

You Are My Friends

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the critical role of prayer in the life of Jesus and its transformative power for believers.

Duration: 55:47

Topics: "Friend Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of a valley full of skeletons to illustrate the process of spiritual transformation. He explains that God gradually brings life and beauty to these lifeless bones by adding sinews, flesh, and skin through different acts and tests of faith. The speaker also mentions the importance of studying and preaching the Word of God, highlighting the depth and richness found within its pages. He concludes by emphasizing that believers have a share in God's ultimate plan for the world and encourages the audience to embrace this truth.

Transcript

The Gospel is then recorded at the seventeenth chapter. There are twenty-six verses in this chapter. We won't deal with them all this morning, but whenever I handle it, I think of Dr. Kozer, who preached for fifty-two Sunday mornings on this remarkable chapter, obviously taking half of a verse, every Sabbath morning for a year.

Someone told me that my good friend Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones in London preached for fifty-two Sunday nights on John 3, 16 without repeating himself. I don't know if you'd like to copy that, I'm sure I wouldn't, but again it shows us how much there is in the Word of God. The teachers, Bible teachers often refer to the four Gospels, and obviously that's not true.

There are not four Gospels. There's one Gospel told by four different men. They all have different emphases.

Matthew reveals the love of Jesus presented in the area of kinship. Mark reveals him as a servant. Luke reveals him as the son of man.

If you want to study the full life of Jesus, you would read, of course, the Gospel as Luke has recorded it, because he gives us the full accent in every crisis in the life of Jesus. While others record the fact that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, Luke says that it was while he was praying that the Spirit descended

upon him. And then he records that while Jesus was hanging on the cross he was praying.

In the dream he says that Jesus spent a whole night in prayer before he chose his disciples. I've often wondered what would happen if a church spent a whole night in prayer before it chose its deacons. It might not get in.

But that's what Jesus did. He spent a whole night before he chose his disciples. And then again Luke emphasizes the fact that it was while he was praying that Jesus was transfigured.

And there is nothing more transfiguring than prayer. There's one great hymn writer, I think Montgomery, said, prayer is the sole sincere desire uttered all unexpressed. The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breath.

Prayer is so simple that a child can do it, and it's so vast it exhausts our vocabulary. Whenever I pick up the biography of a great man, an autobiographic, I always search for the center of his life, and I always read first his prayer life, if it's recorded. I insist again that no man is greater than his prayer life.

In the pulpit a man can reveal his knowledge of the Word of God. In prayer he reveals his knowledge of the God of the Word. In the pulpit a man can stretch.

And often they do. But no man stretches in the place of prayer. If anything takes us down to size, surely it is that when we get alone with God.

And we need to pray continually. I'm sure the great prayer, the Lord teaches to pray. Now in John 17 we have again the Lord's prayer.

Often you hear people say, let's recite the Lord's prayer. But then you say, our Father which art in heaven. Obviously that is not the Lord's prayer.

That is the disciples' prayer. Jesus could not pray the Lord's prayer. The disciples could not pray what is the Lord's prayer.

That is the 17th chapter again in the gospel as recorded by John. The unique thing about John is this, that, of course you've got to remember this, the epistle of John was written by an ignoramus. He didn't know very much.

I can prove that from scripture for the simple reason that after they'd done the miracle. Remember Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer. I don't know why they went to the temple at the hour of prayer.

They didn't believe in the formula of the temple. The temple didn't believe in what they were doing. But they still went to the prayer meeting.

Maybe hoping they could revive it. But anyhow, as they went you remember that they healed a man of a beautiful gait of the temple. You know I learned something new about that.

I'm not very smart. I put things up very slowly. I just went to school.

I never went to a high school. Well I did go to a high school. It was on top of a hill.

But apart from that, I didn't go to college except for a little Bible college in England for a few months. But you know I picked things up very slowly I guess. And so often the things that I should have observed I think years ago, strike me now.

Peter and John went into the temple at the hour of prayer. And the thing that impressed me about that is the timing facts in it. Because Jesus had passed that man down in the temple a hundred times.

And Peter and John had passed it a hundred times. And when the seventy were sent out to minister, they too had passed it. But Jesus didn't heal him.

There came a crisis moment at a particular time when it was glorified the Father for that man to be healed at that precise moment. Now you remember the man was there all with a cripple. To me he's a type of the world outside distorted, defiled, doomed, damned.

And yet the church had nothing to offer to him. That is the system of religion of that day I think. Well as soon as he saw Peter and John he knew that evangelism was a racket anyhow.

So he said they must have a lot of money. And he asked for alms. Well semantically that sounds you know like these alms.

A little girl said why did he ask for alms when he needed goods. But don't we often pray for things we don't need? I don't think he needed money at all. But Peter and John were there at the hour of prayer.

Peter said sin and gold I have not. That's amazing that John said that a shirt off a few days ago. I don't know what he did with it.

Gave it his mother maybe. But Peter said silver and gold I have not. Now in his diary Peter said look on earth.

