

Featured Audio Sermon ■ What is your Life ■

by Leonard Ravenhill

This sermon challenges individuals to examine their lives in light of eternity, emphasizing the need to surrender selfish desires, pride, and sin to fully embrace God's will. It highlights the transformation experienced by individuals like John Wesley and Brother Andrew, urging listeners to seek a deeper, intimate relationship with Christ through prayer and devotion. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being willing to die to self and allow God to work in every area of their lives.

Scripture: James 4:14, Romans 6:6, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Eternal Perspective", "Surrendering to God's Will"

Description

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Transcript

I have a text tonight which is a question, and it's a question that we cannot answer collectively. It's a question you have to answer individually. It's found in the very practical epistle, as it's usually called, the epistle of James in the fourth chapter, and verse 14.

Maybe we should read from verse 13. Go to now ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain. For as ye know not what shall be on the morrow.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then it vanisheth away. Can you think of something that was on earth before Adam was here, and it was removed, and it's in heaven now, and it may come back to earth. I thought you were waving, the lady putting her sweater on.

Well, the tree of life. Oh, were you raising your hand? I can't see very well. The tree of life was there before Adam went into the garden.

And now we're told the tree of life is in the other garden, the paradise of God. And you know, this is about the most fascinating study that there is, and you will never face a more challenging question than this text. What is your life? Now, not only for what it doesn't say, it doesn't say what is life, because if it did, nobody

has an answer.

It doesn't say what is our life, otherwise we could fool all our thinking. It says, what is your life? And it gives a reply here in the text, it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time. There are three main questions that come up in life.

Children ask this question, where did I come from? And somewhere, sometime you better give them the right answer, because if you don't, somebody will give them the wrong answer. And then maybe at your age, right now, you're asking another question, why am I here? And then when you get further up the road, which I happen to be, you say, where do I go from here? So there are three basic questions about life. Where? Where did it come from? Why am I here? And where do I go from here? I was thinking about the different poets who said about this.

One of them said this, life at its best is very brief, like the falling of a leaf, like the binding of a sheaf. Be in time. Francis Henry Light, he lived in Ireland near where we used to live, long while before we were there.

And there's a big memorial to him in the Royal Pretorius School that my boys went to. Francis Henry Light wrote this great hymn, Abide With Me. And in that hymn you may recall, he says this, swift to its close, ebbs out life's little day.

Another poet says, the lives of great men should remind us, that we all may be sublime, and departing leave behind us footprints in the sands of time. Another one says about great men, but how did he put it? Life is fleeting, life is earnest, and the grave is not the goal. Thus, thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul.

Now if this book is about anything at all, it's about life. I was looking while I was away this past weekend at a fairly recent issue of National Geographic. And it certainly has some fantastic photography.

Part of it was about Somaliland. And there were women there lying on the floor with a bit of a rag around them. Their ribs were standing out.

There were corpses of babies all over the place. And the country right now is in a terrible grip of famine. And while we today couldn't make up our minds what kind of ice cream we like.

I mean, you know, we've got 28 varieties, but surely there must be another one. And 48 different types of, what do you call the things with a hole in the middle? Donuts? There must be some other kind of thing to eat besides donuts. And you hear people say, well life isn't just, life isn't fair.

One man said life is a feast, another wise man said life is a fast. One man said life is a paradise, another man says life is a prison. You see, the question here is very pointed and maybe it's very personal, it is impersonal, maybe it's very painful.

Maybe you could answer the question. What is your life? You say it's a failure. What is your life? A success.

What is your life? It's a disappointment. But actually it's showing to us by the very context that life is like a vapor. It's like the steam that comes off the kettle and you try and get a handful of it and it's gone.

And in every case in the Word of God where life is referred to, that is this physical life, it's likened to something that's very swift. It's likened for instance to a weaver's shuttle. It's likened to a tent that men

wrap up and move on in the night.

Isaiah likens our lives to the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven. Now you know there's a saying, it becomes almost facetious to say, but it's said amongst many Christians, only one life to soon be past, and only what's done for God will last. But that's exactly what the poet did not say.

What the poet said, only one life to soon be past, and only what's done for God will last, and when I am dying how glad I shall be if the lamp of my life has been burned out for thee. As I said tonight, again it's easy to say, the things of earth will grow strange with them. You feel very pious when you say that.

But you know when you get to eternity and look back, the things of earth will look very grim. We'll possibly discover we've been as earthly minded as the reprobates outside who are dancing and lusting tonight. Oh we're trying to put empty dumpty together again you know.

I used to ask what that was about when I was a little boy. I never found an answer to it. Or you can get an illustrated book of nursery rhymes and Humpty Dumpty is an egg on a wall and he falls off and breaks himself into a hundred pieces and all the king's horses and all the king's men can't put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Or the old argument, anybody can scramble eggs, who can unscramble them? Life? Men have been trying to manage it, direct it. They've kind of considered that if you made the environment better we would produce better people. That's not true.

You know there's nobody go around in circles more than the politicians. I can remember in World War I, before World War I, so I'm not too young, there were a group of supermen around at that time. George Bernard Shaw, he wrote a fascinating play called Pygmalion that sent him bankrupt and so they changed its name to My Fair Lady and it made millions after he was dead, which I think is what he deserved.

But George Bernard Shaw ganged up with a bunch of fellas that were called the Fabian Socialists. George Bernard Shaw again was there, H.G. Weld was one of the leading spokesmen, Aldous Huxley was there and all the top-notch guys, you know. And they suddenly came to a realization that they had solved the problem of inequality, injustice, a way to empty prisons, a way to make this world a utopia.

After all, Christianity's had 2,000 years, they said, it hasn't done too well. So we don't need the church, we don't need the Bible. And they began to think of things they didn't need.

In 1912, two years before First World War, these fellas made a kind of outline of their philosophy and what they were going to do. They were going to pull down the hills of wealth and fill in the valleys of poverty and make the crooked places straight. They said we can have a new race of men by intellectual and biological processes.

They didn't talk about repentance and sin, none alive, that's too theological. They talked about the adequacy of materialism, the inevitability of progress, and the sufficiency of man. That was two years when they declared that they could have a utopia.

