

Holy People

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon 'Holy People' emphasizes the importance of genuine worship and humility in the life of a believer, contrasting it with societal expectations and superficial religious practices.

Duration: 32:22

Scripture: Luke 7:36

Topics: "Holiness", "Humility", "Worship"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the significance of true worship and humility in the presence of Jesus, contrasting the self-righteousness of Simon the Pharisee with the deep love and devotion of a sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet. He illustrates that while Simon prepared a lavish banquet, he neglected the essential act of honoring Jesus, whereas the woman, despite her past, recognized her need for forgiveness and worshiped Jesus with her tears and precious ointment. Ravenhill challenges the congregation to reflect on their own worship practices, urging them to prioritize genuine adoration over mere service, as true worship is what God seeks from His people.

Transcript

I want to read from the 7th chapter. 7th chapter in the gospel as recorded by Luke, reading from verse 36. One of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him.

And he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meet, and behold a woman in the city which was a sinner. When she knew that Jesus sat at meet in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears. And he'd wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointments.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner. Jesus answering said unto him, Simon I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he said, Master say on.

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors. The one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.

Tell me therefore which of them would love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose, that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, thou hast rightly judged.

He turned to the woman and said, Unto Simon seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house. Thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but since the time I came in, she hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

My head with oil thou didst not anoint. But this woman hath anointed my feet with anointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are all forgiven.

For she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven the same, loveth little. I might suggest this was the most exciting day in the life of this man. He had managed to get the most amazing man in history into his home.

And I've got to condense this. I've got 20 minutes to preach a sermon that usually lasts an hour and 20 minutes. So I got problems.

But Jesus here is in the home of Simon. And I'm quite sure because he had a restricted area, that he had to filter the number of people that would come into the place to eat. So his first problem was the folk.

Of course he got the VIPs there, that's the thing you do. It's the thing the scripture says you shouldn't do, but we do it. The scripture says you shouldn't have a banquet just because the Joneses will invite you back.

You should have a banquet where nobody can invite you back. But you see we don't do it that way anymore. You don't run after the VIPs unless they're very ignorant people.

And and yet this is a thing we do. So he had a problem getting the right amount of folk. I'm sure he got the millionaire, and the mayor, and the magistrate, and the marvelous people.

I think he woke up at night and said no I'll cross that man out, I'll put this name in. Eventually he got the right folk. And then he got the right food.

If you're inviting the President of the United States, I don't think you'd treat him like maybe a father-in-law. I think that you wouldn't have hamburgers and potato chips, if the president was coming. Unless of course it was George.

But this man had problems with the food. And finally he decided on the folk, and he decided on the food. And then I think he decided on the flowers.

He wanted the right kind of aesthetic atmosphere. When everything in the garden was lovely, when he got it all worked out, he said to himself this is going to be a day that I shall never, never, never want to forget. It became a day that he never, never, never wanted to remember.

It was one of those days when everything goes beautifully wrong. From the moment you wake up until you go to bed, even the weather's wrong. Everything's wrong.

He said this is going to be the day of my exaltation. It became the day of his humiliation. He said people are going to leave this banquet talking about my liberality.

They left it talking about his stupidity. You see he was so tense, he was so sure that everything was right. And I can imagine that he just got down and just conditioned all the servants there, and said now alert me when so-and-so comes.

And the first signal is the millionaire is coming, not in a Cadillac anymore, but coming with a beautiful chariot and his horses. And he runs out and according to custom he kisses the man on either cheek, escorts him to the place where his feet can be washed. Because of course they did not wear hose, and therefore it was just a custom to wash feet.

It was a custom to kiss them on either cheek as they still do in the Orient. And this man got excited about this business. Everybody at the banquet had his right place.

And I think in the middle somewhere after a few of the guests had come, that the servant signals and says master I want you. You know that certain woman in town, oh don't mention that abominable woman. If she comes near turn the dogs on her.

Well master I'm sorry but she's all, she's where? Well she's here. She's sitting at the feet of Jesus. Well how did he get in? Jesus has an awful habit of coming in at the back door.

That's how he came in the world. With a suspicion of illegitimacy on him. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

I wish some ministers would remember that. We're to be the love slaves of Jesus Christ. We're not here to carry prestige, or power, or personality, or show-off.

We're the least of all men. We're servants. And I can see Jesus coming in at the back door.

He wasn't concerned about the welcome at the front door. And Simon comes and says oh I missed it, he's no prophet. If he were a prophet he'd know what kind of woman this is.

She is a sinner. And Jesus then goes on with a beautiful story. A certain man had two creditors, one owed him 500 pence, the other 50.

