

Weeping Between Porch and the Altar

by Leonard Ravenhill

The church needs a supernatural move of God to bring about revival, and this requires a broken heart and a genuine call to repentance.

Duration: 1:12:40

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Joel 1:13, Joel 2:17, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Weeping"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker contrasts the superficiality of modern Christian gatherings with the deep devotion and sacrifice of believers in the past. He highlights the story of a young man who prayed fervently despite suffering from a debilitating illness. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the message of the cross. He criticizes the tendency to prioritize prosperity, popularity, and personal comfort in Christianity today, calling for a return to brokenness and a cry for God's intervention.

Transcript

Father, we thank you this morning for this privilege of fellowship. We would be still and know that thou art God. Lord, we care not whether you come in the earthquake, or in the wind, or in the fire, or in the still small voice, but we see a world outside of us so reckless, so hell-bound, so sin-bound, so blind, so deaf, so smart scientifically, and so dumb in the areas of spirituality.

And you've called us to be shepherds, to be leaders. You've called us to be Joshua's to lead the church on to victory. And we recognize, Lord, the staleness that there is around.

We do not see the pillar of fire hanging over the sanctuary. We do not hear the rushing mighty wind. Will you speak to our hearts today? Grant, Lord, we shall be edified after we have been here and have new incentives, a new vision, a new purpose to do the will of God.

We remember the suffering church throughout the world, the millions of precious Christians who today have to bow their necks and bow their backs to the smiters who know no relief from their misery. We thank you for the testimony that still flourishes amidst all that wickedness and violence. Lord God, we thank you for every good and every perfect gift that you bestow upon us.

Thank you for our freedom. Thank you for your word which you've preserved right through the centuries. And I ask you again, Lord, that we may be a vital link between your eternal song and this troubled world outside, this lost world.

And I give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.

I'm not really going to preach a sermon this morning, but I want to have a launching pad, and the launching pad is in the little book of Joel in the second chapter. Joel chapter 2 and verse 17. I'll go back, pardon me, to chapter 1 and verse 13.

God yourselves and lament ye priests, howl ye ministers of the altar, come lie all night in sackcloth ye ministers of my God, for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. Sanctify a fast and call a solemn assembly. And then to verse 17 of the next chapter, let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the altar, the porch and the altar, and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, but the heathen should rule over them.

Wherefore should they say among the people, where is your God? Most of the prophetic books have a kind of historical framework or a setting in which it's comparatively easy to discover that which provides a key to the interpretation of the book. This book of Joel, to me, it's timeless. I know the word of God is timeless, and it differs from other books because there are no kings of Israel or Judah mentioned in the book, no great empires like Assyria or Babylonians and Egyptians and so forth, and scholars dispute whether it's earlier than Amos or later than Micah, and I don't think that matters too much either.

I get literature from all over the world because my books are in a number of languages, and then everyone that writes to me quotes 2 Chronicles 7 14, which I'm sure you know, I'll remind you of it, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and so forth. Now I do not believe that that is the key verse for our day. It's a valid scripture, but you see it's comparatively easy to use it because it throws the responsibility on the few.

If my people are called by my name, I don't believe the key to revival is in the few, I believe the key to revival is in the prophet. There's an old saying that a river will never rise higher than its source. A few years ago before he became the, a few years ago before he retired, Dr. Carl F. Henry, the founder and editor of Christianity Today, sent out a questionnaire to what he called 20 of the leading intellectual preachers in the country.

There must be more than 20 because I didn't get them on anyhow, and the question that he sent out was this, what do you see for the church of Jesus Christ by the year 2000? I remember only one of the replies, it was given by Elton Trueblood, the Quaker philosopher, and Elton Trueblood said this amazing thing, by the year 2000 the church will be a conscious minority surrounded by an arrogant militant paganism. I followed that hook line and thinker, and woke up with mental and I think spiritual indigestion about two o'clock in the morning. The world by the year 2000, the church will be kind of crunched in, which will be a conscious minority surrounded by an arrogant militant paganism, and then I began to realize, well you better back up a bit.

I think we need to remind ourselves that Christianity was not served up to the world on a silver platter. Christianity was born in a sophisticated totalitarian society. We used to live in the city of Bath in England, it was founded in 55 BC, 55 years before Christ, and when Christianity was born, it was born in a slave system that dominated almost the whole world.

I use the figure sometimes again of when we stood on the southern lip of the Grand Canyon, and there read the legend, which I'm sure you've read, it's fixed on one of the rocks that this is the Grand Canyon, and it gives some statistics about it. The yellow ribbon in the distance is the Colorado River, it's seven miles away, it's about 350 feet wide, it's about 45 feet deep, and so forth. And if you look down, and you see the ground level of the canyon, the walls on either side are a mile high, and I don't know why except it seemed the Lord said to me, well how would a child get out of that situation? A little child couldn't surely swim the Colorado River, a man couldn't do that even.

How could it scale the walls on either side? They're almost perpendicular, and immediately I came to my mind, it was a picture of the early church. The early church was walled in on one side with the mightiest military machine in history, the Roman power. It was walled in on this side with Greek intellectualism.

It was blocked ahead by the Jewish monopoly, as they thought, of the gospel. And you know, one of the things that really hurts today is the snobbishness even in Christianity. If you don't have a degree, I don't have any degrees, after all you can have 32 and still be frozen, but those men who turned the world upside down had no colossal intellectual capacity, they had no great financial backing, they had no social standing, they were about the most despised men in and around Jerusalem, and yet they broke out somehow, and they, the later, it was said that they turned the world upside down.

I think at least once a week, sometimes I think of it once a day, where Dr. J.B. Phillips, that gave us the Phillips New Testament, one day turned round rather wearily in his office, and he picked up a book which happened to be the Acts of the Apostles, which happened to be in Greek, which he happens to understand very well, and he read through to about the fifth chapter, and then he summarized it this way, this is the church of Jesus Christ before it became fat and out of breath by prosperity. This is the church of Jesus Christ before it became muscle-bound by over-organization. This is the church of Jesus Christ where they didn't gather together a group of intellectuals to study psychosomatic medicine, they just healed the sick.