Isn't it great when you can say that? When we have the resources needed for that particular situation. And then afterwards when the crowd came around and wanted to kind of dramatize their ministry, Peter said don't look on earth. Boy that's a long way off from where we are today isn't it? Do you know how many radio stations we're on? Do you know how many pamphlets we give out? We're always stuck in our stuff.

And that's the thing God doesn't like. It's unacceptable. But you remember after the miraculous curing of that man.

You know we were in a meeting the other night in a stately, well I said it's a sudden Baptist church. The Lord graciously moved. We were there for two weeks.

It was packed every night with about 1,500 people. And there was a man there who was explosive. You know suddenly the Lord had hit him.

He jumped four feet off the ground and went across while I was preaching and yelled at the devil in his voice, glory hallelujah. And the people sat there and looked him up first and said no this isn't the thing to do. And I said would you keep your seat please.

You're not allowed to do that except when Alabama is playing football. Oh you can do it in a football match. But it isn't kind of streamly you know.

Do things in order. Only where God's chosen people and his chosen people. And you're not expected to be demonstrative.

You see that man had been to hell and back. He had the most sordid story ever heard in their life. And one day Jesus met him.

He cured him. He broke his fetters. He cleansed him.

He's come to enjoy him. He sold his home. He sold the fine china that they had.

He lives in a battered old bus and he spends most of his time with the Navajo Indians out in the west there. But you see the man has had such a transforming experience. Well the man's sitting at the beautiful gate of the temple.

I guess he'd given up all hope. He said the high priest comes in and he gives you gold and the junior priest comes in. He is not as rich usually and he gives you silver and I'm going to be sitting here all my life.

They carried him every day of his life. He was carried but not cured. He was helped but he was never healed.

And one day these strange men came along and miraculously Peter says I don't have what you think you need but I do have what you don't know you need. And immediately he touched it. He said he'd been touched with about 10,000 volts of electricity and he laughed and praised and magnified the Lord.

Well that upset the big boys. The theologians didn't like that. So they called Peter and John to account and they tried to get round it and one fellow says listen why do this silly thing.

The man's been healed. There he is leaping shouting. Everybody in Jerusalem knows about it.

And these fellows are going to get big crowds you know. And so finally they said well this is our summary. You know we've been stretching our vast intellect and coming to some profound decisions.

And the decision is that this fellow Peter and this fellow John. Well they're not collegiate. They have no certificates to say they're authorized preachers.

They should really go back to fishing or doing their job. You know this is our final summary. They're unknown and ignorant.

Well that ignoramus wrote this book. You see the Gospel of John. Which Dr. Coffman says is the most profound thing in literature.

And someone else says that the 17th chapter. John Brown the great commentator says this is the most profound section of the most profound book. So Pete John wrote this wonderful epistle.

And then he wrote further best fellows. He hasn't picked up his royalties yet. But he wrote the Gospel of John.

Then he wrote the first epistle, the second epistle and the third epistle. And then just to prove his ignorance so we'd never forget it. He wrote the book of the Revelation.

Which baffles all the wise men. So it is a baptism of ignorance. I hope you lay your hands on the after the meeting.

I'd like it. I mean if you get such profound knowledge that this man had of God. Now if this Luke again is emphasizing Jesus Christ as the son of man totally dependent upon God.

Therefore he kind of enlarges on his prayer life. But here John is referring Jesus as very God of very God. He's not the son of man.

He is the son of God. In the first verse of the first chapter. Remember what it says.

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God and the word was God. In the beginning eternity.

The word was with God equality. The word was God deity. And he goes right through and shows us the marvelous power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was looking up there in Ezekiel 47 this morning. You know Ezekiel's wonderful book. Somebody said that whenever you go to a Bible conference somebody's going to preach on Roman precedents.

Nobody ever tackled Ezekiel or some of the minor prophets. Ezekiel has a lot to say. In fact one guy says he can have flying saucers.

But he has a lot about wheels and other things. But everything is done in sections. You remember there's a pile of bones sky high.

And he goes and prophesies to the bones. I do this constantly even this morning. You prophesy to the bones.

And he didn't say bones now become an army. He spoke to the bones and there was a rattle. Well we like rattle.

Didn't they take rattle for revival and commotion for creation and action for ancients. And there's a great noise. Well that's what we like.

Noise. It isn't power but it's effective. Stirs you a bit emotionally.

May not feed your intellect, your spirit. But he spoke to the bones and they began to slide. Now that must have been great.

I'd like to have seen that. You know a bone trying to find where it matched somebody's backbone and tibia. No I better not tell you because Kathy's listening.

But all those bones you have in your body. And instead of a stack of bones you now have a valley full of skeletons. And then he spoke again and sinew came on the skeletons.

I always think they must have looked like violins. But they're all the sinews attached to the bones and you've got a valley full of skeletons. And then he speaks again and flesh comes on the sinew and then he speaks again and then there's skin comes on the flesh.

It is not done in one act. It's done in different acts, different sections, different tests of faith if you like. Finally you have a valley full of beautiful corpses.