He forgave them both, who loved him most. The man with the biggest debt, that's why she loves. I can imagine that woman outside of the door and saying I'm not invited.

Isn't it an amazing thing, we don't know who went to the banquet except the woman that wasn't invited. None of us remember. It's going to be like that in the great day.

The first are going to be last. Some of the greatest preachers you know will be right at the end of the line. And some little widow that gave her life to prayer is going to be there right at the head.

You see God's values are not our values. He isn't going to give me a reward because I preach so many sermons, or you singers sold so many records, forget it. You see we put an accent where God never put it.

We put an accent on working for Jesus. And there's no such thing. That's not the first thing God requires.

The Father seeketh such to work for him. No, no, no, no, no. I believe that God is getting less worship today than everybody's got, despite the crowds that we're getting.

We want to work ourselves to death, give out tracks, run here, run there, come home exhausted. And we have a plane to catch tomorrow, and everybody's waiting for us. This little woman stood outside of the door with a trembling heart.

You could have seen it going like that under her dress. I shouldn't go in but she said I'm going to go in. Charles Wesley has a wonderful hymn.

I don't know whether he got the inspiration here, I think he might have. In this hymn he says this, Oh let me kiss thy bleeding feet. Could I ask you how long it is since you were at his feet? This woman is only found at the feet of Jesus, seen three times in the New Testament, and each time she's there she's at his feet.

She was there to learn. When her sister was making a big banquet, and Jesus says that Mary hath chosen. You say it isn't my personality.

That's not what it says. I hear people say I've got a Mary personality, I've got a Martha. That's not what it says.

She chose. And you have to choose to be spiritual. And you have to choose the calendar of your life.

And you have to choose to push people on one side, that he may get what he wants out of your life, not in eternity but even now. And this dear woman is found at his feet to learn. She's found at his feet in grief when her brother dies.

And she's found at his feet when she gives him the best that she has. You see again it's difficult for me to leapfrog in my mind, but will you remember this? That this precious ointment was given to Jesus three times. It was given to him in his birth when he couldn't recognize it.

This woman has more intuition than even the disciples, for she gives him this anointing of his feet just six days before he hung on a cross. That was a second gift. The third gift was there when he had died and laid in the tomb.

You see details are very important in Scripture. It says this box of spikenard was very precious, though it only weighed a pound. The man who came finally with his gift brought a hundred pounds of spikenard.

This box was worth 300 pence which meant she must have saved up 15 years to get it. And if her brother was Lazarus, she didn't love Lazarus enough to embalm him when he died. She was saving it for her own funeral.

Are you saving up for an expensive funeral? Are you so proud you even want the best funeral when you die? I imagine you'll get up and look around. But you see this woman brings her gift. It's only a pound but it's very precious.

The man brought a hundred pounds of spikenard but Jesus was dead. A smart American said this, do your giving when you're living then you're knowing where it's going. That's better than anything Shakespeare ever said.

Do your giving while you're living then you're knowing where it's going. If you leave a ten million dollars to Jesus Christ or to his kingdom when you die, to missionary societies, he won't give you ten cents for it at the judgment seat. You say how do you know? Well my old English Bible says the Lord loveth the what? All right we've got a casket here with a millionaire in, have a look.

He left ten million dollars to the church. And before I shove the lid down I want you to come up and have a look at him. Does he look too cheerful? He should do, he's given ten million submissions.

The Lord loveth the but you missed it brother. Do your giving while you're living then you're knowing where it's going. He didn't give his ten million.

Death put the pistol in his head and killed him. He'd still have the ten million if he was alive. But he gave it reluctantly.

This woman brings her precious gift of ointment. Now will you notice what she did? According to custom she should have washed his feet, kissed his cheek. But she says those feet, she's going to see them in a few days with a nail driven through his feet.

I believe she was the only happy person around there at the crucifixion. Everybody else was weeping, everybody else. Say when you're singing I listen.

When I'm preaching you shouldn't talk, that's bad manners. I'm pretty straight, I get told off for being rough. But after all we've grown up aren't we? This dear woman brings her gift.

And she doesn't anoint his head, she anoints his feet. She doesn't stand in front of him, she kneels behind him. She says wash those feet with water, never.

And so she washes them with tears. Dry those feet with a towel, never. And so she takes her beautiful tresses down.

And she takes his feet and she dries those blessed feet, with the hair of her head. My sister had long hair, she could sit on it. When mother was combing it, she used to say Len come and feel these lovely lovely stresses.

This cascade of silky hair. And I'd run my hand down my sister's hair, it was so beautiful. Mother would say Len isn't that, aren't you sorry you don't have long hair? If I'd lived, if I'd been living you know in these days, it would have been different maybe.