If not a new heaven, we don't need it, a new earth. And they gathered people around them, and they marched on bravely with their little cards saying, utopia isn't far off and we will do all this. Well, the Kaiser in Germany had another idea, and he upset the apple cart.

Two years after they made their declaration, World War I came, 1914 until 1918. 1919 to 1939, I think were twenty of the most wonderful years for the church, she missed it. And in 1939, another fellow came along.

He had Charlie Chaplin's moustache on his lip and one stripe on his arm, his name was Hitler. And we found we were in serious trouble. And like every war, every war gets more diabolical, and the next one is unthinkable.

Why, if you'd been around here a hundred years ago, you'd have walked down the road then, oh, dirty Indian shot an arrow in my back. Uncivilized wretch that he is. Now the boys from Harvard and elsewhere with brains, they can drop an arrow on a city and wipe it out.

That's education. The uncivilized people killed thought one at a time, they were pretty decent about it. Now we can wipe out whole cities.

There's a possibility that a third of the population of the United States could be liquidated in less than one minute. It is a sudden, terrible, horrible, unthinkable atomic war. And the situation isn't better.

Do you know that in the third world, we're giving billions of dollars away? Do you know in the third world right now, there are more billionaires than in the free world? Yesterday showed Mr. Marcos and his wife in the Philippines. I think she's just acquired her first billion. One of her friends in another country that we're sending money to has acquired her second billion, and is on her way to her third billion.

And yet tonight with all our progressive education, we have more sin, we have more darkness, we have more slums, we have more disease, we have more broken homes, more broken lives. The world is a madhouse. Despite all the lives that were laid up.

Oh, how many people perished in World War I? I don't know, maybe a million. And then right after that, 16 million people perished by an epidemic of influenza that swept the world. And then we had a time of recovery.

And then again, we came back to 16 minutes to 8 on the 5th of August 1945. When one man in a plane on his belly, pressed the button, dropped the bomb, wiped out about 100,000 people and left about 300,000, many of them still living, blind and paralyzed. You'd think these politicians would give up.

What in God's name are they doing? Far from wasting money, wasting, dangling a carrot on the end of a stick, when all the time they know there's no hope. You know we learn from history? The one thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history. If we did, we wouldn't be in the mess that we're in tonight.

But you see, when that bloody man Hitler began to wipe out cities and countries, I remember walking down the street in Sheffield, when people were all listening, holding their ear to the door of a shop that sold radios and what have you got. And somebody said to a fellow, what's going on? Shh, shh, shh, Churchill speaking. And there was old Churchill with his famous slur, you know, those Huns, he said, as he called the Germans.

They swept past Paris and they're sweeping down onto the French coast, and they're coming over here. And he said, we shall fight them with bottles if we have to. We shall fight them with sticks.

I imagine myself on a chair trying to pull a Messerschmitt out of the sky. And he roused the people. But the war got more diabolical.

And right in the middle of that war, H.G. Wells, who had already designed, along with his friends, a way to clean the world up out of its moral sewers, and out of its fanaticism, and insanity, and injustice, pull down the hills of wealth, fill in the valleys of poverty, make the crooked places straight. H.G. Wells had written his outline of history. He'd written his book, *Crux Ansata*, that got him into trouble with the Roman church.

And then suddenly his brain woke up. And he wrote his final book, and this was the title of it, *The Man That Was Dreaming Great Dreams of a New World Order*. And he had the answer, along with all his brothers who were so super-intellectual.

And his last book was called *Mind at the End of Its Tether*. And he wrote the whole human race off and said, there is no hope. No hope for the human race.

Because he says, man has a blank inside of him. Well, he got almost theological. Man has a blank inside of him.

You've got life tonight, physical life, otherwise you wouldn't be here. You've got emotional life, otherwise you wouldn't laugh. You've got a social life.

You've got intellectual life, you may have a religious life. But you see, this book is not complimentary in any shape or form. So you find a man saying, youth is a mistake, manhood is folly, and old age is a regret.

Fancy having to be a super statesman to have a bankrupt philosophy like that. Youth is a mistake, manhood is folly, old age is a regret. Sure it is if you miss the one place to get life.

And even in the days of his flesh, Jesus complained, he will not come to me that ye may have life. Now do you remember his great statement, I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the way, without that there is no going.

I am the truth, without that there is no knowing. I am the life, without the him there is no going. I am the way, that's external.

I am the truth, that's internal. I am the life, that's eternal. Now this book is completely lost to one idea as far as I am concerned.

It tells us the origin of man. Now I know at school you have got a teacher who is much smarter than that. She tells you to go to the zoo to see your uncle.

And I think when you go back to school you should take a banana and give it to her. And she said, what's it for? I said, well I saw your uncle George in the zoo the other day, he had no lunch, so why don't you take this for him. I was told that not long ago the monkeys had a conference.

And they outlawed the idea that they have any relationship with the human race at all. They asked for a show of hands, there were 10,000 monkeys there. Chimpanzees, and now there are tanks, and I don't know what were there.

Every kindred and tribe, the whole 12 tribes of monkeys were there. And they asked for a show of hands. Anybody here ever taken drugs? Raise your paw.

And nobody raised a paw. Any of you ever been in jail? Raise your paw. No paws raised up.

Any of you ever been drunk? No, no. Any of you ever been divorced? No. Any of you go to a village and tear it up and murder everybody in the village in one night? Oh, never think of that.

Well that's what those monkeys do that wear clothes. They just raid people at night and kill them. And they destroy.

No, no, no. Here is a wonderful, wonderful fact that God has given to us. It's an amazing thing when you think of it that God gave just one chapter to tell us about the creation of the world and seven chapters about the creation of the tabernacle in the wilderness.

I wish he'd changed it around, but you know he never even asked me for advice these days either. I give him some in my prayers sometimes, because you wouldn't do a thing like that. You're too smart.

But the whole thing is about life. Every kind of life. And supremely about eternal life.

And Jesus appears and when he comes, he comes with a miracle birth. And you know this well enough. But in other countries they don't know it too well.