Well they're not much good. They can't sight, they can't see, they can't talk. What can they do? So he prophesied the final time.

And the final time that one shapeless, hideous mass of bones is now symmetrical, beautiful, attractive. And he speaks the final time and the final time life comes into them. And then Mr. Chadwick telling us about the difference between death and life.

In the church he had in a slum area. He went in one day. The lady said to him, my husband died.

He's lying upstairs in his little house with one room downstairs, one room upstairs. And she said he hasn't been shaved for a long while and I don't want to bury him like this. Could you get the barber to come and shave him? He said sure.

He said he won't come until it's dark tonight. He won't leave his shop. But he came.

The man in the old days, you know, when men were men, their shaves was sides. I mean razors. With a big open blade like this, you know.

And he lathered the corpse. He couldn't reach over the other side of the corpse. The corpse was a big hefty guy, big tummy on him.

So he took the candle that he had. And I know that edit of Leeds where this actually happened then. And he put the candle on the chest of the dead man.

And he thought, well she's downstairs, she doesn't know. So he took his shoes off and he climbed over the corpse, one of those old beds with a low spring, you know. And he put his knee between the chest and the tummy of the man and he put his foot, he pressed it down and the corpse came up and went, blew the candle.

And Chadwick said that man left the razor and everything. He was running down to see, he's alive, he's alive, he's alive. Chadwick says no, he had the wind, but he didn't have breath.

You see an offering mistake helped wind for breath. Well in this case there was no such mistake. They stood on their feet in exceeding great armour.

I told him I had to tell you this. So from there, you remember that he's a man, just as in the case of the bones becoming skeletons, becoming corpses and so forth. In the 47th chapter he says that the hand of the Lord is upon him.

He led him out by the north gate, then he led him east. And there's a man with a measuring line. He measured a thousand cubits, there was water to the ankles.

He measured another thousand, water to the knees. Another thousand there was water to the loins, another thousand water to swim in. Well I, when I think of that, I think also of this gospel, I'll say the gospel as recorded by John.

When you start over 14th chapter, as you like, there's water to the ankles in each chapter, 15, 16, 17, they get deeper, 18, 19, right down into 20. You get into deeper, deeper, deeper areas. Now, again, this is the prayer life of Jesus.

And it always throws me back to something that completely baffles me. Supposing you could have lived one life, and then one day in the life of Jesus, which day would you have chosen? Well I guess the sermon of Isis might have liked the day he preached the Sermon on the Mount. The greatest message ever preached by the greatest man of the world.

Hulloose would like it more excitable. I'd like to have been there when he said to Lazarus, Lazarus come forth. Somebody else says I'd like to have seen him walking on the water.

If I could have been just one day in the life of Jesus, I would like to have been here on the occasion when he prayed, what I want to call here, this masterly prayer. The thing that stuns me about it is this. The disciples said Lord teach us to pray.

Many said they didn't say Lord teach us to preach. I think they must have been fascinated when he preached the Sermon on the Mount. They must have been startled when he stood there and said, well first of all you blow the stone away.

And now we want God to do everything. Jesus says now I'll raise him from the dead, you move the stone. I'll turn the water into wine, I'll put wine in those vessels, go do some work yourself, and then when you've done your share I'll do my share.

And he said he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. Campbell Morgan said he said Lazarus because if he had said come forth all the cemetery would have come. There wasn't time for them to come so he said Lazarus come forth.

It must have been exciting to see him. He even made a good church member today. He came forth like this in all bound hand and foot.

Couldn't walk, couldn't talk. He said loose him and let him go. Now he was alive.

How do you think he walked if he wasn't? He got up, he was alive alright, but he was bound hand and foot like millions of believers are today I believe. That would have been exciting. But the disciples didn't say Lord teach us to do miracles.

I read that when Jesus went into Gethsemane or just before it he sang, I'd like to have heard Jesus sing, I'm sure he sang more than once, I'm sure he sang some of those majestic songs. They didn't say Lord teach us to sing. They didn't say Lord teach us to do miracles.

They didn't say Lord teach us the science of homiletics of exposition. They said Lord teach us to pray. People say that God isn't selective.

I think he is, think he always was, think he always will be. How many disciples were there? You've been at Bible school so long and don't know that, alright they were 12. How many did he take on to the mount of transfiguration? You don't know that, well they took three.

They said Lord teach us to pray. I kind of think maybe he was transfigured every night when he prayed. But on this occasion they were allowed to go into one of the most awesome experiences Jesus had.

There he was transfigured on the mount. They had said Lord teach us to pray. What did they do? They fell asleep.

Well I can excuse them for that. But the same three men that were always with him in the most exceptional periods of his life when he raised the dead and did other things. The three men that fell asleep were allowed to go into the most awesome experience that Jesus had I think.

And as we talk about the greatest battles that were ever fought, men start searching all over the history of ancient Rome or something and trying to find statistics. No, no, no. The greatest battle ever fought was fought by one man in the pro-Israel Gethsemane.

