

Worship in the Spirit and Truth

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the necessity of authentic worship in spirit and truth, highlighting personal responsibility and the transformative power of faith through historical examples.

Duration: 50:02

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Matthew 6:33, John 4:24, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Galatians 5:22-23, Colossians 3:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:15, Hebrews 11:1, James 4:8

Topics: "Worship", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the necessity of worshipping God in spirit and truth, addressing the distractions that hinder congregations from fully engaging in spiritual worship. He highlights the importance of personal responsibility in spiritual growth, asserting that individuals are as spiritual as they choose to be. Ravenhill shares anecdotes of historical figures who exemplified deep faith and commitment, urging listeners to cultivate their spiritual lives through dedication and prayer. He warns against superficiality in faith and encourages a deeper, more authentic relationship with God, which is essential for true worship.

Transcript

I was preaching in Ireland a few years ago, and in a tent, I put my watch on a very improvised pulpit, podium, whatever you want to call it, and I knocked it off, and it went down in the sawdust, and it stopped. So the next night I said to the farmers there, would you loan me a watch? And this man got up, big healthy fellow, and he said, and one of us stayed with, you don't need a watch, you need a calendar. So Shakespeare wasn't totally right when he said the evil that man does is after him, it goes before him sometimes too.

Let me say this, I wasn't really mentally, and this is essential, I wasn't mentally geared for this class right after preaching. I'm not as young as I used to be, and I get forgetful. There are three signs of old age, I don't know if you know them.

The first is loss of memory. I can't remember the other two, but some of the things that I want to say, I don't always carry through on it. Maybe you have a question, and maybe we can jump off from there.

Any question, or do you know everything, you don't need any questions answered. Well, I say this very often to people, that we have three problems. Oh, the question is what did John mean when he said, or

Jesus mean, you mean, when he said we worship God in spirit and in truth.

There are three problems about a congregation. The first is you've got to get them here. The second is, you've got to cut them off from all their interests in the world, and the problems they're going into.

And the third is, we have to get people into the spirit. And I think many a good dinner is cooked Sunday morning before ever you get out, or you're settling a party problem, or thinking of business. Man is essentially a spiritual being.

You might say, I saw Leonard Ravenhill. It's Ravenhill, not Ravenhill, by the way, if you like to put it that way. It sounds a bit more practical.

But, you haven't seen me. You see the shell I live in, you can't see me. I'm an entity, you're an entity.

That's why when people say, well, well, can self die? No it can't. Self can't die. Selfishness, self-pity, self-seeking, self-glory, they can die, hyphenated sins if you like.

But you're a personality. You know the old saying that, we're all made in the same mould. Some are mouldier than others.

But, the fact is, we're all made in the same mould. We're spirit, soul and body. And it's the spiritual part.

God said to Adam, in the day that thou eatest thereon thou shalt surely die. He lived 300 years after that, but he died in his relationship to God. Mentally he was alive.

Physically he was alive. There's an old song, some of you remember, in the old days. Oh sweet mystery of life, at last I've found thee.

Nobody has found the mystery of life. There's only one of you. Maybe that's good.

We say God made you and he brought the mould. Fine. I think life is an awesome thing.

Particularly in this day in which we're living. The most prodigal thing I think that we, the thing that we're most prodigal with is time. I remember Dr. Fawcett, maybe the greatest preacher in Scotland today.

I was privileged to be his assistant for two years in England. And he used to say to me Len, listen God will forgive you, this thing won't. And whatever you say about faith, don't swallow the idea that faith can do anything.

It certainly cannot. It can do anything God wants, but not anything I want. If God can do anything, there wouldn't be a woman here over 25 today.

They'd all have been out for healing and rolled the clock back. But time creeps on relentlessly. Time like an ever rolling stream bears all its sons away.

And therefore we must work while it is day, the night cometh. And you see the old saints used to talk about cultivating their spirits. Nobody has yet decided and nobody ever will decide what percentage of responsibility is God for the development of my spiritual life and what percentage is mine.

You see we say it's all of God. It's nonsense. If you say it's all of God, he's responsible for the backslidden church today.

If you say the responsibility is totally mine, that's arrogance. If you say it's all the responsibility of God, is God, that's ignorance. You see there are provisions that God has made.

I, I, I, I, I, let me say this, at times I'm overwhelmed. And I mean that. Overwhelmed to where I lay on the rug in my office.