This is the church of Jesus Christ where they did not say prayers, but they prayed in the Holy Ghost. There's a vast difference. The tragedy in our colleges and seminaries right now, we turn men out because they know the Word of God.

That's never going to move the world. The question is not whether they know the Word of God, the question is do they know the God of the Word? And just to give a man a license to preach because he has some academic ability, and then he can frame the little thing on the wall, you know, to say he got his degree because his grandmother put him through college, you know, and he likes to show this thing off. To do that is like giving a blind man a driving license.

If he doesn't know God, why is he in this business? I come to this conclusion recently about two things. We've got to make up our minds that this book is absolute or absolute salute. It's either got the answer for our generation or forget it.

And the other thing is that preaching is not a profession, it's a privilege. I remember going down the street, the High Holborn in London, a few years ago. Well, it is a few, 25 I guess, and a little lady was going to the mailbox there.

Her feet were like Charlie Chaplin's, and she was very, very stooped, and she shakily put her letter into the mailbox, and then she turned to go into a building, and somebody said, you know who that is? I said, not

the slightest idea. That's the widow of Hugh Price Hughes, at one time the king of the, at least of the Methodist pulpit in England. His daughter gave us a huge biography of her father, and she said, when he came back on a Sunday night from the service, preached morning and night, when he came back at night, if nobody had been saved, he was inconsolable.

You couldn't comfort him, he wouldn't eat, he wouldn't drink, he wouldn't even take his long coat off. He threw himself over his bed, and he sobbed, and he sobbed, and he sobbed, and said, why, why, why? Isn't it staggering when you think that one sermon on the day of Pentecost produced three thousand people, and we had some cities yesterday where three thousand sermons were preached, and nobody was saved? And he doesn't even say this. The church used to be a lifeboat, now it's a cruise ship.

We're not marching to Zion, we're sailing there with ease. In the apostolic church, it says they were all amazed, and now in our churches everybody wants to be amused. The church began in the upper room, despised, in the upper room with a bunch of men agonizing, and it's ending in the supper room with a bunch of women organizing.

We must take rattle for revival, and commotion for creation, and action for unction. Look, I think in this critical hour in history, and it is the most critical hour in history, the Middle East is ready to blow up. The prestige of the nation has gone down, as we know in this nation we love.

From Walter Gates, it's gone down, down, down, and we've never been as humiliated. And if you want to see the bankruptcy of humanism, all you have to do is ask why we poured billions of dollars into the United Nations, and what did they do? We saw Cambodia raped. It was the most hideous example of genocide in the history of the world, and Nixon and Kissinger knew about it.

They inaugurated the bombing, or they connived to it anyhow. Do you know as many as three million people had to march out of one city? They actually went in when surgeons were doing surgery, and they pulled the surgeons away, and they took the people off that were open, and they flushed them on the floor, and they marched people down the road till they were treading on each other's heels, and taking their skin off. There are not a million people left.

If you get last year's issue, I think it was March issue of Reader's Digest, it has the most horrible article on the rape of a quiet country, I think it called it, the rape of a gentle country. You talk about hideous things, you talk about unlimited wickedness, you talk about the brutality of man. Shakespeare said, in those dreamy days when he lived, that man's inhumanity to man makes countless millions mourn.

I jotted some notes the other day, I haven't memorized them yet, about the condition of the world, and this is given by men outside of the church of Jesus Christ. Carl Jung says, and he's quoted by Paul Kaufman, it is becoming more and more obvious that it is not starvation, or microbes, or cancer, but man himself who is the threat, who is the greatest danger to mankind. Anthony Storr says we are the cruelest, most ruthless species that have ever walked over the face of the earth.

Paul Toneo says the dance of death and violence goes on round about us daily. Another man whose name I do not know says we live in a theater of the absurd. I'm old enough to remember years prior to 1914.

I remember the war broke out on August the 4th, 1914. My cousin had been to our house about a month before that, as straight as a ramrod. He had his red jacket with its lovely gold buttons, and I looked at him

and I thought, my, what a marvelous thing to be a soldier.

On the 4th of August, he went with millions of other men to fight. He came back a total physical wreck. But you see, the slogan to World War I was this, this is the war to end wars.

War is not only unchristian, it's uncivilized. And then after that we had, from 1919 to 1939, we had 20 golden years of peace, when the church had the greatest opportunity since Pentecost, in my judgment. And all we did was try and get a kind of a peace situation between the liberals, and what they used to call German rationalism, and find out how much of a Bible we could concede.

Then came the second World War. Prior to World War I, we had a group of intellectuals in England called Fabian Socialists. The red bearded man who gave us plays like Pygmalion, and My Fair Lady.

George Bernard Shaw was one of the super intellectuals. I forget the names of all the others, but Bernard Shaw was one. One of the helpers was in the same group.

But really the leader was a self-anointed and self-appointed prophet of a new world order. His name was H.G. Wells, a cocky little man. Those men did not talk about redemption, they did not talk about sin.

They were just rationalists, they were just humanists. Funny. But way back in 1912, H.G. Wells said, two years before the 1914 war, H.G. Wells said, it is possible for us to have a new race of people by intellectual and biological processes.

We don't need the Bible, we don't need the church, we can pull down the hills of wealth, we can fill in the valleys of poverty. He didn't talk about sin and redemption and wickedness. He talked about the adequacy of materialism.

He talked about the inevitability of progress. He talked about the sufficiency of man. And they were going to bring in a new millennium by their own genius.

And then a shadow came over the sky. We had the 1914-18 war. And at the end of it, H.G. Wells and the gang weren't so sure about things.

1939 came, the second world war. Well, H.G. Wells had written his crux ansata that got him into trouble with the Roman church, and then he had written his outline of history. But the last book he wrote in the middle of World War II was not this rosy optimism that man has innate power to cleanse the human system and bring peace and civilization and order.

His last book was mind at the end of its tether. And he says there is no hope for humanity. But he did say one sensible thing.

He said there's a little cavity somewhere in the human breast which can be filled by God and only by God. We feel a little a little nervous these days of talking about human depravity. Well, heaven knows there's never been as much depravity around as we have today.

