

(Compilation) To the Preacher ■ The Idolatry of Intelligence

by Leonard Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the importance of true surrender to God, highlighting the struggle with pride, self-sufficiency, and the need to yield our will to God's loving authority. It calls for a return to the core message of offering Christ to others and emphasizes the power of prayer, repentance, and seeking God's presence above all else. The speaker challenges the church to prioritize genuine encounters with God over intellectual knowledge or religious rituals, urging a revival marked by deep spiritual hunger and a fervent pursuit of God's glory.

Scripture: Joel 2:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Psalm 34:18, James 4:8, John 4:24, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:17, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 6:6

Topics: "True Surrender", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of true surrender to God, highlighting the struggle with pride, self-sufficiency, and the need to yield our will to God's loving authority. It calls for a return to the core message of offering Christ to others and emphasizes the power of prayer, repentance, and seeking God's presence above all else. The speaker challenges the church to prioritize genuine encounters with God over intellectual knowledge or religious rituals, urging a revival marked by deep spiritual hunger and a fervent pursuit of God's glory.

Transcript

I don't care how high-brow some of these scholars are. Some of the greatest men I've met have not been intellectuals by a long way. Our pride gets in our way.

We call it intelligence, God calls it pride. Self-sufficiency, arrogance. I've heard people say, you know, if that man would ever give his life to the law, he's a lawyer, or he's this, or he'd be so marvelous.

Are you sure? I'm not. You see, the crumbling of the will is the hardest thing in the whole world. Because if I've no will, I'm under a dictator, a marvelous dictator, a loving dictator, who's never capricious.

Wesley says over and over and over in his wonderful, wonderful diaries, I looked at them the other day, John Wesley says, I went to Wednesbury, or I went to Lancashire, or I went to London, or I went to Birmingham. And what did he do? He said, I offered men Christ. We don't offer men Christ, we offer forgiveness, we offer pardon, we offer peace, we offer prosperity now.

Forget it. Let's beg back to the old rugged cross. There's no substitute for it.

Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Him. We're not preaching Christ. Listen to Charles Wesley.

Charles put his brother's theology to music. Charles Wesley says this, my heart is full of Christ, not my head is full of theology, my heart is full of Christ and longs this glorious message to declare. You go to a seminary in Dallas or Fort Worth, why? To learn to know your Bible.

Forget it. You don't need to know your Bible, you don't need to know the Word of God, you need to know the God of the Word. Elijah didn't know the Word of God, there wasn't one, he knew the God of the Word.

And he never moved until God said, go. God says, go hide thyself, he hid himself for three years, it says. On the third year, it says in the 18th chapter.

And then what? God said, go. Go what? Go show yourself to the king. The king's going to kill me.

Well, you'll see. He doesn't care a hill of beans about that. Whitfield would preach and say all he could say under tremendous anointing, and then when he could get no further, he said he'd lift his hands and just say, oh.

And there was something in his voice that was not of men, it seemed as though the very heart of God was breathing through him. And he would say, oh, as Jeremiah said, that my head were waters. And unashamedly, he was a brilliant scholarly member.

And unashamedly he would stand there and talk to coal miners at five o'clock in the morning. You don't have any evangelists in the country. I know of a guy at five o'clock in the morning that talked to a crowd.

He was talking to plush office over TV and, you know, all the trimmings. But where is the confrontation of the men of God? Paul says, I travail in birth. That's a lost art in the church.

When were you last in a prayer meeting where somebody travailed? I felt this morning after the morning service, a woman looked at us, she was travailing there in agony in prayer. You want to do it giving out sex? Men alive, we've given billions of tracts out. They aren't meant to sing.

Occasionally, yes. Speaking generally, no. Paul says, I travail in birth.

Jesus says, he sees at the travail of his soul. God says that when Israel, of all, when she travailed, when Zion travailed, she brought forth children. I think it's Montgomery that it says in a hymn, all earthly things with earth will fade away, but prayer grasps eternity.

It doesn't demand a colossal intellect. It doesn't demand a vast vocabulary. Montgomery again says, O thou by whom we come to God, the life, the truth, the way, the path of prayer thyself hath taught, Lord, teach us how to pray.