When I realized that all the men that have come down the avenues of time, take Hebrews 11, you're studying Hebrews here. Isn't it fantastic that with all they did, they subdued, what did they do? They wrought righteousness, they subdued, they, they killed lions, they subdued kingdoms, they wrought righteousness, they obtained promises. They raised the dead and not one of them ever had a Bible.

Oh, that hit me like a brick one day, when the Lord said to me, look all those people in Hebrews 11 never had a Bible, and look what they did without it, look how little you do with it. Isn't it awesome to realize that if the world lasts 2,000 years more, and it certainly will not. That if it did, God has no P.S. to put at the end of the revelation.

He doesn't say, oh, I was busy, I forgot to tell John that on the Isle of Patmos. Boy, I'd better, I'd better put it down somewhere else. Isn't it awesome to realize God hasn't spoken to men for 2,000 years.

All that God has ever said, He said. I like the hymn, how firm a foundation these saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in His excellent word. What more can He say than to you He has said.

Now look, you are just as spiritual as you want to be. Did you swallow that? I was preaching in New Zealand one Christmas day. Christmas, it's warm, it's summer down there.

I've been around the world a couple of times, it's the most beautiful island in the world as far as I'm concerned. The Bahamas are lovely, but New Zealand has something different. After all, it's got mountain peaks, you can ski in them in the morning and you can go down to the beach in the afternoon and roast in the sun.

That doesn't make it the best place in the world, but there's a lot of fine Christians there. As a matter of fact, right now there's a conviction amongst many people who've been through it in the last 12 months that revival will break out in New Zealand this year. I trust it does, I'll be tempted to go.

My son has a, he's a sister pastor in a church there, about 800 people and they have blessings. Daddy, he said, he's a conservative Englishman, likes his pop. And he said, you know, Sunday morning when somebody gets blessed and waltzes down the aisle with their hands up going round and round with their eyes closed and worshipping God and comes down to the front and gets back without bumping into anything, kind of gives you a little lift inside, you begin to wonder.

Then somebody else has a prophetic word and somebody has something else. They have meetings, fabulous meetings. It's a great country to be in.

But you know, I say this again, that it staggers me because when I was in that country this Christmas day, I just pointed like that and I said, you are as spiritual as you want to be. And a woman came in through the door. Her name is Joy Dawson.

You may have seen some of her records around, some of her tapes. She often goes to Christ for the nations. She's a great speaker.

And when I saw her family three or four years ago, she said, Len, I've told people around the world that that day you pointed right at me and said, you're as spiritual as you want to be. And I couldn't shake it off. I'm a spiritual, sure.

Philly didn't have a back door entrance to God. As I said last night, I'm overwhelmed when people talk so extravagantly about what the Holy Ghost meant. So many of them have just got rid of a few lousy sins and they live a bit better than they used to.

You know, I have a great burden for the Bible schools of America and for the seminaries. And when I think again, as I said last night, that a little fellow ran out of a snowstorm in England and sat under the gallery of a church he'd never been in before and got saved that morning. He was only, he wasn't 15.

He wasn't 15 years of age. He never went to Bible school. He had very few books.

He had no teachers. And that little guy that got saved at 15 in four years, they built him a tabernacle seating 5,000 people and he packed it twice a day for years. What did he get in four years? He wasn't reading about Adam Clarke.

Arthur Fink hadn't written his commentaries yet. He hadn't money, but somehow he got there into the world. He got down and down and down.

There's a mountain in Australia called Mount Wilson. I remember it. That was my sweetheart's name before I changed it to a better one.

And on Mount Wilson there was a family. They scraped out a living. They couldn't raise crops.

The cattle couldn't be fed properly. And one day in despair they said, Oh, take it. Yes, but let me tell you, it'll break your heart like it broke my heart.

And instead of scraping the surface and chasing a few cackling hens and looking after cows that were all getting dry and other things, they decided to bore some holes. And they didn't go very deep before they discovered gold. You know, some people, all they do is keep mowing the lawn.

Mowing the lawn. Every new book of watchman needs. Something came from, well, you know, not too far away in Florida.

And something else came from somewhere, and they take it, they take it, they take it. Virgil didn't lean too much on others. He said, I've got everything God has said and everything God is ever going to say, and I'm going to read it, and I'm going to read it, and I'm going to read it.

I said, the dark places of the earth are some places where we develop our spiritual life more than others. And if you haven't read the life of John Soong, S-U-N-G, read it. It will excite you today.

