

Blessed Are the Pure

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the necessity of a pure heart and total surrender to God to truly experience His grace and the kingdom of heaven.

Duration: 1:17:47

Scripture: Matthew 5:8, Philippians 3:7

Topics: "Blessed", "Purity of Heart", "Surrender to God"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the profound truth of being 'pure in heart' as a pathway to seeing God, reflecting on the deep spiritual implications of purity and the necessity of surrendering all to Christ. He draws parallels between the struggles of biblical figures like Paul and the modern Christian experience, urging believers to recognize their spiritual poverty and the need for divine grace. Ravenhill challenges the congregation to pursue a deeper relationship with God, understanding that true fulfillment comes from a heart aligned with His will, rather than worldly accolades or riches. He highlights the paradox of the Christian life, where losing oneself leads to true gain in the kingdom of God. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to live out the Beatitudes, particularly the call to purity, as a reflection of Christ's character in a world that often values the opposite.

Transcript

Lord, we're glad to make our expression of our faith and our joy in the borrowed language of these poets. We thank you for those lofty moments of inspiration and we thank you for those deep moments of brokenness, when the fountains of their spirits were open and they put on record those momentous experiences, those crisis experiences perhaps that they had with thee. If you think of Isaac Watts saying, when I surveyed the wondrous cross, and we don't know whether he meditated on it for an hour or a day or a month, but we thank you that he made an expression that we like to borrow.

We have sung some profound things. We trust that we've sung them with our understanding as well as with our emotions and our voices. We thought of that phrase again, content to let the world go by and it could mean so much and be interpreted so many ways.

We can be so content in what we have, we let it go to hell and it doesn't bother us. We can be content to let it go by with all its riches and honors and not let it in any way make us feel inferior, because we belong to a nobler race than the race of men. We thank you for this expression of this marvelous, infinite, matchless grace.

And Lord if we borrowed the language of angels we couldn't describe it. It isn't within the possibility of human vocabulary or human understanding until we get to the other side of into eternity to know what that grace has really meant. We'll never understand until you saw as it were the curtain on one side and show us that the heartbrokenness of God when you turned away from your son on that cross.

Oh God what a wonderful miracle that you should ever love us enough to give your only begotten son, not a son, not an archangel, but to give your only begotten son to build a propitiation for our sins. But we thank you for such grace, marvelous, infinite, matchless. We think of the apostle Paul with his righteousness, his pedigree, his intellectualism, standing as tall maybe as any man that ever lived and maybe as morally correct because he said concerning the law he was blameless.

And yet when he saw the greatest sin was not adultery or lying or murder but he said the greatest sin was to rebel against God. He put himself in a bracket that he wouldn't let anybody push him out of when he said I am the chief of sinners. And even after he'd tasted experiences that maybe we'll never know this side of eternity he was prepared to call himself the least of all saints.

There are not many candidates for that position. We see saints even swaggering, we see preachers spreading, we see people who have not got spoiled with this world's riches but they get spoiled with spiritual riches and they become superior and arrogant and they expect us to bow to them or obey their commandments or fall in fear before their prophecies. Give us that wisdom which is from above that we may discern what is flesh and what is spirit, what is human zeal and what is God-directed wisdom.

Lord we know so little we confess about this spiritual life. We'll be amazed one day when we get to heaven to see what trivialities kept us from exploring the possibilities of grace. Sometimes we get a burden and we hardly get it we want to run away from it.

We think again of a woman carrying a child and as the days get nearer the pain gets greater and the suffering and the sleep get shattered and everything else. And there have been people down the ages who've trusted with the birthing revival and bringing blessing. They've had superhuman, they've had divine inner fortification.

They've had an inward grace that makes, they surpasses our knowledge. Lord we trust that we're further up the road than we were even last week. We say again Lord it's wonderful to think that we can love thee and to say that you'll get better each week and we trust as you look on us you can say the same of us.

We're improving in wisdom and sense, spiritual sense not just common intelligence. We might find that with instructions from psychologists or teachers or universities but we seek something that this world can't buy and sell, this world can't trade. We ask that we may pursue it, continually pursue it, not be satisfied with anything less than the fullness of God, the provision there is through Jesus Christ.

We thank you for this quiet hour and pray the words of our mouths, the meditation of our hearts may be acceptable in thy sight. We sit here, most of us I suppose have been well fed today. We're pretty well clothed, we have comfortable seats.

We think of the suffering saints in Russia and China and other countries. Lord maybe our very worst day is better than their very best day in physical, material, visible things. Oh God we ask again for that quickening by your spirit that will give us that holy compassion, give us that profound profoundly disturbing feeling.

We know this life is a paradox Lord. You've told us if we want to go up we have to go down and you've told us you want to gain everything we have to lose everything. If you want to find life, lose it.

If you want to lose it, keep it. The more that's the puzzle to the average philosopher but it isn't in the things of the spirit. As we leave this house today we pray again the things of earth may have grown strangely dim while at the same time they become almost intolerably heavy to bear.

This again could only be real to us if your spirit teaches us. We thank you again for the book, the word of God. Not only has it got blood in from the first book to the last, it's got blood on its covers.

It was given to us by martyrs, men who were burned at the stake to give it to us. And we esteem it so lightly very often and we read it so carelessly and often on a book. To some people the sports page is better.

At times we're amazed that people say they can't really read without falling asleep but we see houses loaded with sports magazines and if they can read those they can read this. Except this isn't the love letter of God to them in the way it should be. Give us all a deeper appetite for thy word.

Help us to read it again as a love letter from thee to our hearts. Man cannot live by bread alone. The rocky fellows can only wear one suit at a time and live in one room at a time and drive one car at a time.

They're as limited as us and yet they can't live except they live or we live in the word of God. So we thank you for it. You make it so much to us a pillow on which we can rest our weary heads and sometimes it's a knife that wounds us and sometimes it's a balm that heals us.

Pray for every heart bowed before thee this afternoon if there are those burdened we pray they roll that burden on thee. For those who are harassed we pray that this will be a pausing time a resting time like the heart that pampers after the water books when they rest here before we get out to the world that's going to pursue us again tomorrow. May our light shine before men and one I think Francis Ridley Havergill said live out thy life within me oh Jesus king of kings be thou thyself the answer to all my questionings.

We want thee as lord and master of our lives that we may be thy love slaves carrying the burdens you give us running the errands you put upon us and doing the will of God continually. For these things we give you praise in Jesus name. We've been in the fifth chapter of the gospel as recorded by Matthew for a while.

We should really come to the almost the supreme verse in the chapter if we get to it. I'm not sure we will. The eighth verse is blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

In the old testament the children of Israel used to have their guidance from God through the prophet and you remember there came a day when they wanted to be like other nations and they wanted a king and so God gave them a king he allowed them to have a king. There's a very significant phrase in God dealing with Israel that I've never preached on but it's a very wonderful phrase and a very painful one. God granted their request but he sent leanness into their heart.

