

Great in the Sight of the Lord

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of greatness in the sight of God, as exemplified by John the Baptist's life and ministry.

Duration: 55:19

Scripture: Luke 3:8-12, John 1:29

Topics: "Pleasing God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful testimony of a street meeting where the presence of God was evident. Two thugs approached the crowd with drugs, but a man from New Jersey decided to repent and poured the drugs down the sewer. This act of repentance led others, including a Roman and a businessman, to also seek God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of attacking the will and making a conscious decision to turn away from sin. He references the book of Isaiah and encourages listeners to be voices for God rather than mere echoes of others.

Transcript

The only thing I know about all flesh glorifying him together is when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is God to the glory of the Father. We'll now go back into the Gospels recorded by Luke and the first chapter. We have one of the most amazing characters in history.

I don't think there's any way of really grasping hold of some of the immensity of the task of John Baptist until you recognize the historic framework. Remember between Matthew and Malachi, and Malachi and Matthew, there's a gap of 400 years. No prophetic voice, no prophetic light, perfect stillness.

And then suddenly, unexpectedly, as unpredicted as it was unexpected, there was a man crying in the wilderness as we've read, prepare ye the way of the Lord. I say he was one of the most amazing men in history. You know, I used to say, I guess you've made mistakes anyhow.

I used to think kind of pitifully about this man John the Baptist. He had no backing, no financial backing, no committee. And then suddenly I realized he had some of the most powerful agents in prayer maybe the world has ever had.

I believe that was sustained in later in the wilderness. But let me read here in Luke chapter 1 for a minute. It says in verse 10, the whole multitude of the people were praying at the time of incense.

There appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah saw it, he was troubled and feared him. The angel said unto him, fear not, thy prayer is heard and Elizabeth shall bear a child.

And verse 15 says he should be great in the sight of God. You know one of the problems with our day? We think because a man is prominent he's eminent and that's a tragedy. There are lots of men who are prominent.

You can get prominent by having a TV show. Doesn't mean the man is eminent. Eminence speaks of character, fidelity, integrity.

Things you can't find too many amongst Christians. There's not much integrity, not much honesty, not much loyalty. And yet this man as a whole said, he should be great in the sight of the Lord.

Well that's the only greatness there is. If you're hanging on any other greatness it's not worth a hill of beans. Wouldn't it be embarrassing to get to the judgment seat and find your D.D. degree isn't worth sausage? Because there'd be no sausage in heaven either.

D.D. degrees, all those distinctions we have won't be worth that much when we get there. The only greatness there is, is greatness in the sight of God. And it's predicted that this child, a wonderful child, it says in verse 15 again, he should be great in the sight of God, drinking neither wine nor strong drink.

And he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. There isn't another character in all the Word of God I know of where a person is filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, not even Jesus. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Again, okay. Where am I? Luke chapter 1 and verse 17. He should be filled with the Holy Ghost, okay, from his mother's womb.

That's verse 15 isn't it? Go down to verse 35. The Holy Ghost, verse 35 says, the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. The power of the highest shall come upon thee.

And it says in verse 32 to step back again, concerning Jesus, he should be great. So it says he should be great, John the Baptist, and it says he should be great, the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 36 says, behold thy cousin Elizabeth hath also conceived and born a son in her old age.

As you go back to verse 15, this is Zacharias and he says, when he's told he should be great in the sight of the Lord, he should have neither wine nor strong drink, but be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. And come down to verse 18, Zacharias said unto the angel, whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is stricken. It was totally impossible.

It's another case, a case of Abraham and Sarah, beyond the age of any childbearing. You know, that gives me comfort because we're living in an old age, theologically, an old age spiritually. Some of the Pentecostals are still hanging around Azusa Street.

They didn't know, even though there's been World War I and World War II hardly. We're living in the shadows of the past, and God is wanting to do a new thing, and he's going to do it in an amazing way. I'm old and stricken.

What can God do through me? Here is a supreme example of a man who has no, can you move over a bit? Oh, there's two there reserved for you. Ten dollars each, but anyhow. Verse 36 we are in Luke chapter 1. Thy cousin Elizabeth, also she had conceived in her old age.

It's six months with her. Verse 41. It came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now you've got it. His father was filled with the Holy Ghost, his mother was filled with the Holy Ghost, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Boy, that's a wonderful way to enter the world, isn't it? Wouldn't you like to think your children started like that? Dear Lord, by the time they're two years old, they'll be ten times smarter than you after twenty years following the Lord.

Because you've lived in the flesh most of the time, not in the spirit. The babe leapt in her womb when? Immediately she got into the presence of Jesus. Not until then.

But because the living Christ was in the body of the other woman, when a cousin came, immediately she felt something emanating, and immediately the child leapt in the womb when she got into the presence of Jesus. Okay. Verse 67.

Let me look at that again. His father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost. So there you've got the whole list of them.

But then you've got to go into the third chapter. That's what I'm most concerned about. See, this is one of the most remarkable men in history.