He was the most famous foreign student that ever came to America. Could hardly speak a word of English. In three and a half years he learned English.

He mastered German so that his teacher, who gave him the highest grades in German, asked him how many years he'd spoken German. He said, I didn't know a word, six months. He said, you're a liar.

He said, I told my wife. He learned English, as more than most of you have done. And he learned English, and he learned German.

And just before he was going home, because in those three and a half years he learned English, he learned German, he got a B.A. degree, a master's degree, and a Ph.D. all in three and a half years. My boy's just got his doctorate, but he's been at school 25 years. That's why I'm so poor.

But anyhow, here's a little fellow that comes like so many others from another country. All right, he worked and worked and worked and became the, according to Time magazine, and Life magazine was in existence, and they said he's the greatest foreign student. And in those years, it must be 20 odd years back, 30 maybe, they offered him a chair in the university of, the German university, and a university over in China and elsewhere.

And the man said to him one day, you know what, you look a lot more like a preacher than a scientist. Now how he could tell he was a preacher. Don't we look more dumb than other people, do you think, or what? He said, you look more like a preacher than a scientist.

There must be something queer about it. And Johnson said, listen, my daddy's a Methodist preacher in China, and I came over here to study for the ministry. I got sidetracked in philosophy.

Well, why don't you take a, say, one semester in a Bible school? Hmm, good idea. So he went to Union Theological Seminary in New York. The president was called Coffin.

Not a good title for a dead seminary. And, and Fosdick was the great preacher there. Do you know what he said? He said, in three months, I lost every bit of the, little bit of faith I had left.

They so rationalized and theorized that, so now God wins. One night about eleven o'clock, he said, I just knelt at the side of my bed and said, God be merciful to me, sin. And as quick as that, God gave him the witness of the spirit he was saved.

He shrung the door open and ran down the corridor like the man in Acts 3, leaping and praising God. What do you think they did? Gave him a diploma. No, sir, they sent him to a mental institution in New York, in White Plains.

Had him certified as insane. Well, I hope some of you get insane this week. Leaping and praising God.

And when he got there, of course, he met a fellow who said, hi, who are you? And he told him who he was. And the fellow said, I'm Julius Caesar. The man said, he's a liar.

He's Napoleon. I'm Julius Caesar. Must be nice when you're in company like that, don't you think? He said, Lord, I don't want to stay here.

I didn't come to America to stay in a mental institution. And he said, the Lord just said this, will you stay here for 153 days? And I'll reveal myself. I can get you out of here.

Will you stay amongst these lunatics? Julius Caesar, you'll meet a lot more before long. But if you'll stay in this mental institution, I'll reveal myself to you. Oh, you don't want to go to a mental institution? Let me go to a seminary or somewhere.

Oh, God's ways are not our ways. What does he say? He gives beauty for what? Ashes. When thy secret hopes have perished in the grave of years gone by, let this promise still be cherished.

I will guide thee with mine eye. And all his hopes. And God says, give me all you have, and I'll burn it up, but out of the ashes.

I'll give you beauty for ashes. And I'll give you the oil of joy for mourning. And I'll give you the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Who goes shopping for ashes? Oh, I'd like the joy of the Lord. Somebody wrote the other day and said, could you tell us about the joy of the Lord? I'll tell you how to get joy of the Lord. You take those things we were talking about this morning.

Joy comes out of the bitterest experiences. On the verge of the cross, Jesus says, I want you to have my joy in yourself. And it was two steps away from the crucifixion, and the hell of Gethsemane, and the agony of the cross.

A little gentleman said, all right, I'll stay here. And he stayed there for 153 days. Don't ask me how he did it.

I haven't read the story for years, but I think I'm correct in saying this. In 153 days he read that book through 40 times. He learned how to divide a chapter.

How to analyze a chapter, eight different ways. I was preaching in a meeting one day, and I mentioned this man. A really, really fat old lady at the organ.

An enormous lady. One of the greatest women I've ever met. But, you know while I was talking, the tears were running down her face.

And she'd play, and then she'd do this. And after the meeting she came and she said, Brother Rachel, I want to tell you that I enjoyed the session this morning. And that part about John Sloane.

Oh, have you read the book? No, I haven't read the book. Well, did you hear the story before? No? Well, how did you know about it? Oh, I used to play the organ for him in his revivals in China. And the God who said to him, Listen, 153 days and I reveal myself to you.

The Isle of Patmos. Do you want to go there? I say this in Bibles too. I say it in seminaries.