Did you ever have an experience like that? There are times when you push God. Not I'll push God let's say we push God and he'll grant you your request because you're not grown enough enough for him to rebuke you or hope with hope. But he'll send leanness into your soul.

I think of a man in Wales a number of years ago very godly man and he had one child and she was of course the darling of his heart and the child took six and the doctor said there was no hope she's going to die and he clenched his teeth she's not going to die. He didn't go to bed that night didn't eat didn't sleep didn't drink fasted and prayed and he demanded of God that child should live and the child lived and she was 18 years of age just a beautiful high school girl she got into trouble and dragged his name in the guts of the whole family and he said he spent a whole night mourning that he'd argued with God 18 years before that she had to live. A nice lady case but there but God granted their request and he gave them a king.

The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ to me gets increasingly fascinating. You know one is a number you can't divide it and cut it into two halves but you can't multiply by one you can't divide by one you can divide by two and Jesus all the time is talking about two things a broad way and a narrow way. The kingdoms of this world and the kingdoms of our garden of his Christ and right through the whole of the teaching of Jesus you find two things.

Now there are a series of parables which deal with the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ and one of them is the kingdom of the pearl that is a kingdom of course a story a parable about a man going across a field and stumbling over a pot of gold but he wished he could do that and he sold everything and went and bought the field. Then there's a story of a man that had a goodly pearl and some people suggest the goodly pearl is the church and Jesus is the the one that came to seek it and he gave all he had his life's blood to to get the pearl to get the church which is not true because the man already had a bundle of pearls and Jesus doesn't have a bundle of churches. And while the emphasis is put on seeking a goodly pearl that is exactly what the scripture does not say.

It says there was a merchant seeking a goodly pearl. The emphasis is not on the pearl the emphasis is on the merchant. Now what did he do? He gave everything he had in order that he might buy that one goodly pearl.

J. H. Jowett taught me many years ago I won't tell you how many. He said the man had been gathering pearls all his life but one day he sold the pearls of comparative worth for the one pearl of superlative worth. I'll give everything I have in order that I may just have this one pearl.

That reminded me of Paul when he writes there to the Colossians and he talks about coming into the family of God and this is what he says. These things that were gained to me I counted lost. L. O. S. Lost for Christ.

In the next verse he says J. Doubtless I count all things that lost. He's got a bit further than losing. He counted them that lost and he said he takes all these collectively and he counts them all that lost.

And then in the next verse or the same verse rather he says for whom I've suffered the loss of all things. The loss of all things. You know it really is ridiculous though it's done over and over again it will be done tonight.

People suggest when you get saved come to the Lord. Come with all your sins. Give him your sins.

What does he want with them? Don't do God any good. Don't do me any good. Is that all God is after? Do I go to an altar to confess my sins whether they're very mild sins of a child or diabolical sins of an altar criminal.

Is that all I come with? My sins won't do God any good. It's not my sins he's after it's me he's after. It's much easier to give him my sins than give him myself.

And therefore what the Lord Jesus Christ is after he's wanting my total surrender to his kingship. Now if you have a kingdom obviously you're going to have laws every every kingdom has whether they're kept or not. There are certain laws that abide in every kingdom.

And there are certain laws that are kept in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this kingdom business is I guess it's under suspicion because when you talk about kingdom somebody will point down the street and say yes there's a Jehovah's Witness hall down there a kingdom hall. Well they're about as far from the kingdom as anybody could be.

But the importance of the kingdom is stressed in this way. I counted this week and find that 55 times in the gospel according to Matthew 55 times he mentions the kingdom. In Luke he mentions the kingdom 44 times.

In Mark he mentions the kingdom 20 times. In John he mentions the kingdom five times. Now these are the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Now you look around this afternoon we're not such a smart bunch are we? One or two smart men a lawyer a businessman I don't never claim to be very smart. I don't suppose any of you are on the social register in the state are you? Do you do you move with the upper crust intellectually? Are you in the 400 of the leading scientists in the country? We're a pretty normal bunch. But take a second look are you sure that that's right? We're the most wonderful people on earth.

That is if we're born again. What shall we do to enter into the kingdom of God? There's only one way in. Now there are very many wonderful kingdoms in the world.

There's a club in this country that nobody can enter unless you must basically have a million dollars. I'm not a member in case you're getting suspicious. You cannot join that club unless you have a million dollars and you pay your dues very exactly on a certain day.

Now there's another group that if you have a thousand million dollars you can't enter. You can only enter because you've made some tremendous research and discovery in the area of science. It's another kingdom.

Wealth won't get you into that kingdom. Now there's another kingdom in which you can enter because you're an artist and you've made some production that's been honest either in painting colors or sculpting or something. In other words there are all these different kingdoms and there are different ways of entering into these kingdoms and they're exclusive.

You can't get in because you have a friend. You can't get in because your friend is a scientist but he doesn't have a million dollars. Well I have a friend who has a million dollars but he's not a scientist.

So they put their barriers up. You can't enter. And yet the most restricted of all the kingdoms is the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A man cannot enter the kingdom of God on his social standing on his prestige or any other thing. Now in case you think that this is not very wonderful let me stretch it this way. Jesus was talking one day about a

time.

You see this kingdom stretches. How does it stretch? Or do you say Isaac Watts says there's coming a day when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our garden of his Christ. And in that lovely hymn it says his kingdom stretches from shore to shore.

Till noon shall wax and wane no more. Herb was saying that we all need a lift now and again. I've got more lifts this last week or two considering the kingdom of God I've ever got in my life.

You know why? Because it started away not when Jesus was on earth but earlier than that. You know why? Because Jesus said in the eighth chapter of Matthew there's going to be a day. Now did you ever feel kind of oh boy I wish I'd been able to go to that group.

You know it could be in the banquet amongst Christians. I mean the better class Christians you know. Seventy five dollars for a breakfast or something else you know and you go and always sure you put your real earrings and other things in.

Because there's a lot of social caste amongst Christians you know. Do you ever feel you'd like to have sat next to Pat Boone or some other star? Oh there's a lot of hero worship. Did you ever figure this that one day if you follow a faithful to God you'll be able to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and the greatest saints of all the ages in the kingdom of God.

That's what Jesus said. You talk about going to see the coronation of the Queen of England. I remember coming into Chicago in 1952 when a famous artist met me there.

A very godly saintly man and he said you'll be having dinner with us tonight. So I'm usually where it's free and I went. And his wife said if you've been in England.

Oh we've been to England three times today. I said wonderful how did you do that? In a jet age? Well TV they've shown the coronation of the Queen three times. Marvellous.

