

Selah

by Leonard Ravenhill

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Scripture: Malachi 3:16, 1 Corinthians 3:12, Proverbs 10:20, 1 Peter 1:7, Exodus 28:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 9:27, Isaiah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 5:10

Topics: "Devotion to God", "Eternal Perspective"

Description

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Transcript

In Malachi, it says that God has a Book of Remembrance and I think it would do you good before you go to bed every night this week to ask God what did you put in your book today from my mind? Even as a believer, with all your work, they're either wood or hay or stubble or silver or gold or precious stones. Now let's visualize, we give a man over here \$10,000 and he invests it in wood. The next man is given \$10,000, he invests it in hay.

The next man has \$10,000, it's in stubble. The man over here has \$10,000, he invests it in gold. Wouldn't get much at \$500 an ounce, would he? And the next man at silver, he wouldn't get too much at \$12 an ounce.

And the other man in precious stones. But when the fire goes through it, what do you have? All you have is that wood going down until you've got ashes, maybe up to your ankles. And that's all that is left.

A man's life, all his ministry, it shows. You see the difference between the wood and the hay and the stubble and the silver and the gold and the precious stones? Wood, hay and stubble are above the ground. They catch the eye.

Silver and gold and precious stones are below the ground. Nobody sees them. There's a lot of public ministry in that day that's going to go down in ashes, my brother.

Every penny you earn since you became the property of Jesus Christ, you're given account of before God. Your life is wood, the fire's going to come. Hay, the fire's going to come to it.

Stubble, the fire's going to come to it. But what if your life is silver and gold and precious stones? What is gold a sign of? Gold, I believe, there is a sign of our devotion to God. You won't get much gold for \$10,000 today.

What happens when you burn gold? Nothing. All you do is change it from solid to liquid, but you don't reduce it. What's your devotional life this morning? Would you like Gabriel to hand me the book of your devotional life for the last month and read it to this fine audience? The gold is going to be tried for our devotional life.

The silver, what is the silver? The book of Proverbs says the tongue of the just is as choice silver. Yes, every idle word you've spoken, even since you were saved, God has a kind of... You know, he doesn't need a tape recorder, but he has an eternal record of it. You know, the gossip, the slander, the criticism, the prejudice.

Can you think of all those awesome words? Can you think of all the words we've preached to thousands of people over the years? And we're going to answer, and the fire is going to be put to them? Well, will they be hay and stubble, or will they abide the fire? The fire shall try every believer's work. Silver, gold, precious stones. What are the precious stones? Well, when I read that, I think of the breastplate that was on the priest, and he went into the holy place to pray with a breastplate on him.

I've said it many times, I say it again this morning, that no man is greater than his prayer life. I don't care about his organization and his... Let me live with a man a while and share his prayer life, and I'll tell you how tall I think he is, or how majestic I think he is in God. I think again of a statement Dr. Tozer made to me once.

He said, Glenn, you know what? He said, we'll hardly get our feet out of time into eternity, and gaze on eternity with what we bow our heads in shame and humiliation, and say, my God, look at all the riches there were in Jesus Christ, and I've come to the judgment feet almost a prophet. For God has not merely given us Jesus Christ, he's given us all things. And because there isn't enough joy in the house of God, we need entertainment.

Because entertainment is the devil's substitute for joy. Because there isn't enough power in the house of God, people are always looking for the last scientific development, and their hair stands up when they see some fancy show on TV. When I see the church in the New Testament, they didn't have stately buildings, they didn't have paid evangelists, they didn't have a lot of money, they didn't have organization, they couldn't get on TV and bail.

And I'll tell you what they did, they turned the world upside down. And I'm embarrassed to be part of the church of Jesus today, because I believe it's an embarrassment to a holy God. Most of our joy is clapping our hands and having a good time, and then afterwards we're talking all the drivel of the world.

Can he share his sorrow with you? If you're going to get mature in God, all the dwarfs around you will criticize and sneer at you. And say you're trying to be holier than the rest of us, eh? You'll discover this, the

men who have been most heroic for God have been the men with the greatest devotion in their life. I preach out of my heart all I believe and I'd die for it.

But say, am I just a showman? What's my secret life like? You know, if we can't live as a different breed of people on this earth, we have no right to live here. We shouldn't be affected by changing customs or changing styles, or changing opinions, or whether the stock market goes up or down. We ought to live every day as though we come out of another world into this world with the power of that world upon us.

To live and speak and move and have our being in Jesus Christ. Before all the saints of all the ages and you and I have to stand there alone on a diet and be judged. For the deeds done in the body, for every aspect of our lives, for our praying, for our giving, for our living, for our talking.

Only one life will soon be passed. Only one step for God will last. And when I am dying, how glad I shall be if the lamp of my life has been burned out for thee.

No, it's not so simple to be a Christian. After all, it's a majestic thing. We ought to live eternity conscious in time.