I'm talking to some of you young fellows. You say, well, what do I have? Not much education, no money. Do you know what this guy did? It says, if you read the scripture in Matthew, he lived in the wilderness until the day of his showing forth.

I don't know when he knew he was the prophet of God. Jesus says, you talk about prophets, there's never been a prophet in history. And remember he knew about Zachariah and all the prophets of the Old Testament.

There's never been a man in history like John the Baptist. He's more than a prophet. Again, he comes, remember, when the whole nation was crippled.

The whole nation was in bondage. Slavery. Not only was the nation in bondage and crippled, but the minister was carnal and crippled too.

Minister didn't matter that much. I love to read this. I'm a bit of a maverick, you know, a bit of an oddball.

And the Lord loves oddballs, that's why he loves me. But you get the framework again. The whole nation is in captivity.

They'd never heard a prophet. John is in the wilderness. Why, how does he stay there? How long was he there? I guess for 30 years.

He didn't emerge until it was time for him to come and say the most awesome things that have ever been said in history. What did he say? He said to the multitude, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. You know that didn't only echo through the nation, it went down every corridor in hell and

every corridor in heaven.

Prophecy is being fulfilled. So here comes John Baptist. The Lord pitches him into the midst of a bankrupt religious system.

He has no altars. He has no priesthood. He has no brass plate, gold plate on his forehead saying holiness unto the Lord.

He has no garments of glory and beauty like the high priest. He has the very opposite. He has rags on him.

He has no committee. Would you believe it? He didn't even have a newsletter. You know I get this.

The last few months I'm getting newsletters from young guys. The first thing they do is go out and preach and find that two or three come to the altar, particularly to tell emotional stories. And then what do they do? They get a newsletter.

Then the next thing is they get a tax-free organization. John Baptist never had a tax-free organization. How did he abide with the wild beasts in the wilderness? He was a voice crying.

I'd like to have bought a brother's voice tonight. He's a wonderful preaching voice. I'm just a wonderful preacher without a voice but anyhow.

It will come back. You know I forgot to tell you Martha darling. Last night I dreamed that I was preaching to a vast congregation.

I not only led the singing, I sang a solo. Do you wonder? I woke up trembling. I used to sing solos.

Now I sing solo. You can't hear me but anyhow. John is in the wilderness.

What held him together? I believe I know what held him together maybe 20, 30 years. He isn't near the caravan route where everybody goes by. He's with the wild beasts.

Strange in his dress. Boy I preached this in a holiness conference and I've never got back. Very strict people you know that measure your skirt as you're going.

If it's 12 inches from the ground you're not sanctified. If it's nine you are. And if your hair cut, if your hair's cut you've no chance of getting anywhere.

I preached in there and I mentioned John the Baptist wore leather shorts. Boy they jumped on me like a ton of bricks. Actually when I came off the platform a guy got on me and swung on my neck.

He said, You set the clock back 10 years. I said shut up. He said, You said John the Baptist wore leather shorts.

You tell me what he did wear then. Well he couldn't. He was strange in his dress, strange in his diet.

Good night. What did he eat? Locust burgers morning, afternoon and evening. That's all he had.

And a bit of honey out of the rock. Not only strange in his dress and in his diet, it's strange in his doctrine. Can you imagine a man coming after? He has no priesthood there.

He has no altar. He has no sacrifice. He hasn't been following a pillar of fire by night or a pillar of cloud by day.

And yet he's never gone off track. He's never doubted God. Somehow he got all of that truth.

I'm fulfilling prophecy. Somebody has to say, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Pull down the hills.

Fill in the valleys. Make the crooked places straight. And all flesh shall see it.

And that was literally fulfilled because they came from north, south, east and west without any advertising, without any media. You see, we're so used to having crutches. You don't need media in revival.

As I've told you, you never have to advertise a fire. When you came tonight, thank God you did. Last week, week before, people came from northern Minnesota.

A van lord came from, where? Oh, from, yeah, Little Texas, which is in Alabama. Big Texas. You could get, put it anywhere.

And a bunch, a carload came from Mobile. Why did they come? Not to hear me sing, I know that. They came because they get blessed.

They come because somehow God kindles and stirs. I'm encouraged with this. You young men, you don't need the backing of anybody.

You know, I was stupid enough to get ordination. Did you get ordained? No wonder you're in a mess. So did I. I got ordained.

And you know, when I woke up next morning, I felt, I know, no wings there. I looked on the pillow, there was no halo. Boy, was I disappointed.

What does ordination mean? It means abomination. It's another word for abomination. What good will it do you? Not a hill of beans good.

I don't go to ordination services. I get asked to go. No, no, no, no.

If you ask me to come to your funeral, I'll go gladly. I'm in your spiritual funeral. Well, you get dead of, no longer have any ambition for titles or honor or distinction.

Here's a man, he's nobody to lean on. He has no heir than her on which to lean. He's been in solitude.

You couldn't stay in solitude with God for 30 days and be the same man. I told you last week about this young man in tears. I said, Brother Raymond, you talk about revival.

