

Pure Heart, Pure Church - Part 7

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of having a pure heart as the dwelling place of God and the transformative power of His presence in our lives and churches.

Duration: 8:39

Scripture: Ephesians 2:22

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Godly Transformation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the transformation that occurs when God dwells within a person, making them His habitation. It discusses the contrast between living according to worldly ways and becoming a dwelling place for God, highlighting the need for cleansing and surrender to God's control. The story of a woman's restoration after 40 years of spiritual dryness is shared, illustrating the power of God to revive and renew a person's joy and peace.

Transcript

chapter 2. It is? Yes. It says in time past ye walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air and then at the end of that same chapter it says you are the habitation of God. He said, sir, does your God live inside of you? He said, so that's the most awesome thing I've read.

I've read the Quran, I've read the Vedas, I've read all those other sacred books. But I never read where a man's God comes and makes the man the habitation of God. I preached in a big church a few years back.

I said, Martha, dearie, those trees at the entrance of the church are wonderful. Never seen trees like that in my life. I know what the leaves are, but look at all the little white flowers, white buds.

Well, I got to church a bit late one night. Well, I mean late for me. I usually like to get there half an hour before time.

And I went in here with the boys, you know, while I draw this fleeting breath. And then sticking the cigarette stumps in the trees outside. When I gave out my text, I said, gentlemen, I'm going to preach this night.

I did, on Romans 8. And while you're looking for it, get out your cigarettes and your matches. You can all smoke. What? Deacons nudging each other.

We knew this guy was a crank. I said, smoke. This building isn't the temple of God.

This is the temple of God. You defiled it till you got to the door of the church, defiled it inside. Of course, if you start smoking, I'll tell you to stop.

But I said, this is a temple. He doesn't dwell in temples. He dwells in a habitation.

What? Full of carnality, full of jealousy, full of pride, full of anger, full of secret lust. David says, restore unto me the joy, I mean, of pain. The bonds that you brought, this relationship that you severed.

The only way that I can get my joy back is for God to come in full control. First, he has to cleanse the habitation in which he's going to live. 1937 was a great year in my life.

I met my sweet wife in a town called Eccles, outside of Manchester, England. We took a tent there. We didn't know anybody.

It was our usual format. Take a tent to a city, no backing, no churches, no money, sleep in it, pray in it, weep in it, groan in it. And figured in six weeks we could raise a church of four to five hundred people, or even sometimes eight hundred, and we did.

And those churches are still standing now, fifty years after. We'd no money, we'd no backing. We live like mice.

Ate as little as we could, because we had to. Slept as little as we could, prayed as much as we could. We went to Eccles.

Martha came in with a bunch of other nurses. They always looked so beautiful, all sitting in rows, you know. They wore white dresses and a blue cape with a red lining, and smart girls would throw the red over their shoulder, you know, to be more attractive and distract you while you were preaching, but anyhow.

Nearly all the boys fell in love with a nurse. One of them fell in love with Martha. I believe I love Miss Wilson and I want to marry her.

Can I go see her tomorrow night? I said, sure. I said, before you go I want to tell you I'm going to marry her. Oh, well, I won't have any chance.

I said, well, I won't say a word to her. Well, I got the prize and she's been a very wonderful, wonderful wife. But, on the Friday night, one Friday night, one Saturday night, I preached on Psalm 51.

There was a woman sitting at the back. I've seen some ugly women in my life, but she was the ugliest woman I'd ever seen. As I say, she had a nose like a banana and she was as wrinkled as a prune.

She was dressed in black and she was sallow, and at the end I said, if you have some need to meet God, if you've a broken and contrite heart, you're welcome to come and kneel here. I'll pray with you. The others all left the tent.

She came and knelt there. And she sobbed and she cried and she groaned. Finally, I said, well, ladies, it's time to do everything and it's time to quit crying.

It's time to talk to God. Well, I said, what's your problem? She said, Mr. Ravenhill, 40 years ago I was one of the leading officers in the Salvation Army. One night I quarreled with my partner.

There were always two women in one area and two men in another, leading a corps as they called it, what we would call a fellowship. We argued that night and I got angry. I went home, I took off my straw bonnet, I tore it up and put it on the open fire.

I took off my tunic and cut it up and put it on the open fire. I took off my skirt, cut it up and put it on the open fire. I stirred it all up.

And I took my Bible and ripped all the pages out, put it on top. And she said, Mr. Ravenhill, she began to smile a little, she said, it's so wonderful tonight. I said, well, it was a wonderful preaching.

I've had a better time many times. No, no, no. I heard the voice of God the first time for 40 years.

After I severed my relationship with him, I heard William Boo, the founder of the Salvation Army, preach as only he could preach. I heard Colonel Brangle. I heard all the so-called great stars.

But she said, for 40 years God has never spoken to me about a heart of stone. I've been to services, I've never been moved, hymns don't move me, preaching doesn't move me, threatening doesn't move me. And she said, tonight as you spoke there and said, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

She said, I said, God, that's the only thing I need in life. I don't ask you to live longer? I don't ask you to ease my poverty? I don't ask you to restructure? She said, you see, I knew the intimacy of walking with God. I had a love relationship with him.

I could really say personally, he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me, and it's all gone. I said, well lady, 40 years of wasted life. I said, well he can't give you that back.

He can restore your peace, he can restore your joy, he can bring you into a living, flaming relationship with himself. You can trample beneath your feet the world, the flesh and the devil, but it's not going to bring 40 years of wasted life. Do you know after that, that woman, every time we open the house of God, she was the first at the door.

We had a prayer meeting every Sunday morning at 7 o'clock and I seen her standing there in the snow, shivering, her clothes were very thin and she was saying, Mr. Hayden, isn't it a lovely morning? Her name was Shepherd. I said, well Mrs. Shepherd, it's not much of a morning for you. You're shivering, it's cold, it's icy, there's snow.

Oh, but Mr. Hayden, I have my joy, I have my peace. The love relationship is restored. My whole world is a new world.

Dear old Duncan Campbell, I prayed with him. You met Duncan, prayed with him many times. He used to pray at 5 in the morning.

He couldn't pray until he had tea made as black as your shoe. He could almost stand with the spoon up in it. I couldn't drink it like that.

I told him it was Mobil oil. But once he got anointed with his tea, he got going. Oh, how he used to pray.

Oh, when he told me about the revival in the Hebrew, Brother Duncan, please. You make me feel as though God is slighting me. You make me feel as though, oh, what's it going to say? I preach around the world, I preach to thousands.

Oh, forget it. I've never seen any brokenness like this.

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