

True Revival - Part 1 (Cd Quality)

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon explores the critical need for God's presence in achieving true revival and the believer's journey towards intimacy with Him.

Duration: 27:58

Scripture: Genesis 17:3-4, Genesis 17:17, Exodus 13:21-22, Exodus 40:38, Psalm 72:8, Isaiah 6:6, John 1:29

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a recent earthquake in Houston and connects it to the idea of the whole creation groaning, expressing dissatisfaction and a limit to materialism. The speaker then discusses the story of Abraham and how he questioned God's promise of inheriting the land. After a vision of God, Abraham experiences a horror of great darkness. The speaker emphasizes the need for revival and references the Wells revival, where men in a coal mine cried out for revival and the spirit of God came upon them. The sermon concludes with a critique of the church's focus on worldly things instead of repentance and the mission to spread the message of repentance.

Transcript

Okay, we'll look at the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 4. In that day shall seven women take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel. Only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of man Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night.

For upon the glory shall be a defense. There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day from the heat and for a place of refuge and for a covert from the storm. Last week you remember we considered in part anyhow the prayer of Elijah when he called down fire from heaven.

As I've meditated over that I wonder the people didn't rebel because they didn't need fire, they needed water. There'd been a drought for years. And you get away again, a prophet never seeks vindication.

If you read that chapter again it said that Elijah said let it be known this day that there is a God in Israel and that I am thy servant. He wasn't concerned first of all about his acceptance or whether they would say he was a true prophet or a false prophet. Let it be known this day that there is a God in Israel.

And that's the hallmark of people who really love God. They want his name to be glorified and vindicated. Now here it tells us that there should be a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night.

Now skip back a little here into Genesis 14. Sorry, chapter 15. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision saying fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.

In verse 6 it says and he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him I am the Lord God that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, now God has made a promise to him.

God has committed himself to him. He has seen God in a vision. He's seen God, he's heard God in verse 1. These things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision.

There's the vision saying fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. And God has promised him land and an inheritance. And verse 6 says he believed God, it was accounted to him for righteousness.

But then he says in verse 8, Lord God, whereby shall I know that thou shalt inherit it? Now we think of these men like Abraham as having a kind of a cast iron faith. It never wavered, it never had any questions. But God has already pledged this omnipotence to him.

I am thy shield. Not that I'll put a shield between you and your situation, I am your shield. Not that I'll put Gabriel there.

Not that I'll put one of the super angels if you like, a cherubim, or I will be there. I will be between you and your enemies. And though God has given him that stupendous statement and promise and made a covenant with him.

He says, and how shall I know that I shall inherit this land in verse 8. Let's skip down to verse 12. The sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham. And lo, a horror of great darkness came upon him.

And he said unto Abraham, know of a surety that thy seed shall be estranged in a land that is not theirs. And shall serve them, and they shall be afflicted four hundred years. Come on.

Do you love God enough to ask him to lift the veil and let you see what's coming in your life a year from now? He's a chosen vessel unto God. And God says, your people are going to have for four hundred years a horror of great darkness came upon him. Right after a stupendous revelation, he had a vision of God.

And from that vision of God, he goes to horrible, indescribable darkness. There was a great book written years ago. I think I have a copy, I've never read it.

And it's called The Dark Night of the Soul. If I remember right, it was written by Mother Teresa. Well, I can get enough depression without reading that kind of thing.

But those periods come, they have to come. Jesus went into the horror of the darkness of Gethsemane. As I've said often enough, and people question it, Jesus did not die on the cross.

He died in the garden, that's the result of him dying. A man isn't a martyr because he's burned at the stake. He'd already died to life a long while before that.

This proves he's a martyr. And yet the Lord says, and he says, verse 8, How shall I know, Lord God, whereby that I shall inherit the land? Why didn't God say, well listen, are you questioning me? I gave you a vision of myself and my glory. You saw me, you heard my voice, and you still question? You're still uncertain? No, the Lord doesn't rebuke him.

Verse 17 says, It came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river Euphrates unto the great river in Egypt. What was the sign of God's presence? A smoking lamp? How shall I know? You'll know when my glory comes in the midst of that situation.

A smoking furnace and a burning lamp in the same day that the Lord made a covenant with him. Chapter 17. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

And he fell upon his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. But the thing again I want to emphasize is the presence of God is in that burning furnace, that burning lamp and that furnace. The fire is symbolic, obviously, of the presence of God and of the power of God.