The things that were done in a corner 25 years ago now are big business. People are not ashamed to be naked. You can go on the beach there on Fire Island, New York.

You can go to a beach in Southern California and see a thousand people on Sunday without a stitch on them, from little things like this to tottering old men. They play volleyball, they play their games in stark

nakedness, and make good targets of course for the hundreds of cameras that are there. We live in a day again which parallels the iniquity that was on the earth when when the prophet Elijah came on the scene.

The nation was in bondage to idolatry and impurity and infidelity and indifference. There's a Jewish scholar years ago by the name of Butch Basin. You may remember him.

He gave us a sign book on the prophet of Isaiah, and it's my contention this morning brethren that this pulpit is no place for puppets in this day in which we live. It's prophets that we need, and Butch Basin says that the prophet by the very nature of his calling is a tragic figure. He has a fierce loyalty for God, and he has a broken heart over a lost nation.

Read about the prophet Isaiah that he stays, as we would say, in a shopping center. He lies naked there. He's an aristocrat, and yet he's consumed with love for God, but he isn't afraid to be fought a fool.

You read in Ezekiel's prophecy where for, what is it, 349 days he had to lay on his left side. He wasn't even allowed to turn on to his right side because of the iniquity of the nation. We're going to have no broken-hearted people till we have broken-hearted preachers.

Let the priest weep between the altar and the doorposts. It's amazing when you think of it, you know. There's no way that you can organize revival.

It doesn't need to be advertised. It can't be subsidized. It can't be nationalized.

It can't be denominationalized, and it sure can't be rationalized. Right now there's a breath of revival in one country, only one I know of, but it could be other places, and that is over there in Nagaland in northeast India. It broke out in 1977.

True revival changes the moral climate of the community. Most of our revivals don't get under the door of the sanctuary. When a lady was arguing with a Protestant lady arguing with a Catholic lady about a piece of land that was being excavated, the lady said, well our denomination is building a new church there.

The Catholic lady says we don't want one. Why not? Because we just built a church up the road, and I don't want my children going to a church, a daily vacation, bible school, and getting tracts, and getting other stuff. Oh no, the Protestant lady said, now let's not argue about this, you know.

We'd better join together and fight the Communists. You know that was the thing that the old square-headed Georgian, what was the dictator in Russia? Stalin, Stalin, thank you, Stalin, sitting there at, was it Yalta? I think it was Yalta, and Stalin was there, and Mr. Roosevelt was sitting in the middle, and Winston Churchill was over there, and Stalin said, look you've got an enemy called Germany, and I've got an enemy called Germany, and America has an enemy called Germany, so we are friends fighting one enemy. It was very clever, and it worked, though it was wrong.

We have a problem, we've got to fight Communism, so let's link up. There's no difference between your religion and mine. And the other lady said, I thought there was a big difference.

Why, she said, I go to church, and I confess my sins about every six days, and you don't do that in the Protestant church, do you? And the lady said, no, no we don't. Have you ever seen a sign outside of one of our churches? Revival. Yes, I've often wondered, what do you do? Well, she said, you see, you go and confess your sins every six days, and in our church, we save our sins up till we have a revival, and then

we all go up to the front, and cry, and confess our sins, and we have a great time, and everybody's happy, and then we go back and start our sinning all over.

Isn't it about time we told the world that while there's a study of comparative religion, Christianity is not a comparative religion, it's a superlative religion? And we mix them up, and we try and tell people who are morally good, and very excellent, many of them, that Jesus Christ came into the world to make bad men good. He did not. That's a fringe benefit.

The first argument God has with a man is not that he's bad, it's that he's dead in trespasses and in sin. And Christianity is the only gospel in the world, the only message in the world, where a man's God comes and lives inside of him. The Mormons claim that last year they had more converts from Evangelical churches than the Evangelical churches had from Mormonism.

They're funding to make you think. Again, somebody said that Mormonism last year was the most rapidly growing religion in America. Somebody said, forget it, that's not true.

Bromagainism is the rapidly growing thing. And oh, how the preachers are concerned about the White House. I wish that God were half as much concerned about God's house as we are about the White House.

The White House is never going to govern the country. The White House is supposing we have a moral majority. Why, bless your life, Jesus could have had a great time with a moral majority who were more moral than the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

You see, we're always trying to help our poor, bankrupt Christianity out, one way or another. So, it doesn't work that way, let's work it this way. We've glamorized it.

Sunday morning, you turn your TV on, you see people in gorgeous dresses. You watch people going to church, and you've got to say, there's more passion than passion. Come on, where's the brooding of the Holy Ghost these days? When revival comes, you don't daringly say, Joe Smith is coming to preach Sunday night, and he finishes next Sunday night.

Where in the world did you get the idea the Holy Ghost only comes at 11 o'clock Sunday morning, and you send him home at 12, and you want him back at 7 at night till 8, and we don't need him till Wednesday night? That's not facetious, that's true. When revival comes, the lights don't go out in the sanctuary for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks. I spent an afternoon in Wales in 1931-32 with an old man who had been one of the right-hand men in the Salvation Army revivals back in the 1880s.

The man was 80 years of age. He told me about the amazing things that happened in their revivals. The men that would sit on the back seats, the scum almost of the earth, and they'd come in just to get warm, and they'd have a hymnbook in their hands, and they'd get so worried when the old preacher of William Booth particularly was preaching his hellfire messages that they'd shred their hymnbooks, leave a hymnbook shredded.

And Begbie, in his, I think, definitive work of William Booth in the first volume, I think it is in the first volume about the third chapter, talks about the holiness meeting, and he said when the Holy Ghost came down and men resisted the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God would lift people from the back of the sanctuary and carry them over the ordinance and drop them at the altar. And we think we've seen everything because two or three people get healed. Again, you cannot standardize revival.

I'm not thinking of a church revival, I'm thinking of a national revival. There's only one hope for America, not one or two, there's one hope for America, and that is that we have a divine intervention in the nation. Forget your denomination, forget your empty seat.

Let's see first of all how much God grieves over the sin of the people. After all, when you look in the Old Testament, God's argument was not with the Amalekites and Hittites and all the other acts. God's problem in the Old Testament was Israel.

