

(Audio Sermon Clip) Prayer Meeting Exhortation

by Leonard Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the need for the Church to awaken from spiritual slumber and engage in fervent prayer and evangelism. It highlights the importance of being vigilant against the enemy's schemes and the urgency of living with eternity's values in view. The speaker challenges believers to embrace sacrificial living, deep prayer, and a radical commitment to God's kingdom, warning against complacency and the dangers of worldly distractions.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:14, Matthew 13:25, Luke 9:23, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Matthew 24:42, James 4:14, 1 Peter 5:8, Philippians 3:20, Revelation 3:2

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Commitment to Prayer and Evangelism"

Description

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Transcript

The thing that really has gripped me today about this is not just the parable, three simple words that are very very applicable to the day in which we're living, while men slept. I believe that's what the Church of Jesus Christ is doing today, sleeping. Remember Paul in Ephesians 5 says to the people of that day, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.

Well sleep isn't death, but it's the same. All our powers are suspended. A man is unconscious, he's out of touch with the world around about him.

While men slept. If the Christians are the salt of the earth, and I'm sure they are, the praying people are the salt of the church. He that goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall possibly get a harvest.

No? That must be the perverse version. What is it? Shall doubtless. There are lots of things that break me up, but nothing breaks me up like Hebrews 11.

Reading about men and women, like us they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Women received their dead race to life again. What bigger specter of miracles do you want than that? Then there was people obscuring that others, others had chance of deliverance, they wouldn't take it.

What happened while men slept? Well it tells us that while men slept, the enemy got in and sold the seed. This wretched thing about the pea towels coming up every day on TV, what happened? While they were sleeping the enemy was doing his damnable work, but the enemy is sowing his seed. You hear the news tonight? Well a few days ago I got a paper and it said the judge in letter, a judge in Alabama had said that if you're going to teach, you have to teach the creationist theory as well as the, you must teach the creationist theory alongside with the junky theory of the monkeys.

I mean I've no problem with the scholar, if he wants to go to the zoo to see his relatives, that's his business. I'll take them some peanuts. But now what did they say? The supreme court declared today that we cannot teach the biblical creation.

One smart guy says we can't teach that trash anymore. Why do these guys that know so much about monkeys go up the Amazon without arms, without any guns and evangelize in that area? You see wherever this book liberty goes, freedom goes, what's the difference between the United States of America and South America? Well a bunch of fellows came from England and Holland with what? Two things, their Bibles, no three things, you know they all got their own caskets. When they came off the pavilion fathers and mothers, they brought their wives with them, they brought their Bibles, they brought their caskets with them.

What happened? That this was, the lights going out, was and have been and pray God it will be the most enlightened country in the world. What happened in South America? Priests went, they didn't take any lives, they used other men's lives. They didn't take the Bible, they sent it down in a foreign language and only in the last decade or so have they liberated it.

Wherever this word goes it's a lamp for our feet and a light. Now we say why have we got all the problems in school? Because we threw 10 lamps out of every school and 10 commandments. There's no mystery about it, boy I'm no genius but I know when they put the lights out it's dark in the room.

I know when you take the Bible out it's dark. And we've done this in our homes alas, very few homes where the word of God is honoured and read and explained. Sowing the seed of discord, sowing the seed of error.

As an old son let me say that we call a hymn, it's a hymn, it's a poem. Men don't believe in the devil now as their fathers used to do. They force the door of the broadest greed to let his majesty through.

There isn't a print of his cloven hoof or a dart from his fiery bow to be found in church or world today for the church has voted him so. But who is it mixes the fatal draft that pulses heart and brain? Who fills the beer, the beer meaning the thing they take the crops out on? Who fills the beer of each passing year with a hundred thousand slain? Who does the step of a toiling saint? Who digs the pit for his feet? Who sows the turd in the fields of time wherever God sowed his wheat? For the devil is voted not to be, so of course the thing is true. What we simple folk would like to know, who's doing the things the devil should do? The devil alone should do.

There has to be a revival, I'm absolutely sure of that. Look at the error in the world tonight. I remind you again, somebody reminded me this week.