But she said isn't that beautiful hair? I said it is. Don't you love to stroke it? And I did. When mother wasn't there, I pulled it.

But you know I used to take my sister's hair sometime and feel, oh it's the silkiest thing in the world. I've often thought of those feet that were weary upon that dusty road. Those feet that sometimes had the thorns in them.

And they got the gravel between the toes and he was awfully uncomfortable. And a precious woman one day says I won't wash his feet with water. I wash his feet with my tears if I get the chance.

I want to dry his feet with a beautiful towel. I'll take the hair of my head which is the crowning glory of a woman they say. So some of you haven't got much.

But she dried his feet with a hair of her head. She should have anointed his head but she anointed his feet. She should have kissed his cheek but she kissed his feet.

She says I'm not worthy to stand in your presence. I can only bow in lowliness and humility. But listen did you get the point? She not only washed his feet with water, she took that ointment and she put it on his head and she put it on his feet.

And then she took the hair of her head and she wiped the feet where she put the ointment. So obviously the fragrance that she poured out on him, came back on her. You see we think if you read a lot of books about the deeper life as good as they are it will make you a saint.

I've got news for you even reading the Bible won't make you a saint. You've got to get it in your bloodstream. I believe I could line the altar.

Indeed I've seen altars lined with hundreds night after night in mass meetings. And yet I believe at the end of the day Jesus Christ could say to me, thou gave us me no kiss. Why? Because I was so busy serving him I forgot to worship him.

The priority that God wants in our lives is that we worship him in spirit. You can be a cantankerous, bitter, rough, edgy, stiff, resentful, almost cruel kind of Christian and work yourself to death. And say I guess I give out more tracts than anybody around here.

I labor harder than anybody else. I miss the bus. Friend I've been around the world and a few times doesn't give me any standing with God.

I happen to ride a bestseller or two, doesn't give me any prestige with God. If he did God just reckons my intellect and some of my ability. That doesn't give me any standing with God.

God seeks those who worship him. And I say again I like what Wesley said, let me kiss thy bleeding feet and bathe and wash them with my tears. When did you last seize him by his feet and say master I can't go another inch this morning.

Dr. Tozer again I remind you told me as a mature man in his 60s, that there were times when he lay on the rug for an hour, two hours, three hours, four hours and never uttered a word of prayer and never uttered a word of praise. He said I'm lost in adoration. I see him in his glory, in his majesty, in his beauty.

I can hear those holy beings crying holy, holy, holy is the Lord. And he said I'm silenced in adoration before him. I have no language it's beggared.

And he had a vocabulary as good as any man I know. And he had read more of the mystics I think than any man I know. And he had one of the closest relationships with God of any man I know.

And yet he says they're not ours. Listen lady there are some things the Avon lady can't do for you. And God Almighty didn't see you when you came through that door if you have a ring on your finger worth \$10,000 and you have another, you had a hairdo.

God never saw you when you came in this morning externally. The Bible makes it clear God looketh not on the outward appearance but on the heart. But most churches I go to today I would imagine that's reverse, that God looketh on the outward and not on the heart.

Some of us are beautifully dressed this morning, we've got rags on the inside. We've got expensive cars or jewelry and we're poverty stricken within. For the simple reason that we've never developed this blessed wonderful area of worship.

Worshipping him in spirit and in truth and in the very beauty of holiness. If you leave this sanctuary saying well I enjoyed the choir. Well they're a choir and I thank God for them.

Or just the singers or just the preacher. We missed it entirely. If you remember us we're failure number one.

You should remember something God communicated through us. You shouldn't remember the chalice whether it's made of gold or clay. You should remember what came out of that chalice.

This is a very beautiful story I say I don't have time to develop it. But I like to see this poor man he's standing there and Jesus says you missed it. Did you ever try to get God to understand things your way? I confess I have.

I can see this man saying well Lord you don't understand what it cost me to lay this banquet. Isn't it amazing there's no evidence Jesus ever took a mouthful of food or a drink of water or wine or anything at the banquet. He was so satisfied with the worship the woman gave him that the things of earth grew strangely dim.

I don't know who went to the banquet except the woman that shouldn't be there. I don't know a thing that they ate. Well Lord I had to raise a loan in order to, well I rented these precious things these golden vessels and all this food is out of season and you know you know what it really costs.

And the Lord says son I'm not wanting that. You know the devil's no fool he doesn't want you to do something you can't do. He said to Jesus one day look you command these stones to be bread you're hungry and Jesus said I won't.

And he didn't. Yes he did. I think he did.