Well, I don't know your heart, of course, and you don't know mine. I'll tell you very frankly, I'm getting weary of going to meetings where there's no presence of God. The presence of God was there in that shaft of fire over the tabernacle.

It didn't matter where they moved it, the pillar of fire was there. Moses saw the presence of God in the burning bush. Ezekiel had many, many visions of the fire of God.

It was a toll of fire, you remember, on the lips of Isaiah that purged him and sent him forth to speak with tremendous prophetic urgency. It says here that the cloud of smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night upon the glory shall be a defense. There shall be a tabernacle for the shadow in the midst of the daytime from the heat and for a refuge and a cover from storm and rain.

Okay, jump now down into the Gospel of John, as we say. John's interpretation of the Gospel. In chapter 1, verse 29, says, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is prepared before me, for he was before me. And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel. Therefore am I come baptizing with water.

And John bear record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him. And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water the same said unto me, Unto whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him. Remaining on him.

We quote it so often, The Spirit came upon him, but the Spirit remained upon him. Well, if he needed the Spirit of God upon him every moment of his life, I'm sure I need that. If the pillar of fire had come over the tabernacle Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the people would have been disturbed.

There's a permanent evidence of the presence of the living God. Again, I don't know about you, but I'm aching. For the day when I go into a sanctuary and we don't have to try and work the Spirit up and clap our hands and kick the furniture around.

But the presence of God is so real that I'm almost breathless with his majesty and with his glory. That day will come. Let's see if I can find the scripture here.

Well, it's eluded me for the moment, but anyhow. There's a promise of the presence of God to the children of Israel. Remember there was darkness in Egypt, but there was light in the homes of the children of Israel.

The scripture I was looking for, it was where it said that the presence of God will be in the homes. You know, in the Welsh Revival, every house became a tabernacle. Where there'd been profanity and cursing and fighting and all the cruel things that go on with depravity.

I talked with some people that went through the Welsh Revival. They said, you wouldn't believe the neighborhood. There's never any voices raised.

Every house your pastor was singing, come round and guide me, O thou great Jehovah. Everywhere you went, there were prayer meetings. People would start bargaining in a shop and stop and suddenly they'd start magnifying the Lord.

Now, there is coming a day in which Jesus, as Isaac Watts said in one of his hymns, Jesus shall reign wherever the sun doth its successive journeys run. His kingdom stretch from shore to shore. Till moon shall wax and wane no more.

You see, there was a permanent mark there. The spirit of the living God was there. Evidence by fire.

Now, isn't it true in your church sometimes the heat's up there, next time you go it's cold? Sometimes you can feel the throb of eternity the next time you feel it in a morgue. It shouldn't be that way. That's not God's desire.

God's desire is for permanent power. A permanent revelation. A permanent quickening that when people step into that atmosphere that just as you walk into a room and say Oh, this room's too hot.

Cool it down. That we go into the sanctuary and we're overwhelmed, awed by the majesty with the holiness of God. My heart craves for this.

And I won't be satisfied until God comes in in such awesome majesty. Until sometimes the preacher won't dare to stand up and interrupt the presence of God. Even though he may have a burning heart.

Remember they went down the road to Emmaus before the Holy Ghost was given? And their hearts burned within them. I need the quickening of the Spirit of God every moment of my life. More when I preach, more when I'm commissioned to do something.

But I need thy presence every passing hour as the Himalayan says. Because not that thy grace can foil the tempestuous power. When I heard about this horrendous thing, earthquake that happened almost 80 minutes past seven yesterday morning and it shook some parts of Houston even.

And shook cities 200 miles away. I thought of that word in Romans 8 that talks about the whole creation groaning. Actually there's a groaning amongst people.

There's a dissatisfaction. Materialism is saturated. They can't get any further in it.

You can put a sponge in water and release it. It will fill itself, but there's a limit to it. And there's a limit to satisfaction on the level, the human level.

But where will people go to find life? I had a refreshing experience yesterday. A man called me. And he said, I have an appointment with you at two o'clock.

I said, thanks. I've forgotten all about it. I had prayed for it, but previously I admit that.

This young man came. Well, his young age, 45. Everybody under 50 thinks they're young anyhow.

And then we sat down. He began to cry. He said, I've waited four years.

I've prayed. Since I got your book, Why Revival Tarries. And I got revival praying.

And he said, I still get up at two and three o'clock in the morning and read the chapter of Why Revival Tarries, then read something from the prophets. And I go to my room and weep, or I march up and down the tabernacle with my hands raised and magnify the Lord. He said, Brother Raymond, there's something burning in me.

