Articles and Sermons :: Weeping Between the Porch and the Altar

Weeping Between the Porch and the Altar - posted by JoeA (), on: 2006/8/16 0:59

Weeping Between the Porch and the Altar by Leonard Ravenhill

part 1

I'm not really going to preach a sermon this morning, but I want to have a launching pad... Joel 1:13 "Gird yourselves, and lament ye priests, howl ye ministers of the altar. Come, lay all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God. For the meat offering and the drink offering is witholden from the house of your God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly."
And then to verse 17 of the next chapter, "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is your God?"

A few years ago, Dr. Carl F. Henry, founder and editor of Christianity Today, sent out a questionnaire to what he called, "Twenty of the leading intellectual preachers in the country." 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. He said this amazing thing: "By the year 2000 the church will be a conscious minority surrounded by an arrogant, militant paganism." I swallowed that hook, line and sinker, and woke up about 2 o'clock in the morning with mental and I think spiritual indigestion. Then I began to remind myself that Christianity was not served up to the world in a silver platter. Christianity was born in a sophisticated, totalitarian society.

The early church was walled in on one side with the mightiest military machine in history, the power of Rome.

It was walled in on the other side with Greek intellectualism.

It was blocked ahead by the monopoly the Jews thought they had on God.

Those men who turned the world upside down had

No colossal intellectual capacity.
No great financial backing.
No social standing.

They were about the most despised men in and around Jerusalem. And yet they broke out somehow - and later it was said that they turned the world upside-down.

I think at least once a week and sometimes I think once a day, what Dr. J. B. Phillips, who gave us the Phillips New Testament, said of the first chapters of Acts:

"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 phycho-sematic 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 is that we turn men out who know the word of God. - That is never going to turn the world.

The question is not whether they know the Word of God.
The question is:
DO THEY KNOW THE GOD OF THE WORD?
Just to give a man a license to preach because he has so much academic ability is like giving a blind man a driving license. If he doesn't know God, why is he in this business?!
We have to make up our minds if this Book is absolute or obsolete. It's either got the answer for our generation or forget it.

We have to make up our minds that preaching is not a profession, it's a passion.

I remember going down High Holborne in London a few years ago... well it is a few, twenty five I guess. A little lady was going to the mail box. There she was, very, very stooped and she shakily put her mail into the box; then she turned to go into a building. Somebody asked me, "Do you know who that is?" And I said, "Not the slightest idea." "That is the widow of Hugh Price Hughes." At one time the king 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, if no one had been saved, he woul d be 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 3000 people? And we had some cit ies yesterday where 3000 sermons were preached and nobody was saved. And it doesn't even faze us.

The church used to be a lightning bolt, now it's a cruise ship.
We are not marching to Zion - we are 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 with a bunch of men agonizing, and it's ending in the supper room with a bunch of people organizing.
We mistake rattle for revival, and commotion for creation, and action for unction.

Look, I think this is a critical hour in history, the most critical hour in history; the Middle East is ready to blow up... the pre stige of this nation we love has gone down ... As someone said, "We live in a theater of the absurd."

I'm old enough to remember years prior to World War I. My cousin had been to our house about a month before the war broke out, as straight as a ram-rod. He had his red jacket with its lovely gold buttons. I looked at him and thought, "My, w hat a marvelous thing to be a soldier." On the 4th of August 1914 the war broke out and he went with millions of other m en to fight; he came back a total physical wreck. But you see, the slogan of World War I was this: "This is the war to end wars." War is not only unchristian, it's uncivilized.

After that, from 1919 to 1939, we had twenty golden years of peace when the church had the greatest opportunity since Pentecost, in my judgment. 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. Really, the leader w as 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. Awa y back in 1912, two years before the 1914 war, H. G. Wells said, "It is possible for us to have a new race of people by int ellectual and biological processes. We don't need the Bible, we don't need the church, we can pull down the hills of weal th, we can fill up 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.
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, H. G. Wells and the gang were not so sure about things.

In 1939 came the 2nd World War. Well, H. G. Wells had written his outline of history, but the last book he wrote, in the m iddle of World War II, was not this rosy optimism. His last book was Mind at the end of it's Tether. And he said, "There is no hope for humanity." And he said one more sensible thing, "There is a little cavity somewhere in the human breast whi ch can be filled by God and only by God."

