

Who Is Touching the Ark? - Leonard Ravenhill

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon explores the significance of the Ark of God, emphasizing the necessity of reverence and obedience in worship.

Duration: 47:13

Scripture: Exodus 25:22, 2 Samuel 6:1, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 10:31, James 1:22

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of obeying God's commands and not withholding His truth. He warns that there will come a time when God will judge those who have disregarded His truth and put their own desires above His. The speaker uses the example of David and the Ark of the Covenant to illustrate the consequences of disobedience. He encourages listeners to repent, surrender their lives to God, and live in obedience to Him. The sermon highlights the mercy of God, who strips us down to help us understand His standards and calls for a genuine and passionate devotion to Him.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith, and powerful sermons from modern preachers too. This week we have Leonard Ravenhill with his message, Who is Touching the Ark? Through Samuel 6 we read from verse 1, Again David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

And David arose and went with all the people that were with him from the valley of Judah to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah, and Uther and Ahio. Ahio, that's not a state, that's the name of a man.

The sons of Abinadab drove the new cart, and they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God. And Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord, and all instruments, men of instruments, made of firwood, even on harps and psalteries, on timbrels, on connets and cymbals.

And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uther put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uther, and God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God. Let's look a minute here in the 25th chapter of Exodus.

Exodus chapter 25. Remember, the beginning of this chapter is where the Lord is selecting. He's going to do what I think must have been very strange to Israel.

They had never had any covering in the sense of a tabernacle. They'd been nomads. They'd had no priests.

They'd had the heavens for the ceiling of their church, if you like. And now suddenly, instead of being enlarged, they're contracted to a small space that's called, has been called again, the tabernacle in the wilderness. And God gives specific instructions to this amazing man Moses, about the building.

It's very interesting that he had no choice in this. He obeyed every commandment God gave to him. He had no more choice in the colors of the thing, any more than Noah had a choice of what kind of a rainbow he wanted.

He never wondered what kind of a rainbow he might have chosen. If the Lord said, you choose the colors, it would have been a mess. If he'd asked me, I wouldn't know the colors.

But he just did as he was commanded. And it says in verse 8 of the 25th chapter of Exodus, let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them, according to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. Okay, come down to verse 17.

Thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold, two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubins of gold, a beaten work shalt thou make them in the two ends of the mercy seat, and make one cherub on one end and the other cherub on the other, even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubins on the two ends thereof. And the cherubins shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another.

Towards the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubins be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee, and there will I meet with thee. Now that's the first piece of furniture mentioned as regards the tabernacle.

It was roughly 54 inches long, this ark. It was a three feet high and three feet wide, and it was a visible presence of an invisible power. It was a kind of a earthly resting place where God put his power between those awesome cherubins.

Remember how often the psalmist cries, O thou that dwellest between the cherubins, shine forth. Psalm 80 particularly, before Ephraim and Manasseh, stir up thy strength and come and save us. If you talk about the ark, usually people think you mean the ark where, you know, the children play with at home, they were little animals, and they go into Noah's ark.

Well that was an ark all right. Now do you remember another ark beside that? Well it was a little thing a woman made to put a baby in. She made an ark of bulrushes.

And thirdly you have this ark. Now the ark, actually the word really means, if you get right to the bottom of it, it means a place to preserve something intact. It has complete coverage.

You know I've said so often that faith does three things. It reckons, it risks, and it rests. I think the mother of Moses must have been, well she sure was a wonderful woman, and she put that baby in that little ark and pushed it out onto the waters of the Nile.

I think it's a horrible risk. Now did she know a crocodile wouldn't eat it before she had hardly turned her back? Or the lid could have blown off and the sun might have scorched the baby crisp, or it could have been carried away on the on the flood, or somebody could have stole it. But you see when you get a word from God, you're not going to be shaken by the Philistines or anybody else outside.

