

Cost of Discipleship - Part 6

by Leonard Ravenhill

The church is facing unprecedented hostility and spiritual infancy, and needs to prioritize spiritual maturity and strength for the burdens of the day.

Duration: 8:25

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "Discipleship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for spiritual maturity and discernment in the church, highlighting the danger of remaining spiritual infants despite having abundant resources like gospel materials and teachings. It challenges believers to move beyond emotional faith and material blessings, focusing on the true offense of the cross and the importance of carrying spiritual burdens with God's strength. The speaker addresses the prevalence of false doctrines, the love of God based on receiving gifts, and the current spiritual warfare faced by the church.

Transcript

It's like listening to the radio tomorrow morning or your TV program and the one who's addressing it says this, we have just taken a poll of all the men in the Air Force and in the Army and the men that are steering our great big multi-billion dollar, what do you call it, aircraft carriers, and the men who are piloting those jets at greater speed than sound, and the men who are driving the tanks, and the men who are manning the silos and the intercontinental ballistic missiles. We've checked them all and we find that the nation is being operated militarily by Cub Scouts. Wouldn't that shock us? What? I'm going to bed at night and there's a fellow, a little dwarfy boy on board a multi-million dollar aircraft carrier, Cub Scouts? I think if we digested that we might not have had any meetings from then till now.

We might have been on our faces asking God Almighty, but listen, here's the thing, why is Paul arguing here with these people? He says, because I feed you with milk and not with meat. You've no digestible, you've no spiritual digestion. Well listen, in America alone right now we have, I dare to say this before God, I believe we have hundreds of millions of gospel cassettes, and we have millions of gospel books, and we have hundreds of Bible schools, and we have hundreds, over the year we have hundreds of seminars, and we have people memorizing the scriptures, and we have about 5,000 radio stations who every day give some part of the scripture, and yet with all this stuff to feed on, dear God where are we with all this stuff to feed on, 95% of us are spiritual cripples, spiritual infants, spiritual babes.

Oh it's not the only time he says that, in Ephesians 4, where is it, in verse 14, he's careful about the Ephesians there, Ephesians 4, 14, that henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slate of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive you, he's fearful for the Ephesians, babes in Christ, because they're babes they're not able to carry burdens. I can remember when I was a little boy I'd go into the garden, we had a flower garden as we say in England, a vegetable garden, and I'd try and pick up a bucket of potatoes and I'd strain and dad would say, put it down you'll hurt your back. When I got to be about 13 I'd go in and I'd see half a bucket and I'd pick that up and carry the half bucket and father would say, put it down you'll carry the full one you're strong enough to carry it now.

If God Almighty only gives us strength or burdens equal to our strength we'll be in a bad way. What we need is strength for the burdens of this day. I don't believe the church of Jesus Christ has ever faced the hostility.

I believe the world today and in areas of the church is filled with lying spirits and doctrines of devils. Paul is jealous for the old rugged cross and you remember what he says? There are some people who are enemies of the cross of Christ. Now notice what he says, he doesn't say they're enemies of Christ, oh no they're smart enough to use the name.

The Mormons use the name of Jesus. The Mormons say they have gifts of the Spirit. The Jehovah's Witnesses talk about Jesus and the kingdom, that they're enemies of the cross.

It's the blood that is an offence to them. They're enemies of the cross of Christ. I wonder what he'd say in our day.

I say going down the streets in Athens his spirit was stirred, he was angry. Babies, children, full of self-pity, self-interest, self-seeking, self-concern, me first. I never heard of children choosing to fast, I've heard them when they turn their nose up you know at spaghetti or something like that.

It wouldn't be Italians if they turned their nose up at spaghetti, but some other things you know. Usually it's cabbage isn't it? Ugh, spinach. If only somebody could get ice cream to taste like spinach it would be great.

No, no, no, they want to be very choosy in what they eat and what they drink. You say sometimes I wonder God doesn't burden me, do you know why? Because he can't trust you that's why. You're not strong enough to carry the burden.

Isaac Watts who wrote when I surveyed the wondrous cross also said this, if God Almighty should call me to control six universes, not six worlds, six whole universes, I would joyfully do it because he'd give compensating grace. But he said I wouldn't want even to look after six sheep without his guidance. Oh it's easy to be emotional, there's nothing wrong with emotion, you've got to have some emotion.

But it's wrong when that's all there is. Children, they love people, but they only love emotionally. Who do they love most? Oh Auntie Bessie.

Of course her sisters are far nicer personality, but her sister happens to be poor. So when they hear Auntie Bessie comes they climb up at the windows, she's coming, she's coming. Why? Because she always brings a gift.

And they just love her on that basis because she gives and gives and gives. And some people love God because he gives. We've got this wretched prosperity stunt.

Paul's very clear isn't he, doesn't he say, right into Timothy there, that you'll come a day when people think that gain is godliness. Some of God's choicely saints don't have a shirt to change. Read the current issue of Reader's Digest or borrow it, beg it, steal it, do something.

Steal it and take it back, but anyhow. There's a tremendous article there this month on Laos, a country we've forgotten. You see I've got a feeling, not because I'm English, forget my tongue.

I wouldn't have stayed here since 1950 if I didn't love the country. God sent me here. He didn't send you, you had to be here, you had no option about it, most of you.

All right, don't look so sad. I came because God told me to come. I'm glad I came.

But let me go back to this. I believe that the church is facing the greatest hostility. I believe that there's war in the heavens like there hasn't been.

Like back in 1896, at the time, 95, 96, when the Keswick Convention was founded and Mrs. Penn Lewis was one of the founders of it really. No she wasn't, the Welsh revival came out of Keswick. But Mrs. Penn Lewis in those days said that we're having an unprecedented invasion of evil power and we've had two bloody world wars since then.

I was going to say I'm convinced of this, that right now as a nation, you know what we're suffering for? The sins of our fathers, for what we did to the people in the days of slavery, we're suffering for it because he lets us suffer unto the third and fourth generation. We're suffering for the destruction in Vietnam. We're suffering because Mr. Nixon and Kissinger said we were not bombing Cambodia and we've been bombing them here.

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