We feel a little nervous these days of talking about human depravity. Well, heaven knows, there has never been as muc h depravity around as we have today. Look at the iniquity that was on the earth when the prophet Elijah came on the sce ne. The nation was in bondage to idolatry, and impurity, and infidelity, and indifference.

And it's my contention this morning that this pulpit is no place for puppets.
In this day in which we live it's prophets that we need.

A Jewish scholar says,

"The prophet, by the very nature of his calling, is a tragic figure. He has a fierce loyalty toward God and he has a broken heart over a lost nation."
We miss the mark telling 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 is 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.
Where's the brooding of the Holy Ghost these days? When revival comes you don't daringly say, "Joe Smith is coming to preach this week, and he'll finish Sunday night." Where in the world did we get the idea that the Holy Spirit only comes at 11 o'clock Sunday morning and you send Him home at 12 o'clock. You want Him back at 7 at night 'til 8 and we don't need Him 'til Wednesday night. When revival comes the lights don't go out in the sanctuary for weeks and weeks and weeks.

I spent an afternoon in Wales in 1931 or 32 with an old man who had been one of the right hand men in the Salvation Army revival back in the 1880's. The man was eighty years of age. He told me about the amazing things that happened in their revivals. The men that would sit in the back seats, almost the scum of the earth, came in just to get warm, but they would get so worried when the old preacher William Booth was preaching one of his hell-fire messages, that they shred their hymn books. Begby, in his definitive work on William Booth, in the first volume I think, talks about the holiness meetings. 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 audience and drop them at the altar." And we think we've seen everything because two or three people get healed.

You can not standardize revival. I am not thinking of a church revival; I'm thinking of a national revival. There is only one hope for America and that is that we have a Divine intervention in the nation. Forget your denomination, forget your empty seats.

Let's see first of all how God grieves over the sin of the people,
and after all, when you look in the Old Testament, God's argument was not with the Amalekites, and Hitites and all the other "ites". God's problem in the Old Testament was Israel. God's problem today is not communism, Mormonism, Moonism or any other "ism." God's problem is His church today. We are so worldly.
A city wide crusade can cost two million dollars.
Revival doesn't cost a red cent, except broken hearts.
You can stage your revival; you can stage a city wide crusade; you can not stage Revival.
Revival is a mysterious divine intervention. I think one of the most awesome tasks given to man was given to John Baptist, when God said, "Prepare YE the way of the Lord."

You know, you talk about revival in this country and everybody has got tunnel vision. They think revival must come like Finney had it. We are not living in Finney's days. It would be nice to have him around, for sure, but we are not living in Finney's day. It is a new day. Iniquity has never swaggered like it swaggers now. You know what has happened in the last twenty three years in England? In the last twenty three years in England the Muslims have built 300 mosques and at the same time they were building their 300 mosques the Church of England has closed 660 churches. Does it drive us to despair? There are more people lost in this world at the moment than in any period in history. And yet we go on as though we were on the edge of the millennium instead of on the edge of judgment.

I believe the key to revival is given here in Joel, "Let the priests, the ministers of God, weep between the altar and the door posts."

I was preaching in a well known college two years ago. I was preaching on Hannah, because I think Hannah is typical of the true intercessor. The intercessor believes, "The thing will happen through me. I have to stand in the gap." You know, when you talk about intercessors we always go back and say, "Well, America's had some of the best intercessors." You're right; we had.

> We had praying Payson of Portland back in the eighteen hundreds. The floor in his room was as hard as this metal and yet there were two grooves side by side where his knees used to rub in the floor.
> What about Jonathan Goforth that went out and had revival in China?

What about John Hyde, one of the greatest men ever in prayer?
You know, the first thing that really moved me to God after I got saved? Somebody gave me an abridged edition of the life of David Brainard. I just could not believe it; I could not take it in. Could a man be so utterly selfless?
The thing that is crippling us is our prosperity. Materialism is choking the church as well as the world. We want ease and comfort.

When I read of a young man that could walk out in the snow, snow up to his chin sometimes, wrestling in prayer from sunrise to sunset with a tubercular body...

When I read about a man that wrestled in prayer like that, I was dumbfounded.