It's going to be an awesome day with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and the Judge of Judges. You see, there's no possibility of any rehearsal. Because, again, this is the final judgment.

Can you see all the saints of all the ages? And Leonard Wray still is standing there before Christ whose eyes are full of holiness. Where the place is breathing holiness. Where there's all the majesty of an awesome God.

And he reads the record of my poor life before all the saints of all the ages. Can you see the holy dead all lined up there? All the saints in the Old Testament, all the saints in the New Testament. It's not only true that we live in a world of bankrupt politics.

We live in a world, and this is the most tragic of all, of a bankrupt church. God, stand eternally on my eyeball. When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ and he shows his plan for me, the plan of my life, as it might have been, had he had his way.

And I see how I blocked him here and I kept him there and I would not yield my will. Will there be grief in my Saviour's eyes? Grief, though he loves me still. Would he have me rich and I stand there poor, stripped of all that is great? While memory runs like a hunted thing down the paths I cannot retrace.

Lord of the years of the left of me, I give them to thy hand. Take me and break me and mold me to the pattern that thou hast planned. Let's look at all the apostles and all the saints of all the ages.

There's Phineas, look, there's Phineas, with his amazing revival. There's William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. There's John Wesley.

Here are all the great heroic figures, we've all read about them. And here they are all watching while the book is handed down. And somebody's going to read the record when God opens that book of intercession, when he puts the fire to their prayer life, their devotional life.

I'll tell you what, there'll be nothing lost. It won't be wooed, it won't be hated, it won't be stubble. Not concerned about human opinion, not asking for more to spend prodigally on ourselves.

But say, oh God, I want this life of mine adjusting so that when I stand in your awesome presence, as James said, we shall not be ashamed of his appearance. There's going to be no free trial, no? Any candidates here for the martyr's crown? There's going to be no free glory up there. I'm embarrassed to death when I read Hebrews 11.

I can read Hebrews 11 every day of my life and weep. I can turn my Bible over at the back, I can read the map at the back of my Bible and weep. Look what the apostle Paul did, he had no plane, no jet plane, he had no automobile.

Look how it, look at his mystery journeys. No wonder he says, in perils of the deep, in perils of my country, and in perils of labors, in prison. In the first 50 years of Wesley's preaching, the men that joined up with him as preachers died at the average age of 32 years of age.

They were burned out for God. America is not dying because of the strength of humanism, it's dying because of the weakness of evangelism. We're not taking, we take people to the cross, we don't get them on the cross.

The devil says, come down from the cross and save yourself. Why do you weep while other people are laughing? Why do you fast while other people are having a whale of a time? It's stupid, it is. Except in the light of eternity, it is eternity.

The holiest man that ever lived was the most abused. You expect better treatment from this world than he got? What is shrugging up in that little church for? Because it never hurts you to go. Because nobody fasts, nobody prays, nobody weeps.

Your preacher's dry-eyed, he talks. How in God's name did they do it? You see, you have to account for your time. So here you've got three.

You live 24 hours a day. You work 8 hours a day. You sleep 8 hours a day.

What do you do with the other 8? Put that into years. You live 60 years. You sleep 20 years.

You work 20 years. What do you do with the other 20? It's not how long you live, it's how you live that matters. There are more decisions for Christ these days than ever in history.

There were never fewer disciples. They were stoned. How long did it take them to die? They were destitute.

These are saints. These are men filled with the Holy Ghost. They, not one, they were stoned.

They were sawn asunder. According to tradition, Isaiah was hung this way with his feet strapped up there and sawn down the middle. Not with an electric saw.

Get it over with a wooden saw. It was sawn in pieces. The best title for the Church of God today, in my judgment, is this.

We're unbelieving believers. Somebody someday will pick this Bible up and be simple enough to believe it. And when they do, we'll all be embarrassed.

Can you remember the last time you didn't go to bed because men were dying without Christ? Can you remember the last time you pushed the pledge away and said, No, I have no more time with God? Have you geared your life like that? Are you living, trying to be spiritual and living on the carnal pledge? Are you trying to be spiritual and living in time? Are you trying to be spiritual and keeping up with other people round about? This is when God can get men that are sold out to him like Paul was sold out to him. We'll move our generation. God is saying, Who will go for us? He looks for a man, not a cherubim, not a seraphim, not a harpsman, not a half-deity.

He looks for men. God takes men, not money, not methods, not machinery, not movement. Men.

When I can say, Lord, I'm concerned, I'm concerned, and I'm speeding on to eternity. Look at my ministry. Look at my life.

Look at my fruitlessness. Look at my dry eyes. Look at my poor city that has no age in it.

The men that die by the million, they're damned and lost. Look at me. Look at me.

Supposing you just ask God to show you one thing this afternoon. You'll get round, but you don't wear wool. The things you don't do, if you don't do them all right, you'll get by.

Listen, will you tell me this? Will you tell me? And if you tell me this, I'll tell you how spiritual you are. Will you tell me how much you pray a day?

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