We don't know much about it. I remember one day going down the street in England and I was in a hurry and a lady opened the door and as I passed the house she said, oh hello would you drink some tea. I said no thank you.

I'm in a hurry I have to be home in five minutes. She said that's not the reason. You won't come in my house because I'm the poorest person that comes to your church.

Well that wasn't the reason either. She was the dirtiest woman that came to the church. She commonized on salt more than anything else.

Both on herself and in the house. The house stunk. But I realized if I didn't go in and talk with that woman and have some tea I was sunk.

So I went in the house. It's the kind of house you built like this you know otherwise. And we sat down and she had a kitchen sink full of dirty dishes.

They must have been there for months she lived by herself. She said do you drink tea? Well intelligent people do. She should have known that.

But I said yes I drink tea. All right she said and she reached in the sink and she took a cup that was all outside. It was covered with you know she hadn't drunk it and let it slip down.

And as she tilted it that way there were dirty tea leaves in and something at the bottom of the cup. And she took a teapot and she poured it out. It was as black as your shoe.

I don't like tea like that. It's all right for tanning weather but not me. And so she filled the cup up with this horrible black tea almost cold.

Isn't that terrible? In civilized countries they don't drink cold tea. But anyhow. She gave me this black cold tea.

You take sugar yes don't have any. You take cream yes don't have any. I think the mayor is here in mourning.

Or else she'd pass a patoot around in my stomach. There's thirty old things up there with a dirty hand spinking out. A dirty cup.

And she passed this horrible black solution without milk without sugar over to me. And now she's already half ill with that scrawny dirty hand of hers. And somehow I lost sight of the whole thing.

I noticed something that happened two thousand miles away from England two thousand years ago. When a man was offered a cup that had all human degradation and filth and sin in it. The purest holiest

man that ever lived.

So revolting that he said if it be possible let this cup pass. I guess that one of the distressing things about teaching is this. We don't know how far people observe that is an understanding ability to practice it.

I don't believe after three years those disciples understood that much about Jesus. On the Mount of Transfiguration they fell asleep. In the Garden of Gethsemane when they needed them he prayed and he came and they were sleeping.

He went away and came back and they were sleeping. He went away and came back and they were sleeping. In our language forget it he said.

You think he looks from heaven right now and sees the church occupied with so many things except the greatest ministry that's ever been offered to it. I rejoice when I go to churches and I discover a number of them there that have a 24 hour prayer program. The church where they never eat.

A bunch of men get up every Lord's Day morning whether I'm there or anyone else and immediately the preacher or the choir finishes this bunch of men go out to a back room and they pray and hold up the arms of the preacher. Every Sabbath day morning every Sabbath night the women said we can't leave it to the men alone they're going to do it. So at night a team of women go out.

That church has moved just like that in the last 2 or 3 years. That auditorium is crammed. They sit it twice every Sabbath morning with 1500 people.

They're thinking maybe now there's another auditorium seating 4000 people. They're not just in the numbers game. They discover that since they got into the real energy of praying into a place where again the things of earth have become strangely dim.

They've got into a vital living relationship. They've entered into a new depth in prayer. What do you think Jesus felt like after he found them all sleeping? Let me prove my point.

At least I can prove it to myself again. They didn't believe him. You know we say and we should do.

I think so often I preach so many times and always either Mr. Hegler particularly in a certain area where the block is, word comes up to me. We sing a hundred hymns on the blood of Christ to the death of Christ for every one hymn we sing on the resurrection. I try to hold it up balanced.

And you see people almost shudder when you say we're not saved by his death. Who is this heretic? Well Paul he wrote 14 epistles if you're good in Hebrews and then he turns them all over like a pyramid he's built and then he turns them and he balances them all in a fine point and he says listen the whole thing hangs on one thing the resurrection of Jesus. We're not saved by his death we're saved by his life.

If he doesn't live this morning we're sunk. So now we don't get the excitement that's all of it. If the disciples had believed the teaching of Jesus for three years they would have been lined up that resurrection morning and there wasn't one of them there.

And we get excited about his resurrection. I think in one sense it was the most disappointing day in the life of Jesus. Not one of them was there.

He would turn them over and over again. The Pharisees wouldn't understand it. The Sadducees didn't understand it.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection. Sadducees didn't. That's why they were Sadducees.

But they didn't believe in a, they didn't believe in a physical resurrection. Jesus comes out of that experience he died. He had led captivity captive.

And I say sometimes to people teasingly there are no gifts of the Spirit. The only gifts there can be are those purchased by Jesus. There's an old hymn that says the purchase of thy death divide give me with all the saints beside the heritage of works.

What did he do? He died and what did he do? He led captivity captive and he gave gifts unto men and the Holy Ghost bested you in what was made possible through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see as Dr. Churchill used to say, we kind of think of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as though he's a junior partner in the garden. It's this way.

It's the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They're equal in majesty, they're equal in glory. And the supreme task of the Holy Spirit is not to make me a good preacher or make you a distinguished person with gifts.