And since the church I went to was pretty sleepy and I was only about seventeen, I went out into Sherwood forest - I lived on the edge of it - and started praying by myself at night. We have some bracken there, and it grows seven or eight feet high, I used to creep in it and weep and groan and pray for revival. And revival came. Because I prayed? No, No. I was one of a number.
But a man called George Jefferys came. Very humble... He never stopped to meet you... never mentioned money...He just came there, they sang about one chorus, but the ministry and the authority of God was upon him, and again the Acts of the Apostles were repeated. I don't think that a move of miracles like that is the only answer. In fact I think we could by-pass that. In the last thirty years America has had more healing crusades than all the nations of the world put together.

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.

Paul Koffman went to Nagaland, India, to see what happened and expected something like Finney. When he got there saw signs and wonders and miracles, cripples were healed, blind people were seeing, 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 street? Why are we not having a problem with drugs? Why is the nation convulsed? Why is the government inquirying? They were the most rebellious, lawless state in India and now they are 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 had been praying twenty years for revival.

No man - I don't care how colossal his 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 tithe, haven't we? But we only mean their money. You see, we want a "revival" which is a painless Pentecost. We want something that won't disturb our status quo. It's "easy street" everywhere else, so why not here?

There never has been a revival that I can trace, that hasn't been
birthed back there with true, true, true intercession.

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part 2

In the city of Leeds, where I lived in England, the revival came. It came because there was a little man there, he was unlettered, he had no degree, but boy, did he have a burning heart. And he labored, and he had three breakdowns, not mentally, but physically. 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 endued 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 at the university.

We are 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. Look, why don't those men that preach that go to the third world to preach it where they need it? I know wealthy people, many of them are lovel y people and I believe God lets them have a ministry in supplying needs. But when the church of Jesus Christ is prosper ous, she 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 am 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 thirty five students, but I'm glad that the man who was the princi pal was a man of prayer - Samuel Chadwick who wrote the book "The Path of Prayer." The weakest meeting in almost a ny church without exception is the prayer meeting. And when we are not strong in prayer we are saying to God, "We can manage." (Of course, 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, you have to read your Bible and maintain your prayer. You need to maint ain your prayer life to maintain your Christian life." 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, "I don't have any trouble. I delight to expound the Wo rd. My books..." he wrote many, many books, but he said, "I've always found prayer so tough. I just 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 th e 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 gi ves Jesus as a praying man.

I remember a series of meeting we had in Wales in 1949. After three days a lady, Mrs. Lewis, said to me, "Brother Rave nhill, this is the nearest thing to the Welsh revival that we've had." That was forty years after the Welsh revival. "Mrs. Le wis, what's the point of identification?" "Because we walk up the hill now as we walked then." And she explained, "Last n ight, the night before, the night before that," she said "it wasn't until we got to the cross roads and bid each other 'good ni ght,' that we realized 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 door step of the church - "Hey,
do you think the Cowboys will win today?" It's dribble! It's nonsense!
When did you last tiptoe out of the sanctuary when you dare not say a word?
The church has to rediscover two things.

One, the majesty 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, a man God used in the Hebrides revival, 1950 onward. I asked him one day about a certain event, he said, "Yes, that's right. When I was ministering the place was like iron; it se emed as though God was a million miles away. And my message was like throwing a rubber ball at the wall, my words c ame back on me." In front of him were all kinds of ministers, but he didn't say anything to the preachers and the deacons and the elders. He pointed to a boy sitting over there, called him by name and said, "Laddie, will you pray?" A sixteen ye ar old high school boy! And he stood up, and he said in his Scottish way, "Ach, what is the good of praying if we are not r ight with God?" And he began to quote Psalm 24, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and pure heart." and so forth and so on. "And when he'd finished," Duncan told me, "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 a s though he could see the invisible he said, "Satan."

Oh, I've heard people say this almost facetiously
in some meetings, "Get the Devil out of this place."
The young boy stood there and said, "Satan, I rebuke you. Get out of this territory! In the name of the Father and the So n and the Holy Ghost. I plead the blood of Christ, BE GONE!"
And just as though a switch was pulled in heaven God came on the meeting,
He came on a tavern at the end of the road and people left it.
He came on a dance at the end of the road and people left it.
We have to drag people to the altar; there are no altar calls in the New Testament if you want to be REALLY scriptural. Altar calls are an invention for when the Holy Ghost doesn't deal with people. This boy prayed, the Holy Ghost came and that whole community vibrated with God.
You see preacher, you've only two things to do, not twenty two. You are not supposed to be the janitor and running a bu siness and finding about the church's bank balance and all that junk. If you are going to be a true Biblical preacher you g ot 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 is going to visit the sick? The deacons. Who is going to bury the dead? The deacons. (The Scripture clearly say s, "Let the dead bury the dead." - I like to tease, you know.)