God had told her what to do and she obeyed. And again that's the key, that's the anchorage of spiritual success, spiritual maturity, is obedience. To obey is better than sacrifice.

Remember King Saul filled a hole of that that valley with beasts, and yet he retained a few of the price stock. And when Samuel came up to him and spoke to him, he said, well I've done as you said, and the little sheep gave the story away enough. Wonderful what little animals have taken important parts in the Bible isn't it? And Samuel says, if you've done what you said you've done, what meaneth this bleating of the sheep? And the lowing of the oxen which I hear.

To obey is better than sacrifice. There is no substitute for obedience. None, not there, not now, not ever.

Again trust and obey, there's no other way, there's no other outlet. You either do as God says, all right, you begin to shrink, you begin to wither. Now here is the ark, and the measurements are given to us.

Verse 22 says, there will I meet with thee. And that was the supreme desire of God. It's the supreme desire of God today, that when we come together we meet with him.

As I usually ask people when, somewhere in a meeting, did you come here, or did you come here tonight to meet God, or did you come to hear a sermon about him? I talked with somebody today, an internationally known figure who said, you know, I'm realizing how little I know of God, and I had offered somebody a sermon that, uh, there's the most profound thing I've ever heard, and this person said, I don't, I feel as though I don't want to preach anymore. I said, well that's how I felt when I, when I heard the, the depth that this man has. Talking about Jesus laying his glory by and being wrapped in our clay.

Oh God pity us, we're so commercialized, we're so regulated by circumstances, we get up with the clock, the clock runs our lives, that we lose sight of eternity, we lose sight of the wonder of God's salvation. And the key concern is about the whole of the building of this marvelous, you know, if you want to call it, kind of a private area that was to be roped off, and, and again when you think of all the linen that was put round, and every thread, billions of them were put in there by hand. Rather staggering, isn't it? And then there's to be a, a place, a holy place, and then not only a holy place, but the holy of holies.

And this ark was put not in the holy place, it's put in the holy of holies, and it has the chief place in the holy of holies, and inside of it you'll have the, uh, the rod that budded, and you'll, you'll have a sample of the manna that fell from heaven, and it didn't get worms in it either, and, uh, and there you have the tables of stone. These, this testimony of God has to be preserved. And the ark is, is an abiding place for God on earth, that is, he manifests himself there.

Uh, let's, let's skip over a minute here, and read in the first book of Samuel, and, uh, chapter five, sorry. We can't go through the whole thing, this is a fantastic study. I'm going to do it myself, but I couldn't do it tonight, because it would take up too much time.

But if you want to find a, a, a, a minute, excuse me, a minute account of this ark, and God's desire, and the way it moved around, you'd have to go to the first book, go to the first book, uh, of Chronicles, and chapters 12 to 16, and you'll find a very marvelous account of the moving of that wonderful ark. And then, of course, you'd have to read Psalm 68, and Psalm 101, which, which also deal with him, and this, and Psalm 24. You see, this is some little bit of furniture that's tucked away in the corner that has no meaning, meaning it's the abiding place.

If you like, it's the seat, it's the dwelling place. You, you have the ark, and then on the, on the top of the ark, you, you have a mercy seat. The Salvation Army never used to talk about coming to the altar, they used to sing.

I remember that years ago, 60, 70 years ago, when the army used to sing, come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel. Here bring you wounded heart, here, uh, tell your anguish, earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. There's a mercy seat, a blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

Somebody afterwards removed that lid and looked inside, and because they did, they, they got into serious trouble. Now, if you read those Psalms again, 68 and 101 and Psalm 24, you'll find this thing goes immensely, immensely interesting. Okay, we're now in the first book of Samuel, chapter 5. The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. Now, when they of Ashdod rose early in the morning, behold, Dagon had fallen upon his face on the earth before the ark of God. And they took Dagon and set him on his place again.

And they rose early in the morning, and he was fallen on his face, and his head and his hands had broken off. Now, you see here the peril of toying or playing with holy things. There's a verse I didn't look up, but it talks about the iniquity of holy things.