That somehow, though the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, he was contracted to a span and incomprehensibly made man, to use Charles Wesley's wonderful words. He laid his glory by and wrapped him in our tray. Oh, the hymn we sing at Christmas.

Hark the herald angels sing. Glory to the new born King. Mild he laid his glory by.

Born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth. Born to give them second birth.

You see the man in the world there, the man that puts some bits of tin together and sits somebody in it and presses a button and shoots them and they can walk around the moon. He thinks he's far beyond anything that's got anything to do with the Bible. It's all emotional.

That man still has a missing link in his life. That man still has a place in his life that only God can fill. To use the words again of Augustine, we have a space within us.

And God made us for himself and we'll never ever be satisfied until he comes and occupies that part in our lives. It's astounding when you think of it that we, human beings with all our faith, we can be made the habitation of God through the Spirit. Now, you have a classical confrontation as far as I'm concerned.

Here is a man of impeccable morality, one of the greatest scholars in his generation. Maybe he stood on the edge of a crowd and saw miracles. Maybe he went to the bazaar to buy some coffee or something.

He heard people say, you know that fellow's done some astounding miracles and the whole nation had been stirred by John Baptist, but John did no miracle. And then Jesus comes and he does a miracle after miracle. He shows he has dominion over death, over disease, over insanity.

He knocks the demons out of people's minds. He sets the captives free. This Pharisee must have said it over and over again, year after year, reciting the 35th chapter of Isaiah, that when he comes, oh, when the Son of God comes, when Messiah comes, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame leap as a harp, the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Do you know that guy, and even Saul after him, those fellows had been to the anniversary of Pentecost year after year after year, and they accepted Pentecost when it was empty. They rebelled against Pentecost when God fulfilled his word and poured his spirit out on all flesh. We've got people today that are very happy to celebrate Christmas or Easter or even Pentecost and it's as long as nothing happens.

Keep up a tradition. That world outside there is not waiting for a new definition of Christianity, it's waiting for a new demonstration of Christianity. And there's one thing that life does, wherever it goes, life begets life.

You can't love theology, you can't even love your Bible. You can only love a person. You can't love a theological concept of God.

I've often wondered what Paul really saw on that Damascus road when he prayed four simple words, who art thou? If you read it straight off it means nothing. Who art thou, Lord? But supposing you read it this way, who art thou, Lord? Here's a man with a colossal intellect. Here's a man who is in every category, in the highest category.

He's a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He's a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He's of the tribe of Benjamin.

He's of the seed of Abraham. He had fulfilled the law. He says concerning the law that was blameless.

And yet he's going down that Damascus road, breathing out threatening with a heart full of fire and hatred. You talk about a miracle of the grace of God. That man had murdered people as he said in the 26 of Acts.

He tore families apart. He chased them up into strange cities. And that very man whose body, whose brain was filled with theology, and his heart was filled with hatred, wrote the most amazing hymn, the most amazing poem on love that was ever written.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have no love, I'm a sounding brass or a stinging cymbal. And if I give my body to be burned, which he was prepared to do on the Damascus road. Do you know I think, I'll ask him in eternity, I think that suddenly when he fell off his horse there, I'm sure there was a horse rider in front of him to protect him, and a man behind, one to the right, one to the left.

A man of his class would never walk all the way to Damascus. And suddenly he's pitched off his horse. You say were there only four people there? No.

You say there's a man riding in front? Yes. One behind, one to the right, one to the left. Were they the only witnesses? Maybe on earth.

I want to tell you I believe every demon in hell was looking down on that man at that moment. I believe every angel in heaven was looking down. The demons, because he was their best advocate on earth.

He was fearless. He regarded nobody. He had some letters in his pocket saying he could put to death anybody that he wanted.

And then suddenly Jesus came into his life. Would you have thought that man in the dust had inside of him 14 epistles, if you give him Hebrews, and I think he wrote it. Would you think that he would go through Asia Minor and establish a dozen or more churches? Would you think that man in a lousy stinking prison, they wouldn't let you put a dog in today, would write to other Christians as he does to the Colossians and the Philippians and the Ephesians his love letters to them.

And as he says rejoice in the Lord. And again they should have been sending letters of comfort to him and he's sending letters of comfort to them. Why? Because on that Damascus road as far as I'm concerned he came alive.

Religion, formality, ritualism, they were banished forever. And then after that experience he was shut away in the quietness. Maybe that's why God brought some of you around here, so you can get alone under a tree somewhere and talk to God and find out where he wants you to go.

And he had three and a half years in the wilderness. Then he's brought up into the third heaven. And then he sets out on that amazing pilgrimage.

And as far as I'm concerned he explains it all when he said, I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. And yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live here in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

If I were to ask you tonight, you're saved. Do you say, yes I'm saved. When? Oh so and so preached, I got baptized.

Are you safe? What are you safe from? Hell? Are you safe from bitterness? Are you safe from lust? Are you safe from cheating? Are you safe from lying? Are you safe from bad manners? Are you safe from rebelling against your parents? Come on, what are you safe from? Ninety percent of the people in the nation are not saved, they claim to be. When I went to an altar and I confessed my sins, fine, fine. That's what the preacher said, you confess your sins and you confess them.

Do you know they did that in every Roman Catholic church in the country last Sunday? A man needs more than to be forgiven, he needs cleansing, he needs more than cleansing, he needs indwelling, he needs more than indwelling, he needs undoing. I was in a little place, a country place last week. The pastor was away, his daughter was expecting a baby.

Good night, it must have been a big hospital, I think every relative they had went there. It took a thousand mile journey. My daughter's having a baby, my daughter's having a baby, so what? Didn't make all that fuss when I was born, at least I don't remember it, but anyhow.

But oh when the baby came, you should have heard what they were saying about it. It had everything except wings. It had a halo, but it got broken when they handed the baby over to the nurse.

Oh, and this fellow said to me, hmm, isn't the birth a wonderful thing? It sure is, it sure is. I'm not asking you tonight, did you one night kneel down and make confession, and after that your life was no change, your lifestyle was no different, your appetites were no different, your pair life was no different, come on. Suppose we change the language.

