

Lowliness of Mind

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon on the 'Lowliness of Mind' calls believers to emulate Christ's humility and prioritize the needs of others over their own.

Duration: 1:07:07

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, John 3:16, Philippians 2:2-5, Philippians 2:14-15

Topics: "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not conforming to the ways of the world but being transformed by renewing our minds. He addresses the issue of dissension and division within the church, urging believers to have unity and to consider others as more important than themselves. The preacher highlights the significance of having compassion and concern for fellow believers. He also emphasizes the greatness of Jesus Christ and the need for adoration and worship, recognizing our unworthiness and the sacrifice of Calvary.

Transcript

Let's look at the book of Philippians, Philippians, and the second chapter, okay. Philippians chapter two, let's start at the first verse. I usually make this quip in case you're here for the first time and I'm reading from the Living Bible, the King James.

If therefore there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit in any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself. Look not every man on his own need, but on the needs of others.

Let this mind, or if you like, disposition, be in you which was in Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, that made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. So at the end of verse nine you've got every name, in the middle of verse ten you've got every knee, and in verse eleven every tongue. This epistle is really a love letter from Paul to the Philippians.

He had a lot of memories there. You may remember that he writes in another epistle, we were shamefully entreated in Philippi, and in case you've forgotten, he got a whipping there and he got put into jail, and he led the jailer to the Lord. I wonder how many of you would like to go to jail just to win the jailer to the Lord.

We want to win them in a less painful way usually, don't we? A less costly way. And also it was there that a lady, a very wealthy lady, she was a seller of purple. Now purple was not worn by common ordinary folk, it was worn by kings.

And cloth at that time wasn't measured by the yard, it was weighed. So this lady, she ran a kind of a Gucci store, you know, it wasn't Kmart. She sold only to the rich.

And yet that was God's way of getting into a certain class of people. And Paul remembers the people of Philippi. Now I don't think there's a more intimate epistle anywhere in the word of God, unless it's Philemon, and you remember what he said to Philemon.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, I'm sure you know, you should know, that Paul's accent there, his emphasis there, is about Christ loving the church. In this epistle, he's emphasizing us loving Christ. And if you read the next epistle, from Philippians to Colossians, you'll find that there's something of a likeness in the way he addresses the folk there.

A unique thing about this epistle, I've been reading it through and through, I notice there's one word which is omitted, and that's the word sin. I don't think you'll find it, unless it's a different translation. It doesn't mention sin.

He mentions flesh once, and then he kind of dismisses it. But he mentions something which seems to perpetuate itself forever and ever in the church of God, and that is there's some dissension, there's some fraction in the body. So you find him saying now, be of one mind.

Let each esteem the other better than himself. Let this mind which was in Christ Jesus be new. Let each man not just look on his own things, but on the things of others.

There's no outflow of compassion and concern for the other people in the body. And then of course he takes the greatest, one of the greatest statements of all. This is a very small epistle.

How many chapters are there? Remember? I think there are four, that's right. I got a straight A on that. Four.

And yet he says some of the choicest things that he ever said anywhere, he says in this epistle. He doesn't say, well I'm going to write a colossal epistle to the Romans, and the Hebrews will be bigger than that, and I'd better keep a reserve in my mind. You know, I want to put all my diamonds in a row.

But he makes that classic statement in the first chapter, and he finishes the twentieth verse saying, that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. Now you know what you do with a magnifying glass. There's something there you can't see very well, and so you get your magnifying glass and look, and ho! The thing that was mysterious, suddenly it comes to life, and you can enlarge it, and you say Christ is magnified.

He says my body is the glass through which other people look, and when they look through me they see Christ magnified. Now do the answer it for yourself. I mean, does your life, does my life magnify the Lord

Jesus Christ, or does it diminish the Lord Jesus? Do people say, well if that's being a Christian, I don't want to be a Christian.

I don't want a temper like her, I don't want a tongue like him, I don't want something else. We're here that Christ may be magnified, when people see us they say there's the grace of God, we magnify the grace of God which Paul speaks of elsewhere. And then he follows that by a statement you saw very, very often, and I often wonder if you said to somebody, well where is that quotation? If they say it's here in the letter to the Philippians, verse twenty, quote it so often, chapter one of course, verse twenty, for to me to live is Christ.

Now do you get that? He says as long as I'm around, Jesus Christ is around. As I said to you so often, if you ask anybody if they're saved today, so what does that mean anyhow? But if you look somebody in the eye and say, does Christ live in you? Now what do you say? Oh I got saved on the 5th of September, I didn't ask you that question. I'm asking you, does Christ live in you? Because you can only be self-centered or Christ-centered, you can only live in Romans 7 or Romans 8. Romans 7 to me is a funeral march and Romans 8 is a wedding march.

It's a sad chapter but you see, the division in that chapter, like all other divisions in the New Testament, there are no divisions in the Greek, the divisions are man-made. I sometimes feel like to just bash that middle division out between Romans 7 and Romans 8. That Christ, when he talks, who shall deliver me from the body of this death and therefore people finish there. But he did not finish there.

As I said to you before, two great books written in England of course, written by Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Do you know when he wrote it? Right after he got married.

There's no connection but it's true. And then he wrote another book, Paradise Regained. Do you know when he wrote that? Right after his wife died.

Now, that's strange but it's true. But when I think of Romans 7 and Romans 8, I think of the same thing. So many people are still in Romans 7 as though there's something virtuous in saying, well, I'm a limping Christian, I'm a kind of a crippled Christian.