Now that's something to really turn over, isn't it? How in the world can you have the iniquity of holy things? These people have captured the ark of God. They thought it would do them good. Instead it did put it at the side of their God, this monstrous God.

Dagon, with the upper part of his body, was a man, and the lower part a fish. Something like a mermaid you would say today. And there he stood in a temple where people worshiped him, and as soon as they put the ark of God there, without anybody doing a thing, big old Dagon fell down on his face.

So they stood him up again. And they went in the next morning, he was worse off. He not only fell down, his hands had broken off, his feet had broken off, just because of God's presence being there.

Now, see what happened further in the chapter. When it was early in the morning, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold.

Only the stump of Dagon was left. Therefore neither the priest of Dagon nor any that came into Dagon's house dared tread on the threshold of Dagon to this day. You see, just that one visitation, that one movement of God, terrified them.

So in a sense Dagon had to go out to business. Verse 6. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them and smote them with emeralds, and Ashdod and the cults thereof. And

when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of God of Israel shall not abide with us, for his hand is sought upon us and upon Dagon our God.

Going to the end of the eighth verse. And they carried the ark of God, the God of Israel. They carried the ark of the God of Israel out thither, and it was so after they had carried it out that the hand of the Lord was against the city.

Now here you are again, you see the peril. What I want to emphasize, two things. I want to emphasize the peril of having these holy things and misusing them.

And yet the peril is obviously the opposite to the power. Remember the children of Israel, one of their marvelous escapades, they walked around the city seven times. What did they do? They carried the ark of God.

So then that was the very presence of God. Can you imagine people on the walls looking down and say, Well, who are these lunatics? I mean, what are they doing? They were not allowed to speak. That must have been tough on some of them.

They were not allowed to speak. They walked around in silence. They carried the ark.

What have they got there? Is that a coffin? What is it? It's a casket. You see, they were not allowed to mount it. When Moses was sharing out some of the property of Israel, he gave various things to various people, but the sons, I've forgotten his name, Athon, I think it was, his sons were not allowed to have any cattle or any of the possessions.

They were separated to carrying the ark of God. Now the peril is this, and I think to me it comes home with great force. Or let me go to the other scripture.

Where did we read a bit earlier? I've forgotten that chapter. 2 Samuel 6. Okay. 2 Samuel 6 and verse 6. When they came to Nacob's threshing floor, Uzar put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, and the oxen shook it, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against it.

Why? Now they'd made a new cart for it. God said it never had to be on a cart. God said it had to have four gold rings, one on each corner, and put a staff through it, and that men had to carry this thing.

So they made a new cart. You know, the Jews then, I don't know about today, they loved new things. Remember what Samson said, if you fasten me with seven new ropes, then I shall be like other men, or then I shall be weak like other men.

Rather insulting to us, isn't it? Remember it later, when Jesus died, they put him in a new tomb. When Jesus rode an ass, he rode one that nobody had brought in. It was entirely new.

They loved new things, and these people thought they were doing God a favor by, you know, modernizing this thing. I mean, why carry the thing on your shoulders anyhow, when oxen can do it? Now I don't know what happened to these oxen. You know, it says that when they came to the threshing floor of Uzar, maybe they thought it was lunchtime.

You know, they could smell, hmm, that's the stuff we eat, and hmm, right now they're threshing some new wheat. Hmm, we should stay and have some. And maybe it was the very action of those creatures that swayed the ox.

Now isn't it really awesome? They didn't decide to paint it another color. They didn't decide to put a second deck on it. They didn't disfigure it in any way.

The men didn't go in front of it and start blaspheming. The man somehow thought he do gotta, oh look, the ark is going to topple over, oh I'll hold it. Somebody once asked Mr. Spurgeon if he would join a society for the defense of the bible, and he said you don't usually walk before a lion with a sword.