Did you see? Well that's in the old days when black and white TV was a miracle you know. Before we became smart and got colours in it. Now you imagine seeing that pageantry and pomp and circumstance you know and hear them playing wonderful music and all the kings of the earth marching in glittering you know tiaras the ladies had and crowns and staffs and garments and oh brother what a show the greatest show on earth.

And then after that you go to a banquet in Buckingham Palace. Now this lady said if you'd been in England would you have been at the coronation? I said no. She said why not? I said maybe because my name is Ravenhill and not Churchill.

But supposing I'd gone to the door at the coronation and I'd said the god the big god life god stopped me. What's your name? Ravenhill. Let me search the social register.

No there's a Lord Raven's scar. There's a Lord Raven's feet. There's a Lord Raven but no Ravenhill.

Sorry. In any case you look down there and I look and I see on every one of those seats there are three thousand seats in in in the abbey. And they put extra seats in.

We had a neighbour Lord Bellmore when we lived in Ireland. I went into his great big office one day. His study lined with ancient manuscripts and there were two chairs and there was a little clip on the back of two of them.

And on one it said Lord and the other on the Lord and the lady. And I said well these chairs are beautiful. Oh yes yes.

His lordship sat on this chair at the coronation and her ladyship sat on that chair. And afterwards they were allowed to buy the chairs so they could bring them home. So Lord Bellmore shows everybody the chair where he sat at the coronation.

And they're going to leave it for their children and their grandchildren. Your daddy, your grandpa sat on this chair at the coronation. Isn't that marvellous? And the guard said you see sir if you got in well that wouldn't be any good because every every seat has a name on it.

And if you got into the coronation you couldn't sit down because the name isn't on a chair. Ah I see. Hmm.

I suppose you feel very bad about that. No I don't feel either bad or sad or mad. I feel great.

Well why? It's the greatest thing in the world. The coronation of her majesty and you can't get a chair. And I look at him and say sir do you know there's going to be a coronation before long? And I've got a seat reserved.

And it'll make this coronation look like the dishes in the kitchen thing. And I know I've got a seat because it says in one piece of one there there's a place reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Now if that doesn't give you a shot in the arm you're in trouble.

You see any other kingdom you can enter by wealth. You can wealth is the key. Whether it's the wealth of the ability to play golf.

They're fighting now for world championships in tennis and sports. And you need you need you need wealth of skill. Or you need wealth in material wealth to get in some kingdom.

You need intellectual wealth to get into some of them. But this is dependent entirely on one thing. You see this this this doesn't pass up at all.

Your social standing, your financial standing, your intellectual standing. This is a strange kingdom. It's a kingdom so different from any other because it says if you're going to enter it and only twice in the Beatitudes does it actually tie the kingdom in with the Beatitude.

And it says first of all blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And then from poverty you jump right down. As I say if it began by saying blessed are the pure in heart we'd all back off.

He doesn't say that. I would imagine that if Jesus is going to lay a foundation for his kingdom he should say listen the first thing is this. You'll get it better get the first commandment straight.

And the first commandment is thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart soul mind and spirit. But he doesn't start with loving God first. Why? You see the bible already recognizes that we have a love.

If any man loved the world the love of the father is not in him. And if I'm going to love God supremely I have to let every other lesser love go out of my life that he alone may have an unrivaled position in the position in my life. But we jump from poverty blessed are the poor in heart.

And the next time it's tied in is that blessed are they who are persecuted for theirs is the kingdom of God. Now those are areas that we don't go to in naturally. We don't like to be called poor most people don't.

There are not many people honest to goodness could you look in God's face this afternoon and tell him that you're willing to take 10 times as much trouble as anybody else in San Antonio or anywhere else. 10 times the burden for the loss. 10 times the grief for the fact that his church is so paralyzed as he is.

You think well this is all so negative isn't it. We're always on the heavy side. Sure because everybody else is having a joy ride.

You can't read the story of the word of God and particularly when you come down to apostles and others without finding they were men and women who carried the load that nobody else wanted to carry. But they found the sufficiency of grace and the sufficiency of strength in the Lord to do that. Now Paul is in that position.

Remember again he says all things they were gained to me. What gain did he have? He was of the tribe of Benjamin. He was of the seed of Abraham.

There's nothing higher than that to the Jews. Of the Pharisees he was the greatest Pharisee. The Pharisees are the greatest holy club on earth.

You couldn't get into it. They were the tightest most refined. They had bodyguards at the door left.

Anybody could come in who was leprous morally or any other way. And so he says in other words my richest gain I count everything I had. I'm of the tribe of Benjamin.

Of the seed of Abraham. Of touching the law blameless. A Pharisee of the Pharisees.

He's got it all going his way. And he takes everything and he says I lay it all at the feet of Jesus Christ. And I suffer for him the loss of all things.

Now when you've been able to strut around with the Pharisees and everybody bow down to you and regard you as a holy man and then you become an outcast. And then on top of that you say to the Lord will you give me what nobody else gives me. And his joy was what? Totally paradoxical.

Paradoxical nonsense. You know what he says? He doesn't say I have enough grace to keep my chin up. I don't manage to get through every day nearly exhausted and say Lord if there'd been 25 hours in the day I'd just have collapsed.

I couldn't have gone on. Now I'm not saying you get there in a weekend. God forbid.

Do you know what he says? He says I glory in what? Tribulations, necessities, reproaches, adversity. You've got to go a long way up the road with the Lord before you get there. Not where you just say Lord I got through and say oh thank you.

Oh I just made it. Oh Lord if the pressure had been on me I would have collapsed. I'm just about through.

He embraces it. I glory in tribulations. That's really right Herbie does.

He smiled over it. He says well hallelujah Lord you gave me more chance. You know why? Because he says the only way to get grace is to need it.

As I said before you see when God is giving out the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 what did he say? He says I gave to one this gift. I gave to another that gift. And I gave to somebody else that gift.

He never said that about the fruits of the Spirit. He didn't say I give to one the fruit of love and another joy and another peace and another long-suffering another gentleness. No no no no no.

He said you may get by with one gift of the Spirit. You could even get by with none as far as I'm concerned. I think I can prove that spiritually.

But you can't get by if you don't have all the fruits of the Spirit not just one. Now the same is true of the Beatitudes. He doesn't say you have one Beatitude and you don't need the other.

He said you need them all but the entrance. Oh the entrance. How difficult it is.

Blessed are they the poor in spirit. Now I say this kingdom to me is marvelous by the people who are in it. I remember the first time I went to a Bible school in case he doesn't show up.

I went to a Bible school and I stayed nearly six months. He couldn't put up with me but anyhow. I remember the first time the president came in.

He just looked round just like this and he said gentlemen I've one question to ask you. And by the pain on his face I thought my he must be needing prayer or something. He looked really sad.

And he said gentlemen did the Lord call you to preach? Did he? If he did nod your head and we all nodded. Well he said it's a good thing he did but I'm sure I never would. He said you're about the most unpunishing bunch of fellows I've ever seen.