I mean, I go down every time somebody says something nasty about me and if Satan should, oh, you don't need to sing that hymn, he bobbits me every day, makes a punch bag of me. Well, that's your fault for letting him do that. You see, the normal Christian life, to use a phrase of watchmanese, a normal Christian life is a life of deliverance and it's a life of victory.

Again, I believe in instant purity. I do not believe in instant maturity. The little preacher there at back keeps interrupting me.

Nice little fellow. A nice little baby boy. Can't be a boy, be a girl, but if he can be a boy, that's the best thing.

He's a lovely little baby boy. Oh, his daddy and mummy think he's wonderful. They think he's going to be the next prophet coming up and so forth and so on.

Fine. But you see, he's got everything. He doesn't need to grow anything more.

He won't grow any more fingers, he won't grow any more toes, he won't grow another head, he won't grow something else. He's a complete babe, but he'll come to maturity hopefully. And all the possibilities of grace are in you tonight if you're saved by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit is there.

You can become, if Jesus tarries, maybe one of the giants of the faith. That doesn't mean you'll be publicly acknowledged and have a very wonderful public ministry. It doesn't mean that.

It means that you may live in total conformity to the will of God. As Paul says in Romans 12, Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed. Phillips translates that very beautifully.

He says, don't let this world press you into its mould. Now if you don't get careful, you'll get pressed into the mould. You can get pressed into the mould of a group that you're with.

You can get pressed into the mould of a style, fashion, something else like that, thinking. So many ways we can be pressed into a current mould, a current style. He says, don't let the world do that to you.

Don't be conformed, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So Paul says then here, there's some dissension amongst them. There's some things he doesn't like.

And so what does he do? He throws up the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now again, this is a very, comparatively it's a small, small epistle. But this epistle transcends all our thoughts.

To transcend means it's above where you can reach. To me, it transcends my thinking. It transcends my vocabulary.

I can't describe it to you much more than nobody else can. You see, he says, don't you look on things that are your own. Look on the other man's needs.

Now, verse five, let this mind be new, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Now, I don't know his emotion right here. I don't know what he did.

You see, this man who is exalting, and later he goes on in another epistle, and he says, I want you to have joy, and lest you forget, I want your joy to abound. Where is he writing from? He's writing from a stink hole. He's writing from a prison.

A prison that today you wouldn't be allowed to keep a dog in. He's shut off from everything else, but he's not shut off. Again, you can wall a man in, you can't roof him in.

And here he is writing to these people, and he's talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Or, other translations put that word, thought this not a prize to be grasped at. Thought it not an honour to be held on to.

What is he saying? He's saying, look, you can't humble yourselves one to another. You know, again, it's comparatively easy to go to somebody in the street, some flea-bitten old rascal that stinks of beer and he has a, you know, he has a bottle in his pocket, some prostitute or somebody, and say, well, you know, I love you. You know, there's more people who can do that than folk who can cross the aisle in their own church and say, I love you to somebody that they've known for ten years.

Now, when you say to a drunk, I love you, you don't love him at all. You're emotionally loving him. You like him for that moment anyhow.

Love, whether it's human or divine, love has sacrifice. If it doesn't have sacrifice, it isn't love. For as Isaac Watts said, love, so amazing, so divine, demands.

You're not overreaching when you give Christ your soul, your life, and your all. He says, he thought it not a prize, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Now, the theologians have a name for this chapter.

This is one of the battlegrounds. But you know what? If I were writing a book on salvation, first of all, our conviction comes, and then the work of the Holy Spirit. If whatever I touched that, I would touch this.

If we had been going according to plan, we would have been in the Bahamas this week. We usually go this time of the year. We have some friends that give us a nice free lodging there, and at least once when we're there we go for two or three weeks.

I go deep-sea fishing. Some of my friends have lovely yachts, and you know, I struggle along with them. And we go out about 50 miles in the ocean where there's a drop-off of about 800 feet, and we really do some nice fishing.

And you know, once we get up there, my friend gives a signal to the captain on the deck there, and he says, all right, let her go open the throttles, and that thing rolls over. Boy, does it go. And I know when we've been talking and what not, and I've been looking at other boats, waving to other folks maybe, and suddenly the motors drop down.

I know what we're going to do. We're going to drop anchor. And you know, I think of the same thing here, that in the rush of life, even in our ordinary Christian exercises, there's a time when you quit rushing and you drop anchor.

And here's a place where we all need to drop anchor. He shows us, he reminds us of the incomparable majesty of Jesus Christ. Now the kenosis theory is simply this, that Jesus Christ emptied himself.

Charles West has a hymn in which he says, he emptied himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race. Well, he's right to a degree. The question is, what did he empty himself of? The kenosis theory is he emptied himself of everything.

Or, as Charles West says again, didn't he write the hymn Hark! The Herald Angels Sing? Mild he laid his glory by, born that man no more may die. What did he lay on one side? Now, years and years and years ago, there was a famous king, you've heard something about him, called Constantine. In that time, there was a fellow who claimed to be a theologian called Arius.

And Arianism is a philosophy that he devised. He said, before this world was created, he had a revelation that God made another creation before this. And in that creation that God made a son.

But he wasn't quite equal with the father. He wasn't equal in glory, and he wasn't equal in majesty. And that was perpetuated.

Then there was a great conflict, and then there was a... Later you remember the... Well, at that time actually, there was a man called Athanasius. Now, there was another Athanasius 300 years later, and he formed the Athanasian creed that some churches still say. The first Athanasius fought very, very decidedly

against the theory, and it only was a theory, that God once made a man, and like a shell of a man, and he put his own spirit in that man.