Why do you need to defend the bible? All this man did was put his hand up to stay the ark, and immediately he was smitten. What do you think we're doing with the gospel today? Dressing it up? Painting it up? Somebody told me this week of a Christian group, a rock band, a Christian, Christian rock band. Anyhow, whatever they are, they go around, and now they've got sequins on their coats.

Well why not? Johnny Cash has them, and all the other guys have them. I mean if the world can have them, can't we? Glitter, I mean if there's no other glitter, we may as well stick it on the outside if you're not on the inside. Anyhow, and we try to study the ark of God.

We're trying to put some improvement on the ark of God. We try to do that, I think, with the translations we make of the word of God. We try and make sure those words are just a little bit more easy.

As I said to some preachers I've preached with this week, that if we go back, and maybe mentioned it here before, if we go back to bible language and and call sin what it really is, instead of saying somebody, you say that girl's a whore, you say no no she's a call girl. You say about a dirty filthy sodomite, oh no no he's not a sodomite, he's just gay. There's nobody wicked, they're just weak.

There's no iniquity, it's just infirmity. No backsliders anymore, that's a dirty word. A lot of people have a fellowship, but backsliders, you don't use that word.

Oh how smooth. I remember reading a story of Mr Whitfield where he was particularly angry one day. I'd like to have heard Whitfield, I think it had been right up my alley.

He got mighty furious about the possessions the devil had. He was always wanting the church to pull down strongholds. He was always seeing the enemy doing his evil work, getting people to submit to him.

And one day he said, I'm going to shoot the arrows of God into your heart. And he said, he mentioned an arrow and he pulled it, the arrow back like this, and the congregation ducked, you know. And that's the way to preach, if you can get them to do that, at least you've got them halfway down to the ground, and maybe when you get them halfway down, you can push them the other half.

But the anger of the Lord was kindled against this man, and not only slaughtered him, but killed him. Come on, in God's name, what are we doing with the gospel today? Isn't it getting more emasculated? Isn't it getting more Hollywood style? Don't you miss the absence and the glory of God? Why, they got the very presence of God in fact, and that's all we need. There's an old hymn that says, God's presence and his very self, an essence all divine.

I'll ask you again, I've asked you before, when did you last go out to the sanctuary? Tiptoe, because God had revealed his holiness and his majesty. We go out very much as the same way we came in. Go out, we say, hey I like it very much.

Someone like that in fears myself, which I've got it. Or I like some other trivial thing that's got nothing to do with eternity and nothing to do with God. Oh my.

Notice in verse 5 now, go back a minute here. David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord, and all instruments made of fir, wood, even hearth, and psalteries, and timbrels, and coronets, and ensembles. Now that there is his ecstasy.

Now come down to verse 9. This same David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, how shall the ark of the Lord come to me? That's a big switch. He's excited, they have their band music, everything's having a wave of the time, and then suddenly God intervenes, and suddenly his all emotional life does a somersault. He realizes what an awful God he serves.

What a God of majesty, what a God of glory. One minute everybody's excited, the next minute wouldn't that be something? It'd be like going into the uh that experience you know when Ananias and Sapphira went to church. That must have been a great morning.

I would have enjoyed that I think. I said, well Lord why do you why do you stop with two hypocrites? I'm sure half the congregation you could have wiped them out at the same time. It would have been more spectacular, but God doesn't do it that way.

But I what I'm trying to say, rough and tumble as it may be, because I'm up to the hectic day today, that the anger of God was kindled for a very simple thing. He did not take a hammer and break the ark. He didn't say this old piece of furniture we can do that.

Do you know the ark is the only thing that was taken out of the original tabernacle and went into the temple of the most high God? Do you know afterwards in the book of the revelation it says that's preserved the testimony of God in an ark? Now scholars will tell you that the ark was destroyed in the uh second invasion and the burning of Babylon and what have you got, and maybe it was. And yet God's presence, and that's what it matters. It isn't a case of having a wooden box here.