Paul says Christ in you. If I were to stop here tonight and go around the front row and everyone, and say to everyone, you stand up brother, and when you stood up I say, does Christ live in you? What would you say? Oh yes, He lives in me. He rules my life.

He consoles me. He pulls me back when I would go too quickly. He urges me on when I would hesitate.

The miracle of the new birth. You see the insulting thing about the Bible is that while you may have a colossal intellect, and you may invent so many things, and you may write great books. Oh, for some

reason right here I think of Lord Byron.

He was a contemporary of John Wesley. Byron broke all records for writing poetry and publishing books. The rich people of England would have a whole row of books in pure leather binding.

Lord Byron wrote it. Lord Byron, he went into the homes of all the kings in Europe. He went to the palaces.

People begged him to come and grace their home with his presence. He was an extremely handsome man, had a pale complexion, jet black hair, even curls down to his shoulders. And people swooned when he came in their presence.

But he was dissipated. If I remember right, he died when he was 39 years of age. He died shivering on the coast, by the waters lapping his feet there in Greece.

And he wrote this just before he died. My life is in the yellow leaf. The flowers and fruits of love are gone.

The worm, the canker and the grief are mine. What a summary! I was going down Orange Grove in London some years ago. I was speaking at the London Ketty.

I saw this swell place and flunkies there in knee breeches, you know. Oh, they looked so nice. Boy, I'm glad I don't have to wear that.

I've got such terrible legs, right? Thin, thin legs. If I wore breeches like that, I'd be arrested for having no visible means of support. Here was this flunky standing at the door and he had his beautiful velvet coat and a cravat there and his hair.

And I stepped back and he says, Good afternoon, sir. I said, Good afternoon. Could I come in there for some... Oh, no, sir.

No, sir. No, you can't come in here to eat. Well, yes, you can if his Lordship, the Duke of Westminster brings you or the Duke of Argyll or Lord Tallmash.

But you see, well, it was just before the Queen, our Queen, got married in England. The Queen was here last Friday night and her sister was here too. They stayed until two.

We close at two in the morning now. You know, like most church prayer meetings close at that time. And... Thank you.

They... You can't come in here. Why not? I'm clean, I'm upright, I'm a preacher. I mean, I've never been to... But, sir, you're not of royal birth.

You're not a distinctive aristocrat. You can't come in. Why would you like to come in? I said, I would like to see all the Lords and Ladies and Dukes in society with their sparkling diamonds.

And I'd like to get my chair, turn it round and stand up and raise my voice and say, She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. Oh, sir, he said, you'd get thrown out. I said, well, that's what they expected.

Isn't it offensive to say to people, Listen, you may be a genius. You've a colossal intellect. If you fall out of bed, you invent something that you know right in the sense of you're dead.

Because you've no living relationship with God. Now, there are two kinds of people in the world, only two kinds, not black and white, not rich and poor. There are those who are dead in sin, and there are those who are dead to sin.

If I say most people are half-saved, you know what I mean? I mean this, you go to the cross, but you never get on the cross. You go and get your sins forgiven and feel happy, and you go do the same lousy thing again the next day. Come on, what kind of a salvation is that? I had a famous preacher, and he's an Englishman, Terrible, he shouldn't have said that.

And he said, you know, the Lord isn't us. You come here tonight, he'll forgive your sins tonight, he'll forgive your past sins, forgive your sins for today, and he'll forgive your sins for tomorrow. Isn't that nice? Can you imagine a man going up to a judge, and the judge says, you've been found guilty of stealing a lady's purse.

Did you steal it? Mm-hmm. Oh, you did steal it, yeah. It had \$100 in it.

Ever stolen the other purse? Yes, I have a record, this is the 345th purse that I've stolen. Are you sorry? Yes, I'm sorry. Well, he says, you're forgiven.

I forgive you for all the purses you've stolen in the past, all that you've stolen today, and all you're going to steal for the rest of your life. Wouldn't that be wonderfully sane, or insane? You see, the miracle of the new birth is this, that when a man is really born, when he gets this life, he doesn't want that life. Oh, I don't think anybody gives it better than Paul.

To wind this up, writing to the Colossians, he says, if ye then be risen with Christ, or as the literal translation is, if you've been raised with Christ, you seek those things which are above. You say to people, are you saved? They say, well, I don't really know. Oh.

Supposing you're carrying a hundred pound sack on your back, and you're struggling up a hill, and your knees are going down, and somebody whips the sack off your back, and you get to the top of the hill without the sack, and the man says, hey, have you lost your sack? You say, I don't really know. I kind of figured he'd know when somebody took a hundred pounds off his back. And by the same token, a man knows, because the miracle of the birth isn't some intellectual somersault.

Jesus says it is this, that we're dead in trespasses and in sin. And he brings us to life. So now we love the things we didn't like, and we hate the things we used to love.

Okay, so Paul says, if ye are risen with Christ, or you've been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not things under. Come on, come on, come on, you fellows now.

Okay, you say, and yet I guess you talk more about baseball than you talk about Jesus, is that right? Hmm? In the last week you've been more interested in the return of Jeddy than you are in the return of Jesus. And you've talked to your buddies about it. As far as I'm concerned, the three little bits I've seen on TV, you'd have to be crazy to go watch it.

Set your affection on things which are above, not things underneath, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Can you think of anything more wonderful than that? Here is your life. It's hid in Christ, and it's hid in God.

What are you going to do, sneak out and drink a bit of the world's junk? Do you know why you need entertainment? Or any of us, you only need entertainment when you've lost the joy of the Lord. And when we've no joy, we need entertainment. And when we've entertainment, we've no joy.

That went over like a lead balloon, but that's true. You're dead, and your life is hid with Christ. Now he says if you're risen with him, that deals with the past.

You're dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Not when I die, but even now on this earth. I bid the world goodbye.

Not tearfully, but cheerfully. All of its pleasures, its pomp, and its pride. Paul puts it best, as he usually does when he talks in Galatians 5, and he says, from henceforth let nobody trouble me.

I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Weymouth translates that. Weymouth Moffatt translates it.

I bear in my body the branding. They know a lot about branding around here. You might see some cattle branded.

