils of mine own countrymen.

Come on, add them all up. What's the bottom line? He's filling up the sufferings of Christ. But what does he say? Does he whine about it? No.

He says it's one thing to have a bleeding back and somebody rub salt in your wounds and stick you in a stinking hole and leave you there for days and weeks and months and years. But he says, you know, the most hurtful thing is this. What did he say I was? That which cometh upon me.

What is it? Remember? That which cometh upon me daily. The what? The care of all the churches. You think you've got problems with your children? What about a man who has a whole string of churches? They've just come out of heathendom.

Many of them are weak and vacillating. There's no revelation. There's no Bible yet.

God pity us. I preached the first Sunday night here on Elijah. And the more I see men like that and realize all he did, I nearly never had a Bible.

All the heroes in Hebrews 11, not one of them ever had a Bible. And you and I have everything that God is ever going to say to the world. Boy, we're in for trouble at the end of the line.

I like the hymn, Our Firmer Foundation. Remember that hymn? What more can he say than to you he has said? That here is a man who has had the veil of eternity lifted up. That's why he says in the chapter that we read, in 2 Corinthians 5 there, The love of Christ constraineth me.

Knowing the terror of the Lord. None of this sloppy sentimental love business. God is unjust.

God is holy. God has a big investment in you. I got saved at 14.

I'm 84, almost 85. So I've been 70 years. I've seen all kinds of tragedies in the church.

Wars and rumors of wars. Popular men going popular and so forth. But keep looking up to Jesus and reading the word and remembering these old paths that my daddy used to talk about so much.

And all the other looks like trivia.

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