It's a good thing he selected you. Well isn't it like that in everything that God does? Huh? Oh to grace how great a debtor you sang this afternoon. Daily I'm constrained to be.

Let that grace Lord like a fetter. Thine my yielded heart to thee. Thine I am O Lord forever.

You see again if I'm going to get all there is of God. God why did the apostle say his richest gain he carried? I suffered the loss of all things. Why? Because Jesus did exactly that to come and redeem us that's why.

The only way he could make grace available was to leave all his glory in eternity. Hold on one side all his robes and all his honor. And instead of somebody bowing and saying your excellency the son of God somebody spit in his face.

He never did a thing about it. Ever somebody ever pull your hair? You're a strange girl if somebody didn't pull it. I pulled many a girl's hair at school and I pulled my sister's and the mother wasn't looking.

And sometimes she pulled mine. But I'm sure it always hurt more when she pulled mine than when I pulled hers. She'd get it and yank it.

God that hurt. And Jesus one day let somebody yank at his beard and spit in his face and he didn't do a thing. He could have turned them into anything and he didn't.

You see Jesus is the is the total example of everything that he teaches. He's the embodiment of all. You can't fault him on anything.

If you read the Sermon on the Mount he was the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are the poor in spirit who was more poor than the Lord Jesus. This is the way he came into the world.

With suspicion over him that he was born illegitimately. In his lifetime he didn't possess anything. One day he was tied up and he says have you a penny? Yes.

Loan me. As I say sometimes the favorite text for most of the evangelists today is silver and gold. I have none.

But can you imagine an evangelist having to say loan me a penny would you? Whose is the superstition? All through his life he lived. You talk about pouring contempt on your pride. Now it's easy to sing that in church isn't it? You know when you're really emotional it's a sacramental service and you sing I'm pouring contempt on all my pride.

Well that's all right. If you pour contempt on your pride it's all right. When other folk pour contempt on it, it hurts doesn't it? When they start making you such a negative nothing and a nobody and stripping you down.

And if you're not careful you'll get under the weather until you say well wait a minute you can go away. Chip away if you like. Chop away if you like.

Beat me if you like. Let me tell you something when you're done with me I'll be as valuable to God as when you started. I won't be any less valuable in the kingdom of God if you if you try and rub me out.

It doesn't matter how that you try to reduce me. I want to just tell you something. I'm going for that marriage supper of the Lamb.

Come hell or high water. Come criticism. Come all the things that are mentioned in this chapter.

I have a guarantee by the grace of God that His grace is sufficient to carry me through any situation in life. And come out triumphant at the end of the journey. Don't you ever sing we've sung it I'm sure here.

A hymn that's very beautiful. His love in time past forbids me to think. He leaves me at last in trouble to think.

While each heaven either we hold in review confirms his good pleasure to see me right through. Let me get this through to you again. God doesn't play tricks.

God is not capricious. If God has any pruning in your life it's not for fun it's for fruit. It's not necessary to make you feel better.

It's necessary to make you better. If you're going to live on feelings you're going to be in trouble because you've gotten down like a yo-yo. Yesterday it got to about 73 degrees.

The day before it about 33. I thought it was 13 around our yard but boy that wind was blowing and I went out and I got a knock at it. Somebody sent us a letter the very day.

We're up in the cold in the north. It must be lovely in Texas in the sunshine. Boy it was 13 degrees 17 degrees the same as New York.

No no I'm not going to be shielded from every blast. But I'm going to find this that in every situation he gives there is corresponding grace. There is corresponding power.

There is corresponding patience. You see you can go to church and sing when you're weary in the middle of the week sweet hour of prayer that calls me from a world of care. And I'll tell you something in case you don't know.

When the prayer meeting's over you still go back to that world of care. Prayer doesn't shift it. Prayer just gives you grace to get through it.

Prayer means that he fortifies you where the other man falls flat on his face and somebody says well how does she keep up? How does he keep up? What's the secret of their lives? Because the king has come to indwell us by his spirit. And he makes it very clean and clear in case you've forgotten. He says listen there are only two kingdoms in this world and I'm getting to realize this more and more.

There may be 20 kingdoms inside of that kingdom but there are only two great kingdoms in it. One is the kingdom of darkness and the other is the kingdom of light. In the kingdom of darkness things thrive.

The lions come out at night in the darkness to find their prey. I can remember lifting a rock in the garden when I was a boy because a lot of creeping things underneath. But as soon as I lifted them they all scattered.

I never lifted it till my sister sat down in the garden at the side of me. It's the only way I could get rid of her. And I lifted the rock up when she saw she's run off all those creeping things.

They couldn't stand the light. And Jesus says there are people who cannot stand the light. But if you're children of the light you'll walk in the light.

So one is the kingdom of darkness. It's called the kingdom of satan. The other is called the kingdom of his dear son.

One is the kingdom of darkness. The other is the kingdom of light. One is a perishing kingdom.

You see the idiocy of the world outside is it thinks it can destroy Christianity. They thought when they put Jesus to death it would be the end of the story. How can you kill eternal life do you know? Eternal life is in the philosophy.

He was I am the way the truth and the life. But how can you put eternal life to death? He was the light of the world. Blow the sun out then I believe you can blow Jesus Christ out.

You can't do it. You see every other kingdom it doesn't matter what kingdom you mention. The kingdom of science, the kingdom of politics, the kingdom of money.

Mention any kingdom you like and it's got one thing. They've all got one thing in common. They've all got death and destruction in them.

And this kingdom has neither death nor destruction. It's an eternal kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

Somebody said Christians are strange people. Sure they are. If we're true Christians it says we're a peculiar people.

Not funny just peculiar. Some are just funny but we're a peculiar people. The word of God says we are peculiar.

The world won't understand us. Why? Because we live in a different sphere entirely. At least we should.

I say everything in every other kingdom is perishable. Everything in the kingdom of Jesus Christ is indestructible. How can you kill a bomb with love? How can you shoot joy? If you've got joy in your heart how can you shoot it? Nobody can shoot it.

Every quality in his kingdom is an indestructible quality. Love, joy, peace. Everything in the other kingdom is visible.

Everything in his kingdom is invisible. Show me your love. I can't.

I remember in a street meeting one night talking about love and a half drunk fellow and there's nobody smarter and wiser than a half drunk man. And he said you keep talking about my soul. What shape is my soul? Is it square? Is it oblong? And what color is it? And how much does it weigh? And where is it? Where is it? The back of my head? As a matter of fact he said I got three souls.

One on each foot and one somewhere in my body. And the child laughed. Great.

Well he said you can't show me my soul and you can't show me love. Well I said let me ask you a question now. You've asked me a question and I say I can't tell you where your soul is.

Whether it's between your ears or down in your heart or in your feet. You say I can't tell you. I can't tell you what shape it is.