And when Paul wrote this, a man who was a slave could run away from his wicked master, his cruel master that nearly took the skin off his back every day, that demanded a full day's work and hardly gave him enough food to last an hour. This man gets away. The first thing he does, he flees to a temple, and there were priests always awake.

At least they were always there, maybe not always awake. And the altars were burning. And the man runs in breathlessly and wakes the priest and says, brand me, brand me, in the name of which God, and there is different irons to brand him.

And the man puts his hand out and closes his eyes, and the branding irons put on his flesh, and it sizzles, and he yells, and then if he's a garment, he's stamped in the back of his neck, and then he lifts his foot up and he's stamped in his instep, and they rub a kind of ointment and leave him there for days until he's able to get out. He goes out, and as he goes down the street, his old master sees him and says to his friend Marcus, there's Aristarchus, go bring him back here. And Aristarchus comes up and his master says, listen, I'm going to take you back and whip you like you've never been whipped before.

You're going to carry loads you'll never drink, and he starts telling him what he'll do, and he says, just a minute sir, what do you mean? He says, look, look, look there. And the old master says, I've got no claim on you. I've got no claim on you.

You're the possession of a God. And Paul says, listen, I got branded there at the base of my head because all my thinking is going to be about Jesus, this man being you which was in Christ Jesus. Do you think he went to the Olympic Games because they had them in his day? Do you think he fooled around with the material things of the day? His head was branded, his hands, his feet.

So a hymn writer says, let my hands perform his bidding, let my feet run in his ways, let my eyes see Jesus only, let my lips speak forth his praise. All for Jesus, all for Jesus. All my beings, rants and powers, all my thoughts and words and doings, all my days and all my hours.

Listen, are you just a Sunday morning Christian? Do you live and move and have your being in Jesus Christ every waking moment of your life? Has he got your thinking? Would he be embarrassed to rap to

you at some certain point in your life? Or your habits of life? Paul says, I bear in my body the owner's mark. Come on now, listen you kids. You listen.

One at a time talking, thank you, and I'll do it. He says, I bear my brands of Jesus. These hands will never do anything Jesus wouldn't do.

These feet will never walk where Jesus would be uncomfortable. This mind will never think of anything that wouldn't satisfy the heart of God. And then he kisses the world goodbye and says, henceforth let no man trouble me.

I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, for the world is crucified to me. I can make a safe guess. I've traveled the world a couple of times around it.

I've seen a lot of strange customs. In many countries I've never seen a crucifixion. I'm not sure I'd like to see it.

But as dear Dr. Tozer used to say, Len, you knew one thing about a man that was carrying a cross out of the city, you knew he wasn't coming back. We come to an altar and we go back the next week and we're as fascinated. We haven't spent half an hour with Jesus, but we're staked two stinking hours in a movie house.

We haven't witnessed somebody who's going to an eternal hell according to our theology, but we talked about some tribute to them. We sit at the table with unsaved parents and instead of being submissive and kind and loving, we're sassy and we don't come in at the time we're supposed to come in. And mother says, you know our John's supposed to be saved, he's no better, he's as rebellious as our daughter is.

But look at this figure for a moment. Here is a man stretched on a cross. As soon as that man is nailed to the cross he has no rights of his own.

You can take a bucket of filth and throw it over him. You can take a stick if you like and break his legs. You can have a game of pitching rocks and you'd knock his right eye out, I'll knock his left eye out and so forth.

He's no rights. He can be battered and bleeding and broken. And maybe 5,000 or more people are there to see him die at 6 o'clock at night.

And then the trumpet sounds in the city and nobody stays after the trumpet sound. You have so many minutes to get in the city and the gates are locked. Maybe 5,000 people watch that hideous crucifixion.

6 o'clock at night, 6 o'clock at morning there's nobody there. I remember going to India, there were bees, there were birds that were this height from the ground. They have about an 8 foot wingspan.

They keep their necks in until they fly and then out comes this long neck with no feathers. They look hideous. They beat, oh they must be this length, huge, curving.

You know what they do? They go onto the arms of the cross as the light comes up, daylight. And those big hideous things reach down and peck out the eyes if they're still there and they tear the body and it becomes bloody and the entrails run out of the man and the blood runs underground and the doves come out of the city to drink of the blood. Even a woman who saw her husband crucified would never go back in the morning.

You didn't see a woman with her arms around a bleeding, horrible, wretched form of a man saying, darling I love you. And Paul says, that's what the world is to me. It's a system of corruption and rotteness and vileness.

It's anti-Christ from the world go. Is the world crucified to you tonight? Or does it fascinate you? Oh I'm coming down the line. I mean Jesus isn't looking for some sissies to serve him.

He's looking for some men with guts and men with grace and men with determination. You still comfortable to sit in a ball park and say, here somebody take the name of Jesus in vain? Or you're saved and you go to hell fire if you're not. You've only gave him a few sins, that's all, that's all.

Just gave him a few sins. Now look, you've been in this lovely environment today. I don't know how much forced labor there is, how much time you have to sweat and grind and what not.

But surely about one or two hours did you use them to sit around and talk to pretty girls and nice guys? Or did you get along with God and say, Lord I want this to be the most meaningful week I've ever had in my life. I want to hear your voice. I want to see a vision of your glory and your power.

Let me finish with Paul's words here again in Colossians 3. The past he says we're risen with Christ, the present we're dead, but look to the future. When Christ who is our life, there you've got it, there you've got it. What does John say in his epistle? He that hath the Son hath life, and he that does not have the Son has no life.

You can reform your life, you can give up your rotten sex life, you can give up your drugs without the help of God, good night. I've seen some men come out of the gutter and transform their own lives. That's on the social level, but they never made it upward to God, they never had a living relationship with God.

The past, he's made it possible to be risen with him. The present, we're dead and our life is hid with Christ in God. And then verse 4, the future, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then we shall appear with him in glory.

But this is what has to be done. Come on, you do your part here. He says, mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth while you're in the flesh.

Put them to death, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concubines, covetousness which is idolatry. J.B. Phillips translates that best, I think. He says, consider yourself dead to all the worldly contacts.

Loathe them, hate them. Hate what? Well, have nothing to do with sexual immorality. Have nothing to do with dirty mindedness.