You see, we want the church to function our way. "God bless our plans." "God bless what we do." When Alexander McCl aren went to that great big church in Manchester, England - and I've ministered in that church - seats maybe a couple of thousand or so - the deacons, great bearded fellows they were in those days, asked him a host of questions which he an swered. Finally they said, "We've asked you to be the pastor of this great church. We'll give you a new house, we'll furnis h it, we'll buy you a carriage and pair," as we say in England, "and we'll give you a large salary." After they went on, and on, and on, they asked, "Will you accept this?" And he said, "All right, I'll accept it - that is if you accept my terms." "You have terms?" (You know most churches think when they get a pastor they are renting a Hertz car. You better come and f it in!) "And what are the conditions?" And he laid some down, but one vital thing that he laid down was this, "I shall do no visiting."

Dr. Tozer, I loved that precious man and talked with him often, just the two of us in his office and prayed with him. Dr. To zer never went to Bible school, he never went to the seminary. Yet he was one of the most learned men I ever met. I sta yed in the house of a member of his church and she said, "You know what? I have gone to his church twenty five years and he has not been in my house five times." But I'll tell you what, he spread the table, and that's all you have to do. You know brethren, you never have to advertise a fire. You don't have to advertise it in the news paper, forget it. You let the glory of the Lord fill the temple; people will come from hundreds of 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 ni ght prayer. What do you want... social standing? Do you just want numbers of people? Do you want to fill the pews? Or do you want fire?
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 give n by demons. When those demons said, "Jesus I know and Paul I know." Come on preacher, do you think if the devil ha s a danger list of the ten most wanted men in America you are one of them? I would rather be the last man on the devil's danger list than the first man on any honor roll you could give us about preaching. I'll say it again: brother, if you are not known in hell you are not worth a hill of beans.

We must realize we are not just fighting a local situation, we are not fighting drug addiction, we are not fighting massive pornography. We are surrounded by an arrogant, militant paganism. If you told your grandfather forty years ago that fort y thousand homosexuals would march down main street, he would have said, "Not in America."
You know what? Adultery and divorce is getting to plague proportions even in the church of God. We don't have decent morality in some churches, never mind spirituality. We don't elect deacons because they are full of the faith and the Holy Ghost - we appoint them because they own two Texaco stations and a hot dog stand.

Another thing Jesus did, He prayed all night before He chose His disciples. If we prayed all night before we chose our de acons, I guarantee half of them wouldn't get in... if we had to get the witness of the Sprit about it.

You see, I have people saying, "Why don't you write a book about 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 or else there isn't one.

The formula of revival is:

Preachers need to hit the altars and weep because they have no tears.

Groan because there is no moving of the Spirit of God.

Apologize to God that we've kind of manipulated the supernatural.

Now, I am not just thinking of miracles of twisted limbs and other things.

I think the greatest miracle that 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 are more afraid of holiness today in the church than we are of sinfulness.

If an unclean man with an unclean spirit does unclean things, if a man that's vile does vile things because he has a vile s pirit,

surely the man who has the Holy Spirit in him will live a holy life.

I don't ask people if they are saved anymore, forget it, everybody is "saved;" it doesn't mean a thing. Don't ask a man if h e is born again, just look gently at him, it doesn't matter who he is, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Methodist or Mennonite, ju st 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 Sprit.

I hear less still about having your fruit unto holiness.

I hear less still about bringing forth fruit meet for repentance.

You know why some people don't believe in our converts? Because they don't go back and clear up the dirty mess that t hey've made as far as they can. Restore the stolen money...maintain the baby of the girl they got into trouble... some oth er thing they should do. Bring forth fruit. A healthy tree doesn't bring forth fruit. It's the tree that has all the flowing life tha t brings forth fruit.

One day Napoleon ran his index finger round a great country, he was talking to his generals and he said, "There lies a sl eeping giant, LET IT SLEEP!! Because," he said, "if that country ever wakes up and harnesses it's man power to it's min eral power it will shake the world." The country he outlined, in case you are interested, was none other than China, our b iggest headache. See the devil standing there, he isn't running his finger round a map, he is running his finger round the church of Jesus Christ and he says, "There is the church of Jesus Christ asleep, LET IT SLEEP!!" "Because if it ever red iscovers the power of the Holy Ghost, if it ever rediscovers the resurrection power of Jesus, it will shake the world."

