

Poverty of Spirit #2

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill explores the profound implications of being poor in spirit and the foundational principles of God's kingdom as taught by Jesus.

Duration: 1:14:18

Scripture: Psalm 34:6, Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 6:33, Luke 6:20, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:8-9, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:5-6

Topics: "Christian Life", "Humility", "Spiritual Poverty"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the significance of being 'poor in spirit' as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. He reflects on the importance of humility and recognizing our spiritual poverty, which leads to a deeper reliance on God. Ravenhill contrasts the external kingdoms built on power and wealth with the eternal kingdom of Christ, founded on love and righteousness. He urges believers to embrace their need for God's grace and to cultivate a heart that seeks purity and humility, as these are essential for true discipleship. Ultimately, he calls for a revival of genuine faith that acknowledges our dependence on God and the transformative power of His love.

Transcript

Going back to the Sermon on the Mount, the version that's given in the Gospel is recorded by Matthew in chapter 5, chapter 5. Read from verse 1, And seeing the multitudes, he went into a mountain, and there, when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I've been trying to rethink some things about this period in the life of the Lord Jesus. We would say that he was riding a crest of popularity.

He had come to a new peak in his life. People were flocking from Jerusalem, and Judea, and Tyre, and Sidon. And I think the reason's pretty obvious, because they were getting healed, they were getting fed, they were getting a lot of things for nothing, and you can always get a crowd when there's a lot of things for nothing.

The second thing is that it was after he spent a night in prayer that he chose his twelve disciples. If you read the Gospel of Luke, interpret it, you'll discover that it could well call be the Gospel of Prayer. Because in every crisis in the life of Jesus, Luke emphasizes what none of the other Matthew, Mark, or John emphasize.

For instance, in the Jordan of Dove, all the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, have said this, but Luke says it was as he was praying a dove descended on him. He's the only one that makes that reference. And then at the end of the journey, when Jesus is on the cross, it's Luke that says, as he was praying, he was praying even for the sinners round about him.

In between, you'll find him choosing his twelve disciples, after he had spent a whole night in prayer. I wonder how many deacons would get elected if we prayed all night before we selected deacons. But he had prayed all night, and then he selected the twelve disciples.

It was after he had, uh, it was while he was on the Mount of Transfiguration, Luke says, as he was praying, he was transfigured before them. And so in every major crisis in the life of Jesus, Luke emphasizes this fact, that as he prayed, which I think is a very obvious thing to us, that in any crisis of life, we ought to major on prayer before we make a major decision. And then, this is the only sense of organizing at and seeing the life of Jesus, first he chooses twelve, and then, immediately after that, he lays down the principles here of his kingdom.

You see, it wasn't possible for him to delay this, because what Jesus is teaching here to his disciples, and after all, this is the word of God, through the lips of the Son of God, to the people of God. It's true that there were other people round about, but he's speaking directly to his disciples here. And what he teaches here, right down here, right down, right down through the whole chapter, right into the next chapter, too, where he is teaching the principles of his ministry, and he's giving them guidance for their own lives.

I wonder, as I thought of the disciples sitting immediately in front of Jesus, my, what a privilege it must have been to listen to him as a teacher. I wonder what their immediate reaction was, I wonder if a kind of a fire was burning, as they were saying, you know what, I believe, you know what I think, you know what, I've just come to a conclusion about, I believe he's the Messiah. I've just been thinking of all that he's been doing in the past few weeks, because he's done, he's done what Isaiah said, when he has come, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the lame leap as a harp, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

And then after that, you'll remember that God said that I should go one before him. And you know, this struck me forcibly. Last Wednesday night, I tried at least to preach on John Baptist, and as I prepared, and the Lord said to John, prepare ye the way of the Lord.

He didn't say, I'll send Gabriel, or Michael the archangel, or ten thousand angels. You prepare the way of the Lord. And I'm prepared, I believe, I'm convinced, there is a human agency preparing the way for revival.

Why couldn't God send Gabriel? He sent Gabriel down to tell, to tell of that that I have, that his wife was going to bear a son. He sent an angel to tell, to talk with Abraham in the gate of the, of the door of his tent. He sent an angel to speak to Lot before he was going to, why didn't he send angels? Because angels never, in my judgment, prepare the way for revival.

They never prepare the true way of blessing. And so God says to John, prepare ye the way of the Lord. And I think they might, might have turned this over and said, well look, he foresees everything as I said it, and that's the truth.

There's been a man called John preparing the way for him. It is essential at this point that they heard the basis of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. You know, that makes me think of how many kingdoms there have been.

There have been kingdoms founded on money, like the empire of the, of the Rockefellers. There have been kingdoms founded on force, like Napoleon's strategy and some of the great men in history. There have been kingdoms that have been built on science.

There have been kingdoms built in many areas. There is only one kingdom ever that has been built on love. And that is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is what Finney called a royal rule and reign of love. It establishes the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every other kingdom has death in it.

His kingdom only has true life. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. I like that.

We're so tired of seeing things go up and come down. So tired of big governments. So tired of big empires.

But earth's proud empires pass away. And yet the kingdom, the empire of Jesus Christ, shall never pass away. It is essential that they get to know right in here what it's all about.

Now, if you speak truth, the truth that blesses somebody will blast somebody else. The truth that heals one will hurt another. It's essential that they learn what the kingdom is all about here.

Now, when Jesus sits down, remember, he's got a whole multitude around him. It's impossible to think that the Roman soldiers were not there, that the Greeks were not there, the Jews, the Pharisees, the scribes and others. And he's talking about meekness in the midst of arrogance.

Who is more swashbuckling and parasocial than the Pharisees themselves? Who are more haughty than the Sadducees? He's talking about meekness. Boy, that's a shock at the Romans there, isn't it? And yet some of the others might have thought the same thing. You see, whichever way you preach truth, somebody will get hurt by it, somebody will get helped by it.

Somebody will say, you were shooting at us, and somebody else says, no, forget it, he was shooting at us. And again, I say, this is one of the bravest things, though Jesus always did brave things. He walked in the synagogue, went into the temple, and there were 6,000 people there, and stood right in the middle of a feast where for 6 days they poured out water.

And the 7th day, the last day of the feast, he stood in the very place where they'd been pouring out water, reminding them of something that was historical when God split the rock, and he says, listen, I want to tell you, the water that you seek, I am that supply of water. And if a man comes to me out of his inmost being, no, he didn't say that. That's what we teach, that's not what he said.

He said, when he, the spirit of truth, is come, and he dwells you out of his inmost being. Because if you get into a state of dryness and backslidenness, he's not going to pour out of you, however corrupt your or my theology may be. It's out of his inmost being.

I like that phrase of Wesleyan, it's him, he's a lover of my soul. I think it's rapturous, not just because it's English, but it is rapturous. Thou, O Christ, art all I want, and more than a... And then he says, spring thou

up within my heart, rise to all eternity.