But the man hadn't the psychology like you and I have. That is, he hadn't a thinking intelligence, and he hadn't the emotions that we have. And therefore, he was not totally a man.

Now, the rest of the church rose up against that. Do you remember what John said in 1 John? The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

In his first epistle of the first chapter, you may remember, he says, we saw Him and we handled Him. Now, in the Old Testament, you had some, what are called theophanies, or I guess really Christophanies. If I say to you, when Jesus came to earth as a babe, that wasn't the first time He came to earth.

Would you want to argue about it? Because there were temporary revelations of God in Jesus Christ. Who is the Lord? Who is the Lord of the Old Testament? Who is the one that comes into the entrance of the, I was going to say the gate, but tents don't have gates, the door of Abraham. There are Christophanies, but they're very temporal.

There's no abiding presence. But the Word is made flesh and dwells among us. This is the most transcendental thing.

If you get this clear in your mind that one day, again to quote Wesley, He laid His glory by and wrapped Him in our clay. Okay? The Lord Jesus is the Heaven of Heavens. Can it contain Him? And yet He's pressed into the matrix of the Virgin Mary.

How is it done? He's the Ancient of Days, and then He begins His life here on earth. The Scripture says, Melchizedek, who is a type of Jesus, He was without Father and without Mother, without beginning and without ending. Now, this Scripture says that He's the only begotten of the Father.

But you see, what they tried to do, Arius and others tried to drive a wedge between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We often do this. I remember Dr. Tozer saying to me one day, he said, Len, you know, we think about this.

Here is the Father, here is the Son, and here is the Holy Spirit. That's wrong. They're equal in glory, they're equal in majesty.

There wasn't a day when Jesus was born in eternity from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. He's the unbeginning being. He's the everlasting being.

Now, you hear people say, I heard it said on a certain broadcast from a certain church in town. I won't tell you where it's from, there's some members here. But anyhow, I heard it said from that church when the preacher says, now remember the Lord Jesus, he became what we are, that we might become what he is.

That is not true. What do you mean he became what we are? Has the devil ever kicked you around? Come on, be honest about it, shake your head if it's right, do this if it's wrong. I won't believe you, but anyhow, has the devil ever kicked you around, pushed you around, tripped you up? Did he ever do that to Jesus? He became what we are? Oh no, no, no, come on.

He laid everything on one side. Well, if he laid all his glory on one side, the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost were still in heaven. Well, who's the babe? Instead of three persons in the Trinity, you have four persons in the Trinity.

It won't be a Trinity, but anyhow, there are four persons. Now look, if Jesus Christ then became born of our born as it were and flesh of our flesh, what in the world, who did the devil tempt? The word of God says he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Now what's the good of him being tempted if he's totally God and not man? Are you suggesting you're going to solve this mystery here? No, and I'll tell you what, nobody else is going to solve it forever and ever.

This is a mystery. God was contracted to a span. Have you ever tried to think about the angels going back into eternity without Jesus? You know, they came to the sky and they said Emmanuel God, you know, the angels announced his birth.

And then they had to go back alone. How do you think they felt about it? He laid aside his glory. Yes, to a certain degree he did.

And yet he was still very God and very God. You see, what he's saying to these people, you find it very difficult to humble yourself to each other. You see, if you're a Christian, you've got one or two choices, either be humble or be humiliated.

Now which do you want? You humble yourself. If you want to humble yourself, the Lord will get somebody to help you, maybe me or someone else. We'll get you down all right.

The preacher will cut you down to size or the devil will give you a buffeting. He was tempted in all points like as we are. He was hungry, he got weary, he got buffeted.

He became very sorrowful. Do you think God is ever sorrowful? A friend of mine does. He said, Jesus wept when he was on earth and he said, I believe Jesus still weeps.

I think he still weeps because of the weakness of the church today. The failure in the church today. The self satisfaction in the church today.

The apathy of the church today. We've reached a plateau. We're no longer criminals and prostitutes and what we used to be and now we're settled here.

We're settled here instead of realizing it's only one step. There's oh so much land ahead to be possessed. Now he says that being in the form of God he thought it not a prize to be seized on and saying look I'm holding on to this.

I don't want to go to earth. Well he emptied himself of his glory. Supposing he tried to bargain with his father and say well I'm willing to go to earth on these conditions.

Number one, I want a constant escort of cherubim and seraphim. When I get within the last four or five miles of earth I want everybody in the world to fall down and worship me. Now I say he took his limits, limitations.

We, he became what we are. No, no, no, he didn't fail. He never hesitated to do the father's will.

He never answered his father back. He never got obstructed with unbelief. Again it's difficult, it's difficult to analyze this verse.

One old saint said many years ago if you ponder it long enough it will confuse you and if you ponder it longer still you'll get mental paralysis. Well you could do that with lots of scripture but you see there are things that come by revelation not by instruction. If you're looking for a teacher to teach you the first verse in Genesis to the last in Revelation quit because you'll never find one.

God is a jealous God. Young preachers come to see me, ask me what would you do in my place? Well I say what I'd do in your place amongst other things number one I would master one book in the New Testament particularly. I would take ten years to study Epistle to the Hebrews.

You could take a good ten years over it. I have a book on my shelf now written if I remember right about 1660 by a man who preached in London and he preached there in that church for let's see how long. Thirty-five years in the one church and thirty-two years he preached every Wednesday night on Hebrews for thirty-two years.