I can't tell you how much it weighs. I can't tell you what it smells like. I can't tell you what color it is.

And the x-ray can't find it if you go to the surgeon so it isn't there. That's right it isn't there. I said are you married? He said yes.

And do you love your wife? Sure I love my wife. Don't get mad about it. I want to ask you a simple question.

What shape is your love? Is it oblong or square or round? What color is it? How much does it weigh? Is it between your ears or is it in your feet? Does it smell? And go to the surgeon and ask him to x-ray you and find where your love is. You can't find it doesn't prove it isn't there. But you see everything that men have in other kingdoms are destructible.

And the reason the kingdom of Jesus Christ has survived is because this is a quality of spirit. And every quality of spirit that he tells us is indestructible. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness,

tenderness.

There haven't been many men in the history of the world thank the Lord that wanted to conquer the world. Alexander the Great did it when he was 27. Sat down and cried because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Napoleon tried it and nearly made it. He was born on one island wasn't he born on Helena I think it was and died on Elba. And before he died he was standing with Prince Taliban one of the great men of his day.

A man that had been with him in trying to build a world empire. And when everything was shattered Napoleon stood there pensively one day and he said in an angry mood you know I nearly conquered the world. And now my empire is in ashes at my feet and nobody believes in me.

And yet he said you know there are millions of men today who would do anything for Jesus Christ. Not for me but for Christ. My kingdom a visible kingdom, his kingdom an invisible kingdom.

Now this is a wonder of it as far as I'm concerned. God never promised one poet said skies ever blue. Sure he didn't.

You say the Christian life isn't a path of roses. I think it is full of thorns anyhow. That God never said he'd bulldoze all the hills and fill in all the valleys and make all the crooked places straight.

He never promised that to his son never mind you. You think you're having it rough? Just think about his son. Thou didst not spare thy only son.

And the writers of the Hebrews says that God did not spare his son. Well if he didn't spare his only son will he spare you and I from him? After all you've only from the time you get saved, whether you get saved as a boy or you get saved as an old man, you've only from there till you die to mature in Christian living. Again eternity is going to be the same for all of us.

We won't all wear the same clothes, we won't all have the same crowns, we won't all have the same stations, not by a long way. The book of the Revelation makes it clear that there are certain things that are only for the overcomers. And it's for you to find out whether you're an overcomer or a shortcomer but this is what it says.

There are certain things which God himself is going to give to the overcomers. Now if God is going to live his life in fullness in me, the only way for me to do it is find out God's method. And the first entry is through the line of poverty and nothing.

It's not physical poverty, it's not material poverty. You can have physical poverty, material poverty and be as proud as Lucifer. But blessed are the poor in spirit, recognizing that there is nothing in me to commend me to God.

All I deserve, and this is partly what salvation is, repentance is a turning around, it's something intellectual. Repentance is a turning, a change of attitude that I find God is right and I'm wrong. If God were to send me to hell forever, he's justified in sending me to hell forever.

And only by his matchless mercy can I become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Now I enter the kingdom on the basis again of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know what, once I get inside of that kingdom, as I've said often to people, when somebody gets saved at the altar, all I can

say to that person, I shake hands and say God be with you.

I don't know which way God's going to take it. You might grow more in grace and you might start ascending spiritual heights more in one year than I've done in 50. Maturity has nothing to do with the years you live in the Christian life.

Again, it's trust and obey. It's the revelation we have of God as we read his word and obedience to that revelation where I mature and mature and mature in him. Now let's remember this too, there are no fancy-dressed soldiers in the kingdom.

I sometimes wish that when people kneel at the altar, you know, we pump it into them very carefully, don't we? Now you're saved, your name's in the Lamb's You're going to have a five-decker crown, a free ticket to the marriage supper of the Lamb and rule over ten kingdoms. Well that's a deal if ever you heard of one in your life, except it isn't true. Not in a general principle like that.

But if you were to say to somebody, look, now you've become a Christian, a child of God. You've not only got rid of all your sins, you've got rid of all your rights. You have no rights from this moment.

He has sovereign rights over your life. He's the king of your life. He's not the prime minister.

We have a queen in England. All she does is sign papers. She has no voice.

She's no authority. The prime minister runs the council. It used to be that we had a king.

The king was in the same boat. He did not run the council. The government makes the law.

The prime minister says what the course of the politics will be. The government agrees or disagrees and then finally she signs the paper. I'm convinced there are lots of people who want Jesus Christ to be king of their life so long as they can be prime minister.

There is a hymn that says, King of my life, I crown thee now, thine shall the glory be. Lest I forget thy form, crowned wrath, lead me to Talbot. Now, let's make a jump here.

Supposing you say, well brother Aidan, look, to all the life I have, I'm living right in the centre of God's will. Fine. What do you think is going to happen? Your neighbour's going to bow when you go past? Your mother-in-law's going to send you a note tomorrow and say, you know, you're the most wonderful daughter-in-law or son-in-law in the world or some other person.

Do you think that's going to happen? You see, we kind of feel if I get nearer to God and I'm more obedient than I've ever been and I'm really longing for his will, that somehow he's going to write a label, a sticker label on me, so when the devil comes up to smite me, he says on, leave him alone, he's my prophetic. Well, if he said that, the devil hasn't enough manners to do it anyhow. But God doesn't say that.

You see, the most thoughtless life that was ever lived was the most abused person in the whole world. And if ever you get to feeling sorry for yourself, all you have to do is go back and read the life story of Jesus or read of the apostles and the saints, and you'll think you're on an eternal spiritual honeymoon. Usually when we talk about the spiritual life, and as I've said before, I do not know anything that better interprets the spiritual life than the Beatitudes.

I can't find a book, oh, oh, all the ecstasy, all the interpretations of spiritual life these days is ecstasy, joy, and ringing bells, and cartwheeling down the aisle, and having fun, and displaying your gifts. But I'm telling you again, I'm far more interested in character than charisma. I had a letter this week from a man bemoaning the fact that so many people in his section were shouting loudest about gifts.

You see, half of them were divorced, and half of them, their homes were wrecked, and this and that, and the other, I can't, I can't listen to them. Meekness, fairness. This, if you want to find out what the spiritual life's all about, you read about blessings of the poor, and blessings of... I'm telling you again, I'm far more... Now this, if you want to find out what the spiritual life's all about, you read about blessings of the poor, and blessings of the meek.

You see, unless there's been poverty of spirit, there'll be some meekness there, and if somebody treads on... there won't be meekness there, and somebody treads on it, you're going to immediately rebel. Supposing three people were walking across this room, and each of them had a glass. One had water in it, one had milk in it, and the other had wine in it.

And they didn't know that when we say, you walk across that room and keep your eyes on that door like that, they didn't know we had something that tripped over them, and they just go around with a glass of water. Well, what would come out of the glass of milk? You say, no, it's obviously right. You're very right too.