God's problem in the world today is not communism, Mormonism, Mulniism, or any other ism. God's problem is his church in the day today. Less unworldly.

I live in an area which is quite unusual. I suppose if you if you leap straight behind me across the fence there, David Wilkinson lives about a mile away, and up to our left the Agape Force, and down to the right Keith Green. And now the second chapter of Acts has bought 100 acres there, and now Jimmy Owen has bought 10 acres just up the road, and we have the Agape Force there, and we have Youth with a Mission here, and just a bit further over the road there we have Calvary Commission, and Barry McGuire lives there, and Dallas Holm lives there, and Keith Green, one of the top musicians.

Boy we've got such a proliferation, they're calling it the New Jerusalem, which I'm sure it isn't. You know I tease those fellows some days, I say you know you guys, I have to sweat and fast and pray and weep before I go to a so-called revival, and you guys can walk up with a smile and say a few things and wang your guitar, and in two nights you can get more money than I get in a year. Now that doesn't make me envious, but you know I see the pitiful state of the church, when you can get three or four thousand people on a Saturday night to pay five dollars, plus all the expense of traveling, plus the fact they have to eat before they go home and eat before they come, and you can get thousands of people and clap and applaud and have a great time.

When I read of a young man that could walk out in the snow, and the snow up to his chin sometimes, wrestling in prayer from sunrise till sunset with a tubercular body, that when he sneezed he sprayed the snow with blood, that when he coughed he spit up what looked like the leaf a peckle from a rose, and if you've got it you could stretch it like that, it was a piece of his lungs. That a young man could die at 28 years of age, like Robert Murray McShane died in Scotland at 29 years of age. When I heard about a man who wrestled in prayer like that, I was dumbfounded, and since the church I went to was pretty sleepy and I was only about 17.

I went out into Sherwood Forest, I lived on the edge of it, and I started praying by myself at night. We have some bracken there, it doesn't go out this way like a fountain, it starts and it comes out like a ball, and it grows seven or eight feet high, and I used to creep in it and weep and groan and pray for revival. I used to stand on the hill outside the city as Jesus did over Jerusalem, and three years after I started praying, revival came to that city because I prayed.

No, no, no, I was just one of a number, but a man called George Jeffress came. George Jeffress came, there's a book about him called the Ministry of the Miraculous. He was very humble.

No, no, no, no, no, he never stopped to make, you never heard money mentioned. He just came there, they sang about one chorus he'd minister, and the authority of God was on him, and again the acts of the apostles were repeated. I don't think that's the only answer.

In fact, I think we could bypass that. In the last 30 years, America has had more great healing crusades than all the nations of the world put together, and look where we are. What we need now is a revival of holiness, a revival of character, a revival of people who are utterly selfless and prepared to lay their lives on the altar for God.

Again, going back to that thing up there, which Keith Green said to me the other day, why don't you go, I'll pay you fair, let's go see what's happening in Nagaland. Well, one thing, we have a language barrier, but Paul Kaufman, who I consider one of the leading missionary statesmen in the world, he lives in Hong Kong, went to see what happened and expected something like Phinney, and when he got there, there were signs and wonders and miracles. Cripples were healed, blind people were seen, every distorted, perverted thing was put right.

So what? Hey, did you ever hear of a revival like this? The government has made an inquiry. Why has the drink traffic gone down? Why is it the kids are behaving in the streets? Why are we not having a problem with drugs? You've a pretty hefty problem around here with it, I guess. Do you know a city in the nation that hasn't? Miami, now England, the other day said Miami is the murder capital of the world, and some people say, no, no, no, no, that's up there in Atlanta.

Well, how does this eruption suddenly come? Why is the nation convulsed? Why is the government asking? We were the most rebellious, lawless state in India, and now we're the calmest. The crime has gone. People are civilized and gentle and loving.

Well, it's the same old story. They discovered a group of people, underground people, who've been praying 20 years for revival. I live 50 miles from a young man, 32 years of age, who prays 10 hours a day in busy America.

A man outside of Waco is 60 years of age, he prays five hours a day. No man, I don't care how colossal your intellect, no man is greater than his prayer life. To stand before men on behalf of God is one thing, to stand before God on behalf of men is something entirely different.

We've urged people to to tie, haven't we? But we only mean their money. You see, we want a revival, a painless Pentecost. We want something that won't disturb our status quo.

Well, it's easy street everywhere else, so why not here? There never has been a revival at Eichenrace that hasn't been bedded back there with true, true, true intercession. In the city of Leeds, where I lived in England, I say the revival came through George Jefferson, it did. But it came because there was a little man there, he was unlettered.

He knew that shouldn't worry us too much, that the world, what does the world know about spiritual values anyhow? The trouble is, lots of denominations have fallen for it. You can't have a minister unless he has so many degrees. This little man had no degrees, but boy did he have a burning heart.

And he labored, and he had three breakdowns, not mentally, physically. Do you know why? Because he fasted so much, but he had authority. Paul says in Ephesians 6.19, pray for me that utterance may be given me.

In other words, he means let the word be threaded with that mysterious thing that you can't define and nobody can give. The thing that we call unction, the anointing of God. If money could buy it, my, some of you would sell your house to get it, but you can't get it with money.

And you can't get it by, you know, extracurricular stuff at the university. No sirree, I've been praying for a long while in my secret heart that in this last day, when wickedness is so arrogant, the church is going to end up as a conscious minority surrounded by an arrogant militant paganism. That's how it was born.

That's how it is today. That's how it will be until God pours out his spirit with one final movement of compassion. Until again, you don't have to show Christian films.

Oh boy, we've tried to, we've tried to make the gospel roll along, haven't we? Christian films give our children hayrides and sleigh rides. We have some girls and folk not far from us with Keith Green's group who used to be in the Mooneyites. Man alive, you think West Point's tough.

West Point's a nursery compared to the way those guys had to live. The food they got, the discipline in their lives, the hours they have to ponder over the word, the time they have to be up in the morning. That's about the last aspect that we present to people, isn't it? We're so keen to get them all saved and you're going to heaven and we forget to tell them you're the soldier of Jesus Christ if you're really born again and you have no rights.