Do you think Rockefeller walks down New York wondering if he's going to get a loaf of bread or anything? Do you think he's thinking next week of going on food stamps? I don't think he is, with all his ambitions. You know, you and I should, I know we're emotional, we have emotions. I know there are dry patches.

I know there are periods when God will shut you up into darkness to see whether you love his work and love service and love people more than himself. That's his prerogative. And yet if I say to myself, thou of life profound enough, spring thou up within my heart, rise to all eternity.

Stopping over here a minute, let's remember this, that we said that some people interpret this word, blessed as happy. But my good friend, Scaras of the Hyatins, who is the head of the American Mission to and he was raised in Greek and he speaks one or two different kinds of Greek, at least understands them. And he says there is no word in the whole New Testament, I mean the Greek New Testament, which you can, with any justification, translate as happiness, as we know it.

I looked at my dictionary, old Noah, there, not Noah's Ark, you know, Noah Webster. Noah said happiness, and he goes back and he said it belongs to hap, hap. Sometimes they say, well, it was happenstance.

I look for that, but that, that must be a modern American word, it's not in the dictionary. Happenstance. But happiness depends on happenings.

You see, the people who are happy are governed by something external. The people who are blessed are governed by something internal. You see, on the world now, a bit like Texas this week, cross, goodness me, that belongs up north, what are they doing down here? And so on the world, you're beginning to realize the value of the thermostat.

You set it, you say, well, I want my room at 75, you set it. Somebody leaves the door wide open, and the cold air comes in, and the more cold air comes in, that thermostat pipes back and says, you're not coming in here, get out of here. And it puts on the pressure, and puts on the pressure, and it pipes to keep an even temperature of 75.

But if you put your thermometer outside, I think Chloe was saying the other day, we have one somewhere, I think she'd look at the thermometer. All right, what does a thermometer do outside? It gets kicked around with all the weather. It can't fight that.

Now let me ask you a very simple, very painful thing. Are you a thermometer or a thermostat? Do you get pushed around by circumstances, or do you say, no, I'm the master in this under God? Do you know what I feel like today? People say that sometimes, they often say, no, I know what you look like, I know what you feel like. Well, I'll tell you how I feel.

Now feelings are the most treacherous thing in the whole world. If you're going to live by feelings, you don't need faith. And if you have faith, forget feelings.

You see, either I am controlled internally by God himself, and circumstances can go up and down, but I go up and down with them. I'm not a thermometer. I'm a thermostat.

I fight that. I think the great joy, the key of the life of the Apostle Paul was, none of these things move me, number one. Number two.

This one thing I do. God is polarized on those things. And to step back, I think that the disciples must have been thrilled to death, really, when they realized what Jesus was saying.

These are the basic things of his kingdom. And he's saying here, blessed are the poor in spirit. I think it's essential that he taught this.

He couldn't have taught this just before he went into the Garden of Gethsemane. They would never have understood. He was launching them out, and he was going to wean them, and weaning is never easy, is it? You know, this made me think of how essential foundations are.

And I'm going to have a side kick here for a minute about you parents. Because last week, children were discussed twice in the groups we were in. And I thought of how easily, in these days, and it's true, speaking generally, how easily children get by in homes.

And they were discussing this monster that's in nearly every house, the monster of the TV. How much should there be of TV? How much should you control it? Not if the kids kick and scream and say, oh, well, go look at it, then forget it. You're the boss of the home.

What foundations are we laying in lives for children? Now we say they're born in depravity. I don't care what degree of depravity you say, I'll leave that for you to sort out. But we shouldn't feed their depravity.

We had a brother, Herb and John met him the other day from Switzerland, came into our meetings. And in the course of talking, he mentioned TV, and he said, oh, in America, I so hate your TV. Every time I turn it on, it's violence, and blood, and it's horrible.

You glorify, you glorify, or at least you're pushing, you're trading all the time in violence, in blood, and murder, and all these things. He said, there's only one thing worse. I said, what's that? He said, British TV.

He said, we've got 60% of British TV over in New Zealand. And the emphasis is not on violence. The emphasis is on smut, on sex.

And he said, we've learned to come down on this thing. Now, these guys were discussing TV, what they'd done. Not more than half an hour TV any night.

I think that's enough, maybe too much. And no TV until all your homework's done. Not get tired watching it and saying, well, help me with this and do the other.

One of our boys, I don't know about the others, don't remember too well, but I remember once Paul had a problem. And Mummy said, she's very good at maths. And she said, I'll help you.

He said, no, Mummy, if you help me, it's not my homework. I have to do it. Who was it recently, one big man, I forget his name.

His wife is training as a lawyer, and she had a difficult exam. And he said, well, listen, let me help you. She said, no, supposing you die, who's going to help me with law? I've got to get through on this myself.

Now, this is getting a serious thing, you see, because what you saw in a child's mind, it's an accepted psychological fact that 80% of the things that you hear, you forget. I think it's 95% in me right now. But anyhow, 80% of the things that you hear, you forget.

80% of the things you see, you remember. You ask me, did I see a certain waterfall in New Zealand? I can see it now, tumbling down there. You ask me about another place, another country, and immediately I get a mental picture of it.

If you ask me what somebody said at the site of that waterfall, I can't remember a thing about it. Now, I'm saying that to say this, you see, that we should not feed the tendencies that there are in children to violence and other things. It should be, in my judgment, it should be in your home that your children, every day, are confronted with the Word of God.

And every week, they learn at least one verse of Scripture. If they don't, you don't go out to pray on Saturday. You say, that's hard.

Well, what are you trying to produce? As a Christian, do you want somebody, a child equivalent with a kid across the road whose dad's a drunk and the kid knows every devilish thing that's going on on TV and whatnot? You see, the child's mind is so fertile. And I was thinking there, what we had to learn when we were children, and I'm glad we were conscripted to it. People say you shouldn't make your children do that, you shouldn't make them learn their ABCs, be logical, and don't learn them at twice, twos, four.

Now, be consistent. If you want them totally ignorant, well, I'll go along with you. Forget it.

But don't be strong in one area and weak in the other. The most important thing is surely that our children learn character and that they learn to fear God. I don't claim to be a saint, but I can remember at five years of age in church, I was not allowed to shuffle.

If I'd ever got spanked, I wasn't allowed just to go to church. And you should do this whether your children come to this meeting and the other. You should ask them when they go home what the meeting was about, what the scripture reading was, how much they picked up in it.

Now, I'm quite aware that much of what we say is about the heads of these children. I'm quite aware, too, that when I was five years old, I picked up truth that I could hardly see over the pew. I can remember seeing a hymn, I'll praise my maker while I breath, one written by Watts.

And there's a line that finishes in the hymn that says, Nor immortality endure. And you know, I never heard the preacher that night. I struggle with that word immortality.

Couldn't know it. I didn't know whether it was something you ate or something that you bought or what it was. But when I got home, I asked some questions about it.