I would make it my business to master a book master Romans if you like or Ephesians or go to one of the books not you usually preached on very seldom book of Ezekiel or some of the other rather difficult books in there. We don't. If you go to an evangelistic campaign you could almost gamble your shoes if you're a gambler you'll hear one of about ten texts.

John 3 16 what must I do to be saved? Four or five others will the Lord come tonight that's it. It's like the hymn book in your church. You've got five hundred hymns.

How many of them do you know? I mean how many hymns could you stand up and recite now? I mean you've been singing them ten twenty years maybe. How many of them do you really know? It's amazing how much stuff floats over here isn't it and doesn't get down here very deeply. And that goes for the word of God as well.

Do you remember a good wise man in the book says by word have I hid in my heart. It was said of one man I think it's Eusebius in church history who says there was one young man and he was persecuted they put out his eyes and it didn't mean a thing to him. He had memorized almost the entirety of the New Testament and they thought they'd take the word from him but by word have I hid in my heart.

There are people in Russia tonight and other places who hid the word of God in their heart. You can't always turn it up as quickly as you like you know there's a little area some here I think psychologists call it the repressed complex of your subconscious but that doesn't matter. But everything's stored up there.

But the good book says it's hidden in my heart. And it doesn't mean that physical heart. They took a man heart out the other day gave him a plastic heart.

He won't have much feeling really but anyhow. They didn't take his sins out because he took his heart out you know. If they did they'd be booking right now to get rid of their old hearts and get a new one.

They'd be asking Kmart to store them or something. It's that mysterious center of our being. Not only is God a mystery man is a mystery.

Human personality is a mystery. And again he says he thought it not a prize to be grasped at. He didn't say Lord I just can't do this work of redemption.

I'd rather stay here and have the adoration of the cherubim and the seraphim and all the angelic beings. I'd rather meet with the saints of all the ages that have come here so far. He just takes it and makes it as though it didn't cost a meaner thing to him.

Okay he thought it not a robbery to be with God but he made it himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant. I can't get past that any time but without thinking again of the great old man that gave us some of our greatest hymns. Isaac Watts gave us when I surveyed the wondrous cross and what we're marching to Zion and I don't know what else.

But as a hymn in which he says of Jesus a servant's form he wore and in his body bore our dreadful curse on Calvary. He like a victim of him stood and poured his sacred blood to set us guilty captives free. Why didn't he say Father I'm willing to go.

No I don't want to go as a cherubim. I'll take the nature of angels. But the writer of the Hebrew says he didn't take the nature of angels.

We still say he's out of sight. He's out of reach. We need somebody who's touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

So he did our psychology and our emotions and everything else. He made himself of no reputation. Pretty hard to do isn't it.

Don't we strive for honor. Isn't there something in us that always wants to project itself to be known and get to the front and help those others out of the way particularly young people anyhow. Not that old people are exempt from it.

Do you know what the hang up is down at last days. They don't recognize my ability. Do you know the trouble with Agape.

They don't know I'm a hidden genius in here. You know. Why would I forget it.

Forget it. They have so many folks. And if you're not careful you start living for something instead of living solely for him.

I read a statement today. I forget where. I've turned so many things over in a day.

Where this person said you know our bulk service doesn't matter too much to God. Boy I've never heard that. Have you ever heard that before.

Our bulk service. You know what we do in the crowd. Somebody says we'll be ready for the bus tonight.

Six o'clock. We're all going to so and so and so. We all march to Zion in a bus.

And we do our performance. Whatever else we have to do and we feel real good. You know I preached tonight for the first time or the second time or I sang or I did this.

We all get together and we do our thing. And this person says God is not interested too much in. Disagree if you like.

You're not disagreeing with me. With him. Our bulk service.

What he wants is my personal love. My personal devotion. Hey you watch out here right now.

You can mistake service and sacrifice for love. You can sacrifice because you have to in the set up where you live. You can serve so many hours because it's a restriction in the group that you're with.

I'm not quarreling with it. I'm saying it is no substitute for your personal adoration and love to the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the most famous men that Napoleon had.

He was an ambassador for Napoleon actually. And everywhere he went he bought some rare exquisite thing for his house. Each time he came home he'd say to his wife darling look we'll put this here.

And the house was loaded with treasures. And one day on a journey and they must have been tough journeys there were no fast planes in those days and ships crawled anyhow everything crawled. Oh darling I've got you this.

She says no no no no. You know vivacious French woman. He wanted to embrace her.

No. Wait wait. And it began to unfold.

No she said. What's wrong? You fill the house with treasures. There's no room in the house for any more treasures.

What I want is not your gift. I want you. Just French darling had two or three mistresses and she was tired of being on the outside.

And she didn't want these gifts any more. What do they mean? So often we want to substitute our sacrifice. Do you know I gave up for the Lord? No I'll make a guess.

What did I give up? Hell. That's all I ever gave up. One of my clichés I say to myself very often.

I may as well say it to you. One of my clichés is this. That no man ever does God a favor.

I don't care if you're a dear old granny dies and leaves you a million dollars and you give it all to one of the missionary groups. Fine. I don't care if you write a best selling book or something else.

Fine. What concerns me, are you nearer to God or is your devotional life richer, purer than it was say a year ago tonight? You see if this comes on you. Like Paul.

He's trying to say to them, look you're quarreling, you can't submit yourself. There's a lot said about submission these days and about commitment. I don't find too much about it in the scripture.

Do you know the word of God says, it says submit yourself one to the other. It's very easy if you're the top boss in a group to say everybody should submit in this order. You all submit to me.