Now we're trying to marry Christianity to prosperity and popularity and personalities and it isn't working. Oh, you can preach the prosperity doctrine because that feeds our carnality. Everybody wants, look, why don't those men who preach that go to the third world and preach it where they need it? I know wealthy people, I know many millionaires, I know lovely people and I believe God lets them have a ministry in supplying needs.

But the church of Jesus Christ, when the church is prosperous, he never has revival. It's when she's poor. Prayer is the language of the poor.

Bow down thine ear and hear me for I'm poor and needy. The self-satisfied don't need to pray. The self-sufficient don't want to pray.

The self-righteous cannot pray. But the man who realizes I need something outside of anything that's human at all, he wants to bathe his soul in prayer. I went to a little Bible school in England, there were only 35 students, but my, I'm glad that the man who was the principal was a man of prayer.

He wrote a book, Samuel Chadwick's book, The Path of Prayer. It's reissued right now and then after that he wrote a book that seemed logically to follow the way to Pentecost. The weakest, weakest meeting in almost any church without exception is the prayer meeting.

And when we're not strong in prayer, we're saying to God, we can manage because we shall pray if we have an invasion, we shall pray if we have a famine. We have a great utility God. Very often we say to young people, now look, very often we say to young people, now look, now you've got to read your Bible and maintain your prayer.

You need to maintain your prayer life to pray. No, not so, not so. You need to maintain your Christian life in order to pray.

The greatest expositor in the world living today told me personally, he said, I don't have any trouble. I'd like to expound the word. My books, he's written many, many books, but he said, I've always found prayer so tough.

I just, just found, find prayer the most difficult thing in the world. Read the Acts of the Apostles and all you read about is prayer, prayer, prayer, prayer, prayer. When they had prayed, the place was shaken.

If you want to read the prayer life of Jesus, you would read the gospel according to Luke, because in every instance he gives Jesus as a praying man. While the other evangelists say that Jesus was baptized in Jordan, Luke says it was as he was praying he was baptized, whereas he was baptized he was praying. And the others say, of course, Jesus was crucified, but Luke says it was, it was while he was, while he was crucified even, he was praying.

The evangelists say he was on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yes, but Luke says it was while he was praying he was transfigured. I guess there's not a preacher here that doesn't get discouraged sometimes.

If not, you must be a very wonderful guy. You think, well, are they listening? Do they hear? Do you know, I'm convinced of this, that 95 percent at least of the people that came to this sanctuary, or any other sanctuary in yesterday, did not come here to meet God. They came to hear a sermon about him.

When did you last sit out of the sanctuary and you dare not say a word? I remember a series of meetings we had in Wales in 1949, and after three days a lady, Mrs. Lewis, said, Brother Ray, no, this is the nearest thing to the Welsh revival that we've had. That was 40 years after the Welsh revival. Mrs. Lewis, what's the point of identification? Because they walk up the hill, which they call a mountain.

And she said, last night, the night before, the night before that, when we got to the crossroads in Welsh, Gaelic, Welsh Gaelic, instead of saying good night, they say nos dar. And she said, it wasn't until we got to the crossroads that we realized each night that nobody had said a word. We were so awed with the majesty and the presence of God.

Our people don't get off the doorstep. Hey, you think cowboys will win today? Boy, I think they have a chance, don't you? Do you think you'll get in the playoff? It's drivel, it's nonsense. The church has to rediscover two things.

One, the majesty of God, and the holiness of God, and the other, the sinfulness of sin. Prayer is not the easiest thing in the world. Prayer is the hardest thing in the world.

Prayer is the most demanding thing in the world. I had the pleasure of praying very often with Duncan Campbell, the man God used in the Welsh in the Hebrides revival, 1950 onward. I asked him one day about a certain event, and he said, yes, that's right.

We were in the sanctuary. We'd been different places, and revival had moved on, you know, revival that lasted all night. People didn't go home.

But he said, when I was ministering, the place was like iron. It seemed as though God was a million miles away, and my message, which usually went over so well, no, no, it's like throwing a rubber ball at a wall. My words came back on me.

In front of him were all kinds of ministers, and I don't think you'll find a minister in Scotland that doesn't have a degree or double degrees. But he didn't say anything to the preachers and the deacons and the elders. He pointed to a boy sitting over here, and he called him by name and said, would you, laddie, laddie, will you pray? A 16-year-old high school boy.

And he stood up, and you know sometimes when somebody says something here about a thing, you say, you know, in Scotland they say, ah, here's a solemn assembly of people. Here's a 16-year-old boy that walked with God, and he stood up and he said, ah, what's the good of praying if we're not right with God? And he began to quote Psalm 24, who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and so forth and so on. And when he finished, Duncan said, the stillness of eternity was on the building.

And the boy prayed 10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 40 minutes, 45 minutes. And then when he prayed, as though he could see some of it there, he said, Satan. Oh, I've heard people say this almost facetiously in a meeting, get the devil out of this place.

He stood there and said, Satan, I rebuke you, get out of this territory. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, I plead the blood of Christ be gone. And just as though God pulled a switch in heaven, God came on the meeting, but he came on a covenant at the end of the world, and people left it.

And he came on a dance down the road, and people left it. We have to drag people to the altar. There are no altars in the New Testament, if you want to be really scriptural.

Altars are an invention when the Holy Ghost doesn't mean new people. I was talking to a lot of Baptists the past week, and I like to tease them, you know. I like to tease a lot of people.

You know, when you finish the meeting, people should go out sad or mad or glad. Not many go out under the last bracket when I preach, I'm afraid, but anyhow. Some of these boys there, you know, all they did was talk about their Baptist church.

They said, I know some of the greatest Baptist guys in the world. And then I said, you know, the first person who ever preached on the issue of Baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire was a Baptist. What? Well, that's the first record.

John Baptist was the first one to preach the issue of Baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. And then when the Pentecostals think they have a corner on it, I say, hey, you are the first to preach it. The Baptists are the first to preach it.

But my, that apostolic church must have been something, wasn't it? Okay, this boy prayed the Holy Ghost came, that whole community vibrated with God. You see, preacher, you've only two things to do, not 22. You're not supposed to be the janitor and be running a business and finding about the church's bank balance and all that junk.

