

Purity and Fire - Part 4

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fire, purification, and obedience in the life of a believer, and the need to look to the Lord for guidance and purification.

Duration: 16:03

Scripture: Acts 2:3

Topics: "Purity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the liberating power of the fire of God. He uses the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the book of Daniel to illustrate this point. The three Hebrew children were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship the king's idol, but instead of being consumed by the fire, they were liberated. The speaker encourages the audience to turn their eyes upon Jesus and gaze upon His wonderful face, as this vision will help them face crisis periods with praise instead of panic. He also explains how God purifies us like gold, removing impurities and making us holy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Did you know that? Do you know, let me say this, I was in a meeting one night, and there was an old lady sitting at the back. We turned the meeting into a night of prayer. She was in a wheelchair, she had snow white hair, she was lovely.

She had an awful big nose, but she was lovely. And she was 80 years of age, and that precious dear old woman sat in the back of that church till 1 o'clock in the morning when we finished the prayer meeting. We had some praying men there.

Methodists, Pentecostals, I don't know what the other breed were. But the whole front was full of preachers. And boy, we had an anointing of God.

And you know, somewhere around about midnight, I felt such a strange urge in my spirit. I didn't look up, I didn't look up. Wasn't it wonderful? I said, well, God was gracious.

I felt we really got through to the throne tonight. She said, yes, but wasn't it wonderful? I said, what? She said, did you feel anything about midnight? I said, yeah, I felt something strange. She said, you know what? A tongue of fire came from heaven like that, on the head of the first man, the second, the third, and

he went right across the whole bunch of you as you prayed.

And then he ascended and went back again. I saw that tongue of fire, she said. I never thought God did things like that.

Well hallelujah, as David said last night, the iron did swim. Chadwick had a great sermon on that. A fact stated, the iron did swim.

A fact asserted, the iron did swim. A fact demonstrated, the iron did swim. Beautiful.

But you see, whether God wants iron to swim, or fire to come from heaven, he's going to do it his way. We keep praying for the Holy Ghost to come, and you know, if he came right here, a lot of us would run for that door like mad. We'd be scared to death.

He's going to come in his own way. And I can't wait for the day. I get so excited about it.

All right, fire is a painful thing, isn't it? How can a thing be consumed without it being hurt? Do you know that old hymn, I Will Praise Him? I Will Praise Him, Praise the Lamb for sinners slain. Do you know that? Do you remember a stanza in that says, at the end, When God's fire upon the altar of my heart was set aflame, my ambitions, plans, and wishes at my feet in ashes lay? Huh? We were singing a hymn in the church in the Bahamas, and a lady came to me afterwards. She's a millionaire, and she said, Brother Angel, I've sung that hymn since I was a child and never realized it till we sang it this morning.

You know, it's a common hymn, isn't it? The middle of that hymn says this, But we never can prove the delights of His love until all on the altar we lay. For the favor He shows and the joy He bestows are for them who will trust and obey. It's one of the smartest hymns ever written.

Isn't it so simple? We stumble over it. Trust and obey. There's no other way.

If you don't trust and obey, you'll rust and decay anyhow. So you better trust and obey. But isn't it simple? I say this, it's almost facetious, but I say it with feeling that one day somebody's going to read this book and believe it, and when they do, we'll all be embarrassed.

God isn't waiting for you to initiate something new as agape. He's waiting for you to get down and believe Him. Defy your feelings, defy the devil, defy the state if you have to.

That's all He asks. The children of Israel did not enter into the promised land. Why? They had miracles galore.

They wore shoes that never went out. They had a pillar of fire to lead them by night, pillar of cloud by day. They ate miracles, they drank miracles, they saw miracles, but they never entered the promised land.

We talk a lot of shibboleths and make a lot of statements, but I'll tell you what, there's little real sign of the moving of the Holy Ghost in the nation as far as I'm concerned. There's little brokenheartedness over sin. I don't see churches with the lights on till midnight travailing for lost men and women, and there's no other way for revival.