Oh no, no, no, no. The greatness is when you can watch somebody's feet that doesn't deserve it. When you go out of way, your way to be kind to somebody who's done a rotten grudge and stabbed you in the back or something.

There's no reason at all that Jesus should come but he looks down and he sees us in our need and I need volunteers. And he goes on. You see it wasn't one transcendent act.

I'm just coming out of what Baraclough, maybe you never heard him, I heard him play once. And as far as I know he wrote Only One Heaven. It was very beautiful.

Went out of the ivory palaces into a world of woe. Only his great eternal love made my Saviour go. Or a hymn that was written by the grandson of the founder of the Salvation Army and I met this guy brother once.

Remarkable man and he wrote one hymn as far as I know. Down from his glory ever living story. From heaven to us he came and Jesus was his name.

Born in a manger to his owner's stranger, a man of sorrows, tears and agony. Then the chorus, oh how I love him, how I adore him, my breath, my sunshine. It goes to the tune Oh So Mio.

If I could sing, I used to sing that when I was a singer but I can't sing anymore. Used to have a good voice, believe me. You never heard it so you can't contradict me anyhow, but anyhow I used to like to sing that song.

Without reluctance, flesh and blood is substance. He took the form of man, revealed God's hidden plan. Oh wisest mystery, sacrifice of Calvary.

Stooping to woo, to win, to save my soul. What condescension again, bringing us redemption. When in the dead of night, not one faint hope in sight, God gracious, tender laid aside his splendor.

Stooping to woo, to win the world, no to win you. What's the good of him saving the world if he doesn't save you? Now how often do you get alone? I've asked you this before maybe. You think about him like Charles Wesley when he says, Jesus lover of my soul.

Huh? Or another him, he says, oh let me kiss thy bleeding feet and bathe and wash them with my tears. How often do you get Jesus alone and say, look Lord, I haven't come to ask you for help. You know, to some people, prayer is a repair kit for when something goes wrong.

They want to patch it up with prayer. Again, broadly speaking, prayer is preoccupation with our needs. Praise is preoccupation with our blessings.

Worship is preoccupation with God himself. As another old him says, concerning this, I'm trying to think how it starts now I said it. Anyhow, prayer is preoccupation with, OK, my goal is God himself, not joy, not peace, not even blessing.

Why in the world are you so worried about peace and blessing and so forth? You can have a million, million, billion years to have that. Paul talks to these people about joy, verse 26 of the first chapter, that your rejoicing may be abundant in Christ. But verse 29 he says, For you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not on the behalf of your denomination or something else.

For you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him. Salvation is free, rewards are not free. If God had a graduation class for failures, most of us would make it, wouldn't we? What are you trying to do? Are you trying to put us all in a straitjacket? No, no, no.

What I want you to do is get so madly in love with the Lord Jesus that it doesn't make any difference what demands. Love can make any demand. I don't know who wrote it, but I like a bit of poetry that says, Love ever stands with open hands, and while it lives, it gives.

For this is love's prerogative, to give and give and give. And Christ so loved the world, God so loved it, he gave his only begotten son. Christ loved the church and gave himself for the church.

Now he made himself of no reputation, but he took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Surely you can hardly think of that without thinking of two Corinthians 8, 9, where it says he was poor. What? That we might be made rich.

Isn't it two Corinthians? Let me look at that. Two Corinthians 8, 9. I open right to it. Okay.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus that though he was rich. How rich? Come on. How rich was he? Did he own houses and lands? What did he lay aside? How rich was he? Well, I believe he was rich in all that God is.

Since he's equal with the Father, he was rich in everything that the Father had. He was rich in fore knowledge. He was rich in omnipotence.

He held all the world in his hands. He holds up all the world in his hands. He was rich.

For your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich. Well, how rich are we tonight? We always think of rich on a social level or some other level. But how rich are we really? Is it to the Romans where Paul says again that we're heirs of God? That doesn't mean Billy Graham or Robertson some day.

It means you, Mary Smith, John Brown, Dale Brown, Betty Brown, any other Browns, Greens or Whites, whoever you are. That we through his poverty might be made rich. What? When we slip into eternity? Oh, no, no, no, no, no.

Rich in grace. Rich in mercy. Rich in peace.

That the very nature of God, we're made partakers, isn't this baffling, of the divine nature. I think it's Wesley again that says, Thy nature gracious Lord, impart. Come quickly from above, write thy new name upon my heart, thy new best name of love.

You see, he didn't merely bridge the gap between the holiness of God and the hopelessness of man. That was one step. But being found in fashion as a man, the next verse says, he humbled himself as a man, not only as God, as a man.

He never asked for priority. He didn't say to his servants, well, we're sleeping in a field tonight, you find a nice place to sleep. Grassy, warm place for me.

Somebody made an acrostic of J-O-Y, joy. Do you know what joy is? J, Jesus, O, others, Y, yourself. Jesus first, others second, yourself last.

Well, do we live there? Oh, it's not hard. It's not hard to do anything for anybody you're in love with. Imagine the fellow saying, well, look, I've got something four inches a year, another breath, of course.

Been waiting for this for two years, and he says, you know what they all say, oh, it's so beautiful. I'm not really worth it, and all the time she thinks I'm worth something ten times better than that, but anyhow, she looks at the little thing and says, oh, what a beautiful ring. And he says, you better think it's beautiful.

Do you know what that cost me? Three thousand hamburgers, two thousand cans of soda. I walked to work sometimes, and he goes down the list saying, you don't know how much I've sacrificed to give you that ring. Well, then in a sense he's giving it back.