If you're going to be a true biblical preacher, you've got two things to do according to Acts 6.4. Give yourself continually to prayer and the Word of God. That's all you have to do. Who's going to bring it to stake? The deacons.

Who's going to bury the dead? The deacons. The scripture clearly says, let the dead bury the dead. You see, we want the church to function our way.

God bless our plans. God bless what we do. We despise the ritualism of the church.

The old state churches, they have so much ritualism and we've changed it to ritualism. When Alexander MacLaren went to that great big church in Manchester, England, and ministered in that church, the

deacons, great bedded fellows they were in those days, asked him a host of questions which he answered, and finally they said, we'll ask you to be the pastor of this great church. Each may be a couple of thousand folks.

We'll give you a new house. We'll buy your carriage and pair, as we say in England, or used to say, a carriage and a team, and a new house, and we'll furnish it, and we'll give you a large salary, and they went on and on and on, and will you accept this? He said, all right, I'll accept it. Now, that is if you accept my terms.

You have terms? You know, most churches think when they get a pastor, they're renting a Hertz car. You'd better come in and fit in with this plan if you don't, but I'll tell you, we can soon get you out of this book, don't you worry about that. Some churches have an amazing record of kicking preachers out, tragically enough.

Well, what are the conditions? They laid some down, but this was one vital thing he laid down. I shall do no visiting. Dr. Tolton and I loved that precious man and talked with him often.

Just the two of us in his office and prayed with him, and the way to discover how near the man is to God is not to hear him preach. People say, we've had a new preacher this Sunday. Oh boy, he was great.

He was a lovely personality. Well, if the guy doesn't have two super messages in 10 years preaching, he ought to be sweeping garbage anyhow. And usually he comes up with two star sermons.

I've got to impress this congregation. Dr. Tolton never went to Bible school. He never went to seminary.

He's one of the most learned men I ever met. He's read everything of the mystics, from John of the cross to the cloud of unknowing, and the ladder of sanctity, and the holy marriage, and the long night of the soul. You mentioned it, he knew it.

Taught himself some Greek, taught himself some Latin, but you know what? I stayed in a house, a member of his church, and she said, I've gone to his church 25 years, and he hasn't been in my house five times. But I'll tell you what, when he spread the table, and that's all you have to do. You know brethren, you never have to advertise a fire.

You never have to advertise a fire. You don't have to advertise in the newspaper, forget it. You let the glory of the Lord fill the temple, people come a hundred miles, because it's starvation everywhere.

My phone rings constantly, I'm going to move here, I'm going to move there. Do you know a church that really is on fire for God? A church where they have all night prayer meetings. No church should function these days without a whole night of prayer.

I don't care how rich you are. What do you want? Social standing? You just want numbers of people? You want to fill the pews? I said last night, I think the greatest honor that was ever given to a preacher in history was not given by men, it was given by demons. When those demons said, you know, after they'd had some trouble with some preacher fellows, and the demons turned around and beat the men up, and they said this amazing thing, Paul I know and Jesus I know, or Jesus I know and Paul I know.

Come on preacher, do you think if the devil has a dangerous of the ten most wanted men in America, are you one of them? I would rather be the last man on the devil's dangerous than the first man on any role of

honor you could give us about preaching. I'll say it again, if it sounds facetious, brother, if you're not known in hell, you're not worth a hill of beans. The sooner we realize we're not just fighting a local situation, we're not fighting drug addiction, we're not driving massive pornography, we're surrounded by an arrogant, relentant paganism.

If you told your grandfather 40 years ago that 40,000 homosexuals would march down the main street of a city, at the same time there were 50,000 marching in another city, and in another city there were 40,000 marching there. He would have said, not in America. Why, it used to be men used to rush down to see strippers, the fancy women.

They don't go anymore now, they're fading out. Homosexuals do the vile thing. I think maybe we should change the language, don't you? And go back to some bible language.

Instead of saying that that Zed is born out of wedlock, it would be rough if you said he's a bastard. Can you think anything more ridiculous than saying to a man who's engaged in the filthiest thing there is that he's a gay man? What's gay about homosexuality? It's got damnation on it. We don't talk about this adultery anymore, they're just having an affair.

Do you know why adultery is getting to plague, divorce is getting to plague proportions even in the church of God? Do you know there's a new book on divorce in the pulpits? Why, man alive, we don't have decent morality in some churches, never mind spirituality. We don't elect deacons because we're full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. To speak the truth, we appoint them because they own two Texas ghost stations in the hot dog stand.

Another thing Jesus did, he prayed all night before he chose the disciples. If we prayed all night before we chose our deacons, I guarantee half of them wouldn't get in if they got the witness of the spirit about it. You see, I don't have people say, why don't you write a book on some methods of revival? No, no, I can't do that.

We don't need to find the formula for revival. The formula for revival is in the word of God, that's the reason why. The formula for revival is preachers need to hit the altar and weep because they have no tears, groan because there's no moving of the Spirit of God, apologize to God that we've kind of manipulated the supernatural.

Now, I'm not just thinking of miracles of twisted limbs and other things. I believe the greatest miracle God can do is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that unholy man holy, and put him back in an unholy world, and keep him holy. But we're more afraid of holiness today in the church than we are of sinfulness.

I read that Saul, the king of Israel, was an evil man, and therefore he did evil things. Jesus talks about people who are unclean, and therefore they did unclean things. Well then, if an unclean man with an unclean spirit does unclean things, if a man who's vile does vile things because there's a vile spirit, surely the man who has the Holy Spirit in him will live a holy life.

I don't ask people if they're saved anymore. Forget it. Everybody's saved.

It doesn't mean a thing. If you happen to turn the TV on, there's a girl with a bosom almost exposed with a cross, and she's telling you, yes, I'm born again. You go to politicians living corrupt, they're born again.

Don't ask a man if he's born again. Just look gently at him. It doesn't matter who he is.

Pentecostals to Presbyterians, Methodists to Mennonites. Just say, brother, does Christ live in you? Well, isn't that the standard of the new birth? Isn't that what Paul says? Christ in you, the hope of glory? I hear an awful lot about gifts of the Spirit. That's all right.