What it's telling us is that God makes their place in habitation. Now as I said to somebody today this is this is awesome, this is breathtaking, when when you say well I'd like to go and I wish we had a box and you can say God's presence is there. He's there in his holiness, he's there in his majesty, he's there in his glory.

Be careful how you handle this thing. Well we don't need a box, we don't need a presence. Why? Because it says you're the habitation of God.

There's only so much of God's holiness in this meeting as you and I fill with the spirit of the holy spirit of God, the pure spirit of God. He doesn't dwell in temples, they owe you to make him a thousand crystal palaces like they've done on the west coast there. So what? You can't sanctify a building in the new testament since they didn't do that.

Why even Solomon said, and I guess he built the most expensive building ever made, men were like he used gold to walk on, he used gold on the walls, he was the most extravagant building ever made, he used gold more easily than we used cement. And he built the altar and he had all the priests in total correct display there. And yet when he made it into session to God he says, look I put up this building, I've done everything according to your commandment.

We've even got an altar, we even got a sacrifice on the altar. Now what's missing? Nothing except the fire of God. What good is a house that I've built if God's presence isn't there? What's the good of making a showpiece and saying we've got the best tribe, we've got the most brilliant preacher, we've got this time.

So what? In God's name does it matter? Don't you think we're putting our hands on so many things these days? You've got to start this way and finish that way and do something else. We're getting so mechanical. Since when did the gospel need trimming up? I would have to go to a meeting this week, there was a five-piece band there.

It was band, B-A-N. If I had ought to do it, it would be B-A-N-M-E-D, band. I'd have banned the whole thing.

Oh how they swerved and jazzed and what not. They didn't do that too long after I really got going. The preacher said amen for 10 minutes then he lost all his pump, his energy and somehow lost his voice.

Who's touching the arse? David was afraid of the Lord. He hadn't been afraid before. Isn't it incredible that this people that knew God in such an intimate way, this people who had gone round the city without a gun, the most despised people of all, and they went round one day, round another day, round another day, round another.

On the last day they went round seven times, so 13 times they went round. That's pretty unlucky isn't it? And they kept down and they put all the criticism of the people that were watching and all they had to do on the last day was shout with a great shout. Why? Because God was there and I don't see any fun in shouting and carrying on in a meeting.

Oh you can clap your hands that's okay, but mercy that's all you have to do. You have to whip people up. You know I brought my dear friend there Dale there and his father belonged to a tribe called the Quakers.

And I thought about when God said I want a tabernacle and there at the mercy seat will I meet with thee. God wants me to meet with him. It's more than me preaching for him, it's more than me being a missionary for him, he wants to meet with me.

He wants to reveal himself to me, he wants to talk to me, he wants to come and work in this being of mine. And then he called me from the border of Mexico today and she said she was weeping and she said that God has called us here, we're Hispanics, God has really blessed us but oh we do want to be such great soul winners and she went on and I said my dear look the first commandment is not thou shall be a soul winner. The first commandment is thou shall love the Lord by God with all thy heart soul mind and strength.

There are lots of missionaries that don't love God. There are lots of missionaries should have returned to the from the field six months after they got there. They're doing a thing mechanically and it's hard to enjoy that kind of good when you're doing it mechanically.

But when they do it under the anointing of God, when they do it with the love of God. Can you imagine this profession stopping? They had harps and psalteries and timbrels and comments and they're having a great time and suddenly death came. You wonder that David was angry afraid and he said how shall the ark of the Lord come unto me? Verse 12.

It was told King David saying the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that pertaineth unto him because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David with gladness and it was so that when they that bear the ark of the Lord had gone six paces he sacrificed oxen and fatlings and David danced before the Lord with all his might and he was girded with an ephod. Now notice what he danced with.

He danced with all his might. Doesn't say dance with a girl. He said he danced with all his might.

He danced in the presence of God. There's nothing sensuous about it. He isn't linked up with some woman in his arms.