Love doesn't do that kind of thing. Love is measureless. Love is infinite.

And not only did he come from the glory to take all our human limitations, there's poverty for you. You see, he didn't become poor by what he laid on one side. In one sense, he became poor not by a deduction, but by an asset.

He became poor because he limited himself into human personality. He couldn't be in two places at once. There were lots of things he couldn't do.

He could do them before. The glory of the Lord Jesus here is he became what he wasn't. He'd never been limited before.

Did he know everything when he was in the flesh? I don't think so, because he says, there's a day or the hour. I don't know when the Son of Man will come again. Only my Father knows that.

But the fact is, he becomes to be a patterned man, a pattern, a human being on this earth, a God-filled personality, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, a new betrayal, a new sorrow. Do you think God knows sorrow today? Do you think he feels betrayal? I don't believe so. Not in the sense that we think of it here.

And yet he takes it all joyfully. He takes it all gladly. And when he came, he took the form of a servant.

That doesn't mean much these days. But as a youngster in England, oh mercy, I can remember almost 70 years back. Yeah, I can remember 70 years back when somebody near our home went into what we call service.

That is, they left the ordinary run of life and they went to live as a servant in a castle. Do you know the Queen of England has a secretary that women almost fight to become secretaries of the Queen of England. Some of you will fight to get rid of that job, but they fight to get it.

Why should she? She has a mansion of her own. She has a secretary of her own at home. She has a castle of her own at home.

She has a Rolls Royce of her own at home. But oh, it's such an honour to be personally with the Queen and the Queen said, my dear, would you do this and would you see to that and would you see the other and of course we've got this coming up and see the social register, everybody gets this. And she knows the mind of the Queen and she eats at times with the Queen and so forth and so on.

And she esteems it an honour to be a servant. And you know, great people can, they don't have any condescension. A friend of mine wrote to me the other day and he said, would you pray for so-and-so.

I was on a plane with him the other day, one of the most celebrated men living today. And oh, he was so happy. He sat in the plane with this man.

But you know, the man that he spoke to is one of the humblest men in the world. I've got some very wealthy friends. Some of them are the most humble people I've ever met.

He's got enough degrees to paper the house with. He's looking for somebody that will come dispensing grace and mercy and peace and love. Because love is a language the blind can see and the deaf can hear.

It doesn't need any interpretation. He took the form of a servant and that servant was made in the likeness of... and then being found in flesh as a man, he humbled himself. Oh, mercy.

You see, it wasn't one supreme act that he did when he became a babe, but he continues all through his life humbling himself. You can't wash my feet. Well, Jesus said, I've got to wash them or I've no part.

Can you imagine him putting a towel round his waist and kneeling at their feet? That was pretty embarrassing. See, actually, they should have done it to him. They forgot all about it.

They go excited and watching miracles and somebody was raised from the dead yesterday and they talked and talked and talked and never thought once of serving him. Well, come on, I'm asking you tonight. When did you last get him alone and say, Lord, I'm not coming for anything? I'm not asking you for anything.

I'm not even going to praise you. I just want to worship you. And it may be speechless adoration.

What condescension. We get lost in meeting. We clap our hands and have a good time.

We get sturdy muscle and go out and say, well, I feel better when I came in. And Jesus didn't get that much out of it. I wonder at the end of the day how many days I returned to give thanks.

Like, you know, ten men were healed. How many turned back? One. One.

That's about the percentage today. Ten were healed. One returned and said, Jesus, I want to thank you for what you did for me.

Five thirty news tonight, they showed the burial of, what was his name, Bear Brian. Before dawn, people were at the church. Before dawn, people at the cemetery.

They estimated sixty thousand people there. And every overpass going the fifty-nine miles journey from where was it, Tuscaloosa down to Birmingham, there were people on those overpasses waving goodbye. They had big signs out.

We love you, coach. And they covered the casket from one end to the other with the Alabama red. It was incarnations.

You know, I couldn't help but think of something else that, you know, I'm not begrudging the eulogies that he got. Was it, what was the famous, how many opera buffs do we have here tonight, any? Oh, who wrote Aida? Tuscan, no, not Tuscan, Verdi. And, you know, when he finished, the first time it was played, it was played, I think, in the, it was played in the opera house in Milan, Italy.

And when they finished, people stood and cheered. And when they cheered, and they cheered for more than an hour, and he tried to get out. And finally, they smuggled him out at the back, and they had a carriage with four horses.

And men unhitched the horses and shoved them down the street, and they pulled his carriage to the hotel where he was to stay overnight. And he woke at one o'clock in the morning, they were still cheering. He woke at two and they were still cheering, and they were still cheering at five o'clock in the morning, because a man had written an opera which they thought was incomparable.

Oh, so there's a people drunk with opera, and they stand there for six hours in the cold shouting and yelling and screaming, and you know, with their wonderful ejaculations and that exuberance that these Italians have. And sixty thousand people today, well more than that. Maybe more than a hundred thousand watched a football coach go to his grave.

And yet, they on the resurrection morning, for the greatest miracle that ever happened. There wasn't one person there. Hmm? Ever tried to figure what Jesus must have felt like? He came out of the tomb and looked up, not one.

Wouldn't you have thought Bartiminius would have been there saying, listen, he opened my eyes and I don't care if no one else goes. Or the woman at the well, or the lepers. I thought hundreds would have been lined up, because he told them over and over, if you don't go you destroy this body.

