

Apostle Paul's Preaching - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill explores the motivations and unwavering commitment of Apostle Paul in his preaching, emphasizing the love of Christ and the call to live sacrificially for Him.

Duration: 15:04

Topics: "Apostle Paul", "Sacrificial Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the life of the Apostle Paul, emphasizing his unwavering dedication to Christ despite facing immense challenges, including imprisonment. It highlights Paul's desire for Christ to be magnified in his body, whether in life or death, and his willingness to endure any hardship for the sake of the Gospel. The sermon draws parallels between Paul's sacrificial commitment to Christ and the call for believers to live wholeheartedly for Jesus, being sincere and without hypocrisy.

Transcript

Chapter 1. I mentioned before that for years I drifted on in a self-made delusion by believing that in the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 5, where he gives a summary of all his expectations, I thought the 14th verse was the secret of his motivation. He says, The love of Christ constraineth me. I can't say that without thinking about the Marishal, the eldest daughter of the founder of the Salvation Army.

She came to a church I passed, that she was a tall, ungainly, large-shouldered woman, but a tremendous soul winner. And she wrote a hymn, and one verse of the hymn says, There is a love constraining me to go and seek the lost. I yield, O Lord, my all to Thee to save at any cost.

There is a fire that falls on me as in the upper room, destroying all carnality, dispelling fear and gloom. There is a life which was given me, a life divine and strong. It carries me through every sea of sorrow, storm and wrung.

You know, that precious woman came from a fantastic family, and when she was less than 20 years of age, she went to Paris, invaded Paris. And as a result, had to go to jail. She invaded Switzerland.

As a result, she went to jail. They lived in hardships, and so, but you know, she was like a daddy. She blazed with a holy fire.

Remember, he wrote that hymn, Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flames, send the fire. Thy blood-bought gift tonight we claim, send the fire. Look down and see this waiting host.

Give us the promise. You know, the Salvation Army never made anything about gifts, but God help us, they went through the world. They went into 90 countries in 70 years, not 90 cities.

Men didn't go for a holiday at weekend and give out a few tracts. They blazed for God. Their emphasis about the Holy Ghost was not power, but purity.

They still have a banner with a red banner with a sign on it, and it says on there, ablaze for God, if I remember right. An army that he raised up. Well, we need another Pentecost.

I don't know whether we want it, but we need it. I don't know whether we pay the price for it, but something's going to happen before too long, I'm absolutely sure of that. Well, now then, I change from 2 Corinthians 5, 14, where Paul says, the love of Christ constraining.

I'm sure that was one factor, but I feel that this, here's the answer in Philippians 1 and verse 20. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, with all boldness as always, now also that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death, that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. This city of Philip, well, it's written in Philippians.

Philippi was founded by who? It was founded by the father of Alexander. Yeah, Philip. But it's founded by Alexander.

The other thing about it is this, that it was written on Paul's second missionary journey. I guess the most unused part of your Bible is the maps in the back. I had a tutor that used to say, you can't understand the New Testament unless you read your maps.

You see where Paul went. I used to draw a map, but I can't draw these, good these. But you go to Asia Minor.

Here's, say, where he sets off to Jerusalem. He goes to Asia Minor. As Kipling would say, after he got saved, after he got vision, he put on his seven lead boots and he strode over Asia Minor.

Well, you just trace in the back of your Bible, I'll get a Philip's Atlas of the Bible. See how many miles he went without automobiles, without planes. He went on ships.

They weren't allowed to go up a river these days. The Union wouldn't let them go. No wonder he says he was in death's oft, in weariness, in fasting, in painfulness.

He does more than a dozen men. You know, as I prayed this afternoon, I said, God, give me, give me just one percent of the passion and vision and unction that that man had. He out-prayed everybody, out-fasted everybody, out-preached everybody.

And he says, I want Christ to be glorified in my body. You know, Christ gave all he had for us. And you've got to give all you have for him.

He won't ask of you anything less than he gave. He won't ask any more than he gave. But that's his right.

You see, the paradox is that God always uses dead men. He doesn't use live men. He uses dead men.

This man had an experience of dying. Let me go back here a minute. There's some wonderful things in his epistle.

One thing, I don't know if you noticed it, but never once does he mention sin in this epistle. I'll tell you what he does, though. And remember, he's writing from a stinking prison.

During World War II, we were in England, and we read in the newspaper that some prisoners in a prison in America had gone on strike, because you're only getting one egg in the morning. We only got one a month in England. Boy, prison in America is like the Waldorf Astoria.

They go on strike. They can't have color TV. Isn't that degrading? Poor souls.

They ought to be rejoicing in it. They can't have enough ping pong. They can't do this, can't do the other.

Here, Paul is in one of the worst prisons that the world ever had. And yet 14 times in this epistle, he says, either joy or rejoice. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice.

You remember that he's, in the Thessalonian epistle, he says that we were shamefully untreated at Philippi. You remember they put him in jail. What? No, no, no.

It's a strange world we live in, you know. If you do bad things, they put you in jail. If you do good things, they put you in jail.

How many of you want to go to jail? A Baptist preacher was put in jail in England many years ago. And in the course of being there for 15 years, and how many prayers do you think were asked, Lord, liberate him, liberate him. You got Paul out of prison.