Three of us have been praying. We prayed and we've cried and we've groaned and we fasted and we haven't seen revival. I said, how long have you fasted? He said, two days.

Boy, I guess all heaven was excited. To think two days without hamburgers and a Coke. Isn't that a miracle? When you read how men fasted and prayed, 30 days shut up.

Try 30 hours in a room by yourself. Turn off your abominable TV and radio and everything and just listen to God. I'm sure this man was anchored in the fact that God had said there was going to be a voice in the

wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.

I'm sure of another thing. His mother was filled with the Holy Ghost. His father was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied.

I don't know when, maybe he was 10 years of age or 12, like Jesus, went into the temple. And his daddy took him on one side and said, Son, I want to tell you, I had a visitor from heaven. See the little guy's ears almost flapping? His name was Gabriel.

And he came and spoke to me and said, this child, and that's you, will be filled with the Holy Ghost from your mother's womb and be the greatest man that ever lived. You'll exceed Zachariah and Jeremiah and all the others. You have a mission that no other man has ever had in history or ever will have again.

He hung on to that. I can't believe his daddy and mummy didn't tell him about his great commission. Boy, wouldn't it be wonderful to have a daddy like that and a mummy like that? Every time you went in the house, you thought it was illuminated with a million lights and it was a kind of glory.

Some of your poor children come in and you're listening to what? What do they call them? Dope operas. Oh, soap operas. And that's all they see daddy and mummy doing, looking at that junk.

If you want to cripple your children, that's the way to do it. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Again, he has no distinctions, no distinct dress, but he has a commission from Almighty God.

He doesn't ask them to tithe. He doesn't ask them to line up to a doctrinal statement. He's going to a people who are raw, except they have an awesome background.

Most of the rabbis you listen to, like some of the devout people in New York City, some of those devout Jews can recite the first five books of the Bible. Train your children. A missionary wrote to me this week.

He said, I'm in Africa. He said, I can't believe it, Brother Abendorf. He said, people come to a prayer meeting at five in the morning and they've walked 15 to 20 miles and some of them have no shoes.

And he said, they bring a little mat. He said, the front of the church is filled with children, two and three years old, and they listen for two hours and never move, never cry, never speak, never go to the bathroom. They get rid of them before.

He said, America, you can't get that. They get up and run around. They chatter and shout.

And he says, I'm here in Africa. Boy, am I learning some things about being still and knowing God. You can't turn a little knob to get some comfort with a radio station.

Either you live, move and have your being in God or you're living the flesh altogether. God's going to get a people like that. I'm glad of these little groups that I hear of here and there, that God's raising up.

The other day, Jim Simbler, if I may go to New York, for me, I don't go to see the Statue of Liberty. When I go to New York, I want to go to, where is it now? Brooklyn, Brooklyn. Every Tuesday night in Brooklyn at the tabernacle there, there's a prayer meeting of 1200 people.

Brother Simbler called me the other day, said, Brother Lane, I was wishing you and Martha were here. He said, our prayer meetings Tuesday night was so packed, we brought 45 extra chairs and it seats 12, 1250

people. And they had to bring in 45 other chairs.

They brought in 45 other chairs and he said, the glory of God filled the place. They went for a street meeting and as they got there, two big thugs came up and started talking with the folk in the crowd. And as they stood there, the man put his hand in his pocket and he brought a stack of dope.

He says, I've just come over from New Jersey to buy this dope. I'm going to sell it tonight. And they said, you're not.

And he walked to a sewer there and he poured it all down the sewer and he broke down in tears, began to cry and seek God. Oh, well, it was emotion. They hadn't sung yet.

They hadn't spoken yet. They hadn't said a word about Jesus Christ. But Christ was there in the midst.

And they were convicted. They threw the stuff away. They broke in tears.

Oh, well, it was emotion. So much emotion, they came back to the Brooklyn Tabernacle on Sunday morning to worship and were excited. Dear Lord, some people write a book about that.

We see you've got a people there who pray. I've said sometimes, if I live within a hundred miles of New York, I'd go to that tabernacle. I don't feel worthy to go there.

There's a choir of a hundred and fifty black people. Every one of them has been in jail or been a prostitute or a murderer. They have the biggest track record of crime and infamy.

What do you see when you see the gospel in flesh and blood? I'm sick to death of paper theology. I want to see it transformed into flesh and blood. John Baptist saw that.

Do you know he was so hot he'd leave blisters on your soul if you heard him preach? Some of you never heard any hot preaching. You need to hear my good brother when he's anointed. Boy, I'm believing God for some real Holy Ghost anointed preaching that makes people tremble on the inside.

Gets people upset. You know, one of the greatest joys in the world I have is to make people mad. The more mad they get, the more peace I have.

Well, that's what it says. If you don't like the book, don't read it. Okay, let me go now to the third chapter of Luke again and verse three.

He came into all the country round about Jordan, preaching. Baptism of repentance. Come on now.