Look, when you get your diploma, stick it under one arm. Kiss your wife goodbye, and bury your head in a haystack. For three months.

And if a fire still burns, you know that you've got the call of God. And if it goes out, you get out. John Sloane was escorted from White Plains Institution to the West Coast with a couple of detectives to protect him because he was crazy, God's saying.

Of course, we escorted Khrushchev to Disney World, Disneyland at that time. We gave him the red carpet. He was only a communist.

He wasn't dangerous. They had to escort the Christian with two detectives all the way to the coast and put him on a boat. And just before he got to China, the Lord said, John, what are you going to do? Preach the

gospel.

No science. I'm not accepting any of these offers from five universities. I'm going to preach.

And he said his spiritual life was growing. He could almost feel like a woman with a child that knows that thing is growing, it's growing, it's growing. God was more real.

Prayer was more real. The anointings came on him and there was nobody there to see. I don't think much of people who blow the top in church and get excited and never have an earthquake when they're alone with God.

I get more explosions with God than I do on the platform. I get enough when I get going, but that's all right. The Lord said, you're going to preach my gospel.

You've got a little bag, a little washcloth bag with gold keys and diplomas and honours and what are you going to do with them? They're no good. I don't put any value on them. So he became a real Baptist.

He threw them overboard in the China Sea and watched them sink. All his beautiful medals, all his beautiful letters and things of commendation, many of them were gold too. And his daddy said, you saved your diploma to show your Methodist father that you've got your doctorate.

He's invested time and prayer and love in you. I want to tell you something, John. You're going to live.

Just for 15 years. And you're going to die. I told you I'd stay with you 153 days in an institution.

I'm going to anoint you as long as you stay in my will for 15 years. That's the end of it. And when he got home, he told his daddy what had happened.

When he got home, a neighbour came and brought his daughter and said, you promised your son to my daughter. And he could have said, I'm not saved. She's not saved and I don't want to be an equal to you.

But the Lord said, take her. She became a marvellous Christian. John Sung went to areas in China where Jonathan Goforth had been and he was a great revivalist, not an evangelist.

And he had a revival where Jonathan Goforth didn't have it. And this lady said to me, you know, Brother Raymond, why he's so dear? Did you notice I was weeping yet? She said, I'll tell you why. In the latter part of his life he was eaten with tuberculosis.

He went into Mongolia. He went into areas where they fed him food like a dog. Where he couldn't get sleep.

Where there was nowhere to bathe except in an icy river. He was like the apostle in Death's Rock. In his last meeting he was preaching in a church.

And at the end of the meeting she said his strength had gone so he would make the altar call, kneeling with his, gripping his stomach. He was in such agony and saying, you come right now to Christ. And they filled the altar.

And she said he stayed in the home of a friend of mine. When he came from the meeting he was weak. He would walk as slow as a man three times his age.

Just go home, no conveyance. He wore a little cotton shirt, tied it with a string on his shoulder. He had a bit of rebellious hair that wouldn't stay up.

He was no personality man at all. She said the last days before he died, not only did he kneel and make his altar call in brokenness, but she said he would lay prostrate on the bed. And that little fifty cent shirt would be, twenty five cent shirt would be stuck to his back with sweat.

And his body would be going like this, like a dog that you'd chase. He'd be heaving and heaving. He'd spit clots of blood like David Brainard did.

And she said my friend said just one text would come to her mind when she saw him. I've never heard this text quoted out of context. But this lady quoted it.

She said when I saw his broken agitated body, when I saw the pillow wet with tears for those who had rejected Christ, and I saw that body heaving, the one scripture that came to my mind was this, this is my body which is broken for you. That was his price. I'm not against scholarship.

I wish I'd known myself. I'd like to read Hebrew and Greek. I don't know them.

I know a little Hebrew. He has a tailor shop. But I don't know any real Hebrew or Greek.

I have no profound knowledge like that. But you know what? I've discovered this. There are two ways to know this book.

One is by education. The other is by revelation. The reason that little Spurgeon, and he was never very tall anyhow, and he certainly wasn't good looking.

I was going to give a description, but I won't. But anyhow he was not a good looking man. He had a marvelous silver bell voice.

But you see there were no fingerprints of man upon him. The oil we said this morning, no man can make it. If he tried to make an imitation, you put him to death.

And Spurgeon had the sense to find out like Tozer had, the one thing that matters is that I get the anointing of God. The revelation of God, the mysteries of God. It's developing that thing.