My mother didn't know too much either, but it made her go searching for a while. And then she comes up and says, Well, Len, I want to tell you about this. You know, we bypass children to learn.

The Japanese are smarter. You know, they teach the children the violin at two years of age. In Tokyo, there's a concert every Saturday morning of 2,000 children all playing the violin.

Now, don't ask me if I'd like to go in, because I certainly wouldn't like to hear 2,000 kids screeching catgut across, horses tail across catgut. I wouldn't like it. But they say the potential is there.

I don't know. I think in America, what is it, 60 years of age, you go to school, is it? Compulsory at five in England, compulsory earlier than that in some schools. Some of our kids went in at three and a half.

The latent possibilities of a child's mind are almost indescribable. And when they grow older, oh, they're a kid now. Sure they were.

I'm thankful to God. I thank God today I wasn't raised in a TV age. I'm really happy I'm not raising a family now.

I'm too old. You get older, you don't have the same durability. I'm not saying it can't be done, because last week I saw two little guys, one was seven, the other five, and I was amazed at the theological questions they asked.

I was amazed at the spiritual questions they asked. You see, if a boy lives with the values of football, and all he does is talk football. Jack Nicklaus has a boy.

Jack Nicklaus, the world's greatest golfer, they say. He has a boy 12. Jack Nicklaus says he's going to beat me one day.

He is just a master at golf. But I put a golf club in his hand when he was about six. I've been showing him how to make strokes.

I love to take him out. I love to impart my knowledge. I know the man does that in the realm of science, but ours is the greatest of all.

After all, the queen of theology is the queen of the sciences, in my judgment. The loftiest discovery that can be made this side of eternity is about the majesty and the holiness of God. After all, your children are going to live forever and ever, too.

And it should be, again, I believe that... I was saying that we learn the second part. The first part of Psalm 119 is Aleph, and the second part is Beth, and it begins right with, All shall a young man cleanse his way by taking thee thereof according to thy word. And then that wonderful, wonderful verse, God, in the, pardon me, Proverbs chapter three, let not mercy and truth forsake thee.

Bind them around thy neck, and write them upon the table of thine heart. You know, a devout Jew today still has a little box. I remember being on a train from New York down to Miami, and I got up early in the morning.

I didn't have a bed anyhow, but I got up out of my chair, and I thought, well, I'll go wash and freshen up. And when I got there, there was a Jew just tying his, I think it's called, phylactery around his forehead, and stripped his wrap. He didn't care about other people in the washroom.

He had his coat off, his sleeves rolled up. He stripped him, and a Bible, and a prayer shawl. He'd go and strip him.

He was munching away, and munching away, and talking away, and talking away. I thought, good for you. Good for you.

I may not agree with all you say, but I'm glad to be encouraged to do it. In the Reader's Digest a while ago, there's a picture there of a Greyhound bus stopping on the main way from Los Angeles to Frisco. It was

sundown, and the man on the bus pulled the cord and asked the driver, he said, please, could you stop? Why do you want to stop? There's no restrooms, anything.

No, no, he said, it's time for me to pray. I must pray. The sun's going down.

Pray? You know, I'm a Mohammedan. And he got out, and he spread his rug on the side of the road, and everybody got out to take pictures of a man that dared to pray. I wonder how many Christians dare do that.

Because we've got a scripture. Scripture, you're not to, you know, do your good work before men. But I wonder how many of us courageously dare go and do a thing like that, you see.

People talk about the repressed complex of your subconscious, what's hidden there. Forget it. Let's remember what Jesus said.

Jesus says that if you learn the word of truth in your heart, he will bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever ye have learned. If you ask me what 2 Chronicles 7.14 is, like Nancy, if you ask me what 1 Chronicles 7.14 is, I don't know. And he won't tell me, because I haven't learned it.

He doesn't aid my laziness. You're the word of God into the minds of people. How do you know your children won't go to concentration camps if the Lord tarries? How do you know they may not deviate from the line of truth? And that word is there, and someday that word will come back.

Write it upon my, write it upon the tables of your house. Dine it upon your neck. Get it there.

There is nothing more valuable, again, than knowing the word of God. And therefore I say again here that Jesus has to, Jesus is laying down the foundations in this fifth chapter. He has to do it here at the beginning.

He cannot do it at the end. He will not do it at the end. It's essential that they know what all this is about, what are the laws of his kingdom.

It's a kingdom, again, founded on love. To me, this Sermon on the Mount is really the inner robe of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, in the days that Jesus was around, we're distinguished, we did clothes like they are today.

Remember the man that wore purple and fine linen? And we forget sometimes, I think, that every thread was put in by hand. They had no machines. And therefore only the rich people wore long, flowing robes.

And only the very rich wore robes that had any purple or any coloring in them. That was a distinction. That was social character, social casting.

This is the inner robe. Jesus is not concerned about the outer robe. They're told he wore a peasant's garment.

Not much to it, not very expensive. Maybe his mother made the whole thing. But here, to me, you get the inner robes of the Lord Jesus.

Isn't it in Psalm 45 that the psalmist says, the king's daughter is all glorious within? A garment sort of fine needlework and so forth. The inner graces. And when Jesus talks about love, and talks about meekness, and talks about gentleness, all he's doing is showing us the inner character that he himself has.

This is typical of his own nature, of his own life. And these things have to be in the lives of these individuals who are going to manifest in the flesh, they're going to manifest that they're the children of God. That they're part of his kingdom, his eternal kingdom.

Jesus, thy robe of, Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, we sang this afternoon. My beauty is my glorious dress, midst flaming worlds in these arrays. You know, that's staggering if you sit down and think of it.

I say again, I wonder if the disciples reflected as they sat there, you know what, we're entering the greatest kingdom that we'll ever be. This is the very son of God. And if you think they missed it, let me ask you how many times you and I have sat still this week.

Just sat still and read the scripture, forgotten the scripture, and pondered on his majesty, and on the fact that you are part of an eternal kingdom. But forever and ever, and over a million, billion, trillion, quadrillion years from now, you'll be in eternity in his presence somewhere. Fabulous, isn't it? A kingdom which is constructed on purity, a kingdom which is constructed on righteousness.

There never has been a kingdom like this. And the only way you can speak of it really is in superlatives. No wonder that the poets go spilling off as they do when they get enraptured about his love, and enraptured about his holiness, and enraptured about his majesty, and enraptured about his purity.

It's the most amazing thing in the whole world that we can know this. That we can have this same nature within us because he took our human nature that we might be made partakers of the divine nature. He had more than divine nature because he was deity.

I'm not deity, but I have a divine nature so have you if you're born again. In one of his hymns, Wesley says, Thy nature, gracious Lord, imparts. Come quickly from above.

Write thy new name upon my heart, thy new best name of love. Now as I said before, he's approximating to the highest thing in the whole world. He's going to lead us along into that place where he says, Blessed are the pure in heart.