What will come out of the glass of wine? Wine. What will come out of the water? Water. Now if you get in a situation something spills out of you, the only reason it can spill out of you is it was in you.

And if it isn't in you, it can't come out. One of the great sayings of Jesus was, the prince of this world come up and findeth nothing in me. And then later the scripture says, as he was, so we in this world.

Now that's far removed from getting saved, and getting baptized, and joining the club, and joining the softball team, and singing in the crowd, isn't it? You see, God's concern is to fashion us to get character in us. And he doesn't care what price you have to pay to get it. Not salvation, but character.

Not the initial stages of grace, but becoming mature in God. This is what he's after. Now I say, Jesus, and obviously you'll agree, I'm sure, is the most perfect character that ever lived.

What happened? He was continually bombarded with the opposition. Sinners that opposed him, the hierarchy of the church opposed him, the Pharisees opposed him, and the Sadducees opposed him. We usually take Peter as a classical example of a man of spirit filled, impetuous Peter, always saying his piece, talking when he shouldn't, and all the other things characteristic of the volatile person that Peter was.

All right, then what happened after Pentecost? Well, before Pentecost, he ran away when a girl pointed a finger at him. After Pentecost, he pointed his finger at the whole nation and made people tremble as though he had a sword in his hand. Fine.

But you know, I don't think for a minute he's the best example of a spirit-filled individual. I think the most beautiful character in the New Testament, maybe even including the Apostle Paul, the most beautiful character was Stephen. I'm not sure he was more than 18 years of age.

And yet you read the description of Stephen, he was full of faith, he was full of the Holy Ghost, he was filled with wisdom, nobody could say a word against him. What did they do? Stoned him to death. The church needed him.

Everybody said he's going to be the new leader, Jesus has done it. And he's such a handsome man. I mean, he's got everything, he's got personality, he's got courage, he's got gifts of the Spirit, he's got meekness.

Let's see, he's a kind of total embodiment of the Sermon on the Mount. Poverty of spirit, he recognizes he's the least among us, though we think he's the greatest. And he has a very meek spirit, though he could be very arrogant because he's so very wise.

And he has discernment that most of us would like. You know, I've come to this conclusion that while the Word of God talks about riches, material riches being a snare, I've come to the conclusion, disagree if you like, that many spiritual riches would become a snare too. Because lots of people, most of them get filled, saved and filled with the Spirit, then they want to hide off for a ministry somewhere, particularly a lot of women.

Well, of course, it's much nicer, I mean, if there's three or four yelling kids at home and washing up three times a week, it's much better to go somewhere and say, I have the gift of poverty, would you like me to display it next Wednesday night? And somebody says, oh, we had a woman at our meeting tonight, she's great, get her next weekend. Before long, the woman says, you know what, I believe the Lord has called me to a ministry. And I don't believe anything of the kind.

I believe the Lord called us to raise all four youngsters He brought into the world. And maybe the greatest thing He can do for God is raise them, not go running around straightening everybody else's kids out when they're as twisted and deformed as they can be. Because you can't neglect your family and get away with it.

That's not God's order. But going back to Stephen, here is a matchless character. So they didn't fall down and say, we ought to be very careful.

You know, this young man, they say he, well, he's like, you know, Daniel in the Bible, and he's like Joseph, he can interpret dreams, and he has visions, and he prophesies. Man, we better, we better be very careful. Let's see, is there a scripture that says, touch not mine anointing, do my prophecy? They said, get him out of here.

Don't you realize that that young 18-year-old boy, the anointing of the Spirit makes those proud Pharisees, and he makes the leader in the temple and the synagogue look like fools? All they mutter, they recite, it says in the prophecy of Isaiah, this, that, and the other, bring your sacrifice, and we'll kill it for you. And there's no life, there's only death. But, but this young man, Stephen, he stands up, and his face is radiant.

And they said, well, we'll too, change that anyhow. And they put him in the wall, and they blasted him with stones, and maybe one guy says, you try to knock his left eye out. Go on, have a shot of it.

Oh, you missed it, hit the right. Now, see if I can crush his words. Go on, sit down and read the story.

What do you think they've held it in with? Like they do in films, when you see a man lifting a rock three times the size of himself, until you realize it's styrofoam? They were real rocks. They put him in a corner.

We'll knock eternal life.

Well, that's strange. How are you going to kill eternal life? It was eternal life that was in him. Well, I'll tell you what, his face won't shine with God when we've done with him.

And you know what? It was ten times more radiant when he died. They said, he's got a face like an angel. There's something of another world about him.

Be careful, don't say amen, because you might get stoned this week, just to prove it. If you say, well, praise God, I believe that's the way God does it. All right, next week, when you get battered by the devil, and everybody else seems to be getting by easy, just say, well, Lord, this is where I want you to raise those out of me.

This is the roughest day I've ever lived, but let your glory shine out in me. As I've told you before, one of the great things in the story of John Bunyan, you should read this to your children. If you don't, you're a thief, you'll rob them of blessings.

And it's not getting out of the city of destruction to the city of God, but when he got halfway there, there was a fire on the side of the road, and demons were throwing buckets of water, trying to put the fire out. He couldn't understand. Every time they threw a bucket of water, the fire blazed up, and he went to the back, and angels were throwing oil on.

At the front, the demons had little buckets this size, and the angels had buckets of oil that size. So who do you think won? And when you get up right against it like that, your husband, or somebody who doesn't understand, and you say, Lord, it's like hell here. And the Lord says, it's all right.

My greatest decision for thee, they threw a bucket of water. Watch out, there's a bucket of oil, there's a bucket of peace, there's a bucket of joy, there's a bucket of longsuffering. It's all going to work out all right.

You see, because you've determined, if you like, to use the figure to grit your teeth and say, well, by the grace of God, I'll be the holiest woman in this community, I'll be the holiest man in this community, whether I give, whether they respect me, frankly, that's not the thing. If you start living on the level you want to be admired, you're in trouble. You've got to live for the glory of God.

I was reading a story there in 2 Samuel, what was it, 1st? 1st Samuel 25. Story of that marvellous young king of Israel, and he was very young at the time, by the name of David. And do you remember how he had been anointed to be king, and what happened? He got persecuted.

He didn't get the kingdom. Saul was still ruling, wasn't he? And what happened? All hell opened out on the young man. So there's a man called Nabal.

Remember the story of Nabal? And somebody came to Nabal and said, have you heard? He knew the king, the real king of Israel. No, who is it? It's David. Do you know what he said? It sounds like these modern days.

These are days when anybody has run away from his master, that's what it says. Every man is breaking away from authority. And he doesn't like to submit to King Saul, and therefore he's going to start running the kingdom on his own.