I hear less about the fruit of the Spirit. I hear less still about having your fruit unto holiness. I hear less still about bringing forth fruit meat for repentance.

Do you know why some people don't believe in our converts? Because they don't go back and clear up the dirty mess that they made as far as they can. The money they stole, the girl they got into trouble, maintain the baby, some other thing that they should do. Bring forth fruit.

A healthy tree doesn't bring forth fruit. It's the tree that has overflowing life that brings forth fruit. The church of Jesus Christ, again, began with a mighty, mighty endowment of power.

No financial backing. Man alive. I think sometimes of the way things could have, God could have done things and he didn't, you know, my poor little man.

I think about the greatest event in history. After all, Sir Ambrose Fleming, he didn't, he didn't discover penicillin. He rediscovered it.

Pharaoh used penicillin 5,000 years ago. But anyhow, this fella discovered that on your old mushrooms and your bacon, you leave and it grows for that there's penicillin. But he said an amazing thing.

He said that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best-attested fact in history. As I quoted the other night, when one day Napoleon ran his index finger around the great country, he was talking to his generals and he said, there lies a sleeping country. Let it sleep! Because, he said, if that country ever wakes up and harnesses its manpower to its mineral power, it will shape the world.

He said that before his defeat at Waterloo on the 18th of June in 1815. There lies a great country, let it sleep. A sleeping giant, let it sleep.

The country he outlined, in case you're interested, was none other than China, our biggest headache. Do you think China's planning our welfare? She'll destroy us, just like the devilish communists will in another country? They may have yellow faces, but the same devilish policy to destroy us. And we're handing our lives away to them.

There lies a sleeping giant, let it sleep! If it ever reads it, if it ever discovers its power and begins to march, it will shake the world, will change the characters. And I say, see Jesus, see the devil standing there, he's running his finger around the mouth, he's running his finger around the church of Jesus Christ, and he says, there is the church of Jesus Christ asleep. Let it sleep! Because, if it ever rediscovers the power of the Holy Ghost, if it ever rediscovers the resurrection power of Jesus, it will shake the world.

I sometimes wish that the morning Jesus rose from the dead, he'd gone down the street, into the bedroom of the high priest, and pulled his beard. And when he woke up, he'd said, well, now what are you going to do? I wish he'd gone down the road to the Roman, or gone over to Rome. It would be easy, he'd have no problems, he could be there in a flash.

I wish he'd appeared to the Roman rulers, and said, you crucified me, but here I am, I'm back again. He didn't do that. So, we're very arrogant in our evangelism.

Holy things now, do you think people fall down and weep at the presentation of the gospel we put over most radio stations and TV? Do you think if Elijah preached one Sunday on TV, he'd get back next Sunday? We need to rediscover the power of the Holy Ghost. We ought to refuse, never mind deacons, never mind a full congregation. If you don't have the anointing, say, sing, I don't have the anointing yet, and if I don't get it, I won't preach.

Oh, we talk about John Loss, you know, the man who said, give me Scotland or I die. But one day, when St. Giles Cathedral was jammed with more than 2,000 people, and he went through all the preliminaries, and they said, would you kindly stand? I bestow the benediction on you, I have no word from God this morning. Would you and I have the courage to do that? You'd have hashed up an old one, wouldn't you? You'd have warmed it up very quickly.

Oh, I always get away whenever I preach. Everybody likes this sermon. The congregation's heard it six times, but they forget, and you go to town.

I wonder how much of our lives is really dominated by the Spirit of God. No, no, no, we can't go to the congregations. Let the priest weep between the altar and the doorpost.

And as I said, I walked round the front of that podium that day, and they think it's wonderful college, 1,400 students listening. I just walked round and said to the professors, gentlemen, you're teaching young men to be preachers. They're going to guide the church, in one sense, in the future days.

Tell me this, do you have a course on weeping for them? And if they graduate, do you have a course on howling? You hardly find any emphasis in Bible schools or seminaries. One of the students this past week said to me, Mr. Rainer, we tried to get you in the college chapel. I said, well, I know what the answer is.

They won't let me go in. They'd rather have the devil in some of them. One of our old professors is coming to hear you tomorrow night, and the old man came and sat at the back.

And he believes in old blood and fire, hell fire preaching and holy living, and a church being something which God has deposited in the world just to show people how he can redeem us and get a bride for himself. And you know all the other professors in that university say, the old man said, no. I like an old statement that was made, I think, by Montgomery.

All earthly things with earth will fade away, but prayer grasps eternity. And if we're going to see as God sees, and just recently when I've been praying, the Lord just seemed to say this to me, if you claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the things that grieve the Spirit will grieve you. Bring your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Who does the Lord cast his burdens on? Does he roll them away into the oblivion? No, no, no, no. He says, my yoke is easy, my burden is light. We don't want people to think we're depressed.

I mean, everything's depressing outside. Why cover it over? We're heading for judgment faster than you could ever think, unless there's a divine intervention. And the key again is the priests weeping, the priests howling, the ministers getting together.

Every city I was in in England, somehow I managed to get the preachers together, not a lot came. And we would either meet one day in the week, or we would meet one night and we would pray, and we weren't concerned. We weren't just praying, just bless the Methodist, or bless the Baptist, or bless the Pentecostal.

We weren't, I wasn't concerned that I had a revival in my church, I was concerned that God would be glorified in that city. We sure need a heaven-born, earth-shaking, hell-terrifying revival. And it only comes through brokenness.

It comes through honesty. It comes when we admit, which is true most around these days, we just have a form of godliness. Thank God we're not filthy, and we're not dirty, and we're not drunkards, and we we don't have a woman, you know, some spare woman, a husband, or something.

We're pretty good, ah yes. Just like Israel, they got out of Egypt, and they got to Kadesh Barnea, and instead of going to the Promised Land, they got stuck. Kadesh Barnea was supposed to be a gateway, and it became a goal.

It was supposed to be a thoroughfare, it became a terminus. It was supposed to be a stepping stone to something else, it became a stumbling block. Let me wind this up.