There's something that won't keep quiet. And yet my people don't want to hear. They relax.

You know, the theme right now is relax and be raptured. And I'll tell you what, if we knew the Lord was coming at the end of the week, most of us would put our house in order. He said, there's something burning.

And I've offered God. He said, here's my wife. She'll tell you.

I've offered to lay my ministry down. We're building a lovely home. I've no money, but I'm building a home.

The church isn't building it. I'm building it. By the help of God.

And he said, I'm prepared to lay this church down. I got it from the grassroots. God gave me a touch of revival in the community.

And I've got favour with the community. Speaking rapture, I have everything I want, but I haven't. I haven't got it, he said.

I don't know God. I'm not intimate with God. I want to be able to touch Him.

I want to be able to hear His voice. I'm not satisfied with a crowd. I'm not satisfied with my wages.

I'm not satisfied to be accepted. He said, you know, a while ago, he said, I was going down the road. He said, I've made records.

I have a good voice. I've travelled as a singer. And I was going down the road, and I put your tape on the judgment seat.

And he said, you said, well, what will you say to the judgment seat? Some of you will say, I made records. He said, that slew me. I pulled the car off the road and repented.

There's nothing wrong in making records. It's wrong when they become your idols. It's wrong, again, when they become your satisfaction.

I said, well, again, you know, the key to the whole thing, according to Jesus, who is the greatest master of all, He said, blessed is the hunger and thirst. He said, well, I've got a perpetual hunger. I can't feed enough.

Well, I said, you know, that we sing that hymn, God, me, O thou great Jehovah. And we turn the last verse around, feed me till I want no more. I'd like to eat like that.

So, just one meal, and not spend time eating the rest of my life. Spend it in prayer and quietness, if you find a secret like that. Let me know, Dale, or Betty.

Betty does the cooking, all right, sometimes. No, I can't be satisfied, critically, by one meal. And Jesus Christ is the bread of life, and He's the satisfaction.

It's a paradox. But everything in the Christian life is a paradox. If you're going to go up, you go down.

He that exalted himself shall be abased. He that humbled himself shall be exalted. Save your life, you'll lose it.

Lose your life, you'll save it. Now, that's not logic by anybody's reasoning. It's totally paradoxical.

But how true it is. John Wesley said, What I had, I gave. And what I kept, I lost.

I discovered that early in life, he said, and determined to give away everything. I'd live at the absolute minimum, which he did. You see, there's a permanence with the abiding spirit of godliness.

You see, the spirit comes not to glorify me, to help me to preach, help me to sing, help me to do something, do exploits. The supreme work of the Holy Spirit is to make me more like Jesus Christ. By whatever means He does it.

If the fire has to burn more fiercely, so be it. You know, it's easy to sing, Oh, to Jesus I surrender. It's doing it that matters, isn't it? When God begins to strip, when He takes this away, when He takes that away, and He's not touching somebody else, wasn't it? Somebody came to Jesus one day and said, Tell my brother to do this, that.

Jesus said, What is that to thee? Follow thou me. God is making me. I told a young man yesterday, God isn't concerned about your ministry.

He stared at me. And his wife looked sideways, and was saying, Are you crazy? I said, No, He's not concerned about your church. He's not concerned about your ministry.

He's concerned about making you a man of God. He's concerned with making you equal, commensurate with the situation that lies in front of us. No, I don't want the horror of great darkness.

I'd rather not have it. But if going through that great darkness, going through that Gethsemane means death, and then death means resurrection, so what? Is there any alternative? There's a hymn that says, It is the way the Master went, should not the servant tread it still. And that's all He is, the final leader.

It's easy to say, I want the faith of Abraham. Do you want the trouble Abraham had? And the trials and the testing? But one thing I got out of that, you know, is this, when he said, Well, how will I know you'll do it? He's seen God, he's heard God, and he still doubts God. How will I know? And God says, Well, I'll let you know.

When you divide that sacrifice, there'll be a burning fire, a lamp of burning go right through. My presence is fire. I suppose the hardest thing in life to bear, really, is loneliness.

Unless it's ridicule. You know, when you decide you're going to lay all on the altar and live entirely for Jesus Christ, the folk you thought loved you most will turn against you easiest. The Apostle Paul, I think the greatest man that ever lived after Jesus himself, he got together a group of men all full of the Holy Ghost, but his pace was so quick, his fastings were so long, his zeal was so strong, they wouldn't put up with him, they quit.