Again, you see. He's laid his glory by, and yet on the other hand, he says, look, no man taketh my life from me. I lay it down.

I have power to take it up. Have you and I that same power? If we're to be like he was, he came, huh? And he became what we are, that we might become what he is? No, no, no, no. Not unless you trim that statement down.

But again, you see, he's done all this for us. Being found in fascism and I'm going to fold this up here. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

Oh, my goodness, my goodness. Now he starts going down, down, down. Do you ever take all these, oh, you can call them theological things if you like.

Theology is a, it's a word people don't like. But, you know, theology is as simple as this. The simple definition of theology is this.

Theology is systematized knowledge concerning God as he has revealed himself to the man. Now what's difficult about that? Theology is just systematized knowledge concerning God as he has revealed himself to man. All right.

He's laid his glory by. I think the angels are still looking over the parapets of heaven and saying, when is he going to come back? What does he put up with it? Why, in glory there's no, there's no, there's no day or night and he lived in all the superlative splendor of eternity and there he is and he hasn't even got a bed to lay on, he's got nowhere to lay his head. Don't you think that made angels wonder? And he wants to do something and he says, hey, do you have a penny? Show me a penny.

He didn't even have a penny. A homeless, penniless son of God. It ties all our explanation, it exhausts all our vocabularies.

But being found in flesh as a man, he humbles himself and now he starts going down. He turned water into wine, he could have turned Herod into a statue. Why didn't he do it? He puts up with the ignominy and the humiliation.

He lets a mere man press thorns on his brow till the blood runs down. He lets another man who thinks his superiors spit on him and leave a clot of dirty, rotten, corrupt saliva on his cheek. He doesn't retaliate.

Well, most of us would have retaliated before then, wouldn't we? And then he goes into the garden, those poor old disciples that said Lord, teach us to pray. And he gives them the greatest chance they ever had, or any other man ever had, to learn to pray and they all fell asleep. And he came back the second time and they were still asleep.

And he came back the third time and they were still asleep. All right, he says, I'll leave you now. And then they drag him to an unjust trial.

It was illegal to try him at that hour anyhow. And the Jews couldn't put him to death, they had no legislation to do that, but they worked it so the Romans did. And they brought accusations against him.

And as a sheep, well sheep are pretty dumb, we think. No, a sheep can take more suffering than a lion. And he is a lamb, the lamb of God.

He doesn't retaliate. You see, ever since he left his father in glory, it's been down and down and down and down. And now he's come to the bottom, he goes into Gethsemane and then in a few minutes he's going to, a few hours he's going to go to the cross.

And all the scowling, howling mob round about are laughing and jeering and saying, so he's a son of God. And before long they're going to be saying, you saved others, come down from the cross and save yourself, which as I say is a perpetual challenge to every Christian. Why do you give up so much? Other people don't do it.

Why do you sacrifice? Why do you pray so much? Why do you fast two days, three days a week? Other people don't do that. But God isn't making other people, he's making you. And when you get up there they'll discover they don't have the rewards that you have.

Why? Because they were more obedient than you were or I was. And they drag him through the streets in humiliation. Have you thought of the crowd, the scowling crowd, the Greeks looking at him, the Roman soldiers and the Jews and everybody else making fun of him? You know, there are lots of people who can stand the fist of adversity, it's the finger of scorn we can't stand.

Amazing how people will put up with adversity, hardship, unemployment, other things. They'll let somebody ridicule them in the church and boy, they curl up like that. We kind of defend ourselves against the other things that scorn, ridicule and finally go to the final humiliation.

And they nail him between two malefactors. You know, I was reading that word today, it seemed so beautiful that it says that when Jesus was baptised in Jordan, it says he, as he was baptised, he was praying and the heavens opened. Do you know why they don't open so often to us? Because we don't

spend time in prayer, that's why.

If he needed to pray and he did pray, he prayed there, he prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration, he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and he buttressed himself all through his life with the only thing that you and I can do, it's buttressing himself with the Word of God because he said it is written and he buttressed himself with prayer. Here's an example for you, if you read the next chapter, you read in the third chapter of Philippians where Paul describes his own life. Look, I had some things I had to give up.

I was of the tribe of Benjamin, I was the seed of Abraham, he goes through all his culture and all his refinement. He was a Roman, he didn't buy his freedom, his father was a free Roman therefore he became a free Roman. And he says, I've gladly, gladly joyfully surrendered all these things for the Lord Jesus, but first of all I want you to know what he surrendered for you.

I guess, well, I had a young preacher come in to see me a half an hour before I came to the meeting tonight, wanted to borrow one or two books, which I gladly loaned him. One of them was by Jonathan Edwards and it reminded me, I'd been reading this today, this is in his wonderful, great, full, pure, sweet grace and love, and his meekness and gentle condescension. This grace had appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens.

The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all my thought and conception, which continued as near as I can judge about an hour, which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust and be full of Christ alone, to love Him with a holy and pure love, to trust in Him, live upon Him, serve Him, follow Him, and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times had the opportunity the same nature and which have had the same effect.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity and His office as sanctifier in His holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul. Now David Brainerd was in love with Jonathan Edward's daughter, and he would have married her, but that doesn't make the bridge. But David Brainerd has almost a wordful description of how he, walking in a forest one day, had an unveiling of the majesty of God, of the condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And after that love so amazing, as it was revealed to him that he didn't have to do it, but he did it. That he didn't do it for all the world, merely he did it for me. And after that he said, does it matter how I live? Does it matter where I live? Does it matter what I suffer? Does it matter how I live? In the short spell of life, and he died, you may remember, at 28 years of age, for the one who did so much for me, I don't know what you think, and I don't have to.

