

Apostle Paul's Preaching - Part 2

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Paul's preaching, the importance of Scripture, and the necessity of a genuine relationship with God through the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 15:03

Scripture: Proverbs 20:27, John 14:26, Romans 1:14, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 1:13, Philippians 4:22, 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Topics: "Faith And Surrender", "Christian Obedience"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the power of faith and surrender to God, using the example of Paul's imprisonment and how his testimony impacted even those in high positions. It challenges listeners to live a life fully surrendered to God, seeking to magnify Christ in all circumstances, and to be faithful and obedient regardless of age or achievements.

Transcript

...the country and exercise his power, his authority over death, his authority over demons, his authority over doubt and darkness. But there he is in prison, and he writes an epistle which has blessed millions of people since then. But listen to what he says.

In verse 13 he says, My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in other places. Isn't that great? The guy in prison is infecting those in the palace. Look at chapter 4 in verse 22.

And this is how effective it is. You know, we sing, Oh well, it was a lovely deliverance. They were in jail and they sang praise at midnight and the jailer let them out.

Isn't that nice? They whipped his back. They tore him like they tore his master. His back was like a plowed field.

And yet as he sings the praise of God, it echoes down the corridors in the prison. And the result is what? Well, what's it say in chapter 4? And verse 22. Verse 21, he says, Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.

The brethren which are with me greet you, and all the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. My professor used to say Caesar's household was next door to hell. And this man goes to prison in order to get a testimony into the palace and into Caesar's household.

He'd had a miniature revival there. This week somebody sent me a notice. I was profoundly moved with it.

Somebody had been up in Russia and then over into one of the worst countries in the whole world, Siberia, I mean when it's 25 degrees there, it's summer. It's the most frozen, dark, difficult place. Food is almost unobtainable.

Places are inaccessible. And there's an old man there has one page of the Bible. One page.

And that's all he's had all his life. And yet he's had dozens and dozens. He hasn't had a mass revival.

Dear God, you and I have every page in the Bible and ten other versions. What in God's name do we do? I like the way our dear Paul is leaving Monday. Time and again he's held this book up here and says, whatever books we're going to be judged by when we get to heaven, surely we're going to be judged by this book.

Do you know you'll wish you hadn't boasted about so much Bible knowledge when you get there? When God says this is what you boasted of and there's where you lived. You talked about that, you lived down there. You taught freedom, you lived in bondage.

You taught purity and you lived in pollution. You taught liberty and you were a captive. It's an awful thing ever to have the word of God.

I say almost to all the fellows that come in my room, I don't have a lot of books, I have a good few hundred. And I say, you know, all these men that wrote profound things that they wrote, and yet not one of them had a bigger Bible than I have. Madame Guillén wrote some wonderful things.

Where? From a lousy prison. It's not there any longer. The walls were 30 feet thick and they shut it up.

They took a Bible away. They wouldn't let a confessor go and have fellowship with her. And there she sings triumphantly, a little bird am I shut off from fields of air, content within this cage to lie, for God has pleased me here.

Well pleased a prisoner to be, because my God, it pleased a thief. It pleased God to shut a tender, gracious, brilliant woman up in prison for years. What pleasure does God get out of it? One she never murmured, she never complained.

She loved him more and more. She said, there's nobody else to love anyhow. I love you, love so amazing, so divine.

I had a brilliant young man came to see me today, my son Paul. We had a wonderful time. We've hardly had any time with him at all this time on home.

Now he'll be going Monday. Now be merciful, if you want to talk to him, please don't go to the house. He won't be there tonight anyhow.

But call on the phone if you want to wish him goodbye. But he was telling me today, he'd been reading again, part of this woman, Madame Guion, her works are being republished in America recently. And there was a French teacher called Didion, or Didio I suppose it is.

And he said, you know, it pains me to think how few people really enter into a living relationship with God. We're all living on the perimeter. We're all in water to the ankles, not water for swimming.

I'm not going to listen to your sermons and all the rest of it. I want to see God work. Paul, I think, was the greatest preacher ever.

He wasn't an auditor. Apollos was the auditor of the early church. He was the greatest theologian.

He had the greatest concept of God. But remember what he says, my speech, my word, my preaching was not in word only, but in power and demonstration. And that's more than tongues.

Dear God, we've got lost in gifts. We don't exalt Christ, we exalt gifts, prophecy, interpretation. Paul would have loved this.

I haven't memorized it, I should do. It's written by a man called Brooke. It's pretty strong, I think.

He says, my goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessing. My goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessing, but himself my God. It is his to lead me there, not mine, but his, at any cost, dear Lord, by any road.

So faith bounds forward to its goals in God, and love can trust her Lord to lead her there. Upheld by him, my soul is following hard, till God hath full fulfilled my earnest prayer. No matter if the way be sometimes dark, no matter though the cost be often great, he knoweth how I best shall reach the goal, the mark, the way that leads to him must needs be straight.

One thing I know I cannot say him nay, one thing I do I press toward my Lord, my God, my glory here from day to day, and in the glory there my great reward. I usually ask a congregation somewhere, particularly when I go to a new place, as I did last week to some hundreds of preachers and other people, did you come here tonight to meet God? 99% of people in America do not go to church to meet God, not in England. They go to hear a sermon about him.

They don't expect a divine invasion. They don't expect a confrontation. They don't expect the word to become a mirror, and I see all the corruption in my nature, and before an altar call I scream and say, I'm corrupt, woe is me, I'm undone.

Remember that man didn't say, as I didn't say, Lord I need a bit of help, I'm a bit weak, give me a bit of help. Lord I need a bit of courage for a job. Lord I'm behind in my tithing.