That sounds ridiculous. To me, as I see the true church of Jesus, and I don't see a steeple on it, and I don't see denomination or labels, I believe that people are blood-bought and obedient, and the Holy Spirit is in them. They're part of the kingdom.

They're part of his body. But as I see that body, it seems to me the church today is just like a lily on a pile of dung. These disciples and the other people around about me said, Well, I mean, this guy, this fellow's crazy.

Talking about me. Look at that soldier there, feeling of his sword and smirking. Talking about meekness, look in religion.

There's a Pharisee, a proud and arrogant man as you'll find on the face of the earth. Look at the Sadducees. Look at the others around here.

And yet the fruit of this spirit is what? Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness. Paul writes later about the gentleness and meekness of Jesus Christ. It's a revolution, I think.

It is a revolution without saying, qualifying it by saying, I think it is a revolution. It is a miracle of miracles that Christ can be formed in us. And then he puts us where he wills, in a factory, in a home, on a foreign

field, as we say, or somewhere.

But the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ may be revealed in us and revealed through us. All right, Jesus says, Blessed are the poor. Again, I say it's a good thing he started there.

Let's step back a minute. Verse two, he opened his mouth and taught them. Well, you say he couldn't teach them if he didn't open his mouth.

The issue here again is a pale English, sleepy Elizabethan English of the King James Version. I guess in the Greek, it would tell you it's in the *ingressidoris* tense. It means he spoke with authority.

And you remember that even sinners said that afterwards. He speaks with authority and not as one of the scribes. Oh, if there's anything needed in the ministry of God today, it's for men to speak with authority, not to make you feel that they're presenting something which is optional.

You can take it or not take it. No, sir. If you don't accept it, then if it's a message from God, if you don't accept it, or if I don't accept it when I'm being taught, then I'm going to suffer consequences for it.

There is no waste in the economy of God. If he brings the truth to me, it must be that I'm at that stage in my Christian life where I can absorb that truth. Now he says, blessed are the poor in spirit.

Luke doesn't say that. He just says, blessed are the poor. Do you know there are degrees of poverty? You say, there's an old man lives down there, he hasn't enough to live on.

He's a pauper. Now if somebody asked if you knew any Latin, you'd say no, but pauper actually is a Latin word for poor. There is another Latin word, mendicant, from which we get the word mendicant, which means a beggar.

There's all the difference in the world between a poor man and a beggar. There are people living in slum conditions in this country who are far too proud in spirit to beg. Maybe they should beg, but they won't.

They're in extreme poverty, but they're not beggars. A man who is poor need not be a beggar, but a man who is beggar is usually the very rare exception. He's desperately, desperately poor.

And Jesus here is talking about a man here who is a beggar. He is a beggar. If you want to be in the words of a hymn again, nothing in my hands I bring simply.

And do you know what? I believe that's a perpetual situation for a believer. He never steps up and says, where are you? Of course, I'm not what I used to be. I know a lot more.

I'm more sophisticated. No, sirree. You have no more chance of licking the devil with your Bible knowledge tomorrow than you have before ever you were saved, as far as I'm concerned.

There must be the quickening of the spirit of God there. The spirit quickeneth. Bold shall I stand, and God, we chose on him today, bold shall I stand in that great day.

Wesley said, I shall need the atoning blood even when I stand. I have no boldness except in that. I'm a beggar.

I need mercy every day. I need grace every day. I need strength every day.

The man who is poor may have some resources. At least he's managing to keep a life. The beggar says, I have nothing.

I have no way of clothing myself. I have no way of sheltering myself. I have no way of feeding myself.

I have no way of cleaning myself. Please, please. And you know, God loves that.

A psalmist wrote a lot of majestic things, but boy, he wrote some deep things too. He says, This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him. Again and again, he uses that phrase, I cried unto the Lord.

Well, you cry in poverty. You may not be able to diagnose that poverty one day like you do the other day, but it should be every day, I believe, the cry of our hearts. There is an area of poverty, and I come to one who is able to supply all my need out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Again, plenteous grace with thee is found. Another scripture, the river of God is full of water. One of the embarrassments when we get to eternity, in my judgment, will be how little we've appropriated of what Jesus Christ purchased for us.

I used to sing a hymn years ago, the purchase of thy debt be back. You can tell me all that Adam had. You can tell me all about the depravity that Adam brought upon us, and when you've done, I'll tell you that the last Adam has undone all the work of the first Adam.

If he didn't, he didn't give us a complete redemption. If he didn't, he isn't omnipotent, but he is. I said to the Pope the other day, I'm ashamed that we live so much in waters just to the ankles instead of getting to the knees or to the loins of waters to swim in.

There's so much undiscovered territory. I'm not just poor. Oh, I'm poor, all right, but I'm a beggar.

And this poor man cried, and the Lord said, bow down thine ear and hear me, for I'm poor and needy. Oh, come on, come on. You don't mean that.

That's poisonous. Hey, you just go back, David, and look at that psalm you wrote yesterday. It's going to bless millions of people.

You're suggesting that you're broke, that you're really spiritually broke. You could write a hymn like that, but he says that was yesterday. Today, I'm conscious of my need.

You know, one of the wonderful things about the human body, and it might've got a lot of wonderful things, but it's amazing how hungry you can feed. And somebody says, will you take an easy? No, I can't take anything. I'll just eat.

You go to bed, get up in the morning, you haven't exercised, you haven't done anything. Maybe you wake up with a ravenous hunger. And you know what? If somebody gives you bread and butter tomorrow morning of the same cereal they've had for the last 10 years, in fact, if somebody changes it, oh, I can't take that.

Why not? I don't like it. Oh, when did you last have it? Well, I've never had it, but I don't like it. How do you know you don't like it? Well, because I like everything.

So, well, we're totally illogical in many things. I mean, you can put that same diet before a person. My daddy would take porridge, as we say, every morning, and bacon and egg, world without end.

He never wanted a change. Didn't make any difference what, no, no, I don't want, no, I don't want food, no, I don't want this, no, I don't want a, bacon and egg, bacon and egg, porridge, good old stock porridge. And you know the amazing thing about, about the satisfaction of a meal too, how it satisfies, it gives you an ease and a comfort.

And you know, it's amazing in the spiritual life. Now, I don't think we ought to serve up our meals all the time spiritually, because the resources of God are so vast. But isn't it amazing that there is an area that God, that Jesus Christ is both the hunger, and he's the bread.

He longs for his father through me. The spirit longs for the father. Our fellowship is with the father, and with his son, and with one another.

We turn it over, and we get too much, come out of fellowship with each other. If you ask some people to go alone, and have as much fellowship with the father as they have at some meetings they go to, they die on the spot nearly. Oh, I can't stay by myself all that time.

Well then friend, there's something seriously wrong. If you can spend more time in a crowded meeting, and enjoy it more, when you enjoy your personal relationship, then on the basis of that picture, I think it's wrong. Our fellowship is first of all with the father.