You need the Holy Ghost to do miracles. Why? In God's name, why? John the Baptist, again I remind you, he didn't follow a star. He didn't follow a pillar of fire by night or a cloud by day.

He did no miracle and yet from every point of the compass they came and nobody could stand up against him. How do you know that? Because it says so in the chapter. Well, tell us where.

Okay, verse three. He came into the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance and remission of sins. You know, the easiest thing in the world is to get people to profess to be saved.

Well, you have to repent. Dear Lord, it costs no courage to come up in a comfortable church and just shut your eyes and say, Lord, I'm sorry and go out and live the same. You cannot, in my judgment, you cannot

divorce repentance from restitution.

You've got to go put things right. As I say to preachers, you can come here and cry. Stand in your pulpit and tell the people that you've been dumb and blind and you haven't done the things that God would have you do.

As you know, I don't believe in altercals. You never make an altercal in the revival. When you make an altercal, it's a sign of the absence of the Holy Ghost.

When you try to manipulate and sing a smooth, nice, little, comfortable song, you know, there's room at the cross for you or something. Forget it. One of the reasons that Mr. Finney had more success than any other American preacher was he attacked the will.

You to attack the will, you to will to have done with sin, you to put off the old mind, put off your old habits, break all your association with the world of flesh and the devil, and make up your mind, I'm going to be what Christ wants me to be. Read this chapter then. Verse three says, He came into all the country round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance and the remission of sins, as it's written in the book of Isaiah, a voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Let's repeat it, because again it's from Isaiah 40. Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall be brought low, the crooked shall be made straight, the rough ways shall be made smooth, all flesh shall see the salvation of God. He said to the multitude that came forward to be baptized, we don't know what he's preached about, except that God is going to come with awesome power.

And he says, I warn you to flee from the wrath to come. You don't do that. Now it's all smooth and lovely and go to church and hug somebody, give them a kiss and make them feel nice.

And those carnal as a devil, you say I love you and you don't even know them. You can't love somebody you don't know. Boy, you see that big fat woman looking in a window there or a man and you go put his hand and say, you know dear, I love you.

She may be suck you anyhow. How can you love people you don't know have some sense? We have to do more than love people. And if somebody says I love you, it doesn't mean that much.

There's a step beyond love. I was thinking about it today. A friend of mine, pretty wealthy guy and he's lived stylishly and bought his wife every conceivable thing.

One day he said, you know, I'm so happy today. I said, why? He said, my wife, I know she appreciates where we have a wonderful home and we drive a Lincoln and all the other junk. And then he said, but last night she said, you know, I admire you.

Boy, he said that lifted me. Well, you love lots of people you love. How many do you admire? It's a difference between prominence and eminence again.

There are men on TV that are prominent. They're not eminent. I love them.

I don't admire them. Not a good Lord. You think I love a man that takes all the beer stain, tear stain, blood stain, prostitute stain, dollars and an answer to prayer? Forget it.

Holy men don't accept things like that. Immediately you put yourself up as being holy. You've got to walk in holiness.

It's not something you talk about. It's your life as well as by your lip. So what does it say? He preached and warned them to flee from the wrath to come.

Bring forth fruits, meet for repentance. Then he says again in verse 9, the axe is laid to the root of the tree. What's he preaching? Repentance.

What happened? Look at verse 9. The people asked him. It doesn't say he sang an altar. He had an altar call.

It doesn't say he sang some stirring word from Handel's Messiah, which wasn't written except in the Bible. He didn't try to stir them emotionally. But while he's preaching, they're convicted in their hearts.

They're condemned. They feel as though they have a serpent inside. And the people cried, it says in verse 10.

The people asked him, what shall we do? Boy, he laid it down, didn't he? He said, he that hath two coats, impart to him that hath none. And he that hath meat, likewise let him do the same. Let me get this page here.

Verse 12 says, then came also the publicans to be baptized. Isn't that something? The people are there, the publicans are there, and they cried, what shall we do? You see, when conviction of sin comes, there's no regard for station in life. You forget your diploma, you forget you're the mayor of the town, you forget you're the best known lawyer, you forget you're the best known preacher maybe.

The people cried, what shall we do? He reaches them on that level. Then it says in verse 12, the publicans said unto him, master, what shall we do? Go down to verse 14, soldiers likewise said, what shall we do? There's conviction, like a blanket. The people on the edge of the crowd, the people cry, what shall we do? The publicans cry, what shall we do? And then you have this other bunch here, soldiers.

What is it, Kipling? I think it's Kipling that called them the lesser breeds, without the law, outside of the law. These foreigners, they'd never in their lives heard an evangelist. I guess they'd said, what are those men there? Oh, they're priests, dressed up smart, wear the best clothes, live in the best homes, stylish, have the best rugs and everything you can imagine.

Those are the priests, those are the men of God. Well, who's this guy? He doesn't speak their language, he doesn't act like them, he doesn't live in the best house in town. But boy, he says something and I can't sleep at night when I've heard him, I'm troubled.