The supreme task of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus. That is one office. And he does it in so many ways through so many ministries.

You know God's going to get glory for his Son. He's going to work the whole world system to do it, but he's going to do it. I like Philip's translation of Ephesians 2 in which he says that God has designed that all history is going to be consummated in Jesus Christ.

And he's going to have full control over the world. Then he says in a kind of whisper after it, and you know what, the message now continues at this point on side two. Do not fast wind the recorder in either direction.

And he's going to have full control over the world. Then he says in a kind of whisper after it, and you know what, we're going to have a share in it. That's great.

May not encourage you very much, but it encourages me a lot. To think that his kingdom will have no end, he's going to reign forever and ever as the King of kings and of the Lord of lords. Okay, we come right down into the deepening, deepening, deepening sections of this gospel as recorded by John, and then we come to this great marvelous prayer, which I won't get into this morning I'm sure.

But you know, I discovered another thing in reading the sixteenth chapter. You see, the seventeenth chapter, to me again, is the most profound chapter here. But it's preceded by the most comforting chapter in maybe in the whole, at least of the gospel of John, or maybe the whole of the New Testament.

Look at verse twenty. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, that the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. Their sorrow is going to be turned into joy.

Jesus says, I'm going to leave you. Somebody else is coming greater than myself, and as Chadwick said, love in tears is apt to be petulant. Oh no, oh no, they're not buying that.

Somebody coming greater than you are? That's not possible. Jesus says it is. Because I have to be here in this place geographically, I can't be there.

But when he has come, there's no place that he cannot be. Well, they weren't too satisfied with that. But Jesus says, the comforter, the Holy Ghost, in verse twenty-six of the fourteenth chapter.

I can think again of Mr. Chadwick saying, remember the comforter is not a nursing mother for spiritually sick children. That word comforter comes from two Latin words. Comfortus, with strength.

With strength. You shall receive power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. Not to nurse and comfort you and help you just when you stumble, but he comes with strength.

To be witnesses? Yes, but not witnesses in the sense of testifying, but to be martyrs, to die. That's the strength of it. The comforter, the Holy Ghost, shall come upon you.

And then we have again the fifteenth chapter, the incomparable chapter, of the fifteenth chapter of John. After all, there's no parallel of John fifteen in Matthew, Mark and Luke. There's no parallel of the fourteenth chapter in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

There's no parallel of the sixteenth, no parallel of the seventeenth. Ninety-two percent of what is said in the gospel as recorded by John is original, it's new, it's entirely his. He introduces us to new characters like Nicodemus, the woman of the well.

New miracles and so forth. It's an entirely different aspect of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. But again, the Holy Spirit has been given.

Again he says at the end of that twentieth verse, in the sixteenth chapter, your sorrow shall be turned into joy. In verse twenty-two, and ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy, listen to this, no man taketh it from you. Verse twenty-four, hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, asking it shall be given, that your joy may be full.

Now he says, look, I'm going from you, your joy is all being round my ministry, round my personality. The Holy Ghost has come. And one of the great things about the Holy Spirit of God in the gifts again is, the fruit of the Spirit is love first of all, and then joy.

And he says your joy shall be full. Now he said joy, notice that, he didn't say happiness. Happiness comes from the word hap, chance.

If everything goes right, you're as happy as can be. We go up and we go down, don't we? When I see that lovely snow. You don't think it's lovely? Well I think it's lovely anyhow.

And when I see that snow, and when I, we were coming up, driving up from Texas there, and they said it's forty-four below in Minnesota. I think one of the boys said that was really cold. But anyhow, forty-four below.

I look out of the window and there's a thermometer on the wall. Poor thing. There it is with its nose down there like that.

A few weeks ago it was up there at a hundred and four. That weather kicks the thing around up and down, up and down. Over here there's a thermostat on the wall.

You put it at seventy-two or seventy whatever else you want. You open the window. What does it do? Down or up? No, it says you do what you want.

I'm going to stay here. I'm in control here. I'm not, you've got mistaken, I'm not a thermometer, I'm a thermostat.

Now I think we're all in one of two categories. Are you a thermostat this morning or a thermometer? I mean do you go up and down with every change in emotion? Do you get so sad and heavy? Do you know why a lot of people get so bored and they get so heavy? Because a situation comes and they concentrate on it and they concentrate on it and they feed themselves on it. But when some ecstatic experience comes or some experience of joy, they don't dwell on that to the same degree.

Now Jesus says your joy shall be brought. You're going to lose everything. You're going into the darkest period of your life.

I'm going into the darkest period of my life, but I want to tell you something. You can lose everything else, but you do not have to lose your joy. Happiness in the sense of emotions you may lose, but your joy may be full.

Remember a hymn that says go labour on, spend, go labour on, spend and be spent by joy to do the Master's will. Jesus who for the joy that was set before him. What was the joy? You know they give us pictures of the crucifixion.

Nobody ever saw it in the truest sense of the word. Not even God. It was too awesome.