I can't draw life from a group of people. I may get some joy. I may get a little bit of a lift.

I may enjoy their company, but actually when it comes down to the last thing, our fellowship is with the father. I draw my life from him. I draw my joy from him.

I draw my peace from him. Well, what are the best illustrations about this poverty? Well, I think in the word of God, there are three very beautiful, very simple things. You remember, two men went up into the temple to pray.

One of them hadn't got any means at all. The only mean he had was to go and boast of how big and fat and sure he was. He went up into the temple to pray.

I don't think he went up into the temple, he went up to the front. And he went to the front, and he lifted up his voice, and he reminded the Lord of our virtues and all. Thank God I'm not as other men are.

Extortion is unjust for even the Republican. I fast twice. I, I, is what I strain, is all I. I fast twice in the week.

I give tithes of all that I possess. Just paraded everything. What did the Republican do? Stood behind the pillar of me, beat upon his breast saying, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And he went to his house justified. How do you know he hadn't done good works that week? He might have done a lot. But deep in his heart he says, no, no, this is no place.

Oh, the Pharisee enjoyed his own righteousness. Did you ever do that? He enjoyed the, the saying, God, you know, I'm not this kind of man. I'm not that kind of woman.

I mean, I've always lived on the clean side of the road. Well, I think of a lot to thank God for. I don't think there's any virtue in being born in a ghetto.

And maybe there's no shame. It's not your responsibility. The job is if you stay there.

But very often I've been in meetings where even testimony meetings became meetings of boasting. You felt somebody's trying to put one over on you, you know. The poor guy, a fellow that went up and beat his breast and stood behind the pillar there, hiding away says, well, Lord, I, I'm sorry.

I have nothing to bring. He smote his breast, a sign of humiliation, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. And he went down to his house justified rather than the other.

The other case of true poverty to me is the, is the, is the prodigal. He went into a far country. I don't know what he spent, maybe a million dollars.

I know he lost everything. He didn't lose his money. He lost his character.

He lost his reputation. He lost his purity. He lost his sense of bearing.

He lost his family. Then he lost everything. You know, Jesus says before you enter the kingdom, would you do me a little favor, sit down and count the cost.

It's going to cost you an awful lot. Because an experience of God that costs nothing is worth nothing. And it does nothing.

But you never knew a man sit down and figure out what it would cost him to go to hell, did you? Men don't do that. You lose your money, you lose your life. You may lose your home and you're going to be lost.

For all eternity. The devil never sits down and says, sit down and count the consequences. Sit down and count the cost.

People rushed to vote for missions. Dr. Ellie Maxwell there, Prairie Bible Institute, one of the best schools in the country, if you need to send your children anywhere. Ellie Maxwell said this, they have missionary rallies two or three times a year.

And he said out of every hundred students that come forward and say I'll go to the mission field, one goes. Out of a hundred that come forward, but of ten you go into full-time service. Now out of the ten, nine stay at home and one goes to the field.

All right, sit down and count the cost. The young man didn't do that. Somebody told him there's a happy land or a hippy land, I don't know which, not far away.

So he set off and went, took his money and had a great time. You know that's what he did, hmm? When he began to be in want, he went to a man that had pigs. But when he was dying, he went to his father.

I know that he went home with a genuine repentance. Why? By the way, he went home. He went home in absolute poverty.

Why? Well, obviously he was in rags, he had no strength, he had nothing to present to his father except his filth. And I know he went with a genuine broken heart about his sin. It doesn't say it in scripture, it does if you read it carefully, between the lines without getting off the lines.

Well, how do you figure it out? Because if he hadn't have gone home blaming himself for all the sin he'd done, he would have walked in the house and blasted his father and said, you old fool. Do you know why I've been in jail? Do you know why I've been in the gutter? You gave me the money and you knew I couldn't stand up to it. You know the areas I'm weak in.

Why did he give me the money? He didn't blame his father. If he hadn't have been genuine repentant, I guess he would have gone to his brother and said, so you, you never dirtied your hands, did you? You never did this or that or the other. But he doesn't attack his father like that, he doesn't attack his brother like that.

He has nobody to blame but himself. And he blames himself. He takes all the responsibility for all that happened.

The father says, bring forth a robe and put it on him. How do you think they threw a robe over a man that had been wallowing with pain? Surely he got cleansed before they put the robe on him. Surely his feet were washed before they put sandals on his feet.

His father was disgusted he came home without sandals. After all, only slaves have no sandals. All God's children got shoes, they tell the folks there.

I'm going to walk in heaven in my shoes. Why? Because they never had shoes. When I go to heaven, I'm going to have a pair of shoes.

That's going to be heaven. Put shoes on his feet. But I don't believe he got shoes on his feet before they were washed.

I don't believe they threw a robe on him before he was bathed and got all the stink of the hogs off him. Before God puts a robe on me, he's going to cleanse me. As I tried to emphasize before, we only preach half a salvation.

We tell people you want to be forgiven. Well, they're idiots if they don't. But in Holy Mary, he promised mummy she wouldn't dirty her dress and then she falls in the dirt.

Mummy comes in and says, um, you fell in your dress? Yes. Dirty the dress? Yes. But I'm sorry.

Mother says, all right. All right, if you're sorry, I forgive you. Kisses the little girl, changes her dress.

The relationship's restored between the mother and the girl. Fine. The girl's forgiven.

The mother isn't angry. Has that taken the dirt out of the dress? She needs more than forgiveness. She needs cleansing.

But we say, you'll come, the Lord will forgive your sins. Just say this sinner's pride be merciful to me, and that's all right. And to many people, I'm convinced it's a psychological somersault because the results prove that.

Not in every case, but in most cases, because the percentage of preserved fruit in the Christian life is desperately small. I mean, in evangelism, they're very small. This fellow comes repentant.

He doesn't attack his father for giving him the money. He doesn't attack his brother and say, she really cared, instead of listing my sins. For after all, it was the brother that recited the sins, not the father.

In essence, the father says, my son is bad. Tell me, in essence, the son says, my brother's bad. The father never said he was bad.

He said he was bad, in presbyterism, in sin. And again, I remind you, Jesus did not come into the world to make bad men good. He came into the world to make dead men good.

And you know, while I was meditating the other day, I was thinking about this presence, this push up in Congress to get one day, to keep one day separate, or to recognize someday as something for transcendental meditation. And I was thinking, yes, the accent of all these modern religions is what? Peace. Because everybody's disturbed.

And the difference between Christianity and those other religions is that the accent of Christianity is not, first of all, peace, but purity. Jesus Christ is aiming at that one thing. He's going to get us there eventually, the pure in heart.

But you start with poverty. Thou shalt mine ear and hear me. I'm poor and needy.

I have nothing to commend myself. Yeah, my daddy may have been a bishop. My uncle may have been a famous character.

But that doesn't do a thing for me. I have to come out in poverty. Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night, Jesus, I come.