They'd come from Rome with all its idolatry. You know, one of the greatest rival, I think, that Julius Caesar had was Pompey. He sent Pompey over.

Pompey came with pomp and circumstance, without playing on the word, came with soldiers. They'd never seen horses with clothes on, they know they put those big covers on them. And the soldiers wore wonderful uniforms, bright uniforms, and breastplates and everything.

Well, anyhow, when he came to cut the story short, they saw all these horses get off the boats. And Pompey went in town and after a couple of days he said, what's the building in the center there, up on the

hill? Oh, that's the temple. Well, we've thousands of temples in Rome.

What is it? It's the temple of the most high God. Who's the most high God? He made the stars. Do you want Isaac Watts' words? He made the stars, those heavenly flames.

He counts their numbers, calls their names. His wisdom's vast and knows no bound, the deep where all our thoughts are drowned. That God lives in there? Yes.

He doesn't just live inside or a bit further. He lives right in a place called the Holy of Holies. You can't go, nobody can go in.

Even a man of Israel can't go in, a priest can't go in. Well, I'll go in tomorrow. They spread the news around town, Pompey is going into the habitation of God.

Three thousand people followed and as he got off his horse to go into the temple, they screamed, they fell on their face and cried, don't, don't, don't do it. Why? They remembered Isaiah 6 or 2 Chronicles 26, where you remember that Uzziah went into the temple and he was so demon-possessed that when 80 men got hold of him, he threw them all off. And he said, I'll minister there.

And they said, if you minister there, you'll die. They remembered that. And here is this proud Roman.

He's going to tread in there. He went in the outer court. No, first of all, he came to the, well, yes, the outer court.

And then he went to the inner court. Well, he went to the, there's a lot of courts actually. There's a Gentile court, there's a women's court, there's a priest's court.

He went through them all. He went to the holy place. And from there, there was a big curtain and he went through the Holy of, to the Holy of Holies.

Watch behind the curtain. That's where God dwells. You can't go there.

Yes, tear it open. Remember, all the crowd was outside till terrified. And he'd gone defiantly through one place to the other, to the other.

And they tore the curtain away. And it was pitch black. He nearly went mad.

I've come all this way through storms and dangers. I want to see the living God you talk about. You said his glory is greater than the sun.

That when he's there, it's blinding. You can't, and it's pitch black. There is no God.

He's not in the outer court, the Gentiles' court, the women's court, the priest's court. Where is this God? And he was furious and angry and stormed out. Well, so what? What relevance has it today? I'll tell you what.

I went to a church a while ago. Good work, good way from here. On 35 acres of land, they're hoping to have their own football grounds, tennis courts.

I went to the place. You go to the outer court, and it's the tennis court. You go to the next court, it's the basketball court.

Go to the next one, it's the tennis racket. They're all in a racket anyhow. And what's the other court called? Volleyball court.

Then the handball court. Then you come into the sanctuary, and young people say, where is God? He isn't there. Well, in God's name, he's good of all the trimmings if God isn't there.

Supposing God had of been there. He saw the ritual, he saw the formality, he could smell the blood of the beasts. But God isn't there.

What's the good of your fancy choir? What's the good of your lovely building if the holy God isn't there? If your children don't learn to worship even when they're children. If you don't tiptoe out of the sanctuary when you've felt the presence of God. Not just heard a sermon, God help us.

Most of you could preach sermons backwards way. But where is the glory of God? This one isn't bringing fire from heaven. Nobody comes screaming and saying, John, John, have mercy on my son, he's a lunatic.

Nobody says, have mercy on my daddy, he's a leper at home. It says, John did no miracle, I'm glad of that. He didn't raise the dead man, he raised the dead nation.

He didn't have an organization, he didn't have financial backing, he didn't have angels escorting him, he didn't have fire from heaven. Do you know most of us, God help us, we've never been in a revival. You've been to a good meeting.

We have a meeting and we announce it's death before it's born. Oh, we're having a big man, he's preached in 50 countries, I don't care if he's preached in hell if he has no anointing. Oh, this brother's coming on Sunday night, come and hear him, he's eloquent and wonderful.

He's coming Sunday night, he'll be here at seven, till next Sunday night. Isn't that lovely, you've already pronounced the death of the service anyhow. It has to die by seven o'clock next Sunday night, because this guy's preached to go in another town and hold a funeral service.

Why did it say he's going for a funeral service? John Baptist had nothing to do but prepare the way of the Lord. He had nothing to encourage him, he took no offerings, but you can imagine when he got back into town, people were saying, do you know what, there was hardly anybody in the temple Sunday. Boy, that's something when you become, get into competition with the established church and all the rest of it.

The seats were empty in the sanctuary, they're all running after that strange man out there. And you remember there came a moment when Jesus walked down into the water. You know, we repeat over and over again, Jesus was crucified between two thieves.

I want to make a suggestion to you, I believe he was baptized between two thieves too. Maybe the one in front of him was a prostitute, and the one behind him was a chiefest of sinners. It didn't make any difference.