He's dancing in God's presence. God has turned his sorrow into joy. He started off in joy.

There comes bereavement. There comes sorrow. They've disobeyed God.

They've hurt God. They've transgressed against God. Do you ever wonder if you're getting insensitive to what God's trying to say to you? Do you ever wonder when when a certain thing has happened somewhere in your nervousness you put your hand up to steady the ark and somehow that sensitivity went and the compassion you had went and the concern you had went? Again this man didn't take an axe and split up the ark.

He didn't say we've carried this thing long enough we need no no no no. All he did was try to steady the ark of God. Oh mercy how we're trying to steady the ark of God these days.

We want to do some new thing. We wouldn't we wouldn't we wouldn't just steady it. We'd paint it.

We'd paint it. We'd put a musical box inside of it. We'd put the priest in some new garments.

We'd try and make it more acceptable. You know there's nothing nothing this generation needs more than a baptism, an old-fashioned hellfire preaching. I'm sure of that.

The power and the presence of God were resting on that tabernacle and while they were obedient they had success. It doesn't matter if you have to get a city down. Again the most ridiculous thing.

And they stood all the criticism and scorning and yet on that final day when because they'd obeyed God the whole place came tumbling down. Well let's not be too critical about them because you know you and I again have more we've more transfer for than they had. We've seen the mighty workings of God.

I don't know anybody that's pulling Jericho's down do you? Can you think about obligation that we have as a nation with all our Bibles all our broadcasts? Well are we studying the ark of God in the way of presenting the gospel these days? The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. And when I hear people I heard somebody say well you know there's a different approach today is there? Is there really? You go tell a woman who's just lost a child. Well these are modern days you don't have to weep over it and groan over it.

I mean they did that in the Bible days but of course women were women then. But nowadays it doesn't matter. All they've done is lost a child.

Is there any difference between the grief of somebody who's heartbroken today than there was in the grief of somebody who lived 3,000 years ago? We say human nature has changed. Human nature has not

changed. Human nature is still a sinful nature.

Human nature still needs God. And I think there are times when God tries to stop the business you know. When I think of again they all they did was put his hand up to the ark.

He didn't curse God. He didn't take a hammer and smash it. He didn't say now you're all lunatics for going this way as if it's too old-fashioned.

Well do you think that God maybe has been speaking? Have you noticed how many tragedies we've had this winter? One whole town swept away with a mudslide just like that. People went into eternity. Mississippi has covered more area than ever.

We came down past there just the other day. Acres, hundreds of acres, just little bits of roofs standing up out of the water. And all you could see looked like you could see for 50 miles just straight to the water.

And some farms just standing on a little island. They'll never get any crops in there this year. There's sludge will be left behind.

They can't do with cattle. It seems though God is trying to check us but we we won't take the checking. We won't take the warning.

And again I said to you the most distressing area I believe is the area of the church itself. We're trying to study the ark. We don't want God almighty to govern the whole thing.

We want a little bit of flesh in it. We want a little bit of humanism in it. We want a little bit of organization in it.

We want some skill in it. And God holds off. Want to do it in the flesh? By the word of God says some trust in chariots and some trust in horses.

But we will trust in the name of God alone. Oh I'm aching on the inside to see somebody that will really really really have no confidence in the flesh. Don't try to organize.

Isn't it horrible when we try and subsidize God's cause with a few dollars in a collection there and something else. Now either God is God or he isn't. As I've said before this book is either absolute or it's obsolete.

There's no middle course. It either has all the answers or it has no answers. I've got to get to the place where I say Lord you can strip everything else away from me.

I'm on Christ the solid rock I stand all of the ground is sinking sand. I'm not going to study the ark. I'm convinced God's going to do new work.

I've talked the last two or three days with a brother I love very dearly and he's at the crossroads in his life and I know others who are men that you think are at the top of the tree. You think they should be satisfied with what they've got and they're not. They're suddenly realizing there's a new dimension that God wants to bring to our generation.