These young Shiites and others, every time they hear somebody's being killed, they're lining up in Lebanon, standing in line from 17 to any old age up there, 17, 18, 19. Asking, I want to go and die for my country, not fight for it, not live for it, die for it. Well that's all Jesus Christ, he doesn't ask you to come and get rid of your lousy sins, so you won't go to hell, he says come and die.

You can't be a disciple. I said to a preacher today, you say to young folk that come to the altar, listen before you go away, renounce the world, respect the devil, say I put off every unclean thing, and I embrace everything that's pure and holy, and right here I take up my cross. Because Jesus says if you don't take this cross, you cannot be my disciple.

And that's a tremendous statement, that we lose all our rights. The moment we say, I take Christ into my life, I have nothing. I have no rights to myself.

It may not cost you much to say, take my silver and my gold, you don't have much. But when you sing take my life, remember the moment you said it, we read this in eternity. I read it again this week where D. Campbell Morgan said, remember a man, a man is not an apostate because he propagates hell, he's an apostate because he knows the truth and won't accept it, he's living below standards.

But we're in God's name with all these people. I wonder how many kids now, they've been ambitious, they've got a style, I wonder if they like PTO. I say this and I'll answer before God, maybe the greatest show when we get to the judgment seat will be a man who worked 20 years to get 200 million dollars to buy 200 million dollars of wood here and sell it.

The whole thing's going to be burned up before God. There's only one way to live and that's to live with eternity's values in view. If you do that you won't care whether you wear designer clothes or you don't, whether you've got the worst looking car or the worst looking car, it won't matter at all.

We used to sing a hymn when I was a little boy and I'm glad we sang hymns and not so many choruses. He was not willing that any should perish. Jesus enthroned in the glory above, saw this poor fallen world, pitied our sorrows, poured out his life for us, wonderful love.

The last time it says he was not willing that any should perish. Am I his follower and can I live longer at ease with a soul going downward, lost for the lack of the help I might give? Perishing, perishing, thou is not willing. Master, forgive and inspire us anew, banish our worldliness, help us to ever live with eternity's values in view.

I've been thinking about this very thing of sewing and a friend wrote me a note today. It came and it just put in Satan seems to do his most critical work when men are asleep. It says while men slept the enemy came.

People say sometimes, are you critical? He said no I'm a watchman. The watchman's on the wall higher than this and he doesn't have a bullhorn. He doesn't have a light.

He stands there day and then he shifts for the night shift. He's on the wall maybe 40 or 50 feet high and he hollers to a man like that little guy and he says the enemy is the enemy and he in turn shouts to the next man who shouts to the next man who shouts to the next man. You know we read the bible as though

everything was electrified in those days.

It was all man, it was all hard work and they couldn't sleep. Napoleon was very one of the greatest military strategists in history. People still study his military strategy.

He appointed some men who were supposed to be the cream of the crop in his army, lieutenants and captains and majors to go on night duty and he put them all around an area where he knew the enemy wouldn't come and I don't know what you do in here. We have sheaves of corn in England. You stick them up like this at least they're used to in the field and this captain is way on the edge of the field.

The night was cold. He got cold so he popped his gun up against the sheaves and he slipped in, pulled his big coat around him and fell asleep. He woke up in the morning.

He looked in there. All he could see were a pair of trousers. He crawled out at the other end and looked up and Napoleon saluted him and said, now what? Well he'd been another captain in the interval but it was the famous Napoleon, again the superman.

You know God almighty is going to judge us merely by the bible verses we know. The trouble again is we're living in a generation that's still with apostates. All of us know to live better than we're living.

We know to pray better than we're praying. We know to sacrifice better than we're sacrificing and as I've told you before, I don't know who said it but it's smart, you never get a second chance to make a first appearance. One chance.

These crazy folks talk about coming back a second time but they're saying I've lived 200 years ago, 300 years ago. Do you know what the problem is? They're not even living now. They're dead in trespass and in sin.

Sure they can throw a million dollar back when there's some great situation on, picking up all the so-called luxury things of this world, perishing things of clay, born but for one brief day. As I said last week, these horrible wretched people who die with age. Have you heard of one that said look when I die put at least six back issues of pray boy in my casket, put six copies of what's the other stupid thing they have, some other silly girls magazine.