That was one opinion. Though he was a close relative of the king, Nabal was an Israelite. He was a close physical relative of the king of Israel.

And yet the nearest of kin, as it were, began to despise him the most and oppose him the most. Oh yeah, he doesn't want to submit to authority. If you read a little bit further on, a little bit before that, actually it says this, that when Nabal was in trouble, you know there was a war between him and the trouble? David, the king of Israel.

David shielded him. David protected him. David guarded his life.

And then he turns around and comes to his notice and says, he's no king anyhow, he's running away from authority. Now that's number one opinion. Number two opinion is the son of the king by the name of Jonathan.

Jonathan finds him out one day and he says, listen I want to tell you something. I know it's going rough for you David, but I want to tell you, I could be king you know, but if I'm one of the kings, I'm the prince, it shouldn't come to me. But I want to tell you something, I'm not the prince.

I'm not going to be king, you're going to be king. And you know what? I'm going to stand with you and make it as easy as you can. Isn't that nice when the king's son comes and says, well I'm going to be your buddy and stand by until he gets to another place further down.

What does it say? It says Jonathan went back to the palace. Do you know where David went? In the woods where he was living. Hmm? Hey, why didn't the Lord kick the king out and say, this is the rightful man, he's already been anointed to be king.

Get out of that palace you're living in comfort. This man's living on hickory nuts and monkey nuts and anything else he can find and drinking water and finding wild honey. And he's the king? Oh come on, what do you mean he's the king? Who's going to believe that? So you take the testimony of Mabel? He's running away from authority.

You take the testimony of the second man, the prince, and he says, listen, I know you're the real king. I'll never get, it's a lovely disposition. But he says, uh, I'll just have to lounge on my chosen bed.

I need some ice water, orange juice right now. You go back in the woods, I'll be praying for you. Sounds great, isn't it? And then you get the third witness.

What did David do? He gathered a bunch of what? Debtors, distressed, despondent, disagreeable, despised people. That's a nice fellowship to have. I haven't had a church like that.

And he gathers them all together in a cave. Despised, despondent, distressed, disreputable, disappointed people. What did, what did Mabel say? He's running away from authority.

What did the king's son say? Well, you're the real king, and I acknowledge that, but I'll be thinking about you. I'm going back to the palace to rest. You go live in the woods.

What did the other men say? Disappointed, distressed, discouraged, deprived, disreputable. They heard the king turning over on his soft bed of rocks, and he said, you know, the water around here doesn't do me much good at all. Why? There's only one well with good, sweet water, not to a gate of Bethlehem.

And they go out, and though the city is defended, and there's a thousand chances to lose their lives, those disreputable men that he rescued, and he was putting them all together again, they risked their lives. They ran to the well at the gate of Bethlehem. They brought him water, and as the king gets up in the morning, and he's coming out to get a breath of fresh air, and look at the lovely sunshine, and they say, and they bow down and say, your excellency, we brought you the water from the well that you used to drink at as a boy.

We know what you say, it's as sweet as wine, and it's all we have to give, but we love you because you see all those array of armies, we fought our way through them, we fought our way back, and we stumbled in the darkness, and we brought this treasure of water, and we're glad it's here, we want you to drink it. Remember what he did? He poured it out on the floor, and he said, you're asking me to drink men's blood. It was the same king.

One scene from the angle of the king's son, the other scene from the angle of a friend that he had befriended, and defended, and helped, and then he turned foul on him, and the other, a bunch of men who'd been rescued, as he'd said, rescued the perishing, and he'd cared for the dying, and he'd snatched them in pity from sin and the grave, and because they'd been loved much, they returned much love to him. Well, if you and I are going to walk the way that God wants us to walk, after all, Jesus says, it's a guarantee, you say, he said, my peace I leave you with. So he did, do you know what else he said? In the world you shall have tribulations.

You know, if it meant that being a Christian, you saved every affliction, and every hardship, and every trial, and every bit of storm, the kingdom of God would be swollen from here to the ends of the earth, but again, it's an invisible kingdom. Somebody might say to you tomorrow, well, what do you have more than I have? I hear you get headaches, and you get heartaches, and you know what? We get heartaches, we don't know a thing about, because our heartaches have lost humanity, too. We don't see maybe the state of people up in the Appalachians, and so forth, we see other things far, far worse than that.

I remember in Scotland, when our little boy, who was now a missionary in South America, was three weeks old, and I had to preach up in the head church of the Nazarene, and nine miles out of Glasgow, there's a little town called Blantyre. We had no meeting in the afternoon, so I said to Martha, sweetie, let's go up and see the home of David Livingstone, and we went. It's a little place, it's what we call a tenement, that is all the houses in a row, and just a little room, and there's the old fireplace there, with the wooden spoons, and all the ancient stuff they had in those days.

And incidentally, when David Livingstone went out, there was nobody new at that time, could be the greatest missionary in the world at that time perhaps, he walked the whole of the nine miles from Blantyre down to the dock, a dirty foggy morning, and just an old man walked with him, I wonder who he was. But I remember that morning, we took Paul, and there's a rope around, you know, so he couldn't go near the fire, and then they have what they call a buttoner bed, you're going to build a house, all you do, you build a shelf in the wall, you build a house up, and then you make it big enough for a mattress to go in, and then you don't need any furniture, see, and you pull a curtain over, and that's where David Livingstone was born. And I climbed over the rope, and I laid out Paul on that bed, and I dedicated him to the Lord, I said, Lord, take this boy, and make him a missionary, which he graciously did.

But when we got a little bit further down, there was a marvellous little system of photography, you press a button, the room was totally dark, it was a long, long chamber, and daylight broke, and it showed about six

different phases in the lives of David Livingstone. It showed him confronting the Portuguese slave traders, and breaking the yoke proper next to the slaves. It showed him other things, and then finally, it showed him kneeling at the side of a grass bed that he had.

It was only a frame, just some four parts of a tree and props on, and some old leaves that he'd woven together. And there's a flickering candle at the side, it's a perfect reproduction, a total reproduction of what actually happened. And there was the flickering candle, and here's this old man bent at the side of the bed, bowed down.

That's how he died. He died praying. And underneath it was his favourite prayer, Oh God, when will the wound of this world's sin be healed? The wound of this world's sin.

He saw it like an aggravated wound. And you know, when all's said and done, God isn't going to make you a saint just to put you on show. He's going to make you a saint to put on a show so people can come and admire you.

If God's going to put a lot in you, he's going to expect a lot out of you. If you're going to come to maturity, he's going to put you in maturity, not that it may be easier for you, or that you may enjoy being a Christian necessarily more. He's going to put you into a place where he can share some secrets with you that he can't give to one of five million other people in America, maybe.

You don't have to believe that, but I'll tell you it's true. You see, the secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him. You've got tens of thousands of people praying to be sanctified.