And then he says, prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try. Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach the maddest young heart. Answer this question, not to me, but answer it to yourself.

Did you kneel and pray this morning? Did you believe that when you prayed this morning, that God, who heard Elijah on Mount Carmel, heard your prayer? Do you believe when you prayed about saving

someone being there? Or heard the prayers of your son, heard your prayer? And I've heard in a forum in England, some of the greatest preachers that have preached in the last half century. And some of them were very dazzling, very fascinating. They were masters.

They had elastic vocabularies. They could stretch their words. They could paint pictures.

They could make something run up and down your spine. They could chill you. They could give you a fever.

Because they knew how to put words together. But I've met very few men that disturbed me when they prayed. Nobody wanted to pray after the doctor told that he had a language.

He had a, he had, shall we say, a disposition in prayer. This, in my judgment, is why Jesus says, you stay here while I go pray. They would never have understood his grief, his anxiety, his sweat.

He sweat as it were great drops of blood. They didn't understand. They didn't understand this. They were used to saying their little paternosters, their little prayers, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

But beyond this, they didn't know much about intercession at all. Philip says this is the church where they did not sign articles of faith. They acted in faith.

This is the church where they did not gather together a group of intellectuals to study psychosomatic medicine. They just healed the sick. This is the church, he said, where they did not say prayers.

But they prayed in the Holy Ghost. And I know the greatest preacher in the world in the last 50 years. And yet the outstanding experiences of my life are not in hearing these amazing men who can do a juggling act and almost blind you with their theological science.

The greatest memories I have are of praying with men who were anointed by the Spirit of God and we prayed until two or three or later hours in the morning. Do you think you can find a church on earth that fits into that pattern? No? Does your church rule in that liberty? Not in bondage to headquarters? Not studying psychosomatic medicine but having power? So I had one of the great theologians of the Pentecostal church in my office recently. I said, I want to read this.

This is what Baselman said. There are 70 million classical Pentecostals. He said, that's not true.

I said, well, I'm sorry, I misquoted it. He said, not 70 million, 120 million. I moved across, almost put my finger in his eye.

I said, were there 120 million in the upper room? No. Well, I said, well, this was their baptism in ours. Come on, be honest.

We're boasting about something we don't have. It's a theology. It's a phrase.

It's a technique. I want an invasion of God. I want God to settle over a community.

It only comes by birth pangs. Somebody may have mentioned that great revival through Jonathan Edwards what in the 1700s when he prayed that sermon that is still read sinners in the hands of an angry God. But listen, he spent the whole night before that with a group of choice people praying and fasting and

weeping.

Do you know in those revivals never once was there an altar call? Do you know that all the years that Spurgeon was in London they never once made an altar call? Do you know when there's a revival you don't make an altar call? Read the third chapter of Luke. And what does it say? It tells about John the Baptist. What a man.

His mother was filled with the Holy Ghost. His father was filled with the Holy Ghost. The priest of the day was filled with the Holy Ghost.

He was filled with the Holy Ghost through his mother's womb. It doesn't say that about Jesus. Jesus was the son of God but he didn't preach until the Spirit rested upon him.

And he says go into all the world but don't go until you're tired to be endured with power. Listen, there isn't a Pentecostal church in America today. I said that in front of Pentecostal audiences.

You talk about restoration. Are you going to see people restored to be deacons like Acts 6 full of faith and of the Holy Ghost with signs and wonders? Those are deacons. Are you going to have revivalists like Philip in the eighth chapter? He's not an all-day minister we would say.

And then he goes into a city and the whole city is moved in the power of the Spirit of God. It's the fire that makes the difference. I'll tell you, once you get in a meeting with the Holy Ghost you'll never forget it.

Something burns. So I'm getting old. I get tired.

But I want to tell you I've got a fire in my belly if you'll excuse the word and if you won't I'll tell you it's still there. And it gets more fierce every day, Brother Rick. It doesn't go down.

I jump out of bed if I've gone to bed early. At nine I get up at eleven or twelve. If I go at ten I sleep maybe till two.

Many times I think the bed's on fire. I get up and run to my office at the other end of the room. And you know, I want it that way.

I love the fire of God, the Word of God to burn in me until I can't do anything but say, Oh God, don't let this generation pass without seeing your glory. We've had the gold gluttons. We've had these men who want their private jets and live ostentatiously.