Listen, if the fire falls on your heart, brother, the Holy Ghost fire is going to consume something. When God's fire upon the altar of my heart was set ablaze, my ambitions, plans and wishes, I know a guy, one of the best preachers in England, standing by Darling Sweetheart. They bought all their furniture, and they

were singing a closing hymn in one of the great conventions.

And as they sang it, God spoke to him and said, you don't get married in three weeks, postpone it for three years, and you go to Bible school. And he came out, and she's a gorgeous, she'd been the means of his salvation, and she turned to him, he turned to her and said, you know, we're not going to get married. She said, what? Well, we were singing a hymn.

Here I give my... Isn't it easy to let them slip over your lips like water slips over Niagara and mean nothing? He said, I stood there, and the tears came down on my face, and I sang, Here I give my all to thee, friends and time and earthly store, soul and body thine to be, holy thine forevermore. And he said, the Lord said, you mean that? Of course I mean it. You'll give your friends, the friend next to you, the lady that's bought a wedding dress, the lady who's got a house stacked with furniture ready to put in a new home, you're prepared to send letters to all the guests you've invited? Because this is the price you pay.

He paid the price. She agreed with him. The only phase of revival they had at Cliff College was one night when that young man got up in the middle of the night to pray, and he went down into the college lecture hall and began to pray.

And within half an hour, the whole college emptied into that prayer meeting. There were no girls around at all. It was a college where only men were allowed to go.

And those fellows were sprawling around in their pajamas. They soaked their pajamas through. They wept, and revival started that night because he obeyed God in the meeting where he laid everything on the altar for God.

The fire consumes the sacrifice. Fire hurts. I don't have time to go through this.

Fire will hurt somewhere. Fire will destroy some of the greatest treasures you've got. But fire empowers.

You may have come up in one of those strange little Beetles, you know, German VWs. You may have come up in the Lincoln, if you're an evangelist. And... But you know, when you go out and you turn the key, if there's no fire there, it's much harder to push a Lincoln than a VW.

Oh, you may have polished it and made it look nice to come here and filled it with gas and it's well insured, but if you turn the key and there's no fire. You know, the trouble with the Church of God today, we're so organized that we've no fire. We've substituted organizing for agonizing.

We mistake rattle for revival and commotion for creation. And we get no place. You see, if the Holy Ghost is going to come in your life, there's going to be some burning.

But I'll tell you another thing, there's nothing liberates. There's nothing liberates like fire. Eh? You did right to sing that song, brother, as you closed the song session this morning.

You know, some of the worst things that happen to us are the best things that happen. You know what the Lord showed me just the other day? That when we come into crisis periods, when they're as black as hell, we do one of two things. People in the world panic.

People in the Church of the Living God praise. It's either panic or praising. There's no other way out.

Let's take one or two things and I'm through. One day some boys obeyed God. You see, people say you obey the state.

No, you don't. You don't obey the government if it contradicts what God says. If you obey the state, Daniel would never have gone to jail.

Neither would the three Hebrew children. And they bound them all up. And they took six strong men to throw them in the fire.

And the men that threw them in all fell down dead. They couldn't take the heat. They all fell down dead.

And the three Hebrew children were toppled into the furnace. Well, that was the best thing that ever happened. Because all that happened in the furnace was that the fire burned off them what the world had put on them.

That's all it did, liberate them. Their ankles were tied. Their hands were tied.

They got in the fire. None of them had a penknife, so the Lord says, All right, the fire will burn it off, don't worry. And that's just what the fire does, it liberates.

You take some dross and stone and everything. Did you ever sing a lovely song? It's gone out of fashion, unfortunately. But we used to sing a song years ago.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. It's a lovely song. Look full in his wonderful face.

You know what you should do every morning? You should lean your elbows on the windowsill of heaven and gaze upon the Lord. And then with that vision in your heart, go forth to meet the day. You'd have far less difficulty.