Out of my sickness, into thy health. Out of my poverty, into thy wealth. Out of my sin, and into thyself.

So I find a good example here in this poor derelict that came home, dead broke. And he says, I know what my father will do. He's a man of compassion and love.

I won't go and run to my brother. He's just a deacon in the church or something. I won't go there.

But I'll go to my father. And his father saw him, and he ran and fell on his neck. And he said, I've got all you want.

Look at the elder brother. That father had two prodigies. One of them never left home.

Oh brother, he's going to be in a mess one day. As I tried to say to people the other day, look brother, before you and I start riding the high horse, just get your nose rubbed a bit in the dust. Read Hebrews 11 again.

There's some deep kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Look at all the wonderful things they did, and not one of them ever had a Bible. You and I have the full revelation.

What have we done with it? The elder brother had everything. And when he said to his father, well, if I don't like this, why not? Well, I've always been a good boy. But thou gavest me no great party.

You didn't kill a fatty calf for me. I can, father says, hold it, what are you saying? Well, I'm just saying you never called my friends in and gave a great banquet and killed a fatty calf. Now the big show, he says, I

couldn't do that.

Well, why couldn't you do it? Because he said, you own all the cattle, they're yours. I divided the inheritance with your brother. He wasted it, what have you done with yours? All they do is count them every day and say, I'm getting richer, and I'm getting greater, and I'm getting, what have you done with it? You know, to whom much is given in that great day? Oh yes, you can, but more people listen to me over radio than anybody else.

More people have read my book. Go ahead, boast of it. But remember at the end of the line, friend, you and I are going to have to count.

We've had more, we give more. To whom much is given, much is demanded in that great day. The final character, of course, is the apostle himself.

You wouldn't think that he would talk the way he, at least I wouldn't think he'd talk that way. After all, he's a man of impeccable morality. To hit him with his own words, he said he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

That's the greatest holy club in the world, and he's one of the top members of that pharisaical club. And then he calls himself the chief of sinners. The chief of sinners.

When he comes to the other line up here, do you know what he says? He says he's the least of all saints. Now, if he'd reversed that, I would have agreed with him. If he said I was the least of sinners and the chiefest of saints, I'd say, I didn't know nobody would ever break your record.

All the epistles he wrote, 14 if you include Hebrews, all the things he did, what did Jesus do? Paul didn't, raised the dead. Paul raised the dead, Jesus raised the dead. Cast out demons, he did that.

He did some things Jesus didn't do. And yet, such is his conception of his humility and his need before God, that he comes to the beggar day by day. He's trying to inspire others.

He says, listen, let me whisper this in your ear lest you forget it. Do you know that all things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God? Do you know God hasn't really given Jesus to lift you out of a rotten, horrible pit and write your name in a book and give you a reserved seat in heaven? Do you know he's done more than that? With him, he has freely given you all things. And he goes on these great rampages, he says, you know, I want you to know the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of the love of God.

But let me tell you this, it's passing knowledge. But have a shot at it anyhow. But don't stay in the war just for the anxious.

Get out there into the deeps and remind yourself that God is inexhaustible. I reminded the folk the other night of one of the great forgotten preachers of America. He was preaching one night and he just shot an arrow at a venture.

I've done it often and I guess every preacher has. You almost wish when you said it, you could recall it now. Now, I hope nobody takes me up on that.

But this man was preaching and he shot an arrow at a venture and he said, the world is yet to see what God can do through one man who is totally committed to him. Well, Henry Varley meant it. There's no question about that.

And there was a man sitting there just a little bit of a guy that nobody knew. All he did was sell shoes in a shop. But he said under his breath, if the world has waited until now to find a man or a person who has been totally committed to Jesus Christ, I'll be that man.

Well, he came pretty near to it. At least he made a good job of it because his name was B.L. Moody. And as Dr. Tosley used to say, even when he was the greatest preacher evangelist in the world, he couldn't speak good English.

He said Jerusalem in two syllables. He always called Daniel, Daniel. And he slaughtered his English.

People in England couldn't put up with him for a little while. But Daniel knew. Remember the two little ladies? There's always two little ladies in the story.

Two little ladies who challenged him one day and said, you're a wonderful speaker. All you need is the Holy Ghost. All I need is what? You need the Holy Spirit.

I don't think they called it a baptism even. They said, you need the fullness, the anointing. It's irritating.

Truth can be very irritating, can't it? As I say, it will soothe one person. And the same thing that soothes somebody, irritates them, gets under their skin. Yee, yee, yee.

I said last Sunday night, two, two weeks tonight, preaching on Psalm 51. And speaking there, David praised three prayers, the prayer of a sinner, then the prayer of a backslider, who restored unto me the joy of thy salvation, and the prayer for the highest thing, creating me a clean heart. I was speaking about conviction coming and shooting into the heart of an individual.

I used the illustration of preaching in Toledo about 1950. And a girl came to the altar, a beautiful girl, about 17. She said, in the middle of the meeting, your voice died away, and all I heard was swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit.

Swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit. What, what, what, why did you hear that? Well, I have a gorgeous swimsuit. I stole it from the best shop in town, just down the road.

But I told my mother I found it in the street. Swimsuit, swimsuit. She said, I heard swimsuit.

I was wishing you'd give up preaching. You weren't the only one, I'm sure. But anyhow, she said, I wish you'd quit preaching.

I want to get out. All I could hear was swimsuit. I don't know what you said after you'd been preaching about 25 minutes.

Swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit. Oh, swimsuit. The pastor got a call early in the morning, Monday morning.

A man who lives in style. Uh, pastor, I can't speak. I got problems.

Ravenhill, in the middle of the meeting last night, didn't mention swimsuits. But the spirit said something to me about money, money, money, money, money. What's wrong about it? Well, he said, my father gave me a credit card on his company, and I don't work for the company.

I travel. I buy airplane tickets on it. I get gas on it.

I live in hotels on it. I spend maybe \$15,000 a year on it. I've done that for a few years, and I never bothered about it till in the middle of the night.

I woke up, and the voice was saying, money, money. What money? Well, same as swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit. Only you've no swimsuit.

Yours is money, money, money. What are you going to do about it? And he had to come and ask advice of the pastor. Find peace.

The truth can be very irritating. Sure, we say this Sermon on the Mount is the most gorgeous thing. It's the greatest thing that was ever preached by the greatest man that ever lived.

Isn't it tragic to think that if the world had embraced it at that time, there'd never have been all the hellish wars, and all the violence, and the reason we have wars, and the reason that every jail is packed to capacity, and all the homes are broken, and all the other devilish things we have, all the carnage is due to the fact that this truth was rejected when the Lord Jesus presented it. Oh, we'd like a kingdom that has no wars. We'd like a kingdom where there's no immorality.

We'd like a world in which there's total peace. The only thing is, we don't like the one that will bring it. I say again about the only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history.

If we did, we'd be a lot smarter. And so God says, let me come and do a great thing in you. You're at war with God.