Have nothing to do with evil desire. Have nothing to do with uncontrolled passion. Don't lust after other people's goods.

You see, and it's hard to say again, if Christ has been born in me, he wants to live in me, he wants to talk in me, he wants to walk in me, he wants to work through me. It's not a struggle that I'm trying to be a Christian. Life, life, life.

He says, I'm come that ye might have life, and that ye might have life more abundant. You know, if you have life, I guess it's a sign of life, maybe there's some other things too, but a sign of life usually is you

have a good appetite. I guess they found, the cooks found that out today.

You have a good appetite. Look, if you haven't got hold of this, get hold of it now. You can't impress God.

Now, if you're a Christian, you're supposed to be living at full stretch, but you can't impress him. Now, if I'm going to live, I'm going to eat. If I'm going to live, I'm going to eat this world because Jesus says what? I am the bread of life.

Man cannot live by bread alone, the only earthly bread, but he can live by the bread which is Christ. He says, I am the water of life. That's essential to life.

You can't live without water. He says, I am the light of life. And he says, I'm not merely come, isn't it? John 10 and 10 in which he says, I'm come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

You know, I hear people go to conferences, meetings, and they say, boy, that was good. Boy, were we challenged. Every meeting, we were challenged.

The question isn't were you challenged, the question is were you changed? Were you changed? Paul runs his flag to the top of the mast. Oh, I like his statement there in 1 Corinthians 5, 7 in which he says, if any man be in Christ, any man anywhere at any time, if he be in Christ, he is a new creation. He isn't patched up, he's made a new creation.

He gets a new heart, a new spirit, new desires, new hopes, new longings. That cannot be satisfied with the broken systems of the world. Do you remember the try match to the life of King Saul? Saul got pretty mad because a young guy was coming up behind him, and King Saul had been writing songs that were at the top of the charts.

And then after him, there came another young fellow by the name of David, and boy, he broke all records for publication. And people were going down the streets, clapping their hands and singing, Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands. And then there's a man that terrified the nation, big man, oh mercy.

He was only about ten feet high. And Saul didn't go to him, and Saul's brave son didn't go, and the chosen men from West Point didn't go. A little boy comes up with a sling and a stone, and his brother says, hey, you go back and look after those sheep.

He says, well, do you mind if I kill Goliath before I go? And his brother says, now go on, go on, look after those few sheep. And somebody says, I'm going to tell the king, and the king says, that little boy you mean? Bring him here. Well, he was handsome, ruddy, good-looking, country boy.

And the king says, is it true you want to go tackle that man there that's ten feet high, and you're only five foot six? Yes, sir, I'd like to do it just before I go see my dad. What makes you think you can do it? Oh, the other night I was looking after my sheep, and a lion came. I got hold of him by the beard, and I punched his nose and said, if you come back, I'll kill you.

And the next night a bear came, and I took my slingshot, and I killed him. I got rid of him. So I killed a bear, and I killed a lion, and I'd like to make it three in a row.

Do you mind if I just kill this fellow? He says, well, no. You can go. I put my suit of armor on, you know.

He put his helmet on, came down on his shoulders, he couldn't see where he was going. Put his suit of armor on, it came down to his knees, he couldn't walk. I can't go kill that giant like that.

He said, why not? He said, because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. No, he didn't say that, but he thought it. And he goes out with his sling and his stone, and Goliath came.

And Goliath had an armor bearer in front of him, Markiel. And little David had nobody in front of him, except God. You know what David said to Abraham, I am thy son and thy shield.

Not that I'll give you a shield, I am the shield. And if God is between me and that situation, did anybody ever get past God and beat him? David goes to the brook and he chooses his five stones, and the old guy is getting so angry. Send a kid like that.

I'll break him up on my knee and feed the birds with him. And David says, well, that's two minds with a single thought. I've just been thinking I'd do that with you.

And he took five stones. Do you know why he took five stones? Because Goliath had four brothers and he wanted to kill the whole lot while he was at it. He wanted to wipe the family out.

Do you know what he did? The little boy took a stone and whoop whoop whoop. I remember years ago preaching this in another message and I said a stone went up and a boy in the back of the church went whoop like that. I said the stone hit him in the forehead and he said whoop.

Well you see he got armor plating all over. And just a little thing there and the stone came and you know such a thing had never entered his head before. Just a little boy.

He didn't bother with the armor bearer. Do you know we're so busy chasing demons we're leaving the devil alone. You've got a demon.

If you sneeze in some churches you've got a demon. If you have a headache, oh you've had it all day, oh you've got a demon in you. Good night.

They must multiply like frogs those demons. Oh I'm longing to see the church get into the place where again she pulled down strongholds. I'm tired of writing about revival.

I'm tired of reading about revival. There are more lost people in the world tonight than ever in the history of the world. And what are we doing? Sitting around the campfire thanking God we're saved and we've given up our lousy drug lives or prostitution or some other thing.

Great, great. But there's more than that to it. I remember a night I walked down an aisle in a church in England.

I got saved when I was 14. I read David Brennan's life when I was about 16 that knocked me for a loop. I was about 19 when I read a great American book by the name of Power Through Prayer by E.M. Bounds.

And I was a youth leader in the church and I got people to pray, I got the youth to pray. We met Friday nights and we prayed. We went to the church 7 o'clock Sunday morning and we prayed.

We saw some people in the community saved and yet there was one thing that ate me up. It was another fellow in the church. I was a youth leader but boy he was more efficient and he was breathing down my

neck and people were talking about him and so forth.

And I got so filled with envy that my spiritual life began to shake. I remember being in a meeting where the preacher said there's something more than salvation. There's something more than cleansing.

As wonderful as it is, it's the indwelling. And beyond indwelling there's anointing. I walked down the aisle of that church, everybody said I wonder why Ravenhill went out.

Well I went out because I knew that I'd got an inward enemy worse than any outward enemy. Somebody came to pray with me, that was a custom there. And the fellow was rather startled.

He said well Len what do you want? I said I want God to make Romans chapter 6 verse 7 real in my life. He said you mean Romans 6.6? I said I mean Romans 6.7. He said no it's 6.6. I said well maybe for you, 6.7 for me. What's Romans 6.7? He that is dead is freed from sin.