You know, I think many of us are content to live in a state of near poverty in our spiritual lives. Many of us want to go to heaven on minimum spirituality, a minimum prayer life, stuck up in our heads theologically, that doesn't mean too much to God anyhow. Compared with my worship and my devotion and my adoration, he took upon him the form of a servant.

And he wasn't enough to come to this level, being found in flesh as a man, and then he served all the others. And that wasn't enough. He goes down and down until he goes to the cross.

And then when you read the rest of the chapter, he talks not about his humiliation or his pre-creation first, then his humiliation, then he talks about his exaltation, that God has given him a name above every name. And then he says, come on for a minute, can you think of this age, just God blowing all the lights out, closing the business up, taking us into eternity where we see everybody way back to Adam, for every knee is going to bow, and every tongue becomes the one same tongue. And there's going to be a given moment in creation when every knee bows, whether you're the prophet Isaiah or you swept the crossing down the road, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Christ to the glory of the Father.

What a moment that's going to be. If we didn't have a glorified body, we'd burst at the seams, I think. This thing's going to be turned inside out.

We're going to see him in his pre-existence. We're going to see his prayer answered when he said that I may be with thee with the glory that I had before the world was. We're going to see the one who was totally God because John says in his first epistle, the first chapter, that we beheld his glory and we have seen him and we have handled him.

No, he wasn't a theophany in that sense. He lived 33 and a half years about. He took everything that comes to us, every temptation, every trial, every upset, and he triumphed in every one of them.

And he triumphed in order that we don't have a high priest who's somewhere up there in the sky with Abraham and Isaac and others that we can't reach, but we have a high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. And when you come to a situation where you can say, Jesus went this way and he triumphed there, or I can triumph. We give him too little adoration.

We don't take time to just be still. Oh, sometimes maybe you have to do it while you're underneath a car or washing up and you start singing, thank you Lord for saving my soul, but there's a time to get along with him. There's a time when you take him by his feet as it were.

There's a time when you gaze on him and you say, Lord, I recognize something of my total unworthiness. That if I live to be ninety or nine hundred years, I can't do God any favors. That he did the favor when he lifted me out of a horrible pit.

When he put my name in the book of life. When he made me a partaker of divine nature. When he took away my appetite for earthly perishing things of clay, as A.B. Simpson says.

And he set my feet on a rock. And he gave me a goal and he gave me power to reach that goal. I've taken more time than usual, but I wanted to share that with you because I thought of it while I was in hospital.

I had much else to do but think. And I thought about it every day since I came home. What condescension.

When God unveils it all in eternity, we'll be speechless. This weekend, Melody and Last Days will be going out. They go this weekend when they go Saturday or Sunday.

Pardon? Sunday. Sunday. So we need to pray.

They've, I think, ten concerts. Let's pray for them. We have Dave Wilkerson on the West Coast.

Has a wonderful family. They've been having some big meetings there. I guess you heard part of the report anyhow about YWAM.

They've been having a time of blessing in the boat. They went to Guatemala. That wonderful bridge head that God gave to the Calvary Commission when our dear friend Little Warrior went down there.

And God opened an amazing door for them down there in Belize. Used to British Honduras it used to be, but they changed it now. It's Belize.

And they've been praying for him. Are there other people we can pray for in the final part of this meeting? You know what would be real good? It would be good if you would be honest with God tonight and apologize to him for how little you've really worshipped him. Not just when you've praised him and got happy, but when you've fallen in adoration at his feet and used that good American hymn, As thou hast died for me, so may my love to thee, pure, warm, and changeless be a living fire.

You see, you can't make God rich if you give him a million dollars an hour. And do you know he'll get along without your wisdom? You haven't any wisdom to give him. All you can give him is love and adoration.

And again, don't substitute sacrifice or service for love and devotion and sweetness. Supposing Jesus could walk down the aisle tonight and I say, Lord, would you start right here with my friend at the end here and come right down the road, right across and round, and tell us how many of us are real really paid up in our adoration and our worship and our true thanksgiving. You see, often we think that the devil, that God has given us a raw deal.

And you know what the trouble is? We've dried ourselves up. We haven't put our well, our bucket down in the well of adoration and love. We haven't been willing just to get it.

Take one aspect. Each time you go, you can't take the whole revelation of God, but one day you can thank him for his holiness, you can thank him for his love, you can thank him for his mercy. We can all do that.

Thank him for the revelation he's given, thank him for the home he's prepared. Oh mercy, there's so many things we could adore him for. Then ask yourself, how is it that you're a favored one, that you know God and there are about three billion people in the world still that don't know him.

And the way we're going, they won't get to know him either. There'll have to be a new urge of divine lovingness. Love that doesn't count the cost, love that doesn't ask any questions.

God doesn't owe you any explanations. If he gives you marching orders, do it. Because if you don't, somebody else will do it, and if they do it, they'll get the crown anyhow.

You know, I felt strongly in my heart today, a lot of us need to make an apology. You don't need to pray all night, if you do it it'll be all right, we'll stay. They do say, Lord, I failed, I failed to give you the place of love and adoration in my heart I should have given you.

I'm like the horse leech in the scripture, I'm always coming to get, get, get, but not much to give. So let's have some short concessions tonight, let's have some short prayers, and as one prays we'll all agree, if you pray for YVAM, if you pray for Agape, if you pray for Last Days, pray for Calvary Commission. But let's pray.

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