

Leonard Ravenhill's Prayer Closet

by Timothy Bence

This sermon reflects on the life and teachings of Leonard Ravenhill, a revivalist who dedicated his life to intercession for revival. It emphasizes the importance of humility, prayer, and learning to pray in alignment with God's will. The transformative experience of praying with Jesus in the throne room is highlighted, showcasing the power of intercession and repentance.

Scripture: James 4:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 6:6, Romans 8:26, 1 John 5:14, Hebrews 4:16, Psalm 139:23, Jeremiah 29:13, Luke 11:9, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Intercession", "Humility in Prayer"

Description

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Transcript

mid-80s, I met a fantastic, wonderful revivalist named Leonard Ravenhill. He lived in Lindale, Texas. He was from England, London, England.

He used to pastor one of the largest churches in England. He started preaching on revival, and England didn't want to hear it at that time, and many of the congregants just grumbled and complained because they didn't want to be told that they were sinners. They didn't want to be told that they needed to repent.

They didn't want to be told that they needed to pray, so they just started grumbling and complaining, and pretty soon, the religious people in that city drove him out, and with a broken heart, he asked Jesus, what do you want me to do? And Jesus told him to go to America and to pray for revival. Mr. Ravenhill gave the rest of his life to intercession for revival. He learned a lot of things from the Lord about how revival comes.

He wrote an amazing book called Why Revival Tarries, and one of the things that he said to me when I met him, he said, if you want to go up into the heavens, you first got to go down on your knees. Learn to live on your knees, and if you go down on your knees and you humble yourself before the living God, you'll find yourself ascending into the heavens. You'll find yourself in front of the throne room in pretty short order.

I wished I could do his accent. I love that British accent. He was like, you've got to go down before you can go up, and it was so true.

It made me laugh at the same time. I thought, okay, he's right, so let's just go ahead and do it, and he had such a reputation for praying. I asked him, I said, Leonard, how do you pray? Everyone that I've ever heard mention your name says you're a prayer like nobody that they've ever known, and he says, my day doesn't go right, young man, if I didn't pray at least eight hours a day, and I thought, what? How is that possible? Who has eight hours extra in a day? He said, oh, you'll outdo me, son.

One day you'll pray unceasingly. I was like, please help me. I need to learn how to do that then.

He took me into his prayer closet. He had a big walk-in closet, and I didn't know it, but he had a protocol with his wife that if he was in his closet, she never disturbed him. She would leave food outside of his door, and if he came out and wanted to eat, he would.

If he didn't, she'd pick it back up and take it to the kitchen and bring him some fresh ones later in the day. She would keep it, just serving him as much as she could because she loved him, but she knew when he was with Jesus, she didn't want to disturb that until he got done what heaven needed done. He took me into his prayer closet.

I found out later that a lot of people met him. A lot of great leaders met him. Almost every mover and shaker in ministry that I've ever known crossed paths with him at some point in that decade.

It was a rare thing for him to take somebody into his prayer closet. I didn't know that I was being honored or privileged. I didn't know him well enough to know what a special treat that was because I just saw a little old guy on the outer appearance, typical little three-bedroom house, nothing fancy in his life, nothing abnormal, just a nice old couple with a lot of love for each other and a decent little house, a small town in Texas, nothing that would say that anything special is going on here.

But when we went into that closet, within a few seconds, I thought the DNA in my body was going to explode. The presence of God was so weighty. I said in my heart, Jesus, the only time I've ever felt your presence like this is when I actually was in the heavens with you.

How is this possible on the earth? It's because he had learned how to humble himself before the Almighty God. He maintained something with the glory in his house. Just sitting there in that room, I felt like I was in front of the face of God.

I shut my eyes and we were both in the throne room and it was just a glorious time of prayer for the first time in my life. I think maybe I had done this in my sleep a little bit, but I can't say that honestly. Sometimes I would wake up in the middle of the night praying.

Maybe I did some prayers like this, but consciously this was the first time that I found myself in the throne room of God and Leonard and myself were both praying exactly what Jesus was praying. And suddenly I saw the difference and experienced the difference of I'm not praying to God. I'm praying with him right now.

How is this possible? I didn't know what he was praying until I walked into that room. I realized how far short my prayers had been so many times in my life when I was telling God what I wanted him to do instead of asking him what he was doing. And as I sat there with this precious man and we prayed with

Jesus, I knew that I knew that I knew that we were going to see those prayers answered because the King of Kings and Lord of Lords was praying them too.

He wasn't saying, yes, I hear you. He wasn't saying, okay, I'll do that one, but not that one. He was initiating the conversation and we were just charging into the depths of intercession with him.

And one thing I have learned about Jesus, I don't know, I can't claim to know a whole lot, but this I know, he always gets his prayers answered because he always prays the perfect will of his father. I thought that we were in that room for about 20 minutes when we came out. We just walked out like normal.

He's like, oh, my wife probably has sandwiches outside the door. We can have a little bite to eat before you go. I thought it'd been about 20 minutes.

And when we opened the door, sure enough, she was just leaving a tray there for both of us. And she said, I'll be right back with something to drink. I'm glad both of you had got heaven's work done.

I looked at the clock on the wall in the hall, and I realized that we had been in that room for four and a half hours. And it seemed like 20 minutes because we were truly in the glory with Jesus. That day transformed me because I thought I knew what was prayer up to that point.

I thought I was a praying man. I would have told you that I had grown up as a child praying often, and I had a wonderful experience of being a member of a church that prayed often. Sometimes I had experienced some encounters like that with heaven, but I rarely got to share them with another person.

And that day was so transforming because I felt like I had been yoked to a mature ox that knew how to pull the line, and he taught me how to do it. He never said he was going to teach me something. He just shared his life with me for a few minutes, and it was so transforming.

He gave me his book, *Why Revival Tarries*, and he gave me a tape called *The Judgment Seat of Christ*. I took that book home, and I read it. I thought it was an amazing book, and then I thought I'd take a bath and just soak in the tub for a little bit.

I put on that tape, and when I started listening to that tape, I thought I was going to drown because I fell under the weight of God, and I thought, oh my gosh, *The Judgment Seat of Christ* is real. Everything in our life will be examined. Every thought and intent in our heart is going to be examined, and I didn't feel the nearness to God that I thought I would.

I felt like, gosh, surely I've got things in my life that aren't quite what he wants, but it was an amazing sense of presence and weight of glory on that to drive people to repentance. There was also this sense in that message that God would always accept our repentance, and his joy was not full until we were willing to repent, that he was never shining a light on us to condemn us or to make us feel bad, but it was to gently lead us to repentance so that our joy could return, so that the presence of God could inhabit everything we were doing, and our fellowship could be complete at that moment. I just couldn't stay in the water anymore.

I thought I was going to drown because the weight of God was so heavy, so I got out of the tub and just fell on the bathroom floor and cried out to God, forgive me. I'm a sinner. I've known you for so long, but I'm still a sinner.

Oh God, have mercy on me, and I didn't even know what I was repenting for. It wasn't something that I consciously said, I've done this, and I've done that, and I've done this, and it was just, I know I'm not as close to you as I could be, so whatever is keeping me from you, get that out of me, oh God. And boy, Jesus loves to answer those kinds of prayers.

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