You can take the enmity out. Enmity. The carnal mind is enmity against God.

It's war against God. I can take it out, and I can bring peace, and joy, and love. But you know, it's pretty difficult for people to come in bankruptcy, isn't it? Hmm? Oh, what is it? If somebody asked you what is the greatest sin in the world, what would you say? Drunkenness? War? What would you say? The greatest problem in the world today, I think, is the problem of human relationships.

It's always been there. In the home, in the office, in the church. It's the hostility between people.

If that's something that neither wants to get the best of you, and so forth, if God hasn't dealt with it. And this, this answers all the problems. It's the perfect answer through the perfect person.

Through the perfect sermon. All that science does, all that the, the, uh, all that the law, all that the politicians do, they deal with external things. They deal with effects, not causes.

God deals with the cause. After all, the heart of the human problem is the heart of man. And if you can't change the heart, you can only have a temporary change outside.

Men have screamed to high heaven for equality in wages, equality in everything. What, what, what do you get? You don't get a better race of people. There is no one, as we know, can change the condition of the heart, except the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

But for proud Pharisees and self-righteous, whether we're Methodists or Baptists or what we are, to, to, to get broken at an altar before God. And after all, God breaks everything he uses. There's no exception.

And never has been. But for me to voluntarily go and humble myself, to say like the day, Psalmist David, bow down my knee and err and hemming, I'm poor. I have no confidence in the flesh.

I have no confidence in self-righteousness. I have no confidence in my self-ability, self-expression, self-anything else. That old ego has to get out of the way.

It'll get bruised with conviction. It'll get bruised when I look at my record. And I bring it to the Lord Jesus and say, hey Lord, here I am.

I'm a sinner. I may be a Pharisaical sinner. I may be a filthy gutter sinner.

I may belong to the elite of society. I'm a sinner in the sight of God. There's no distinction at all.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And yet Jesus comes and he says, I want to make you. That's his word.

He said to the disciples, follow me and I will make you. I've often wished somebody would stop there on that page and explain some of the things he does. I will make you.

I'll make you what? Doesn't make us self-confident. Doesn't make us arrogant. Doesn't make us self-sufficient.

I was amazed reading just this week about one of the best-known writers in the whole world, who has tremendous acceptance wherever he goes. And he said, I never step into the pulpit without being nervous. Good for you, boy.

I'll give you a straight A for that. You know why? Because God says, to this man will I look. To him that trembleth at my word.

If I just feel confidence in my oratory or confidence in my illustrations or confidence in the fact, well, I've no nerves now. My knees don't knock like they used to. I don't get upset and stumble.

Well, brother, I need, I need to go hide away and get to the place where I say, Lord, I don't have a thing in myself. Oh, to be nothing, nothing, just to lie at his feet. An empty and broken vessel for the master you've made me.

What a paradox. You're looking for a man to run in a race to represent America in the Olympics? You wouldn't go for a man hobbling down the street on a stick. You wanted somebody to take you into a new realm of science, research on the moon? You wouldn't take a boy that's just in high school.

You take the best, the greatest, the most perfect. God does the opposite. He takes the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are.

That no flesh should glory in his presence. I've got to go every day and say, Lord, give. I'm not going to say I'm a rotten sinner because I don't believe I'm a rotten sinner now.

I'm a child of God. I can't be both. As I say, sometimes people almost glorify, well, I'm a safe sinner.

Well, you may as well be illogical and say you're a married bachelor. It's just as logical, just as ridiculous. Well, we have no righteousness.

Well, you better get some. And what does the scripture say? It says, no, I'm righteous, but that doesn't say you stay there. Why don't we come to the other side of the coin? And John says, he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous.

The recognition is that any virtue or any ability that I may have in any dimension at all in the spiritual life is not by credit of the fact that I've been saved 40, 50 years, and I've traveled a lot, and I'm experienced, and I'm well known. Forget it. That has no standing with God.

It's that day by day I come and say, Lord, any righteousness today is your righteousness. The holiness that's in me or in you is because of the Holy Spirit. You see, in the Old Testament, it says there that, does a man have an evil spirit? What did he do? The obvious thing, he did evil things.

Jesus says a man has an unclean spirit. What did he do? The obvious thing. He did unclean things.

Well, if a man with an unclean spirit does unclean things, and a man with an evil spirit does evil things, surely he's got an unclean spirit. A man filled with the Holy Spirit does holy things. It's no longer works of the flesh.

It's the fruit, not of my ability, not of my strong mind, not of my good character. It's the fruit of the Spirit. And to the degree that he's released in me, my fruit will be better.

My fruit will be more wholesome. That is a maturity that should be. God matures everything.

As I've said often enough, the slowest growth in the world, I believe, is growth in grace. It isn't in you, it is in me. I'll put it that way.

You will say, well, you need a little bit of sin to keep you humble. Well, the logic is, have a lot and be real humble. I don't need sin to keep me humble.

All I have to do is read the record of the Apostle Paul, or read about Judson going to Burma, or read of Cary going to India, or read of Gilmore going to Mongolia, or read of somebody right now in South America. That about humbles me to the dust. Sin breaks the heart of God, so how can I come and present it as an act of humiliation? My imperfections, they're entirely different from sin, from deliberate, violent act of God and transgression that I deliberately do.

No, no, no, no, no. You see, so often I think that we, in trying to be humble, all we do is dishonor God. Can I say this? I was up with the Eskimos and Chippewa Indians a few years ago, and on a Saturday night in a crowded room that smelled horrid, because up there those people make their own boots and they don't know how to cure the caribou hide.

And when the meeting gets hot, well, that's something else. But in the meeting the preacher prayed. Oh, he prayed a prayer.

Brother, did he go down? How violent he was? How impure he was? He went down the line. After about three days he said, you know, brother, you're preaching something entirely different from what I've understood. Can we talk? We talked till after midnight, two or three nights.

He said, the light's beginning to dawn. I said, well, praise the Lord for that. So he said, be honest, be quite honest with me.

I said, well, look, if I come in your meeting and you tell me that those Eskimos at the back are violent, you tell me those Indians, those Chippewas are brutal and they're drunken and they're immoral and they're everything else. He said, yes, that's true. Well, I said, if I've been one of them listening to you stand behind the desk deploring your depravity, deploring how immoral you are, deploring how unrighteous you are, deploring how dishonest you are, deploring how sinful you are, he said, uh-uh.

So long, brother, you're in the same boat as I am. I'm going to find somebody else who's better off than that. You see, there is no boasting, Paul.

Paul says, no boasting for me except in the cross. This man, to me, the most towering figure after Jesus Christ. I think he had a colossal intellect.

He had an unbreakable spirit. He had a fire in him that all the witch that they had in the whole empire of Rome couldn't lash out on him. He was in the sea 36 hours, the waters couldn't wash it out of him.