God didn't want him liberating. People call me sometimes, would you ask the Lord to take this burden on me? No, somebody else would be praying, put it on you. The only way you get sense and reality is carry that burden.

John Bunyan, 14 years in Bedford prison. I sat in his chair once. It didn't make me write any better, but I had the joy of sitting in the chair where he used to sit.

I sat in another chair that used to be occupied by Adam Clout, the great expositor, but it didn't make me a good expositor. I sat in a chair that the King of England sat in, but it didn't make me a king either. But in the prison adversity, he's saying to listen, come on you folk, rejoice in the Lord, rejoice.

Why do you hang your head? He says that Christ may be magnified by my body, whether by life or by death. In the next verse he says, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. In other words, he says the only reason for me to live is if we're profitable for God, if I live.

I don't believe my life depends on circumstances, whether I fly or I don't fly. I believe when God can't do without me, he'll call me home. When he says I need Ravenhill up here, he'll call me home.

And I don't want to get there ahead of time, because I know some of you will drag your feet, you don't want to go anyhow. Like a friend of mine said, would you like to go to heaven? He said yes, but it's not urgent. That Christ may be magnified by my body.

Paul makes a lot of the body, doesn't he? Remember Romans 12, 1 and 2, present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, or as Phillips translates it, don't let this world press you into its mold. But lots of people are getting pressed into the world's mold, by lifestyle and every other thing.

You know, I cannot for a moment think about Paul saying that in the Philippians, that Christ may be magnified in my body. Let me relate it to Galatians chapter 6. And there he says in verse 14, but God forbid that I should glory, say in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Verse 17, henceforth let no man tumble.

Get out of my way, the whole lot of you, philosophers, Stoics, poets, he meets them all in the 17th chapter of Acts, and he's totally king of the situation. I think he had the greatest brain the world ever knew, except apart from Jesus. But he says, look I want to tell you something.

I could glory in my pedigree, I'm of the tribe of Benjamin, I'm of the seed of Abraham, I'm a Pharisee of the Pharisees, I have everything going for me. But he says, my richest gain I count but loss. We sing that, it doesn't mean a hill of beans.

But he's put all that stuff to death. But he says, no boasting, that's how, who translates it that way? Moffat translates it, but it says, God forbid. Moffat says, no boasting for me, not in pedigree, position, intellect, anything.

No boasting for me, say in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I'm crucified to the world. And then he writes it off from henceforth let no man tumble, I bear in my body the marks. Now Moffat says, I bear my, I bear the brands of Jesus Christ in my body.

Heracles is being called a father of history. I don't think he was. But he recites how in the days of the Apostle Paul, a man who was a slave could get away from his boss or whoever had him in captivity, and he would run to the temple of Heracles.

And there were altar fires burning, night and day, 24 hours a day. And there were men sitting with branding irons, like we brand cattle here. And you could choose which God you want to be branded for.

You say, I'll take that one. Okay, so what do they do? They take a branding iron and put it there, and how your flesh sizzled. You lift it up your instep, and they put it in your instep.

You pull down your toga, and they branded the back of your neck, so that your head belonged to your master, your God, your feet belonged to your God, your hands belonged to your God. And Paul says, I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's a lovely hymn we used to sing in England.

I don't know how to begin. Oh, I got it, I think. All for Jesus, all for Jesus.

All my being's ransomed powers, all my thoughts and words and doings, all my days and all my hours. Let my hands perform His bidding. They're branded for Him.

Let my hands perform His bidding. Let my feet run in His ways. Let my eyes see Jesus only.

Let my lips speak forth His praise. All for Jesus, all for Jesus. Oh, what wonder, how amazing, Jesus, glorious King of Kings.

Yes, I know it, but I can't. Thank you, James. But it fills me up.

He, King of Kings, deigns to call me, poor bankrupt me. He deigns to call me His beloved and lets me rest beneath His wings. Do you wonder, he said, all for Jesus.

Paul would have enjoyed that so much. You see, Paul had only one thing to live for, one person to live for, Christ. Whether by life or by death, I don't care, he says.

If it pleases God to crucify me, crucify me. If it pleases Him to put me in a stinking prison, let me stay there. Why? They did the most ridiculous thing they could do, putting the fellow in prison.

What did he do? He got out of it. But he got his revenge. He prayed an earthquake and wrecked the prison.

I thought that was good. Let me find this, the epistle I was looking at here. It said in verse 10 of chapter 1 of Philippians here, that you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense.

Do you know what the Greek there is? Without wax. What does that mean? What does wax mean? It means this, that when they were chiseling, sculpting a marble statue, the man might be looking around and he chipped a piece of the ear off. And so it was damaged, it wouldn't be bought.

So what he did, he got some, he got a piece of the same stone and crushed it to powder. And then he mixed it with wax and he filled the ear in. And it was alright until the sun shone.

And when the sun shone, the guy's ear dropped off. And so he says, be sincere without wax, without any duplicity, without any hypocrisy. Now look what he says, and he's writing from prison.

I would that ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel. No, that's senseless. What's he doing in prison? He can't write an epistle there, at least not much, even more useful outside.

This man has a ministry of healing. He raises the dead, and he's stuck in a stinking prison. What good is he doing for God's glory? Why does he go to some other?

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