A new revelation. A new unfolding of the word of God. If you like men that don't try to study the ark by organization and saying you must do it this way you must do it that way.

Say no listen we're going to follow if it takes us we have to follow those loin oxen. They look pretty scruffy things. But before long you remember that David he went and slew the oxen and and he took the fatlings and he made a sacrifice to God and then he danced before God.

Why? Because he got rid of many of his obstructions. The Lord is very merciful. Do you know how merciful he is? He's so merciful he'll strip us right down to the place where we under thing to stand on.

We under thing to lean on. We're cast in nakedness and we we stay in despair. You know the church that was rich and increased in goods? That's where the church is today.

She's rich, she's increased in goods, she's in need of nothing. Which church was it Jesus spewed out of his mouth? I would I was either hot or cold. So then because I was neither hot or cold I would spit.

It didn't spew the cold one out of his mouth it never been in. It was his church that he spewed out of his mouth. It wasn't a heathen religion it was his church.

They were neither hot or cold. They were kind of midstream. And because they were neither one thing nor the other he vomited them out.

He didn't vomit the cold church out. He didn't bother with it. God will not stand for mediocrity.

I think I need to sit down. In fact I've said to somebody today I'm going to do less preaching in the next few months as little as I can and I'm going to meditate on certain things. I'm not young anymore.

I'm getting older and older but that doesn't mean you can't. I mean Moses was 80 when he started and I'm not 80 yet. So maybe when I'm 80 I'll wake up and start doing something.

But there's a hunger. There's a the class we talked to the last Saturday morning there's some 500 men maybe about 30 of them 32 or 3. And half of them were zealous. They were sitting on the edge of their seats with all prospects.

Most of them there were seminarian fellows. Eager keen. Even asking afterwards well Mr. Raymond what's the secret really of abiding? What's the secret of abounding in the Christian life? What's the secret of not being a failure? What's the secret of not letting your branch get withered up? I had somebody calling today for prayer again.

Every day they call. I'm sorry for the situation some of them are in but it's the only way they'll go in grace anyhow and in the knowledge of God. They've been leaning too much on what they have and now God's going to dry up their souls so that they only have God on whom they can lean.

They've had so much flesh. They've had so much ability. They've had so much organization.

They've had so much security. God says well let me pull it all away. Doesn't the word say trust in the Lord forever? For in the in the Lord is everlasting strength.

I think one of the shocks in eternity will be to discover how little we've ever used of the available power of God. Not for our own mean silly self, but there's a world out that's dying there. Does God have resources to meet this generation? Come on.

I learned to my horror just while I was in Brooklyn that a man who is a professional in this realm, a very fine Christian man. Last year the churches in America spent close on two billion dollars on radio and tv preaching. Two billion.

Do you know how many people we reach? Less than four percent of the of the national family. Less than four percent of Americans listen to the gospel. And we spent nearly two.

Can you imagine how many how many mission stations that would have built? How many churches that would have built in some other country? I think we're putting our hands on the arse. We're rather afraid that we might go a bit overboard you know. Doctrinally somebody comes and says, hey well steady a minute.

And he hardly knows he's putting his hand on the ark anyhow. We're just afraid it seems of some new revelation, some new some new demand that God will make upon us. Not just individually, well it is individually of course, and collectively.

Now I guess I didn't get this over to you as it came to me, but I'll tell you when I read it the other day. I was shocked to realize that again this man did not smash up the ark. He didn't tell all the people to rebel.

He didn't tell the priest to do it. All he did was steady the ark thinking he was doing God a favor. Like all he did was disobey.

Is that all? Well that's all Adam did in the garden. All he did was disobey. Didn't curse God.

And it seems the hardest thing that we have in the in our lives to learn is how to obey in the very very very simple things that God challenges us with. I still say you know if I were a kind of protestant Pope I'd close every church down for a month. We're preached to death.