I don't hear of them saying I want to die of a communist, put Karl Marx's bible, the other kind of a bible, put Karl Marx in my casket with me. I've been asked to put my encampment in my casket with me. They don't do that.

They don't call their friends and rejoice they're going into eternity. It's only those of us who know the light and by the grace of God walk in the light. You remember what Abraham did? He made his offering.

What did he do? He slew the beast, birds here, the birds there and he walked down the middle in the night, beating off the birds of prey that were coming. I tried to do that in a little way every day of my life. I know that as soon as somebody sowed the seed somewhere up the Amazon or somewhere else, the birds of prey come, the unbelievers come, the liars come, the cheaters come, the false priests come.

But the story says remember the wheat and the tares, they grow together until the final day and it's the tares that are gathered the first, not the wheat. There's going to be a removal of a lot of these tares. I think God is starting a purging in the church and I pray God it will go on.

God is jealous for his church. He's jealous for his bride. He's coming for a bride, pure and spotless.

How many of you know that lovely hymn of Ruth that's written where? 1550, the sands of time are sinking, you remember that? When he has a verse in there he says the bride eyes not her garments but her dear bridegroom's face. What all these folk want to be raptured for? Do they get intoxicated with joy every day they kneel there and see his face by faith? Are they transported to the exorcism? Oh God I wish I could, right now you come and get me. No, most people want to be raptured because they're in debt and distress, they're afraid of war, they're afraid of communism.

A poll was taken recently across the nation. What is your number one fear? Oh my God, cancer. What's your number one fear? A nuclear war.

What's your number one fear? A rush of alienators. Went down the list like that. What's your number? Not one said they were afraid of death.

Not one said I'm afraid to stand trembling before the eternal holy God. Not one person said that, even amongst Christians. But what an awesome thing when we stand there.

How can you smart men, you study stars, you know history, you know philosophy, how is it you don't know God? How do the Kennedys still light candles for a man that's been dead? And the candles can't help him and anybody else. And yet they still do it, and they have a sincerity. The trouble is that these people have gone through them, it's a shame us.

The sacrifice they make to climb mountains or go to a sacred place. Every Muslim wants to go to Mecca. Every Catholic wants to go to Rome.

Well thank God the good book says neither in Jerusalem nor anywhere else in this place is where we worship. I remember going to Ireland and preaching in a hut, it had no floor, just mud. And that was nice till it rained and then boy it was knee deep in slush.

But that was one of the best prayer meetings I was ever in. But I remember an old man muttered a prayer, he said this, it's in an old Methodist hymn book, where there we seek thee thou art found and every place is hallowed ground. I'll tell you there are more prayers in aeroplanes in the storm than in most churches in the country.

Everybody becomes religious. Now this doesn't mean when we go to bed tonight we should be waking because other people are waking. The hymn writer says the sun that bids us rest is waking our brethren beneath the western sky and hour by hour fresh lips are making thy wondrous doings heard on high.

It doesn't mean that. When a man is asleep it's insensible, there can be a fire there. He doesn't know about it, he doesn't care about it.

You know it's a wonderful thing to have this book, it's an awful thing to have this book. As the hymn says what more can he say than to you he has said. God hasn't two words to add to the that he's given us here.

Every word is here that's essential for salvation, for our wisdom, for our strength, for our inspiration. While men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and then he went his way. While Jesus is a supreme example, he is the bread of life, he's the cone that falls into the ground and dies.

You know we don't think what's doing. A grain of wheat, stick it in the dirty ground, then it rains, then it freezes, then it snows on top of it, then some big old crag today who comes and sticks his foot on top of it. But it germinates, it brings forth forty, sixty, eighty, how does it fall? Then it's mission is all we know it is, you put it in the machine and grind the life out of it.

And then you grind the life out of it, you make dough of it, make bread of it, then you stick it in an oven and bake the thing, kill it, then you pull it out and slice it, then you give it to some pagan that puts it in his teeth and tears it apart. Is that the price we pay? Surely it is. If you're not prepared to be torn apart, forget all about it.