God blew the sun out. I do not understand. No theologian does that.

I'm not a theologian. I do not know how the high and lofty ones who inhabited eternity could be compressed into the matrix of the Virgin Mary. I do not understand it.

I do not understand how God became man. I do not understand how the ancient of days became the infant of time. I do not understand that he who created all things has to be hung on the breast of his mother in order to survive as a babe.

I do not understand it. I do not understand the virgin birth. I believe it.

I do not understand it. But if I can't understand that, less and less do I understand how the God who became man, that that same man became sin for us. Not like it.

He became sin for us. That's baffling. Now Jesus says your world is ending.

A new chapter is starting. My world is ending. Here.

A new chapter is starting. I can't be with you. My spirit will be with you and you can have joy.

You can sing in the storm. I believe one proof of being filled with the Holy Spirit you sing when you're in jail. Now I don't mean, you know, the jail that they have down the road there, though I'm quite sure maybe many of you should be in that, the times you've been breaking speed limits and all the rest, but it's not like when you're hemmed in by circumstances.

You know, we sing rapturous hymns of, what's his name, who wrote When I Surveyed the Wondrous Cross? Isaac Watts. Yeah, he wrote that. But he also wrote, if I remember right, a hymn the WIC used to sing a lot.

We used to sing it here, I think, When Mountain Walls Confront My Way. Where I sit and weep, arise and say, Did I remove, and they shall be by power of God cast into, in the sea? Did I remove? God bidst thee start for yonder sea, arise, depart. I may, I can, I must, I will the purpose of my God fulfill.

And one of the great secrets, I think the reason men went singing to the scaffold was that they knew that God was faithful, they were in the will of God. I was asking Pastor Brooks yesterday about a book called Scottish Worries. I don't know if you can find it, but you can certainly find a book written by a good friend of mine, a dear, brilliant Scotsman.

There are some brilliant Scotsmen. And Jock Povice wrote it. One of the greatest friends, I think the closest friend of Norman Grubb.

He wrote a book called Fair Sunshine. He has a man in it, and I don't know his name, Hugh, do you remember that? You don't remember that, do you? Hugh, was it? My wife would know if she were here, she'd prompt me, but she isn't. I don't know.

Anyhow, his name was Hughie. They took him to the grass market, and he was sentenced to die. They took him to the court.

He was the apostle Paul in that day. He was only about twenty-four years of age. He was about six foot two, big, tall, brilliant man.

Had a profound knowledge of God. He had a, he walked with God in an infamous, if you may never knew. And as he came out from the judge's chamber, and he walked down the main street, and he had to take a right turn, and they were going to hang him in three days, hang him in public humiliation.

And as he went down the street, there were thousands of handkerchiefs wiping his eyes. I think in Scottish, don't they call weeping greeting? Greeting. Is that Gaelic? I guess it is.

And all Gaelic were greeting. And there were just thousands of people weeping like this. And as he went round the corner, this Hughie saw an old man called Hughie.

And Hughie just looked up, and he was sobbing and sobbing. And young Hughie put his shoulders back and said, Hughie man, ach, he says, what are you greeting for? Well, they're going to hang you in three days. And you're greeting about that? He said, man, don't you realize in three days, I'm going to see the king in all his glory? You wonder him why he decided he wanted a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by many a fall, that will not tremble on the brink of poverty or war.

Say, if all the calamities that have come on the church in Vietnam or away there in Iran, if they came on the church here in America, do you think most of us would stand up for it? As it came to casting three grains of incense and saying Caesar is Lord. In all hit, they thought he'd got it all in the bag. He wanted to, well, he wanted to establish the Third Reich.

The First Reich was the Holy Roman Empire. They put images of the Caesars in different towns. They have some in the city of Bath still in England.

And people threw three grains of incense or nonsense, but they threw them anyhow. And they said Caesar is Lord. Now, if you turn that way and said Christ is Lord, your head went off.

Or they gave you the opportunity of watching your wife walk into an arena and a lion tears a baby out from her breast and chew it up and eat your wife up and you still stand there having no conscience? You're going to let your children die? Your wife be devoured? What kind of a man are you? You mean that that Christ that lived 2,000 years is more than your wife and children? Say Caesar is Lord and go back and live happily ever after. Why did they do what they did? Why were they stoned and thorn asunder? You see those fucking Hebrews were getting under the weather. They thought they were the only folks suffering hardship.

And they're thrown back to a time when God's choicest saints, the greatest saints God ever had at that period. What did they have? They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins being destitute, afflicted, tormented. And the world says there's a bunch of idiots.

There's some messianic vision. There's a God away there who once made heaven and earth and they split the seas or something. They're a bunch of idiots.

Let's get rid of them. Do you know what God's view of them was? The world isn't even worthy of them. We live in a day when if you get filled with the Holy Ghost, you go to breakfast every Saturday morning for seven dollars and you go at night and rub shoulders with the broken down film stuff and boy you get excited about it.