Forget it. There isn't a revivalist in America today, not one. When revival comes the total environment is changed.

You don't have to lash people for money. A prophet never asked for money. Prophets are lonely men.

Prophets are daring men. Every piece of paper that comes to my desk these days, and I get it from the ends of the earth. Everybody gets a name somehow and they all send me literature on revival and how to get it and not one of them is within a million miles as far as I'm concerned.

And you know what they all call? Right across the middle of Decision Magazine on the fourth of July. Remember that? Right across in that fabulous, beautiful painting that was there. It's a footnote of a bunch of preachers from Billy Graham to who's who that are going to meet in about three weeks and pray down

in Dallas.

Everything has one mark on it. Two Chronicles, 740, for revival today. That pushes all the responsibility on the people who come to, whoa, whoa, whoa, Joe 113, Joe 213, Joe 313, who weep like this.

This woman is weeping or weep like the apostle he says in... I ask that of every batch of students we get at our prayer meeting. They change every few weeks because of the Bible schools round about us. We get about 100, 150 students on a Friday night.

It's a fantastic meeting to me. They drive three, four, five, six hours to get to the prayer meeting. They leave at ten o'clock at night and if they're from ORU they get back at three and four o'clock in the morning.

Isn't that wonderful? Sure. But it's also tragic. Why do they have to drive three, four, five hours to find a prayer meeting? The prayer meeting is the Cinderella of the church.

If you want to know how popular a church is, go Sunday morning. If you want to know how popular a preacher is, go Sunday night. If you want to know how popular God is, go to the prayer meeting.

Who wins? If you want to take your spiritual temperature, and you should do that more regularly than you, you check your blood, check your prayer life. Prayer is the language of the poor. It doesn't matter if you're a king.

It was a king who said, bow down thine ear and hear me, for I am poor and needy. It was a king who said, this poor man cried. The self-sufficient do not want to pray.

The self-satisfied don't want to pray. The self-righteous cannot pray. Prayer is the most demanding exercise beside eternity.

Do you know the nitty-gritty of the whole thing is this? We don't know God. We don't know God. We know theology.

We know about him. Why did Jesus come into the world? To save sinners. That's not what Jesus said.

What did Jesus say? I am come that they may know thee. Every man that comes in my office, I get them worldwide, I don't know why, but they come. And I say, first tell me, do you know God? Well, I have a degree.

I didn't ask you about that. Do you know God? When was your last encounter with God? When were your last prostrate in his presence? When did you last sit spell down at his majesty? You don't know God. Because we don't know God, we don't know how to worship.

We don't know how to enter into his presence. We're content to know a few theological shibboleths that other people have taught us. Dear God, one of the leading men in the Southern Baptist Church, a very dear friend of yours, I won't give you his name, give you his I won't give you his I won't give you his name.

I won't give you his I won't give you his name. I won't give you his I won't give you his name. I won't I won't give you his name.

I won't give you his name. because his grandmother put him through a college you know and he likes to show this thing off? do do bad is like giving a blind man a driving license. If he doesn't know God? Why

isn't this business? I come to this conclusion recently about two things.

We have you weep, sir, because you don't weep. I say if your preacher doesn't weep, you weep over the preacher. I say if your religion hasn't changed, you change your religion.

Weeping is an integral part of revival. Doesn't it say there in Joel 2, 2 what's the verse, 17, let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the altar and the doorpost. Let them say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them.

Does anybody want to do that? We have conferences, we call people to repentance, you can't, you can call them to listen, only God can call them to repentance. We should live in a constant state of repentance. Why should I repent every night when I go to bed if I've done nothing wrong all day? I think what we have to do is not live in a state of repentance, it's live in a state of brokenness.

How can we be whole when the world is damned and rotting before our eyes? Let the priests weep between the altar and the doorpost. And as I said, I walked round the front of that podium that day in that distinguished, wonderful college, 1400 students listening. I just walked round and said to the professors, gentlemen, you're teaching young men to be preachers, they're going to guide the church in one sense in the future days.