Again for me it is amazing, amazing, that some of the greatest things that happened in history did not happen in great revival meetings. The fall of Tarsus with his colossal intellect, going down on Damascus road, breathing out threatening. If I find anybody in the church, following the church, I've got a document here from the big shots there that tell me I can put them to death.

Before long he became the most zealous preacher the world has ever known. He laughed at death. Scorned all the honors.

Buried all the things that everybody else was reaching after of the tribe of Benjamin, of the seed of Abraham, a pharisee of the Pharisees. Brother you couldn't get higher than that. Heed everything everybody wanted.

And he says, I laid it all on one side and counted it, but done that I may win Christ. Oh yes, but Christ is pretty hard. If you're going to develop your soul, you'll get help surely from ministry, no question about it.

But you know it gets worked out in the secret place, in a lonely place. If you had a chance this week of a million dollars of going to the Isle of Patmos, honestly where would you go? This time of ours is so precious. I told the friends last night, the old man I mentioned to you when I was here before, the man that hadn't been to bed one night at that time for 25 years.

He prayed every night from 10 o'clock at night until 5 in the morning or 6 o'clock. He died just recently. And when they carried him through the door of his little house in a very roughly cheap casket which was his desire, they took him through the door of that house.

It was the first time he'd been through the door for 12 and a half years. You think God hasn't got some men 15 feet high these days in America? I could tell you some of those names. They wouldn't let you publish the name.

Wouldn't let you take a photograph. I'd like to write the life story of some of them. They won't let me touch them.

They're married to the will of God. They're what you mentioned last night Pastor, God intoxicated men. Spinoza talks about God intoxicating men.

You can say this about those men in Hebrews 11, a chapter I love very much. They were all amazing men, but they all had amazing trials. As I said last night, we don't all graduate the same.

Jesus had 12 disciples. They didn't all go into the garden of Gethsemane. They didn't all go on the Mount of Transfiguration.

They couldn't take it. God's school is a very expensive school. It's a school of loneliness.

It's a school of trials. There's no pattern. You're looking for a book that has all the answers.

This is the only one. It doesn't fit in with that. It's not true.

All we have to do is find them. They're not so easy to find. Let me just say one thing and quit here.

You know, God dealt with the man called Moses. Took him out of a little casket, a little basket that was on the river. His parents didn't do what the government told them.

There'll come a day when you won't either. I think before long people were going to jail in this country because they won't send their children to certain schools. They're going to abolish all private schools, all schools where spirituality is taught.

All going to be abolished. That's what they're pushing now in Congress anyhow. Moses was trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians.

Read the 7th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Clever. Spoke a number of languages.

Everybody saluted him. They bowed down and said, he'll be the next Ramesses. Everybody was thrilled with Moses.

And God suddenly came in his life and said, if you're going to be any good for me, get out of here. If you're going to rescue slaves, go be a slave. And he disappeared for 40 years.

People say he was a wonderful man. He had 40 years in the wilderness. Well, you're dead wrong.

He didn't. He had 80 years in the wilderness. 40 by himself and 40 leading them.

That's a pretty good stretch. But as long as he wore medals and rode in a chariot and everybody bowed down to him, God said, you're no good to me. Get down there.

Learn the hard lessons of life. And he went. I marvel at his patience.

If it's said that after 30 years he got angry one day and said, God, 10,000 people die every day in the slave camps. What are you doing about it? Let me go. God said, stay here another 10 years.

He told him to go in at the back door. It would have been all right. He said, you walk right in Pharaoh's house while he's having his lunch and you say, hey, listen, I've come and I want my people.

He'll kill me. Never mind. No, he won't kill you.

I'll tell you something else. He won't let them go either. You're going to have to punch him somewhere else.

Find where he's weak. And he won't let them go. Oh, what a test.

He's had 40 years, Lord. Now surely I'm going to get my diploma. Now I've got 40 years on the backside of the desert.

I haven't backslid. I still love you. I'm ready to do the job.

And the Lord says, no, wait, wait, wait, wait. 40 years. Now here's a little fellow.

He was sent one day to go down and take some bread and cheese for his brother. Here's where he lived. He lived up here.

And his father sent him down to Dothan. And when he got to Dothan, his brothers put him down in a pit. And then they sold him to the Ishmaelites who took him down into Egypt.

And when he got into Egypt, they put him down in prison. And when he got in prison, the bottom fell out. As far as I can see, he was 17 years of age when he went to prison.