I'm tired of bondage, I'm tired of fear, I'm tired of weakness, I'm tired of vacillating, I'm tired of being hot and then cold, strong and then weak. I want to get rid of the old South life, I want to die right here. Let me tell you this.

An experience of God that costs nothing does nothing. And it's worth nothing. Two simple things.

I don't know why I thought of this man. He came and joined our revival party in 1932, that's a good way back. He was standing in a meeting one night, he had his lovely sweetheart at the side of him.

She'd been the means of his conversion, he'd been a fighting, drinking, swearing, lusting, lying man. And this beautiful lady led him to Christ. They'd been engaged about a year, he'd bought a house full of furniture, they got a house in view and he was standing there and they were singing a hymn.

And as they sang it he turned it over in his mind and thought boy I've sung this but it's had no meaning until now. And for some reason the song leader said let's sing this last stanza again. Here I give my all to thee, friends and time and earthly store.

Friends, that's my sweetheart, time, that's my life, earthly store. I've got a house full of furniture. Here I give my all to thee, friends and time and earthly store.

Soul and body thine to be only thine forevermore. As they went down the steps of the church he said to his sweetheart I've got news for you. Is it good? He said well I think it is.

What is it? He said well we're postponing our marriage till I get up. Postponing what? Well I have to make up my mind whether I love you more than the Lord and the Lord says he wants me to serve him, I'm not in a state to serve him, I need some discipline, I need some correction, I need some authority over me, I need to study the word of God and it's going to cost a lot. And even if you give me up, you can have the furniture but I'm going to follow the Lord.

He became one of the outstanding men of the day in England at that time. Ok, let me quote the final scripture, 2 Samuel there, where Saul is chasing after David because he's got envious of David, the songwriter, envious of David who can throw the enemy down. And he chases after David and tries to find him.

And you remember how David's men cut a piece of the royal garment off and they showed it and then another time they shouted over the valley and David says hey King Saul, you know you're acting the fool over there and I could have killed you, now here I am and you're chasing me like a flea over the mountain, like a partridge. And the king suddenly saw the idiocy of it. I profess to be a king and I'm eaten up with envy and jealousy, I should be languishing in my palace, here I am over these rotten roads and climbing up scraggy mountains and dying of thirst when my men kick up the dust, all because I'm eaten up with envy and jealousy.

And just before he died King Saul said this, with all his royal living I have erred exceedingly and played the fool. That's Saul in the Old Testament, here's Saul in the New Testament, now Paul, he's come to the end of the journey, he's been whipped and lashed and tormented in perils of the deep, in peril of his own countrymen, a night and a day in the deep. Once I was stoned flat, I suffered shipwreck, in weariness, in fastings, in painfulness and he writes it all off as a huge joke because he says, number one none of these things move me and number two he says I like affliction which is but for a moment and he doesn't crumble up like King Saul looking over a wrecked life, he looks over his life of triumph and deliverance and he says this, I have fought a good fight and finished my course and kept the faith.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. You know tonight could be the turning point in your life tonight, if you not only come to the cross but get on it, get rid of your pettiness and your jealousy, get rid of that erratic living that you get on top when you come to a conference and whoop you'll be down in the valley next week. That should not happen if the Christ is indwelling me, he is the same yesterday, today and forever.

He keeps me in peace, he keeps me in joy, he keeps me in power. Okay, 35 years of age, John Wesley was converted. About a quarter to nine on the 24th of May 1738, about a quarter to nine I felt my heart strangely warmed.

He was a scholar, he was a gentleman, he was a clergyman in the Church of England like his brother and like George Whitfield. But when he was born again, England was born again. Across the English Channel was one of the most vicious atheists by the name of Voltaire and he said, ha, that thing they talk about in England, why? He said, a hundred years from now there will only be Bibles in museums.

You missed it I think, don't you? There will only be Bibles in museums. You see a bloody revolution swept over France and they tossed the monarchy into the garbage can and they put the tricolour up, red, white and blue, liberty and fraternity and equality. And Leckie is a secular historian, not a church historian and Leckie says this, remember the bloody revolution that swept over France and swept the monarchy into the garbage can was going to sweep over England and God raised up two men, he raised up three.

Whitfield was the final leader, Charles Wesley, John Wesley. Ok, John died in 1791, converted at 35, turn that round it makes 53, add them together it makes 88. Because he was saved at 35, preached for 53 years and you know what he left when he died? He left a handful of books, a faded Geneva gown that he preached in all over England, six silver spoons somebody gave him, six pound notes, give one to each of the poor men that carry me to my grave.

And that's all he left, six pound notes, six silver spoons, a handful of books, a Geneva gown and something else, what was it the other thing, oh I know something else he left, the Methodist church. He could have died as rich as your famous TV preacher Sunday, sure he made money and he built orphanages, sure he made money, he printed Bibles, sure he made money, he compiled with Charles the

Methodist hymn book and they built orphanages and he died worth about \$30. How many of you heard the little man down the road, oh he wasn't here, he was at the other place Sunday morning, brother Andrew, did you hear him, how many of you heard him, good, good, good.

I remember him when he wasn't with brother Andrew, nobody knew him, he came and I called the staff, I was working with Dave Wilkerson in New York then, nearly 20 years ago, brother Andrew's called me, he said Len I'd like to come and see you, I said well come, by the way we have a staff prayer meeting, will you speak to us, where are you coming from, he said Cuba, I said he can't come from Cuba, it's not legal. He said well I went from Cuba to Mexico City, changed planes and came into America, you can always find a way. I introduced him that night, I said this is brother Andrew, a friend I've met before, very strange man, he's God's smuggler and he gave his book that name, I told him the other day, I said hey remember I gave him the name for that book, I mean it's no good being humble if people don't know is it.