And John doesn't make any guess at all, he's told, this is the one, the anointed one. I tell you, every rafter in hell shook when John said, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And so listen, if you hear God's voice, obey him.

You don't need a committee behind you, you don't need financial backing. You need to know God told me. I could take you to the very place in a factory in England when I was 18 years of age.

I could take you to the crack in the floor where God called me to preach. I was cutting a suit, I was a tailor's cutter. Took my tape measure off my neck and put it on the counter, on the table.

Put my big shears there, put my hands together. Eight thousand people in the factory. They weren't all looking, I thought they were.

Soon as I shut my eyes and bowed my head I thought, boy, everybody's looking at me. And I just said, yes Lord. The Lord said, follow me.

I said, okay. I was coming through, I was coming over the Atlantic once. One of England's greatest preachers was there and we got to talking.

He said, I've seen you somewhere. I said, well I've been under your nose a couple of times, about 10 years ago. And I said, I never forgotten the beginning of your message.

Mind you, he's a liberal, didn't believe in salvation as we do. But when he preached, he said, he opened his Bible and he said, a man was filling out an income tax form and a shadow fell over the ledger. He looked up and he saw the greatest face in the world and the person behind that face said, follow me.

He shut his income tax book and followed him. Would you have done it? Anybody ever preach on the faith of Matthew? I never heard them. You and I know everything that we need to know about Jesus, yet we're hesitant.

You're afraid to give up your job. You're afraid your parents won't like you or something. My dear friend, I want to tell you, God isn't looking for men of brilliance.

He's looking for men of faith. And your faith doesn't need to be that size. It has a grain of mustard seed.

I got a tremendous lift, partly through that good brother Brice, Bracey, that spoke to me yesterday in my office. And I got a hold of this after he'd been talking. And he introduced me to this.

Let me read this to you. He was talking about faith. There is no other way, there is no other way of righteousness, no other way of living, but by faith.

It is by faith we are justified, by faith we live, by faith we stand, and by faith we walk. This is true of all Christians, and all should seek to enter into it fully. Every child of God is called to live by faith.

It is a very grave mistake indeed to single out certain individuals who happen to have no visible source of temporal supplies, and speak of them as though they alone live by faith. According to this view of the question, 99 out of every 100 Christians would be deprived of the precious privilege of living by faith. If a man has a settled income, he has a certain salary.

If he has what is called a secular calling, by which he earns bread for himself, is he not privileged to live by faith? Do none live by faith save those who have no visible means of support? It is a life of faith to be confined, it is a life of faith to be confined to a matter of trusting God for food and raiment. What a lowering of the life of faith it is to confine it to the question of temporal supplies. No doubt it is a very blessed and a very real thing to trust God for everything, but the life of faith is far higher and wider in range than mere

bodily wants.

Now listen out here. He says it embraces all that in any wise concerns us in body or soul or spirit. To live by faith is to walk with God, to cling to God, to lean on God, to draw from God from his exhaustless springs to find all, A-L-L-R, all our resources in him and to have him as a perfect covering for our eyes and satisfying object for our hearts.

To know him as our only resource in all our situations. Such is the life of faith. Let us see that we understand it.

It must be a reality or it is nothing at all. If I write to a friend or publish to the church the fact that I'm looking to the Lord to meet my needs, I'm virtually off the ground of faith. The language of faith is this, my soul wait thou only, in capital letters, only upon God.

My expectation is from him. You see, these people talk about faith. They're not, look, well, they're faith.

It's not faith in God. There's a certain man that put a temple up. He calls it the city of faith.

It's a city of begging from the moment he started. He's begged every penny for it. Faith, simple faith that promises and looks to God alone, laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done.

You know, there are very few people, I think that, listen, I believe that pure faith is the rarest thing in the church of Jesus Christ today. Why do you need it when you get a newsletter? Why do you need it when you can tip people off it? Well, we're not, we've no money, we're going, in other words, we expect you'll come out with the money. I got two sons that live by faith.

I told a man the other day, I'm the strangest guy in the world. And a guy said to me recently, you know what, it's very difficult these days to live on a fixed income. I said, well, come with our group.

We've no income at all. You're better living on an unfixed income with God than a fixed income with anybody else. I got two sons that go around the world, and they have no church backing.

They get some support here and there, but they never asked us for a penny in all the years. You know, we're going, I believe God is going to get glory to his name, and part of it will be drying us up financially. A lot of these big shows will go off TV before long for more than one reason.

God isn't jealous, God. If need be, he'll rent the heavens to satisfy us. But faith that is going to be trusted is going to be tested.

I said to somebody the other day, it's all right to stand here and say, we need some preachers that will go to these sharks, you know, these TV pirates. It's easy to say thou art the man when there's nobody there. But it's difficult when you know somebody's living in error, and you go to them and say, listen, I believe you're grieving the Spirit of God because the Spirit of God in me is grieved.

And you have to go and say that. Not out of a pompous attitude, but because you're concerned for their spiritual life. Well, I don't know if this did you any good.