He was 30 years of age when he came out. A priest cannot enter the holy place until he's 30. Jesus did not preach until he was 30.

John Baptist did not preach until he was 30. The Apostle Paul did not preach until he was 30. Joseph didn't get authority until he was 30.

Moses was past that age. I don't know the mystery of that. Pastor might find it out for you.

Why are they 30? He'd done nothing wrong. And he prayed for his friends in prison and they got out and left him. My, isn't that a dirty trick God's doing? All the years I've been here and they get out and I'm still left in this lousy prison.

What's God working at? It's all been down, down, down, down. Can't go here, there's nowhere to fall through here. I got to the bottom of the bottom.

What happens now? And then the Lord says, all right son watch this. And he starts taking up, and up, and up, and up, and up. Until he sits on the throne with the king.

And when the king goes out of town he says, well here are the keys of the kingdom and here's my chain of office around your neck. And you have all authority and all power. Mmm, how nice.

Do you really mean that? Do you think you've enough courage to say to the Lord this morning, send me to jail for 13 years so I can learn the mysteries of godliness. Lady's shaking her head, thank you, we've got one on his plate. Well, I think there's some others, but.

13 years. 40 years on the backside of the desert. 30 years chopping bits of wood, making caskets for people, putting yolks on animals' necks.

And he's a son of God. Oh my. Ian Bounds, the great warrior of prayer in this country.

Wrote that book, Power Through Prayer. He wrote 7 other books on prayer. I put them all together in that one book, The Treasury of Prayer.

It's worth a king's ransom. I say that because I didn't write it, he only edited it. It's not a book on prayer, it's a library on prayer.

He's the man that got up at 4 o'clock every morning to pray until he got old, and then he got up at 3 o'clock. But I remember when I was at college, I did go to college. One of the best men ever turned out.

They turned me out as quickly as they could. But there was a time when I was at college, somebody sent a list and said, there's a preacher wanting to get rid of the library. A few cents, 15 cents.

Choose 3 books, on any subject. So I got my 15 cents, it's all I had too. Plus a 2 penny stamp.

I wrote to the preacher, dear sir, would you kindly send me a book on holiness, a book on the second coming, and a book on prayer. And when I opened my little parcel, there was a book, flaming red covers, and it just said on the top, Power Through Prayer, Ian Bounds. Well I went to a college where there were no girls.

Went to a college where there was no sports program. Principal said, you came here to meet God, life's too short to fool around. If you want to play ball, go somewhere where they play.

You came here to meet God, stay here and meet God. And I said to myself, well some of the fellows in the lunch hour, they do go around the avenue there, and they tie a bit of string up and kick it around, and some paper, and kick it around, or throw it around for fun. I'll go upstairs, and every day I'm going to read this book, Power Through Prayer.

I'm going to go through this book. Do you know what, I didn't go through the book. The book went through me.

Why, I read the opening sentences, it takes God 20 years to make a man, I thought, boy, he's off centre. Just like an American to say a thing like that, it's nonsense. Why, a few months, when I get out of here, people will say, Spurgeon's risen from the dead.

Man, here's a felon. You know, as I read in that book, I got deeper and deeper and deeper and under conviction. I began to realise, yes, he's right, it takes 20 years for God to make a man.

It takes 20 years for God to discipline. The Bible again, 30 years. See, there are no shortcuts to blessing.

I mean true blessing. There are no shortcuts to maturity. My dear wife likes to do a little work in the garden.

We have a yard anyhow, a garden we have, a flower garden. You know, she goes so patiently. I go and keep looking and, you know, the bulbs have been in.

She's not looking, I scratch a bit of soil. I say, listen, are you coming up? You've been down there long enough. Good night.

When are you going to wake up? You've had rain, you've had sunshine, and I'll cover it up. I like to see things go. I like to see things get going.

But God lets things go very slowly. Let me give you one story. It's from an American school, where a boy went to see the president and told him that, he said, Sir, oh, I remember you, John, when you were a little boy.

Yes, well, I've just been, I've just realised that this course takes seven years. And I'm already 21, I'm getting old. And I'll be 28 when I get out of here.

And I can't wait till I'm 28. Now, can't I kind of reduce these studies? Say, could I do this seven year course in, well, four? The president said to John, he said, did you ever go out west and see those giant Sikor trees? Redwood trees, as you call them. I think they're called Sikor, after the first and maybe only Indian who made an alphabet to teach his people to write.