Would you have thought a few years ago that little man from Holland, he doesn't look like the heavyweight champion of the world does he, about the only weight he had to make a paperweight, that he'd been in and out of countries, that he'd been arrested. He told me, I don't know if he told you, one time he went in, not the last time, the time before that I think it was, and he's coming back out of Moscow, he's taken in about 800 Bibles, he's coming back and they see a car coming, you never see cars, there's only a gas station every 100, 150 miles, and he says to his friend, ah, ah, ah, here's somebody, and the car stopped and there were two Dutchmen from his own native city, and he said have you any food, they said no. We have something to drink but we've no food, he said well we've got food and nothing to drink, so they made a meal at the side of the road, and he gave them a tract each, six years after in Holland, there was a knock at the door, his wife went and, is your husband in, yeah, I'd like to see him.

Brother Andrew goes to the door and the man says, you remember me? Yeah. Remember meeting two men halfway on the road to Moscow one day? Yeah. And he said as they were coming out from Moscow, when they got home, they heard that two Dutchmen had been arrested and put in prison.

And he said to his wife, you know, I stopped and talked with those two men, I'm sure, the man comes six years after and says, you know what, you gave me a tract and you gave my friend a tract, they arrested us and gave us eight years in jail, but we got out after six years because of our good behaviour. But he said, you know, in those six years I read that tract and read that tract until Jesus Christ became my own personal saviour. Would you think that man had been in and out, man, he told me this last trip he was on, he went to Russia, then he came back and he went to, I don't know, and there's that other little guy, you've been here, he's about this width all the way up, you know, he's a tall fellow, about that height.

Dear little George, I'm sure all demons in hell will get a day off when he dies. The Lord will say, the demons will say, we'll not see a fool like him anymore. That guy sets off to go into fifteen countries behind the Iron Curtain, never thinks he might get turned back.

He just walks in and says, you should be glad to have me, you know, I'm of royal birth, you know, I represent the King of Kings. Oh, you know what? Gabriel, if you're looking down from heaven, I want to tell you something. You don't know the hidden potential in this meeting tonight, only God knows it.

There are vast areas of the Amazon where nobody has been yet. The last time I flew over the South Seas, the plane didn't fly too high, there are 300,000 islands and nobody knows if they're all occupied, and I wondered how many people are squatting in the trees there. Then you have that new area up there to the north of New Guinea there, north of, yeah, off New Guinea there, New England and New Ireland and New

Scotland, vast areas of the world.

What are you going to do when you go to heaven and say, Lord, I gave out six copies of the four laws every day of my life for the last six months, and I'd like my crown right now. Hmm? You ever wonder if there are two heavens? Huh? Come on, athletic guy, when you stand at the judgment seat, oh, I hope it's not me, I hope it's you. I hope David Brainerd is judged right before you, and then you stand up and say, could I play softball for the church? I'm not more home runs in our league.

All the angels say, oh, your excellency. Will they say that, or will they say, you idiot? Hmm? Oh, I know it's revolutionary, that's what God wants. What the church has had in the last 25 years has not moved this nation or this world to God, it's time for something new.

And God wants some men who are really drunk, intoxicated with the spirit of God, who have a love life with the Lord Jesus, and he can ask anything of you and you'll do it. But how many of you guys are eating up with lust? Hmm? You women eating up with jealousy, with pride? Or is it just chronic laziness, you've no appetite for this love letter of God's? Because the only way you can grow is by eating this word. And the other thing is prayer, which is the Christian's vital breath.

You see, your lifestyle changes. You don't talk about your social life and your financial life when you get saved. You talk in other categories.

You talk about your devotional life and you talk about your prayer life. You know, I will have one of the most merciless interrogations when I stand at the throne of God. For I stand over preachers, often with hundreds of preachers after preachers, and I see them shrink and I see them fall on the ground and cry, because they've no prayer life.

Because they're so busy with all the affairs of the church and they're not ministering to Him. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you tonight for this privilege of exploring some of your word.

I wonder how many people in the Gulag archipelago would sit here and weep and rejoice tonight to hear the truths of God. How many of the lost millions in China would hear it joyfully? Lord, we've ill-treated your word and we've ill-treated your voice very often. We've accepted our decent living for spirituality, but inside we're dead.

We've no life. You don't live in us and move in us and walk in us and talk in us and love through us. God, get hold of that life of that young man tonight, that young woman.

It's stale. If they were honest, it's really boring to go to church, because that's all they go. They don't meet the Christ there.

I'm going to ask you a simple question tonight. How many of you are here tonight? You've come from many parts and I'm asking you to keep your eyes closed, not look around. How many of you say tonight, I do not know that Christ lives in me.

Christ is not in dwelling me, I know that. God bless you, thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Any others? How many say, well I profess to be saved, but all the self-life dominates me. Yes, hands go up, hands go up, hands go up, hands go up, hands go up. You see, if I'd quoted the context where he says, what is your life, immediately before that you say, we'll do this and we'll do that and we'll go here and

we'll buy and we'll sell.

When you don't know what tomorrow is and you haven't asked God's will. I'm going to pray for you tonight, and I tell you what, I'm going to pray a very strong prayer. I'm going to ask you all to stand with heads bowed and eyes closed.

Now remember, you have to answer the judgment seat for tonight, and I have to answer for preaching it. Let's keep our eyes closed. Those who raise their hands, say I'm willing to die tonight to my own plans.

I want you to put to death selfishness in me and lust and pride. I want to be totally emptied of self and filled with God. I want you to come and stand at the front before I pray for you.

Move right out, we're not going to sing, I'm not going to try and move you emotionally. Forget it, make an intellectual decision tonight. Father, I pray in the name of Jesus that you make us realize at this moment, we haven't left home and churches and friends to come here just for a good time, but we're here in divine appointment.

You know every life here, there's not a secret in our hearts that you don't know. But Lord, we thank you that the blood of Jesus Christ is able to cleanse every part of our being tonight. I pray for these precious young lives.

Lord, I could not guess where they might end up. They may end up somewhere on a desert sand, or in a forest, in a jungle, or I don't know, maybe in a prison cell somewhere, in some strange country of communist domination. But I know tonight, Lord, if they're willing to die to self, die to their own ambitions, if they're willing to let you put to death that secret thing, the one thing that still has them in bondage, of which the apostle speaks when he says in Hebrews 12, and the sin which does so easily beset us, I pray just now in every young man and woman here, you slay that one besetting sin.

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