Fold your little arms, relax, be comfortable. The devil has sold me streaks amongst the Christians today. Be comfortable, everything's comfort, comfort, comfort.

Rock us in the cradle of prosperity, give us a pillow called comfort, don't disturb us. I tell you again friend, five minutes after you and I enter eternity, we wish that God would be a thousand times more zealous, more faithful. Obviously what we've had for twenty-five years and we've spent all millions in evangelism in America in the last twenty-five years and the rest of the world has since Jesus came to earth.

But where are we? A drunken, backslidden, divorced nation, with more crime than anybody else, with more teenage pregnancies than anybody else. The devil has sold me seeds. Now I don't think these evangelists should have million dollar homes, I don't think the Pope should have a billion dollar home either, in the Vatican.

They're talking now again, I think I mentioned it last week, but it was mentioned this week again, the FCC's talking about putting all Christian services, all religious services off TV from here on, while men slept. What are we doing? Oh we've got volleyball for the young people in the church, some of them have got baseball, they've got this, that and the other. So I'm glad I didn't go to a church with a sports program, I'd have been a backslider.

Somebody at 17, I'm through, somebody gave me an abridged copy of the life of David Brainerd. I read it, instead of playing golf, I went to a golf course, got in the forest at night, tied my mother's little dog to a tree and cried my heart out for the Bible. Then I got bounces, powerful prayer, determined to read it through and I said I'll go through the book, I didn't, the book went through me.

Changed my life. Come on now, if you want to believe Schofield and all the other strange Bibles around, they'll tell you the miraculous ended, there are no apostles and no prophets. Oh come on, be faithful.

Cast out the apostles, cast out the prophets, but at the same time cast out the evangelists that are in the same verse. Get rid of the whole shebang, say Christianity is bankrupt. It isn't.

God hasn't done off production, God is making men. If I believe some men here are moving up with God, I've got to go. I believe God is shaping men and women in prayer here, so that we won't be around too long.

Somebody else is going to step in and take up and do what we haven't done. Come into dimensions of faith, dimensions of revelation. We're heading now for the most terrible time.

Can I say one thing? I was reading that, is it 22nd or 23rd of Matthew today? When you see Jerusalem surrounded with armies, here's Jerusalem, over here you have Iran. Russia here wants Iran so she can go

straight to Jerusalem without getting round the sea way. Over here you've got Libya, so Libya cut to off here.

You've got Jordan there, you've got Russia up there, you've got all the nations of the world right now, right now around Russia, pardon me, around Israel as we call it. And the scripture says watch, Harry Potter watched, Jesus said watch. When you see these things watch, well if you watch you're not going to sleep.

It's a day to be diligent, it's a day for clear eyes. I seriously doubt that we would get through five more years without war. Isn't it strange? It was Iraq that started the war in the Gulf, it was Iraq that shot the shell into the ship.

But we're not blaming Iraq for anything, it's all Iran, Iran, Iran, Iran. Iran, in any case it sounds like Iran. Iran.

It's Iraq that did it, we're not saying a word about Iran. It's all Iran. The devil hates this nation, he hates every nation that has a true word of the living God.

I like that hymn, Stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long, it won't be. We're going to need the blood for our constant protection, the blood that pleads for us at the mercy seat. We're at war, we've no option about it.

All the wealthy nations of the world, all the heathen nations of the world, they're armed to the teeth, even in a natural sense. And yet God, as Napoleon said, God is on the side of the armies, he's a light. The word of God says it takes the weak things to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should glory in its presence.

God's going to do a move, a work of his spirit, and non-men will get the glory. Willie Burton went to Africa. I had a pastor with me, he'd always tell about Willie Burton.

Went right up there, up at Amherst in about 50 days. He went up the Congo, one of the longest, most beautiful rivers in the world. Then he suddenly got some disease in his mouth, his teeth were going corrupt, it was in chocking state.

He paddled in a steamer, a dugout canoe. I sat in one once, good night. Going two feet was too far.

And he goes right down the Amazon, sees a doctor. The doctor says, there's only one thing, I must take every tooth you have, whether you're from or not the Amazon. You must get every tooth out.