They tried to starve it, they couldn't starve it out of him. They tried to threaten it, they couldn't threaten it out of him. What changed a man going down to Damascus, Rome, breathing out threatening? It would have been a man that wrote the most wonderful hymn of love one Quentin XIII of the world had ever had.

And you see him there, an example of humility, never boasts and never brags. In fact, all that was virtuous and all that was lovely beforehand, he says, it was all nothing. It was self-righteousness and self-glory and self-seeking and self-promotion.

And he said, I want to tell you I boast now, but I don't boast in my pedigree. You never heard of me saying I'm of the tribe of Benjamin, I'm of the seed of Abraham and this and that. I've forgotten all that.

Boasting is excluded. My boasting is all in Jesus Christ. He wrote the miracle.

He gets the glory. He gets the praise. He was still poor, because he said, I have nothing.

Oh, what a man. I want to get a talk with him one day when I get to heaven. He says some things that just shoot me right through.

He says, I have nothing. And I say, well, brother, I'll sit down with you about it. And he says, wait a minute, I didn't finish the sentence.

But I possess all things. Oh, oh, you want to sit down with me now? No, thanks. No, I'm not in that bracket.

No, I'm not in that bracket. Isn't that amazing? He had nothing. He possessed all things.

Whether he meant government smeared on, whether he meant death, whether he meant demon possessed, he had every answer to the situation. He can meet the intellectual from Mars Hill. He can go to a hellhole like Corinth.

He's at home where they worship the body in the truest sense of the word, where they worship the brain with the intellectuals and he faces them where they worship the body. Whether a boasting of learning, a boasting of licentiousness, it doesn't upset him. He gets out with the truth.

He presents the gospel. He says, I'm determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ. And he goes away thumping that message.

But he's able to redeem the rottenest, vilest. And he runs his flag up in 2 Corinthians, in 2 Corinthians 5, 17. Man, it must have shaken the whole community.

Shaken hell itself, I think. Because he says in that verse there, if any man. That's a tall order when you're in the cesspool of the world.

He was in a place where he didn't need to learn the alphabet of impurity. He didn't need to learn the grammar of obscenity. All he did was say about a man, he's a Corinthian.

And when you said that, you meant he's the dirtiest, vilest thing that crawls in a human body. And yet Paul goes there and he says, listen, I want to tell you something. If any man, anywhere, at any time, be in Christ, he is a new creation.

That's why the missionaries went to the blackest spots in the world. That's why William Booth stepped out into the gutters of England and raised up the Salvation Army. That's why John Wesley said, I condescend it to be vile.

Because remember, nobody preached in the streets until George Whitefield. And then Whitefield said, get out of your big state little bit. You know, the last 600 sermons John Wesley preached, he preached only six inside of churches.

Tough going, isn't it? For a man who was the most immaculate scholar. A man that knew a number of languages and read the scriptures in various languages. And yet often had to sleep.

And never once in the days when the British roads were full of molesting highwaymen, never once was he molested on the highway. And he rode on horseback, only one man ever beat him, and that was Asprey, I guess. Somebody said the other day to me, I'd like one of those diesels, you know, those nice Mercedes diesels.

I have a friend that did 220,000. When I get a horse, he's beat 250, and you don't have any gas problems. Wesley rode about, rode about over 220,000 miles on horses, and Asprey rode over 250,000.

Boy, you talk about keeping humble, that rubs my nose in the desk. Wesley said I, said I slept in Georgia, and when I woke up, he had longish hair, my, he said I was fastened to the ground with a frost, and I struggled. I got one arm free, and then I, I pulled the other free, and then I pulled one leg free, and I pulled the other free, and I, I pulled my head gently out of the mud, and he said I was coated white with frost, and I brushed it all up, and raised my hands, and sang praise God from whom all blessings flow.

I'd have been in, I'd have written home asking if I couldn't have a furlough, I'd say the climate doesn't suit me. I'm not used to being frosted, but he did it. Why did he do it? I, I'm, I was going to say I'm moved to tears, I certainly am, when I think of the vastness of God's redemption.

It can take men like Wesley, or men like Balut, or men like the Apostle Paul, and I was thinking of the phrase, the Old Testament phrase, I forget what it is, is it, in the Song of Solomon it sounds like it, where it says love is a fire. It's the greatest fire in the world, it'll keep us warm at all times. Do you ever wish you were God? I'm in this sense, I, I sometimes wish God would cut the world open like that, and let me see it just once for five minutes.

See everything God sees, every hell hole, every tribe that warms me. Hmm? Just, just what's going on in the Gulag Archipelago, what's going on in China? I had a girl pray that once, the daughter of a wonderful doctor up in Canada, and after I prayed with her she got saved, and when I prayed she said, dear God, let me see the world as you see it. I'd known her a while, and I said to her, mentioning her name, I said, you know, I almost said amen, but you know, if I saw the world as God sees it, I'd, I'd break every nerve in my body.

I'd die of shock. Maybe the thing that would scare me most would be to see the church so paralysed and ineffective, so snug as a bug in a rug while the world goes to hell. Love is a fire.

And until the heart is made pure, that we're going to come to, until the heart is pured of all it, purified of all its dross, it's self-seeking, it's self-pity, it's self-loathing, and everything else, until that fire reigns in us, God won't see what he wants to see, in our generation. And my prayer is that out of our gathering, we're not, we're not much, maybe we never will be, that won't worry me. Quantity, Jesus, if anybody could have money in a thousand people, Jesus could.

I've often wondered why he didn't take a thousand men, he took twelve, and they didn't all turn out good. But I'm still convinced in my heart, as I've said this past week to the folk, and I'm still convinced of this, God is going to do a new thing. Right now I don't see much, even as big as a cloud, as big as a man's hand, personally, on the horizon.

That's all right. The tide goes furthest out before it starts coming back, doesn't it? When it's the most hopeless thing, then, and every revival in history has been when depravity and iniquity and impurity and idolatry have been exalted to our heavens. And then God says, that's enough.

Now raise up the prophets. Your sons and your daughters, prophesy. The young men, see visions, and the old men, dream dreams.

It's possible for this to happen in us. The kingdom of God is within you. It's not merely something ultimate, it's not as Schofield tries to say, something postponed because the Jews rejected it.

I don't believe that. Jesus said it's happening right now in you, by his precious blood, by the abiding of the Holy Spirit, and by the word of God, this word that liveth and abideth forever. Our Father, we're grateful for this time of fellowship.

Thank you for your word. It surely is sweeter than the honey in the honeycomb. It's meat that strengthens us.

It's the lamp for our feet, the light for our path, the quickening of our spirits. Again, we thank you for every redeemed soul on earth at this moment. We're a tragic minority in one sense, we're a minority of a minority.

But again, our God, we're glad you said the very gates of hell will not prevail against the Church of the Living God. Help us to keep looking unto Jesus, the author and the perfecter, the finisher of our faith. May our testimony day by day please thee, honor thee, bring glory to thy name.

And we give you praise in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

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