The early church was in such a condition, you know the word of God says about them, they weren't acceptable to the world, they were rejected by the world. Paul says to this, present hour we suffer need. We're the offscouring of the world.

Oh we're not. You can be accepted in Hollywood now if you're born again. Your wife may go with her body half bare, as long as she has a cross dangling on her bare breast she'll be accepted.

We're not rejected by the world, we're very unacceptable to the world. Paul says unto this present hour, this man who built this colossal library of truth that blesses millions of people, he wasn't accepted anywhere. Oh he wasn't a handsome personality.

If you'd seen Paul, if you'd seen him limping down the road like this, you'd look at him, one eye was up and the other one was down, his face was up. How do you know? Well if you take a man to a whipping post and lash him a hundred and ninety-five times, what does he say, three times I was stoned, five times I suffered shipwreck, he hung on a piece of wood thirty-six hours in the Mediterranean, went up and down with it, pickled his skin there for thirty-six hours in that salty water, was brutalized, terrorized, enough to kill a whole church. Do you think he hadn't any humor? The devil says, what can we invent next to try and break this man's spirit? I don't know, we just can't do it.

We've put enough persecution and suffering on that man to wipe a regiment of soldiers out. And do you know what I heard him saying yesterday? He said to his buddy, hey, our light affliction, which is but for the moment, he must have had a sense of humor. Our light affliction, when you've been lashed a hundred and ninety-five times with a cup of nine-tenths, it took his shirt off, his back looked like a ploughed field.

They threw rocks at him, his face was scarred, he limped, he had to do it. The outward man is perishing. Why does he glory? Because he's doing God's will, that's why glory.

All right, let me wrap it up here. I got to the introduction of the chapter anyhow. And it says here that your joy shall be full.

What is Jesus saying? He says, your whole world is going to collapse, but listen, the Holy Ghost will so imbue you that in every adversity, calamity and tragedy you can shake a fist at the wall of the flesh of the devil and say, listen, you're not the conqueror, I'm the conqueror. Think of a classic case, here it is. It isn't Satan challenging God, it's God challenging Satan.

Hey, Lucifer, come here a minute. Have you considered my servant Job as nobody like him in the earth? Oh yeah, I've considered him as a matter of fact I can push everybody around in the world except that one man, he's my headache. I can't move him.

But I know his secret. What's his secret? Well his secret is this, his piety is tied up to his prosperity. All you have to do is let me get at him.

No, Satan says, you put your hand against him, the Lord says I can't, I'm using them to hold the world up. You go beat him up. Satan had to go, am I just something the devil kicks that way when he wants and adversity comes when it wants.

I believe if I'm in the will of God, as dear Hudson Taylor said, by the time it comes to me it's God's will for me. It may baffle me, it may mystify me. I see through a glass darkly.

Well, all right, Satan. He said, you see, here are two things. Number one is prosperity keeps him going.

He's the richest man in the world. The second thing, you have a hedge round him. Isn't that an acknowledgment from the devil? He said, I can't get near to him, you put a hedge right round him.

Move the hedge. Well, aren't you glad that God never takes any advice from the devil? He won't take it from me. I've tried to give him some at times, and Lord do it this way, and he says, no, you do it, I do it my way.

So I've given up trying to advise the Lord. All right, he said, I won't take it away, I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll pull it in a bit nearer, and then you can go outside of that hedge and destroy it. So Satan comes down at a great time.

Job goes to bed a multimillionaire, he gets up in the morning, he has nothing. Satan reports, and God said, how did he get on? Oh, I didn't move him at all. What did he do? Oh, well, I sent him bankrupt.

And he said, well, the Lord knows what he's about. Take the hedge away. No, I'll pull it in a bit nearer.

The first stroke was bankruptcy. The second stroke, bereavement. He went and killed all his children.

Did you consider my servant Job? Yes. What did he do? I wiped his family out. What did he do? Well, I got through.

I got through to him a little bit, he said, the Lord gave, and the devil took it all away. That's what we say, isn't it? Everything was going up, and then the devil came. Listen! If God had control in number one situation, he had control in number two situation.

He said, I took the hedge away, and you had the liberty, and you went and destroyed his wealth. You destroyed his prosperity. The next thing, you destroyed his family.

But when he destroyed his family, you remember, he says, the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. But then there's a very significant thing there.

It says he shaved his head and worshipped. Sometimes I wonder what it will take us to get to worship. I've preached about prayer for fifty years and more.

I believe now that prayer, that worship is more vital even than prayer. Because you can pray without learning to worship, but you cannot learn to worship without praying. As I've told you, Dr. Tozer said to me one day, Len, latch the door.

You see that rug yet? He said, I get on that rug some mornings at eight o'clock, and then at eleven, twelve, or one o'clock, I haven't said a word of prayer, I haven't said a word of prayer, I've worshipped. Speechless adoration, contemplation, meditation, adoration. The awesomeness of God, the majesty of God.

He said, the reason we're so poor, we don't have to worship. He lost his millions of money, he lost his family. He shaved his head and said, well right now I'm going to worship anyhow.