It didn't be a lot of good preparing this. To see this man again, lonely. You know, that's the most difficult thing in the world.

If you're going to be mature for God somewhere, boy, you're going to school. And you know what? You'll be the only student there. So get ready.

Moses, 40 years on the backside of the devil, that's a long while. 40 days is a long while. 40 hours in hospital when you're waiting for an operation seems like 40 years anyhow.

Jesus had 40 days in the wilderness. John Baptist had at least 30 years, I'm sure, in the wilderness. The greatest genius God ever gave the world, I believe, was the Apostle Paul.

And he had to go into the wilderness, didn't he? Into the desert of Arabia for what, maybe 14 years? Not to learn, but to unlearn. You know, we saw, God is my witness. We know so much about man.

We know so much about this book that somebody stuffed into our ears. He, uh, studied Romans chapters 1 to 7, 8 to 11, 12 to 16, all the other junk. We know the Word of God.

We don't know the God of the Word. We know outlines of Scripture. How much do we know God? How much do I know God? I've more craving in my heart to know God today than ever in my life.

There's no satisfaction in anything else. This, last week, I had two letters from two of the most famous preachers and writers in the world telling me about my books, how they enjoy them. You know, at one time, I'd have cut those out and stuck them.

That was so simple. I'd have put them in a little, a little scrapbook. I put them in the big one, the round one, you know.

Do you think God looks over my shoulder to see what somebody else thinks about my preaching? Forget it. I have to have a witness of the Spirit. If nobody else likes it and I like it, hallelujah.

If everybody else likes it and I don't like it, hallelujah. I'm doing what God says. That's all I know how to do.

God is looking for men, not movements, not looking for men who are itching for miracle and projection, men who are jealous for God. We've exalted men too much. We've seen them go down in the last six months.

Poor little boy spent 20 years building a, somebody said, a Pentecostal playground. He won Pentecostal playground. But those by, when the bakers get to heaven, I'm telling you as sure as that's God's Word, before millions of people, God will say, Jim and Tommy, you spent 20, Tommy, you spent 20 years building the greatest collection of wood, hay, and stubble in history and you'll set fire to it.

Everything above the ground is wood, hay, and stubble. Your life and mine is wood, hay, and stubble. It's above the ground.

Everybody sees it. Silver, gold, and precious stones are under the ground. I don't know any godly, true godly man who advertises his prayer life or his fasting or his tears.

I know people that stretch, that pray, stretch their lives out in prayer and fasting and nobody knows a thing about them. I so rejoice again. Even this week, young men have said, our church has started a prayer meeting, got a letter today.

We're starting a prayer meeting every morning at six o'clock in our church and the people are really coming. Why? Because they're tired of all the waste. They wanted to see God work.

And God will. Side two. Basically, a people with sacrifice.

And he has this little unattractive man. I can't think he was attractive. Hairy man in his leather shorts and his poor diet.

You'd think he'd have started a breakfast, wouldn't you? Full gospel breakfast every morning. He didn't. He's got nothing.

Where would you rather be? Have everything the modern boys have? The jet planes, the wonderful ministries? Come on, be honest now. Would you rather have all the junk that they have and have nothing? Or would you like to be like the apostle Paul? He says, I have nothing and I possess all things. Known in heaven, known in hell, known on earth.

Standing in front of kings and he didn't tremble, the king trembled. Well boy, if the king trembled standing before Paul, what will he do at the judgment seat? Boy, that'll be interesting, won't it? I think most of us will have legs, knees are very friendly. Brother, don't be an echo, be a voice.

There's too many echoes saying what the other guy said. Preaching Spurgeon. Spurgeon's okay, I'm not quarreling with him.

But listen, this is a living word from a living God to dead people. And if you and I are living, we'll transmit life, not just knowledge. Oh, we're here to declare truth.

We're not here to declare truth, only we're here to spread life. There's thousands of people can recite the Apostles Creed. They can recite all chapters of the Bible.

They've had memory verses, but there's no lives there. Life begets life. True life is a life of reproduction.

And again, you'll be really alive when you personally produce another Christian. Not just read the scripture, but you've burdened for them, you've prayed them through. They're your spiritual offspring.

And that's what God wants. And when revival comes, that's what happens. Well, let's pray.

In a minute or two, let's pray for the crusade, David Wilkinson's crusade in New York, and the Brooklyn Tabernacle Crusade. And there's any YWAMers here? Where's the YWAMers? Nobody from YWAM tonight? I thought it was a good atmosphere. Anyhow, there are 200 YWAMers, I believe, 200 YWAMers.

Where are they? In New Jersey. They're coming in on the ferry each day. They're working in New York.

There's some other big team up there. So let's pray God will move on them. A brother called me just as I was coming out from El Paso.

He's with the original team, team challenge group there. And the last few Saturday nights, they've gone into what's little better than a Sodom. Interrupting myself a minute here, just as we came out, the news said Dallas last year had 6,000 teenage pregnancies.