I was reading, and I guess I read it every week, or I recite it to myself, that amazing chapter that we call the faith chapter in Hebrews 11. Faith is mentioned 24 times in that chapter. I believe the key is not just the word faith, I believe the key is the sixth verse of the 11th chapter, when it says, he that believeth, he that cometh to God must believe that he is.

He is what? He's everything he says in this word. And then, you know, I read Hebrews 11, they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions. Women received their dead race to life again.

I read that, and then I went down to pray in my office, and it's not the Lord said, say that again. So I said it, Lord, that these people, far off, far off there, they subdued whole kingdoms, they wrought righteousness, they stopped, they obtained promises, they stopped the mouths of lions. Women received their dead race to life, and I don't know who it was, but somebody said in this ear, and not one of them ever had a Bible.

Did you ever consider that? It's encouraging those people who are getting shaky, strengthening weak hands, confirming feebly. Let me take you back to a time when God's chosen people wandered around in sheepskins and goldskins. Now we will find them flowing with milk and honey, and churches full of mink and money.

Again, people go to church so stylishly Sunday morning as though it were a fashion parade, as though God looks on the outside, forget it, he looks on the inside. Those people never had 66 books. I don't know what if the world lasts another hundred thousand years, which it won't, but if it did, God hasn't anything to add to that book.

He said all he's ever going to say to man. There's a hymn, how firm a foundation says, what more can he say than to you he has said? What more? What do you think? I used to listen in my youth, I used to go and listen in a Bible class where Dr. G. Campbell Morgan preached very often. Fascinating Bible teacher.

I remember in my early teens, I thought one day I'll stay behind and ask him what kind of a Bible he has, because all that stuff he has isn't in my Bible. I don't care whether you're thinking of Finney, or Wesley, or Booth, or any great majestic figure that that has ruled in the church of God and seen revival. Not one of them ever had a bigger Bible than you and I have.

It's the same word. Again, we'd better make our minds up whether it's absolute or obsolete, but I'll tell you what, if this, if this book doesn't have the answer for a rotten, corrupt, stinking world, there is no answer for it. Move out since Sodom and Gomorrah.

Do you know there are 600 million Bibles in America, and if you say there are only 15 million people, that means that every person in the nation has four Bibles. Would you try to guess how many millions or billions of cassettes, gospel cassettes, there are in the nation? Would you try to like to estimate how many seminars there are, or Bible schools there are, or how many gospel messages were preached throughout the nation, and there were 5,000 radio stations that broadcast something of the gospel? Let me give you the other side, and then pray. We're the most broken nation we've ever been in history.

We've more broken homes, we've more broken hearts over those broken homes, we've more broken little kids because of those broken homes, we've more minds broken by drugs, we've more bodies broken by VD. Over a million girls last year got pregnant under 17 years of age, and people were marking a few years ago, we will stop the war in Vietnam, stop the war. It's no right to kill people, and yet it's estimated in the last nine years we have put more than 10 million babies to death before they left their mother's womb in a Christian country.

My Lord, what happens in a heathen country? Do you think God Almighty is going to wink at our sin much longer? I don't, and the legislators can't help us, and the banks can't help us, and the government can't help us, and money can't help us. Our help cometh from the Lord, and the only way is in submission and brokenness, that we get and say, many of us say, Lord I don't have the vision I used to have, I don't have the passion I used to have, I don't have the concern I used to have, not for America, for lost souls, lost souls first, America second. I'm convinced the key is in the ministry.

Maybe the way to start revival in your church is to stand up next Sunday morning and say, look I want to tell you, I have had no passion for the lost. I shed no tears for lost mankind. I had so many other things.

I believe the key to the apostle Paul's life, amongst other things, one key was this, this one thing I do. He lived God, he thought God, he prayed God, that's all. You can lash him, you can't whip it out of him.

He can float on a piece of wood in the Mediterranean a night and a day, 36 hours, you can't wash it out of him. They try to starve him, you can't starve it out of him. He's had a vision of the cross.

He's had a vision of the resurrection power. He realized the greatest thing this side of eternity is to be a God-filled man, and go out and proclaim that message. Whether he goes to Jews, the barbarians, the Greeks, the intellectuals, he's at home in the religious capital of the world, Athens, as well as he is in the intellectual capital of the world, Jerusalem.

God never, never intended his church to backslide. God never intended his church to function anything less than apostolic Christianity in the acts of the apostles. And it's time to call the church to prayer.

I believe if we were as spiritual as we think we are, we'd have gone to church yesterday in sackcloth, and a handful of ashes to put on our heads, and mourn that the glory has departed. Man alive, we lock our churches up as though they were banks. We have to get through by promptly at nine o'clock, and some of those same folk will go to a disco till 11 or 12 or 2 or 3 in the morning, and they'll go to an opera and stay for three hours.

And the seats are uncomfortable, not in this church, but in many there's still a lot of old benches. But they can go to a ball match and sit and bake in the sun for five or six hours, and that doesn't trouble them. Their church is in a mess.

And only the Holy Ghost can bring that needed conviction, and bring us to the place of brokenness, and bring us to the place again where we cry, and I can almost hear Duncan Campbell saying how they cried in Scotland, oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down. You see, we've never seen God move till he stops the traffic, till people in the shops are singing, till the lights don't go out week after week, till the Holy Ghost is moving in factories, and moving. He's done that in the Shang Tung revival, another revival is doing it in North India.

Isn't it amazing that with all our stately churches, and our monopoly of TV, all the other gadgets that we have, that the Holy Ghost went right over us, and went to a people that don't have any of those preacher comforts, and they don't have an electronic church. And the New York Times said a while ago, we have an electronic church today. And immediately I thought, yeah, the church today is electronic.

The church in the New Testament was electrifying. There's a big difference. Let me pray.

Lord, we recognize, or some of us recognize, that you've called us to stand in the gap, to be the repairers of the breach, to bring the power to the world, to come on this materialistic blind day in which we live, on this sleepy Laodicean church. When you're on earth, you cleanse the temple. We feel it needs cleansing again.

Our willingness, our sports-mindedness, our materialism. Lord, help us to search our hearts, as well as search the scriptures. Help us to be honest and admit where we failed.

Seek the place of prayer, the place of cleansing, and the place of anointing. For your glory we pray. Amen.

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