Lord I'm being, he said two desperate things that bring personal revival, I am under and I'm unclean. And when you get there brother, you're serious with God, then he starts doing some surgery, and it's desperate, but it's desperately needed in this awesome hour in which we live. I'm going to skip into this again, Philippians, so what does he say? He's been asking for prayer, but listen to what he says again, that Christ may be magnified in my body.

He doesn't say, Lord make me a more attractive minister, don't give me a deeper ministry, don't give me more miracles, don't make me a star person, God in heaven. I used to covet that at one time. There's a competition amongst preachers and I was foolish enough to fall into it, but there came a day when, boy all that went, I couldn't care less what people think or say.

He says that Christ may be magnified in my body. He's not passing an opinion here, he's declaring a principle that must take place in his life. Let's say here, verses 20 to 21.

He says that Christ may be magnified by my body, whether by life or by death. He says for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. But listen, it's only gain to die if you die in Christ, it's hell if you don't.

You've got to be living right up to every bit of light you've got. As I've told you before, I want to be in that position with God that without a second's notice, he can transfer me from here to heaven, without me being an embarrassment to him when I get there. I'm supposed to be made for his praise.

I'm supposed to be pure in heart. I'm supposed to have rejected every other vile affection, every other thing which would contaminate my life. And that's how we have to live anyhow.

We're not going to get a notice, most of us, that we're going to die. You know, people say, I believe Jesus may come today. I say, you're lying.

Oh, that's a rough thing to say. I say, if you believe Jesus will come before twelve o'clock tonight, you'd make a dozen telephone calls. You'd do this, you'd do that, you'd do the other, you'd level your own life out.

You'll be asking God to do it, you'd go do it yourself. The scripture says, keep yourself in the love of God. There are so many commandments.

Read Hebrews, let us, let us, let us. You know, we sing Jesus paid it all, that's not true. In blood redemption, yes, but there are things I have to do.

I have to put off the old man, I have to put on the new man. I have to renounce this world, all of its pleasures, its pomp and its pride. Give me but Jesus, my Lord, crucified.

So let's say this then here, verse 20 and 21. I call this Paul's purpose. In Galatians 2, 20, you remember he says, I'm crucified with Christ, not I, but Christ, and the life which I now live in the flesh.

You sit down and contemplate that for 10 minutes tomorrow. The life which I now live in the flesh, which could go like that. Who's the richest man in this meeting tonight? There isn't one.

All any of us possess is one beat of the heart. You can't store them up and say, I'm going to breathe and mercy, you can't do it. But we live as though, you know, anybody's going to die, but not me.

Oh, some other day, maybe when I get old. You know, the thing that kind of grieves me is this, when this fellow wrote this epistle, he wrote 14, if you give him Hebrews, and I give him Hebrews, I think he wrote it. But that guy, that guy, I'm getting so Americanized.

I mean, this preacher, he wasn't much more than half of my age when he wrote these epistles. I'm much older than he was, but my goodness, he was a million miles up the road spiritually compared with me. It's not how, we're not going to be rewarded for how long we've lived.

If we are, God isn't just. David Brainerd, one of the greatest saints in America, died at 28. Wesley died at 88.

Who gets the biggest reward? The man who died at 88, the one who died at 28. No, no, no, no. We're rewarded for faithfulness, not for years.

We're rewarded for obedience. We're not rewarded for achievements necessarily. To whom much is given, God will expect much.

You say you have more knowledge of the Bible, so what? You'll be in more trouble when you get to the judgment bar. You've this talent, you've that talent, the other. You know, you say about a lady this day, a lady that's praying for us tonight, she has a talent.

That's not a talent, that's a gift. In the Bible, talents are always related to money, silver talents and golden talents. And we'll be responsible for those as well.

You want to look at Romans 1.14? I know you know it well enough, but let's check it for a moment. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and unto the unwise. So do you wonder, he says in another place, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.

This man has a passion of a hundred men. This man wasn't filled with the Spirit at some junction 20 years ago. The Hebrew, the Greek there anyhow says, be being filled with the Spirit, not just get filled up.

There are thousands of Pentecostals and wholeness people who are filled with the Holy Ghost. They've been leaking ever since it got filled. But there has to be a constant inflow that there may be an overflow and an outflow.

If you keep a cup under water and the water is dripping down, the cup will fill, it will go over and then it will go out. And if you live in complete subjection to the Lord, the Spirit will fill us. I saw a man right on a board recently, a lot of things.

Get this out of your heart, pride, anger, jealousy, suspicion, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I said, brother, I didn't say it to him, he was preaching. I said in my heart, you don't remember.

How do you remember all those things? You don't. You just let the Holy Ghost come. And there's an old hymn that says, our blessed Redeemer, ere he breathed his tender last farewell, a guide, a comforter be queethed with us to dwell.

He came sweet influence to impart, a gracious willing guest. And know that word ghost, ghost, Holy Ghost, the word ghost is a corruption of the word guest. He comes as a guest.

How long does your guest stay? Until they tell him to go. He comes as a guest and if you greet him, he goes. But we live, we do the actions, we know the vocabulary, we say the same things, we have the same terms, we gesticulate, we stress, dear God help us.

But he says, he goes on to say in the hymn, every virtue we possess and every conquest won and every thought of holiness are his alone. What's the quotation over there, Martha? Pardon? I know dear, but how does it start? Well, the middle of it says, he checks each thought and calms each fear and speaks of heaven. The Holy Ghost is my inward monitor and he tells me, that's wrong, stop right here.

Or go ahead, that's right. I need that inward presence of the Spirit of the living God to be my constant monitor, constant ruler. But he says, I'm a debtor.

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