You'd have far less defeat. But that song says, Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face.

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. You know, when they're purifying gold, they put it in a crucible. These days an induction crucible.

And they press buttons. And a man sits there with a scoop and he throws stuff off and he talks to you and he throws stuff off, he throws stuff off, he throws stuff off. And then he takes his ladle and he puts it down.

And you say, Well, why didn't you take the scum off the top? Because he says, there's no scum there. How do you know? I tested it. I didn't see you test it.

You didn't dip anything. No, no, no, no, no. No, you got it wrong.

I tested it. How? Well, you see, if there's any impurity, there's a skin on top. It may be very thin.

But when you take the last layer of impurity off, the man looks in it and he sees his own image there. Hmm? Did you ever sing a song that says, Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me? All his wonderful passion and purity because love that is pure is passionate. In human love, a man loves a woman or a woman, a man with all their heart.

They want no one else. And holy love, love that is pure, is passionate for God. It asks for nothing for itself.

Beloved David Brainerd, who died at 28, says, Does it matter where I live or how I live as long as men perish? At 28 years of age, as he lay with his advanced tuberculosis, what was her name? Jeshurin, the daughter of that great preacher in New England. Thank you. Jonathan Edwards' daughter that was going to marry him looked and watched him die and he said, Darling, don't stay near me.

She loved him and nursed him for three weeks and three weeks after he was buried, they buried her at the side of him. I've got a picture of that in one of my books. Let the beauty of Jesus.

You know, there's something indefinable about the abiding presence of the Spirit of God. You will never, never impress me with your ministry. I don't care what ministry it is.

I listen to it. I think you're genuine, but I need to get close to you to know what you really are. You might put a show on on here.

You see, you can demonstrate and get angry and do all the histrionics and know something about the drama of preaching and be a hypocrite. But if I lived with you, I'd know whether the love of God is shed abroad in your heart. You can't prove to me that all the disciples went to the upper room that they were told to go.

But how many of us obey God every time? And when they'd gone, you don't know where they all went. They didn't all become flaming evangelists and they didn't all write epistles. They went home to be holy daddies and holy mummies and live a sanctified life and show forth the praise of God.

Oh, it's wonderful when God comes and He purifies, purifying their hearts by faith. It hurts because there's something to be burned up in us. He purifies and takes all the dross away.

The power of the Holy Ghost comes and endures us with His might. He comes and the beauty of the Lord, our God, because the Word of God says we're to worship God in the beauty of holiness. Let me give you an illustration and finish.

It will encourage you, I hope. There was a preacher in the church of the Nazarene in England. He was a very fine man, very good singer.

And I did a meeting for him in his church in Perth, away in Scotland, beautiful Scotland. And he said to me, Brother Ravenhill, I'm to preach at the Cherryfield Mission tomorrow afternoon, away in lovely Dundee. Dundee famous for its Dundee cakes and lots of other things.

And he said, I wish you'd go with me. And I said, no, sure I'll go. I remember going down in the train and the train had no heating on and we, oh, we were so terribly cold.

And as we came out from the station, the station was there, the church was here, and as we came round there was a huge sign up, James Baxter McLagan will preach the anniversary service in the Cherryfield Mission Saturday afternoon at three o'clock. He was a little man and the sign had a big painting and I said, well, I said, you know they've got a bigger sign than the preacher that's coming. They've really let people know.

And as we went up the steps into the church, he said, and you know the funny thing about it is I'm not going to preach. Oh, I said, well that's interesting, I'm not who he is. He said, you.

I said, no, I'm not going to preach, I don't feel I'm warmed up to preach, I don't feel any anointing just now. But he got up and he led the singing and he was real good at singing. Played a concertina and did a lovely Scottish tenor voice and he sang.

And he said, now I'm going to ask you all to stand and sing and then Brother Ravener is going to give us the message. What friends. I shot a quick request to Heaven and I preached something about the fight of the Holy Ghost.

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