Why do we keep going to conferences? You can't handle the light you've got. Why do you want some more? Turn it off when you go home tonight. The next conference you go with it this weekend, the next week.

You'll have more light therefore you'll have more to answer the judgment seat. Haven't you got enough to answer for? Aren't there areas in your life where you're still not obeying even though God said do this? You put your hand on the ark because it was toppling over on you. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God the word of God said.

Robert Louis Stevenson said I only know one thing and that's when you fall out of the hands of the living God. And that happens. It comes a time when God says to a nation all right you've been putting your hand on my truth.

You've been withholding my truth. Job said I have not eaten my morsel alone. You say well we've given money to mission.

So we have. You know this came I mentioned it last night before I do a lot of number of preachers in that place and I said this I said you know we we had a national day of prayer last week. No we didn't have a national day of prayer.

We had a national suggestion. If we had a national day of prayer the president would have said every factory is closed down. Every school is closed down.

Every shopping mall is closed down. Everything's on the start. It's time we listened to God.

It's time we humbled ourselves before God. But when God wants it that way, which he does, we put our hand on the ark and say well we'll steady it and make it a little bit convenient. Dear God there was a time when they were so concerned about revival they even put remember they put what um sack cloth on the animals.

If you wear sack cloth they think you're a crackpot. If you don't think so get a sack. Get an old potato sack and put a hole in the top.

Put it over your head and get your wife to cut some holes so you can put your arms in and go to church like that. And say this is an outward sign of an inward sorrow I have. I don't care about the style of my clothes.

I don't care what you think anybody else thinks. We've got to have revival. We've got to have a move of God.

And we haven't had it by all our financial efforts and all our geniuses of evangelism. All the other things. We get so far then we put our hands on the ark.

There's going to be a conference shortly and I am not in any way troubled that I wasn't invited but I know some of the godless men in the world and they're not invited to that conference in Amsterdam. 2500 the itinerant evangelists. I guess that's why they'll get to say well they're not itinerant evangelists.

They're going to meet and they're going to go through a rigmarole again. Workshops. Workshops.

Workshops. There's a workshop for this and there's a workshop for that. The hardest work in the whole world is prayer.

They are workshops aren't they? No. The ark is falling. We're going to study it.

We've got a new idea. Every magazine I pick up now, Christian magazine is, is how to make your church grow. I'm looking for one that says how to take your church deeper.

Somebody said to a preacher you have the biggest church in. How big is your church? He said three miles wide and an inch deep. I think that's true of a lot of them.

Three miles wide and an inch deep. And while it's true it's tragic. Are we going to change the style? Are we going to keep studying the ark? Are we going to say no no no we're not going any further like this.

This old cart you've got it on with. New cart we're taking it off. We're going to do it God's way and it looks silly to carry it on your shoulders.

It looks silly to walk around when you can mechanize the thing or organize the thing or paint it up or make it more attractive. What in the how can you make God's presence more attractive? That's about the height of insanity. Isn't God himself in his holiness attractive? For some reason I don't know why I thought about Westminster Abbey.

They recently redecorated it. Oh they climbed up there and they put pure gold leaf. It's worth millions of dollars now.

I don't think God ever enters the place to tell you the truth. You know the less of the glory of God we have the more showmanship we need inside. A fancy good-looking choir with marvelous robes on.

Lovely church building everything. And the more we get of that it seems as though God says I don't dwell in temples made with hands. I'm not comfortable here anyhow.

You know what we need to do? We need to do what David did. We need to take all the implements. We need to take the cart and break it up and we need to get hold of the bullets and chop them up and have one big holy ghost bonfire and say Lord God I'm going to live on the stretch for you from now till I die whether I die tomorrow or ten years from now.

I'm going to meet with you as I've never met with you before. I'm going on the stretch for God as I've never been on the stretch before. You've been listening to the From the Pulpit and Classic Sermons series.

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