When? One morning he says hi boys come on and as the old hymn says they make their hearts desire bread and fish upon the fire. Do you think Jesus went shopping for fish before he went to that breakfast? Did he went to the baker and said I'm sorry to disturb you but I'd like a few loaves. Now I've got no proof of this.

You won't find it in another book in the world. Which of course shows my superior wisdom but anyhow. I'm quite sure that that morning he took those pebbles those stones off the beach and put them down and said become bread.

And they became bread and he said to the devil there I'll do it when I want but not when you want. You see that's power. When you have power you need power not to use power.

I think he laughed in the face of Satan and said there you are I can make stones into bread when I want but not what you want. I'm not going to prove. You know God doesn't have to prove anything to you.

No sir. God isn't obligated to explain anything he's doing. Why he's doing it or where it is.

I rejoice in that. I'm glad in a day like this when the federal government wants to know even almost if you have dandruff, that there are some things that God has that are prerogatives. There are some things he does.

There are some things he does not have to explain. Well my time's nearly up. I'm not so sure how I can fit these pictures together because there are at least four accounts I think of this same story.

Let me suggest to you that that one and finish with it in the 26th of Matthew is the same. Because in the story there's injected one little word but a very illuminating word. As far as I'm concerned it turns the whole story round.

It says he went into the house of Simon the leper. Well how could a leper be in the house? Only one reason he could be there. He got healed of his leprosy.

Who healed him? Jesus. And the man that Jesus healed forgot to worship him. Now come on this morning lady.

It's hard on the ladies it takes you long to get better. You weren't born as attractive as us men. And so you have to have beauty parlours and dyes.

And as one man said you can't turn one hair black or white it says in the scripture. But that was before Clairol. And you ladies have to get a lot of repairs done before you come to church.

And honestly I just wonder what you're like before you started. But listen did you get down and worship him this morning? Because the greatest thing you could do is not bring your tithe and your offering and look pretty and smell nice. Did you get along with him this morning? Not in a crowd of people but did you say Lord my Jesus I love thee I know thou art mine.

It's a bit late to say I'll say when the death dew lies cold on my brow. Come on did you get along and worship him this morning? He came to the house of Simon the leper. And the leper forgot to kiss him.

You see there was a day when this man said I'm a leper. And he kissed his wife goodbye. And he went to the temple and they pronounced him a leper.

And he went to the gate of the city and they excommunicated him from all his privileges socially. And he stood on the road and he had a little tin can and he said leper leper help the leper. And one day Jesus passed that way.

He must have done because there was no other place to be, a way to be healed. And Jesus touched him and made him whole. And he went to the gate and he said don't come in here Simon.

He said my flesh is like a little child. What happened? That fellow Jesus did it. He ran to the temple and the priest said you can't come in here you'll defile the sanctuary.

And he said why I'm as pure and clean as you are look at my flesh. Who did it? Jesus did it. He came home and his wife said oh don't touch the children please.

Don't touch the children. He said darling it doesn't matter if I touch them. My hands are soft and pure as yours are.

And it was the man who got that cleansing who forgot to kiss Jesus. And if you say well brother Abner I was never a drug addict or a prostitute. Wait a minute, wait a minute.

You say he didn't lift me out of a horrible pit. But you were going to a horrible pit. Oh we've got the idea that just doing this or that make, no, no.

A lot of it makes us happy. A lot of it isn't even spiritual. It's soulish.

It touches the emotion and stirs us and gives us kicks. But there's nothing too exciting unless you really know the wonder of pure divine holy love to get down on your face and say Lord I can't even go to a meeting maybe this morning. I'm overwhelmed with the glory and the majesty and the beauty.

Do you think we're going to run around heaven giving tract out? Why I used to sing. I sang for a few years with a revival party and I certainly enjoyed it. But boy I think I'll be a bullfrog when I get round that redeemed company up there.

Unless the Lord does something for my throat too. No God is seeking that we worship him. Worship him in spirit.

Worship him in truth. Worship him in the very beauty of holiness. A couple of minutes.

There's just one story more amazing than this to me in the Bible. It's about the most amazing woman that ever lived. She birthed the Son of God.

And they were having a big convention in Jerusalem and she and her husband went up to it. You talk about singing. They used to sing from Psalms about 145 to the end.

The women went first and the men came last. And the women sang a verse and the men responded and they marched to Zion the beautiful city of God. And it was exciting to go.

Every new lane brought a new group of people. And more than a million of them went into the city to worship God. It was an exciting time.

But all good things come to an end. Some of us will be down in the valley tomorrow. Some of us will be up in the air too.

But, but tomorrow's going to change a lot. Unless you've got the indwelling Christ who never changes. Circumstances change.