Tell me this, do you have a course on weeping for them? And if they graduate, do you have a course on howling? In the days of Oliver Cromwell was Dr. John Owen that wrote all these fabulous books. He has about six volumes on the Holy Spirit. One day the king called him and he said, come and speak, I want to speak with you.

You are the vice-chancellor of Oxford University, you are the greatest preacher in England today. I hear that thou dost go listening to that babbling Baptist. He said, your majesty, I walked four miles the other day and I listened to that Baptist.

He's a tinker, he's a poor man. But he said, sir, I would take up my role of office, I would gladly resign as supreme preacher for Oxford University if I could preach like John Bunyan. You see, there's something that money can't buy, you can't bestow it, you can't pass it on.

It originates in God, it has to be born in me and make men die. Dear God, you'd be amazed how many young men write and ask me, would you like to pass your mantle on to me? So I write back, no, I'll tell you some of my sackcloth and never hear from them again. Oh, you're the new apostle Paul and I want to be your Timothy, forget it.

If we took everybody, we get about 30 visitors a week to our house. Some guys, they'll all just show me to come and stay at your house a year. Good for you.

You haven't shown me, so you're not coming. But all we're looking after is a short way to get blessing, aren't we? We're looking for a formula, there isn't one. There's no formula, it's a person.

I hate it to hear Swaggart, Paul Swaggart, saying the Baptist, have you had it? The Baptist, it's a person, it's a blessed person of the Trinity. And when he comes and invades human personality, everything goes. And that becomes God's control.

He thinks like Christ, he sees like Christ, he loves like Christ. Somebody asked Hudson Taylor, why did God choose you to go to China and establish the China inland mission? He said because he'd been looking for years for somebody weak enough to use, and at last he found me. They were unlearned and ignorant men.

The Holy Ghost came upon them. Where did he go the first time? Did he not go to the Sanhedrin and say, hey, I'm just a very likely prospect, I want a man with a sharp intellect? Did he go to the high priest and say, well, who do you think is the finest young priest you've got around? He ignored the whole bunch. He went to some smelly fisherman and said, come on, follow me.

And unlicensed servants are man-made, not intellectuals and bishops and presidents of colleges. God's going to bypass organized religion and systems before very long. I believe that many denominations are breathing their last right now.

They're struggling to try and plug the hole up and stick the hole up here and stop something else. And the world says, but you've got nothing real and vital and living and powerful. The Church of Holiness today, we have no life.

We've got the lack of and no life. Jesus is life. I said last night, every miracle, the word of a living God, what have men done? Banned it, blamed it, burned it, but it lives.

It will live for an empire's cause. ...university some years ago by putting a frog in a dishpan of boiling water and he jumped out. And then they put a frog in a dishpan of cold water and they turned the jet at the bottom and they turned it up one degree, two degrees.

And you know what that frog did? He stayed in there till they cooked him to death. When they put him in the boiling water, he got out because he said, I can't live here. But when they, by degrees, they changed the thing and he adjusted and he adjusted and he adjusted and they still killed him anyhow.

And you know, we've got some things in our churches, if not in our lives, that a few years ago we would never would have had. And old Satan didn't pour the boiling water on, he put this little thing and then that little thing and that little thing. And before very long the churches be sunk, come so carnal.

The glory of the Lord doesn't fill the temple. When did you last tiptoe out of your particular tabernacle saying, surely God is in this place? I say again, with all the power of my being, I do not believe that modern Christians go to church to meet God. They go to church to hear a sermon about God.

They don't expect beauty to invade the place. They don't expect to tiptoe out of the holy place saying, God is here and that to bless us. The spirit moved over my heart.

A boy has said to me a sweet thing this morning. He's only a young fellow, 17 rating, I guess. And he said, Brother Ray, it's been so good to be here this week.

You know, during the preaching and a number of priests besides me, but he said during the the Lord has been pushing back my horizons. Well, God bless him. I'm glad for fellows that have got bigger horizons.

You know, David prayed, enlarge my heart. Some of us are praying, enlarge my head. But David didn't pray, enlarge my head.

He says, enlarge my heart. And if he enlarges my heart, he'll enlarge my vision. He'll enlarge my compassion.

He'll enlarge my concern.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/MPliwX7DcL4.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/leonard-ravenhill/compilation-to-the-preacher-the-idolatry-of-intelligence/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net