Did he get any headway with my servant? No. You've got to hedge around him, take it away and let me touch his body, and skin for skin all that he has. He'll turn round and curse you.

Go ahead. You've got to turn it. So he comes, and poor old Job, he's got boils.

I once had fourteen boils in a row. I'm glad I didn't have them all together, I'd have been boiling over. But he had boils on his feet, he couldn't sit down, he couldn't stand, and there he is, he's in an awful mess.

Bankruptcy has come, bereavement has come, boils have come. Not only that, his friends have come too. As you say, friends like these, you don't need enemies.

Eliphaz the demonite came, build out a shoe height, he was a dwarf, he was only a shoe height. And then the other guys came and they sat all round, and then finally, just like the devil, took everything that poor Job had and left him with a nagging wife. That's a terrible thing to do.

And she comes in and says, listen, now you've been acting this, you know, putting on a big facade. You're not a holy, pious man that's lost in God. She says, why don't you curse God and die? The Hebrew says, blaspheme God and commit suicide.

Remember what he said? Bankruptcy, boils, bereavement, there's no light in the sky anyway, if you want to tell me something. It may get worse. But he said, even if walls destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

I know that my Redeemer lives. They remind you again, surely, of the psalmist who said, you know, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, I got very upset that the godly don't live like that, until I saw their latter end. That makes all the difference.

All right, here. Jesus says, I'm going. I'm going to be with you, abiding in you, your joy will be full, your circumstances may be as black as midnight, the world, the flesh and the devil may have designs on it.

I want to tell you something. That you can be more than conquered by the indwelling spirit of God. Let me finish with this, verse 32.

He says, Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and ye shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. The reason I can go through Gethsemane and everything that's coming in, the Father is with me. Now, if I can go through all the hellishness that's going to break on me, the sin of the world.

Something he couldn't share vocally with them and explain to them. But he says, the reason I'll go through this is that my Father will not leave me at all. And if I can go through that, well, you can go through life, because he will never leave you or forsake you.

The Holy Spirit will abide with you forever, and not only that, your joy will be full. They're told again of the Lord Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him. You know, the artists try and make Jesus look pretty presentable.

I don't believe for a minute Jesus had a loincloth on that cross. I believe part of the humiliation was his total nakedness. It was a cursed thing.

Only the worst of criminals died on a cross. He takes the worst of everything. Human corruption.

Everybody ran away. Well, he could understand that. Peter was never too strong anyhow.

John, and as for Thomas, they all forsook him and fled. And there he is in splendid isolation. And then darkness came and his Father left him.

And he said, I can understand the others, but my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I believe that's hell. Whatever the temperature is in hell is something else. I believe that blackness, the darkness, the total misery, is when a man is God forsaken.

And they endured that horrible experience for those poor sinners. I've often wondered what my brothers felt like looking there and seeing the cross and saying, I should have been on that cross. But we used to sing a hymn here, I guess.

Man of sorrow for a name. Bearing shame and scoffing rude. In my place condemned he stood.

And seal my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah our Savior. And that majestic prayer that we didn't get until we got to the introduction.

Jesus prayed what? For the unification of the disciples. Not that they may be one with each other necessarily. They would be that.

It was more than that. It was that they may be one vertically with the Father. People say you've got to love everybody if you just say they're filled with the Spirit.

They may be smoking, drinking, they may live with harlots. Some of them do. And yet, no, no, no.

Jesus never scolded the disciples because he didn't love Pharisees and others. He didn't blast John the Baptist because he blasted some of the sinners around. Jesus prayed that the unity he had, the oneness with the Father, you and I may have it.

He prayed for their unification. He prayed for their jubilation, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. He prayed not for their separation in one sense, but he prayed not for their isolation.

Keep them from the evil that is in the world. And then he prayed. Again, he prayed for their jubilation.

Verse 17, he prayed for their sanctification. But the reason he prayed that you and I may know jubilation, sanctification, and the indwelling power of the Spirit, it is not to finish on verse 17, which one man says is the last rung on the ladder. John 17, 17, sanctified and preserved.

No, no, no. That's not it. God isn't going to sanctify you, sanctify me, fill me with the Spirit to be merely an ornament, but to be an instrument.

And the end of the chapter, the first verse is what, 1 to 5, Jesus prays for himself. And then 6 to 19, he prays for his disciples. And then 20 to the 26, he prays for the world.

Maybe that's a design order. But he is praying for our cleansing, he's praying for our unification, he's praying for our jubilation, he's praying for our sanctification, that we all might know. His ultimate goal, that through the church, cleansed, renewed, inspired, we might go, before you and I go to bed tonight, I believe somebody will have died for Christ in China, and in Russia, and maybe in Iran.

We don't understand it. I don't understand why God took David Brainard off at 28, and let Wesley live to be 88. It wasn't so Wesley could get a little more interest in heaven at all.

Each of them did the will of his father. And this is the great supreme joy of life, that we can do the will of God, by the power of God.

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