You've got more people praying to be Spirit-filled and have gifts and whatnot these days, and I'm not despising them, I'm only saying that the church doesn't seem much richer because of them anyhow. You see, one of the things that Jesus says, we'll come to later in this, he says what? He says, hear the salt of the earth. He says clearly, if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight.

Now God pitied all who would try and stand up against God's children and God would be part of this world again. You know, we talk about power and we get almost scared to death that we live in an atomic age. Why should you? You're wearing me a heller bean.

In one sense, yes, in another, I'm fed up. If you haven't read it, there's a story in the Old Testament. No, I won't, I won't even tell you where it is, but there's a story in the Old Testament, and I find it very thrilling, I find it almost laughable.

The first bomb dropped, atomic bomb, was dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th of August, 1945, at about a quarter to eight. They killed and permanently maimed a hundred thousand people. You know, back in the Old Testament, one day an angel was going home, to put it in my language, and he was a bit late behind the other angels, and he, and he, and he, you've seen planes when they do that, I always think they're going to go over and not do a good job because they lose the balance, but the boy does it too quickly.

But this angel was going down and he just grabbed his wing, tore it down. That's all he did. Do you know how many he killed? A hundred and eighty thousand people, killed with an angel's wing.

Now, to show you what power is, Jesus said on the cross, look, don't, don't you start challenging me because I could call twelve legions of angels, and leave him a legion. There was twenty thousand, you remember that, wasn't there? Have you heard anybody? Twelve thousand, well say it's twenty thousand.

Ten thousand angels, and he said, I could, I could call twelve legions, that's twelve times ten thousand, huh? What would that be, a hundred and twenty thousand? And if, if one angel can kill a hundred and eighty thousand people with one of his wings, well what would all those angels do, huh? Philip Graham's just written a book on angels.

Somebody sent it, I haven't read it yet. I wonder if he's got that in. I think that Mr. Churchill was a very remarkable man.

I, I don't think he was a sane man, I wish he had been, for many reasons. But I remember one thing he said, amongst others, not too long before he died. He said, I've been wondering what will happen to this world if God runs out of patience with it.

Are you serious, isn't it? God's patience doesn't run out. He will not always guide, neither will he keep his anger forever, he says in the psalm. He says, way back in the Old Testament, my spirit shall not always strive with man.

He said to people, sometimes you need to be careful you're playing with fire. This world doesn't know how much fire it's playing with. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, they never had, never had an evangelist, they never had a preacher, they had a backstreet man called Lot there.

God destroyed them. And I tell you again, in this country we've got more Bible schools than the rest of the world. Put together, there's 300,000 hours of gospel broadcasting a week.

You say, well how can you do that? There's only 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but we overlap and overlap and we have, we have 6,000 stations in the country broadcasting, about from TV stations, almost every one of them broadcast the gospel some part of the day. You say, well do you think the world's going to wake up? No, I'm not interested. I've got to the place now where I feel very much like the great American evangelist Moody, he said, I'd rather wake the church than wake the world.

Because if you wake the world, it'll go to sleep pretty quickly, but if you wake the church, you'll get the greatest visitation. And I go on the heavy side, I know that. I, I like to talk to people that I think have grown up anyhow.

If you aren't, then I'm sorry to go over your head. And if Jesus was interested in a kingdom for size, do you know what he'd have done? He'd have taken 12,000 disciples instead of 12. If he wanted a kingdom of money as easy, if he turned walking to wine, he'd have turned stones into solid gold.

If he wanted a kingdom of prestige, he'd have gone to the Pharisees and the others, but he says, I'll start with the least, most despicable, most useless. Now I don't know how you pray, and I don't want to know, don't tell me. But I, I weep when I pray, and I smile when I pray.

And one day when I was praying, I just said this to the Lord. I said, well Lord, you have better chance with me than you have with Adam. There's nothing to start with him.

You do have a bit with me. I mean, when you start with Adam, it's only a handful of dirt. Well, he's got a bit more than that with me.

I don't have a lot of sense, I have a little bit. I don't have a little, a lot of spirituality, I have a little bit. Now Lord, take what I have.

And don't you back off and say, well you see, I got saved two ways. If I were 23, I'd be in a Bible school right now, I know where I'd be. I'm sure I wouldn't get married, are you sure? It's still a procedure.

But, uh, you might know, you might have shaken it off, I don't know. But you see, get this and I'm finishing here. Look, it's not what you bring to God that matters.

It's what God can bring to you, if you obey Him. What is that in my hand? Well, it's the stick. It's the rod of Moses.

You know what it's called right after that? It's called the rod of God. What is that in my hand? It's all blown up in air. It doesn't sound very dynamic, does it? Tell the story sometime of a preacher saying, you know, the Lord doesn't use the jawbone of an ass anymore.

A little egg on the front row said he does in our church every Sunday. But, uh, all right, the rod, the rod in his hand is the rod of Moses. The next time it's the rod of God.

What is that in my hand? Jawbone of an ass that slays an army. What is that in my hand? It's just my lunch. I'm a hungry boy.

I always bring five rods and two pieces. But Lord, if you want it, here you are. Wouldn't it be great when the Lord reads that boy's name? I'm glad the Lord doesn't give us his name, because everybody has told me there's something about that name since then.

It's just, you know, I want him to be a miracle boy, like the boy that gave out the loaves and fishes and the Lord didn't give him. You see, it's not what I have and I bring to him. It's my willingness to be a nothing and be a nobody, that he may be something and be everybody.

And he starts off and you say, well, Lord, I'll tell you one thing. If you're going to get anything out of my life, you're going to have to put it all in, because there's nothing right to start with anyway. And he starts and he blesses and he merges right.

And sometimes we stop with that word, he took bread and he break it. Yes, he did, but don't stop there because it's difficult. He took bread and he break it and he blessed it.

And everything that God is going to bless, is God's going to break. So if you're going to the breaking process, have spiritual intelligence enough not to say, Lord, please stop right here. Let him grind you to powder if you want.

I think that there are some people, I laid my life not too many years ago on the line for a group of people. They wanted to use me. I've written some books and they thought it would give them a lot of standards.

And I felt at the time this was the thing to do. I laid my life on the line. I laid my money on the line.

I laid everything on the line. They took it and they used it and took a couple of thousand dollars out of my money and turned around and threw me out. I don't feel a bit bitter about it.

They didn't hurt me, they did me good. I'd have been there still if things had gone right and that wasn't where God wanted me, I guess. So the Lord gets up with us at times.

But what does he do it for? He ever is speaking what? My broth to consume and my gold for the times. Lord, again we say we would rather be the least in my kingdom than be the greatest in any kingdom of men. Help us to bear the image of the heavenly, we've borne the image of the earthly so long.

Maybe we've thought about external beauty and other things that are beautiful but we pray in spirit let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. May each of our lives and each of our homes be enriched because of this our fellowship.

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