The most dreadful thing. You know a lot of people want to live on feelings. And the most treacherous thing that you have.

If you live on feelings you don't need faith. If you live on faith you don't need feelings. I don't care whether I'm up or down.

God is the same. His resources are the same. His love is the same.

His holiness is the same. His purity, His power, His peace. The storm may roar without me.

My heart may low be laid. But God is there within me. How can I be afraid? They had a good time at that convention.

It was very exciting. They were thinking of history and prophecy. You never heard singing like they sang.

We don't sing like they sang. They sang the Great Hallel. They exalted the Lord.

You, you talk about being filled with a Holy Ghost to sing. You can't find any higher spots of praise than in pre-Pentecost days. You can't find any exaltation greater than the psalmist I think Brother Jack.

When he says, lift up your heads O ye gates and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors. And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty.

He is the King of Glory. Man alive their feet left the ground when they worshipped. They adored, they magnified Him.

But it was all over. And at the end of the day there was a trek. No Howard Johnson's, no quality courts, no blacktop roads.

Just chewing dust all the way from a million people walking around you. Spinning it out. Trying to get a drink at the well.

And the folk who were spiritual today were carnal tomorrow. At the end of the day Mary looks for Joseph. He was with the man and she said, what a day.

And he said, yes darling it was a rough day. I didn't get a drink of water at dinnertime. No, at lunchtime.

No, I didn't either. My feet have never been so sore. It was never been so hot.

It's been unbearable. It's been so rough. Yes Mary dear it has.

Mary says, Joseph how did Jesus get on? How what? I say, how did Jesus get on to that? Well I don't know. He's been with you. He hasn't been with me.

He's been with you. He's never. Now don't tease me I'm too tired.

Where is he? Isn't it amazing that after they've been to a big Holy Ghost rally, they lost Jesus going home. Isn't that something? What do you think Mary did? Like any sane woman in this building this morning, if you lost your son and he wasn't recovered by tonight, what would you do? Cry yourself to sleep. And the second day she cried herself to sleep.

And they went everywhere and said maybe the Ishmaelites stole him. Or maybe a wild beast devoured him. Or maybe he fell down one of the old wells.

And they searched and they searched. And finally Joseph says sweetheart listen, we've searched everywhere. We've been in a bazaar.

He liked to watch the man selling goodly pearls. We've been down to the pool of Ceylon. He isn't there.

Where did we see him last? Well of course we saw him darling in the temple. Let's go look. And they searched the temple with its many, many, many, many rooms and couldn't find him.

And they gave up and then they said, wait a minute, there's one place, the school of rabbis. Well he won't be in there, he's not allowed to go in there. Well I'm gonna look anyhow.

You do anything when you're desperate. And I can see Joseph opening the door and saying Mary, Mary come. There was Jesus.

In the pulpit explaining Daniel's image. No. People said you want to hear a boy preacher? No thank you.

If ever there had been a boy preacher, Jesus would have been a boy preacher. But you'll discover if you've intelligent children, they'll soon embarrass you. They'll ask you questions you don't know, smart as you are.

And Jesus was there asking questions. How beautiful. Asking them questions.

And finally they brought him out and they said you know, we've sought you for days sorrowing. And he said don't you think I should be about my master's business? Here's the crux of the story. They lost him in church.

There's a man on record in this book, do you know why? Because he went to church late. When he got there they were excited and saying he was here right where you're standing now. Who was here? Jesus was here.

Until I can put my finger in the nail print. Until I can put my fist in his side. You're not getting me to believe.

Jesus came a few days after and he said come on Thomas. He said it's all right Lord. No come on Thomas.

No no no no. You'd better watch it the Lord will nail you. You'll make some extravagant claim.

He'll nail you. He's got every right to do it. That man, he's on record because he got to church too late.

But you know sometimes why we lose blessing? Because we stay in church too long. The glory comes down. You say I don't think brother Jack ever had more anointing and fed my soul.

And you get out there and you say say let's see the Rams are playing the Goats this afternoon aren't they at 3 o'clock. Let's get home. We don't want to stand in a big line.

We've got to see that TV match or something else something else. And before long we've dissolved. You couldn't even remember the text 10 minutes after.

You know at the end of this day however much I preach, however much you sing, however much you serve, the Lord's gonna get a record. And I try to do this. I try to say at the end of the day well Lord it's not what I preached over TV or radio to millions or two or three or one person I visited in the sick, who was sick.

I tried to ask myself Lord did I kiss you today? Or did you look down and say son you were very busy, very active. You made some new friends. People said you preach well.

But listen son, thou gavest me no water. Thou gavest me no oil. Thou gavest me no kiss.

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