Big tree, Sikor. Oh, I've seen those amazing trees, 300 feet high. Do you know when they were planted? They were planted before Jesus Christ came on earth.

We can prove that over 2,000, some nearly 3,000 years old, it's taken them all those years to mature. But he said, as I came up the road, I saw a man lifting watermelons, putting them on the truck. Big things this size.

Oh, he was kind of shooting watermelons. He said, John, it takes God over 2,000 years to make a giant, durable tree. Takes him only six months to make a watermelon.

What do you want to be, a three-year-old watermelon? A lot of us want to be trees on a watermelon basis. Lord, do it quickly, do it quickly. God never does anything in a hurry.

He worked for six days and he sat down and rested. When pastors tell me they'll warm out, I say, it's only because you're disobeying God. What do you mean? Do you have a rest today? Can't, I have two bigger churches.

No, no, you have more sense than God. I don't think you can claim healing from God if you break any of his commandments. Not until you obey the commandments.

Six days, shout thou labor. Preacher Spurgeon said one day, when somebody said you disobey God's word, you work on Sunday. He said, I put more work in on Sunday than you do in the other days of the week.

But I want to tell you something. On Monday he said, I don't even lick a stamp. Oh, I can't give you all the answers.

I don't know why God takes a man who is going to be a king it seems and makes a slave of him. And then he takes a boy who was sold as a slave and makes him a king. Why he says to one man, if you live in luxury you'll be useless to me.

And he says to another man, if you don't get up there and live in your luxury I can't use you. They come from opposite ends. God's different methods.

And both in the will of God. The only guidance you can find is to read the word. And as Mary said, whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

But let's be careful we don't tempt God. I think sometimes, you know, when we go calling the pastor or somebody else and saying, I wish you'd explain this to me, you know. Something's gone wrong.

What's happened? I guess if you could dig back in your mind, one day you got very brave when you were praying and you said, Lord you can put anything on me and I'll take it. So he let you forget that for a few months. You know, he let you have a good time.

Lots of people when they get filled with the spirit, oh, the first two or three months of ecstasy and joy. You know what that is? That's God's anaesthetic preparing you for surgery. But when you get through all the thrills and he starts coming down with a knife and he cuts this off and he tears this down and he stops that.

And this way you've been feeding so long, the well runs dry. And that man you thought was the greatest, this fellow, this side of heaven, suddenly his ministry doesn't meet you in the same way. And the Lord has an amazing way.

He's a jealous God. But I'm glad he's God. And that everything I need in this tripartite being of mine, as the theologians say, my three-department personality, spirit, soul and body is answered in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

I don't care what happened in the transgression of Adam. The last Adam restored everything the first Adam lost. And I don't wonder that great English preacher again.

He happens to be an Englishman. Dr. Dale was preparing an Easter sermon. He'd prepared so many.

And he was thinking there in his office in England, in Cars Lane, Chapel Birmingham, Easter. Oh, we'd better sing that hymn of Charles Wesley's first. Let me see.

Christ the Lord is risen to death. Risen to death? Risen? Who said so? Well, the women said so at the grave. The angels said so.

Wait a minute, wait a minute. He stands at the end of the line and he says, Listen, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. And that stayed English clergyman said, I pushed away from my death, and I walked round my... Of course, there's nobody listening.

The janitor had gone home, I think, so he was safe. And so he walked round his office clapping his hands and saying, He's risen! He's risen! He's risen! And he's alive forevermore. And not one Sunday after that, to the end of his ministry, did he ever let that hymn get out of his clerks every Sunday morning.

They sang that lovely, lovely hymn. Christ the Lord is risen today. Hallelujah.

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies. Hallelujah. Made like him, like him we rise.

And Paul says in what? Colossians 3. You don't have to wait till you die. Oh, I've told my class I'm going to preach on this when I get home. God hold of me, I can't preach it all here.

I'd like to, but it may be in light lunch. But all right. But it says, you know, we are, not we're going to be, we are seated with him in heavenly places.

Can I tell you one thing, you won't come during the week, many of you, be chasing money or something. Well, I know you should go to work, that's all right. But you could let the bills pile up and take a week's vacation.

You're good. I hope. There's a man selling newspapers at the corner of Oldham Street in Manchester.

Selling the Manchester Evening News, the Manchester Chronicle. And when it was raining, he covered his newspapers with a piece of brown paper. And he was standing there one night, raining, wet, dirty.