So he said, I'll come back tomorrow. Took every tooth out of his head. And the doctor said, now go home and come back in six months.

I can't, why? He said, it takes me six months to get home. And then it took me six months to come back. So what does a little man of God do? One of the craziest things I've ever heard of, brother, is believe God.

You know what? This generation of Christians is the most brilliant generation of unbelieving believers almighty God's ever had. He goes to bed, he can't talk, hardly, mouth's are sore. But in the night he said, Lord, you turn water into wine.

You can do anything that we ask. We take that out of context. In the 15th chapter, ask what you will.

That's if you've been pruned. That's if God submitted you to all the stripping and taking everything away. You've no confidence in anything at all.

He had no health. He had no money. There he is in terrible pain.

He said, Lord, the miracle is normal with you, abnormal with me. You're the God of the miraculous. You're born of miracles.

You died in miracles. You rose in miracles. Lord, he said, it's not hard for you to do a miracle and give me two sets of feet by morning.

What do you think happened? A walker with pearlish white teeth, yeah, and pearly white teeth there. That's God. It's not only that I want to see.

I want to see meetings where people go home and a man walks in and their wife says, what's wrong with you? He doesn't blaspheme. He doesn't drink. He doesn't wander his TV.

He doesn't curse the kids. He's transformed. He's a new creation.

He's got a heart for God, a love for God, a love for everybody else. That's the thing that brings true revival. When people become so conscious that everything I have up to my body isn't worth a thing.

It's all perishing. You can strip me in my very shirt off my back, but I've got treasure in here. Moth and rust can't corrupt them.

Thieves can't break through and steal. They're eternal. The word of God says the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

It tells us repeatedly the preparation of the heart is of the Lord. It's not just giving somebody a tract. God didn't do that.

He doesn't need many guts to do that, any grace, any love, any passion. But to step into the midst of a tide of corruption, you know, these men are jailbirds, they're dirty, filthy, stinking rascals. They haven't the desire for purity or anything.

But they're the ones that need the gospel. Carey went to the heart of the corruption in India. I preached in his church one Sunday morning.

Not when he was there, but I preached in his church. Right banging the hell hole. The opium dens were there.

Prostitution places. And this is where we have to take light into darkness. What do you think I'd do if my son was there? What would you do if your daughter was prostituting tonight? Would you just go to church and throw a buck in the offering on Sunday? You know, if you don't worship God six days a week, you sure can't worship him on the second.

If your heart doesn't beat with love for him and love for others, you can't put a shower on Sunday, bless you, you're a hypocrite if you do. The gospel isn't something we just believe, we behave it. The church is sleeping and people don't want to be wakened up.

But I said, remember the scripture says, hold fast to that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Not no devil take it, not God take it, not Gabriel. God has a crown for you.

And he doesn't keep adding to it. We used to sing this kids' ring that when he cometh to make up his jewels, to be a jewel in the crown, to have a crown of righteousness, to have a crown of glory, to have a crown of martyrdom. We know it's not all going to be the same in heaven.

The dying thief got there on the last breath. You think he's going to have the same reward as the rest of those who sacrificed for 53 years? A gentleman, an aristocrat, yet he slept in the mess. In Georgia, froze to the ground, struggled to get one arm free, pulled to get the other free, got his leg free, then got his hair out of the stuff, brushed off the snot and sang praise God for whom all blessings fall.

Boy, we'd have gone home on the next boat, wouldn't we? But there was a world. What does the old hymn say? These people, these martyrs, they climb the steep ascent to heaven through peril, toil and pain. Oh God, to us may grace begin to follow in their train.

I'm asking God for burdens I've never had, for vision I've never had, for passion I've never had. You see, why people want to hinder you and get in your way is because you might outshine them and out-praise them and out-suffer them and out-fast them. Boy, that's going to be something in eternity when we see ourselves as God sees us and begins to give us reward.

Don't sleep too much, not even physically. Sleep as little as you can, eat as little as you can, live in reason, pray, read the Word of God and ask God for a new love for souls. There's not much time to labour and love and look for the last.

God does great things in little places and we pray him to give me a chance.

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