The highest in the nation. Dear God, what are those big churches doing? Bouncing it off satellites across the world. They can't do anything for the prostitutes in the street, or the kids around the corner.

I want to see a local fire. I'm not tired of hearing of revival in other countries. I thank God.

Maybe the biggest mission field, the hardest mission field in the world is America tonight. We're soaked in a false theology. Our problem is not eternal security, it's false security.

We need some prophetic utterances. I'd like to be in a fellowship where people don't go past the building hardly, because God is there. That happened in the Shang Tung revival.

People couldn't pass the building. The meetings went on. I'll tell you when you have revival, the lights don't go out for weeks and weeks and weeks.

Whether you go midday or midnight, as in the revival with the Moravians, even little boys and girls, 8 and 10 years of age, were on the floor, prostrate, traveling for revival. Young men went, got on boats and went to be sold on slave blocks, so they could get into plantations. You see, you can't have in any shape or form, you can't have revival without sacrifice.

You can only have revival without a big disturbance, and you can have an earthquake without one. But you want this same holy God that produced this holy word, and produced holy men that spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Boy, I'd give everything I have to hear John the Baptist preach once, wouldn't you? And here's some wicked old Roman there, who'd lived a life of profligate.

And he says, what shall I do? And some old rabbi at the side said, what shall I do? And the businessman says, what shall I do? And he didn't say, well, come and see me on Monday. Right there they repented of their sin. And the whole town shook.

He prepared the way of the Lord. There's an appetite in this. I have no committee, I have no staff, just Martha and I. And we live in a nice little home and enjoy it.

But I've got connections with people all over the country that write to me, call me. We're getting together for prayer. We're finding something of brokenness, we don't know how to handle this.

Our young people get down and weep. A young man called me the other day, he's going to bring 10 young people on the, what is it, 4th of September? All the way from Lubbock. We want to come and show you a prayer meeting.

I'm glad they come. We've never taken an offering in this place in 10 years, we never will the next 10 if the Lord parries. We're here to tell you that we've got hearts of a burning and burden.

And God is going to find an outlet. So are you young men. I pray for you every day, not just because you're here.

By the way, when we do go to prayer, let's remember Sonny. How's he doing? What's the last word you got, Spencer? Pardon? Well, he and Joe, the Indian brother, were in a car yesterday. Was it a car, truck or something? They tried to take the shortcut through the windshield and it didn't work.

So they got cut up. They're in hospital but they're not seriously hurt. Is it this week that that big ministry's on up in Washington? That big demonstration on abortion? 22nd.

We need to pray for that. And these precious Indian brothers here and sisters, they're going up to Oklahoma. Will you be there next Friday? Next Friday.

So let's remember it. I don't like the word but it's true. It's a hell hole.

It's 24 hours of debauchery every day, morning till night. Don't you white men go, they'll kill you. It's full of witchcraft, demonology, drunkenness, sex perversion.

Every diabolical thing will be practiced there. And yet you've got Tulsa with a big place with 4,000 students. What in God's name is it doing when you have 5 or 8,000 Indians in Oklahoma that are lost without God and without hope.

The highest suicide rate in America. The highest rate of alcoholics in America. And those folks are twiddling their thumb and talking about through with the Holy Ghost.

I don't believe it. The Holy Ghost means tears. It means compassion.

It means brokenness. I'm looking for some of the old time Holy Ghost folk. Those giants I knew in England, not because we were English.

Some of them you knew I guess. Well most people know. What was the man of faith? Smith Wigglesworth.

Ever increasing faith. He and about half a dozen fellows there. They were tremendous.

My dad would go a hundred miles to hear Donald G preach. And he went in the rain. He had no car.

Just took a bus here and a bus there. But those men were mighty in God. People knew when they'd been in a town.

The Holy Ghost was not talked about. He was manifested. Sometimes in miracles but in brokenness.

People suddenly had a hunger and didn't know what it was for. They had to ask what it was for. And it's that that God satisfies.

Your hunger for God should get keener every day you live. You'll find more bread to feed on. He is the hunger and he is the bread.

He's both. And I'm sick to death as I've told you. I've lived amongst dwarves so long.

I'm embarrassed. I'm embarrassed to be a Christian in a day when the church is an embarrassment to Jesus Christ. I'm looking to see some men that aren't looking for a handout or support.

Just walk by faith. And I tell you every day I pray about this. God will produce a new breed of Holy Ghost filled anointed men that speak with prophetic utterance and hardly know they're doing it.

And people go home and can't sleep. Can't do their business. Can't buy and sell.

Somehow everything's cut off. God is jealous. He wants every part of you.

Not your lousy sins. Just he wants your will, your mind, your spirit, your soul, your body. Can we sing a verse of all to Jesus I surrender? And then if you if you need to leave as we sing the last part.

We'll sing it twice. You may leave if you wish to. We shall pray for about an hour.

I hope you can stay and pray. And just pray what's on your heart. Let's pray for the YWAM, Operation Mobilization, a Teen Challenge, whatever else is on your heart.

But pray for revival.

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