He was poor, ill-shaven, ragged. His boots were letting in the water. And a beautiful Rolls Royce pulled up.

And he said, you want a news or a chronicle? Manchester Evening News. The man said, is your name Ezekiel Jones? What's that got to do with it? You want a paper? I want to know if you're Ezekiel. Yeah, yeah, yes, yes, yes.

For what? Do you have an uncle Ezekiel Jones? Well, get in this Rolls Royce right away. Come on, I want to know. What for? Well, I've got something to tell you.

Your uncle died and left you some money. Well, he said, could you drive round? Maybe another ten minutes while I sell these other four or five newspapers. Finally the lawyer got him into the Rolls Royce and they drove out to a beautiful area of Manchester and they turned off the main road to a side road and came to a great big gate.

And there was a beautiful house. And the lawyer said to him, Ezekiel, this is your house. That's mine? I'm afraid our way.

God, is it, is it real? Sure it's real. I've been looking for you for months. And now you're selling newspapers.

You've got a newspaper at the corner of the street. And in American money you're a multimillionaire and you've inherited gorgeous property. Well, let's get in the house.

And he went in and he saw the house. Beautiful rugs. Beautiful deep gold framed pictures.

Snow white linen. He'd never slept in there. A bathroom.

The lawyer told him what it was for. And all the other accoutrements. And he looked at it and then he sat down in a chair and he put his feet up.

And the lawyer said, well, I think we'd better go. No, no, I'm not going out of here. I know there's a trick in this.

I'm staying here. But, sir, this is my house? You're my lawyer? Well, do as I tell you. Is there some food here? Oh, well, just a minute.

Yes, there is a little. You've got other business to settle, isn't it? Come back in the morning. This is my house, isn't it? Yes.

Every room. The furniture, the beautiful china. Everything's yours.

Oh, I'm going to sit here and enjoy this. The lawyer said, all right. All right, sleep here.

Enjoy it. I'll be here in the morning at ten o'clock and I'll take you to the house. To the house? Mm-hmm.

Well, isn't this my house? Yeah, it fits your house all right, but really it's the gate lodge where your chauffeur lives. Your house is a mile up the road. It's a mansion.

And if you'd like to come right now, the servants are waiting. They have a banquet for you. You don't mean that.

Oh, yes, I do. All right, let's go. He got in the Rolls Royce, and they got up to the door of the mansion.

There's a big thing there, and the fellow pulled the bell, and it rang down the corridor. And when they opened the door, the servants were lined up on either side, the girls in their pretty pinafores, you know, and the footman was there, and the butler was there, and the other guys were there, and they saw His Excellency in his rags. And as he came in, they all bowed before him, and he looked at that great, beautiful building.

And they showed him in the library with all the expensive books, and they showed him the private art gallery, and he sighed and oohed, and he aahed, and he sighed. Are you sure it's all right? Yes. What type of being is here? What type of being is here? The house is yours.

The gate lodge is yours. This Rolls Royce is yours. There's a boat down there.

You have a beautiful lake. It's all yours. My, and he said, wouldn't I have been a fool to have stayed in the gate lodge? You know, we've got a lot of people who got so blessed, when they got out of Egypt, they stayed in the gate lodge for the last three years.

Some thirty years. They've never gone on to possess their possessions. It's a land of corn and wine, it's not an easy land.

There were thirty-one kings, but they killed them all, except when they backslid and gone into sin. It's not an experience where you get filled with the Holy Ghost, and it's an escalator, and the devil is kept at bay, and temptation enshrines. No, they get more fierce, they get more difficult.

The Lord lets you grow up and share his burdens. He fills us with the Spirit, only that we may come to maturity. You've only from now, till the sepulcher, till your grave, to develop your spirituality.

I don't believe it will develop after. Knowledge, yes. I don't believe spirituality.

As a tree falls, it lies. Some of us will get to heaven and we'll be three years old, ten million years from this morning. We're not all going to be the same in heaven.

We're not all going to look the same. We're not all going to wear the same dress. We're not all going to have the same honour.

God is a marvellous, radiant Christian. But if you've been born of the Spirit of God. If you've been born of the Spirit as he was.

If you'll be filled and anointed with the Spirit as he was. If you'll walk in the Spirit as he did. Then the possibilities of grace are natural.

Isn't it wonderful to be here? Isn't it wonderful to know that the whole revelation can come to any of us if only we seek him earnestly with all our hearts and all our souls and all our minds.

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