All men forsook me. Nevertheless, the Lord stood by me. When he lost everything, he gained everything.

You want to give a limited amount to God, and expect him to pour his bounty, unlimited blessing, for a minimum deposit. God says, Not so. I gave my all in my Son.

I expect your all to be given to me. It's a lonely way. It's a hard way.

That young man looked at me and waited a minute and said, You mean to say that my ministry doesn't, I'm not saying your ministry doesn't count. I'm saying it's not number one thing in your life, in the sight of God. Are there deficiencies in your life? Yes.

I've moved up in my prayer life, but I've not got the groanings which cannot be uttered. I don't know anything about traveling. I don't know anything about tears.

Essentially, when I go, I discover in the center of myself I have some self-pity, I have some restraint. There are things I'm holding on to. Well, until you let them go.

And you really sing as the hymn writer says, Nothing in my hands I bring, simply that I, You can't grasp something if your hands are full. You can't learn of God if your head's full. You can't learn of God if your heart is full of something else.

It's the stripping that's the problem. We want to be told, but who wants to be stripped? And then it's God's way with us. It's the only way.

You wouldn't think the backside of the desert would be the place where God's going to reveal himself, but he did that to Moses. Again in that defense we have, that marvelous defense of Stephens. And he begins to tell the fathers and the elders of Israel there, Our Father God revealed himself to Abraham in Mesopotamia.

That's like saying you're going, just walking through Las Vegas in a nightclub and suddenly the Holy Ghost came. God doesn't do it that way anymore. But the only way that he could get to Abraham was to get to him in a place that wasn't much more than a forest of idols and hedonism and superstition and darkness.

And yet a merciful, holy God came and presented himself there in the midst of all that idolatry. I dare to think that every day in some part of the world God is revealing himself where there's no sanctuary, where there's no building, where there's no priest, where there's no Bible. Some people are making discoveries of God today in prison cells.

They've been there maybe ten years, twelve years and this was the day when God came as a result of their faithfulness, as a result of their intense desire for God. And we said last week this amazing man John came in the wilderness after four hundred years of darkness and no prophetic light. Then he comes by to inhale his comet.

There's still no voice and suddenly his voice. He came with a message which is so badly needed in the day in which we live. You hear people saying well of course the last word of Jesus was to the church in which he said go ye into all the world.

That's not true. It's not the last word of Jesus. That was the last word of Jesus to the disciples.

The last word of Jesus is given about six or seven times in Revelation. Repent, repent, repent, repent. That's the word to the church.

The church has halted somewhere between the upper room Calvary and the upper room. We're trying to capture the attention of the world with something we have instead of something he has. We've got to the bottom of the barrel.

The different things we're doing in these days. A lady called me the other day she said in our town the leading evangelical church in the town so called they've had aerobic dancing for women and now they've got women and men aerobic dancing. That'll be some sight.

Anything to try and capture people bring them in. But again there's nothing more fascinating than fire. And there's nothing more fascinating than the fire of the Holy Ghost.

Again in the world's revival when the spirit came on those blood streaming miners some of the roughest men in the world they take their lunch in a little basket or sometimes in a handkerchief they call it their snap. When it came to their lunch time or snap time they said instead of talking football and talking sport and talking all that you'll hear all that in bible colleges if you go. All they do is talk about the latest films about the football teams about the baseball scores.

But when it came to the world's revival the spirit of God came all over the coal mine there were groups of men they'd be singing come round and guide me oh thou great then they quit and they start praying. And all over the mine you could hear the surging of the voice voices of men crying for revival. That revival did not stay in Wales.

I think it was Seth Joshua that was one of the leading figures. And he and one or two other men had been anointed in that revival. And they asked for this very same thing the spirit of the Lord remained upon him.

Stay upon us stay upon us. It meant loneliness it meant fasting it meant weeping it meant isolation. But they went from there to the Cyclot Hills in India and had revival there.

Praying Hyde was a key figure there too. The fire was permanently there from there they went to China. And they had an amazing revival in China.

And when the fires were lit all over the country they said we're going to Korea. And the Chinese people said never never they're too phlegmatic. It's like trying to set water on fire.

But they went and had the same fire. Because it was the same Holy Ghost. Because the hearts had the same need.

There was no profit making. Nobody was trying to establish a denomination. They didn't even ask for offerings they went and poured out their hearts in prayer and intercession.

God is going to bring us back to that I'm sure of that. You may think I'm overboard that's alright. You stay on board.

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