I wonder how much of our lives is 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 door posts. I walked round th e front of the podium one day, in a distinguished, wonderful college, fourteen hundred students listening. I just walked ro und and said to the professors, "Gentlemen you are teaching young men to be preachers. In one sense, they are going t o guide the church in the future days. Tell me this, do you have for them a course on weeping? And if they graduate, do you have a course on howling?"

An old professor came and sat at the back in one of my meetings. He believed in old blood and fire, hell-fire preaching a nd holy living and a church being something which God 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, "That old man is senile."

I like an old statement that was made I think by Montgomery, "All earthly things with earth will fade away, but prayer gras ps eternity." And if we're going to see as God sees... Praying, just recently, the Lord seemed to say this to me, "If you cla im to be filled with the Holy Spirit the things that grieve the Spirit will grieve you." Who does the Lord cast His burdens on ? Does He roll them away into the oblivion? 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 is depressing outside, why cover it over? We are hea ding for judgment faster than you could ever think unless there is a divine intervention. And the key, again, is the priests weeping. The priests howling.

We sure need

a heaven born,

earth shaking,
hell-terrifying revival.
And it only comes through brokeness, it comes through honesty.
It comes when we admit, which is true of most around these days, that we just have a form of godliness - thank God we are not filthy and we are not dirty and we are not drunkards and we don't have a spare woman or something, we are pret ty good. Ha, yes, that's 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 and it became a terminal.
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 twenty four times in that chapter. I believe the key is not just th e word faith, I believe the key is the 6th verse - "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." He is what? He is every thing that He said in this Word. And then, you know, I read Hebrews 11: "They subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousne ss, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, women received their dead come to life again." I read that and I knel t down to pray in my office and it's as though the Lord said, "Say that again." And so I said it, "Lord, these people far off t here, they subdued whole kingdoms, they wrought righteousness, they obtained promises, they stopped the mouths of li ons, women received their dead come to life." And, as somebody said this year, "and not one of them had a Bible." Did y ou ever consider that? Let me take you back to a time when God's chosen people wondered around in sheepskins and g oatskins! Now we've a land flowing with milk and honey - and churches flowing with mink and money. As though God loo ks on the outside. Forget it! He looks on the inside. Those people never had 66 Books. And you know what, if the world l asts another 100 thousand years, which it won't, but if it did, God doesn't have anything to add to that Book. He's said all He is ever going to say to man.

In my youth, I used to go listen in a Bible class where Dr. G. Campbell Morgan used to preach very often - a fascinating Bible teacher. And 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 are thinking of Finney or Wesley or Booth, or any great majestic figure that has ruled in the church of God and seen revival, not one of them had a bigger Bible than y ou and I have. It's the same Word. Again, we better make our minds up whether it is absolute or obsolete. I'll tell you wh at, if this Book doesn't have the answer for a rotten, corrupt, stinking world, there is no answer for it. We've out sinned S odom and Gomorra. Do you know there are 600 million Bibles in America? Would you try to guess how many millions or billions of Bible cassettes there are in the nation? Would you like to try to estimate how many seminars there are? Or se minaries there are? Or Bible schools? Or how many Gospel messages are preached throughout the nation? And that we 've got 500 radio stations that broadcast something of the Gospel.

Let me give you the other side and I quit.
We are the most broken nation that 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 - over a million girls last year got pregnant under 17 years of age. And people were ma rching a few years ago, "Stop the war in Vietnam, stop the war." "No right to kill people," and yet it's estimated in the last nine years we've put more than 10 million babies to death before they left their mother's wombs (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 brok eness. That we get and say, many of us,
"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 am convinced the key is in the ministry. Maybe the way to start revival in your church is to stand up next Sunday morni ng and say, "Look, I want to tell you, I've had no passion for the lost. I shed no tears for lost mankind. I've so many other things I am interested in."
I believe one key to the apostle Paul's life 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 -
thirty six hours, you can't wash it out of him.
They tried to starve him, you can't starve it out of him.

He'd had a vision of the cross, he'd had a vision of the resurrection power.
He'd realized the greatest thing this side of eternity is to be a God filled man. And goes out and proclaims that message, whether he goes to Jews, to barbarians, the Greeks, the intellectuals. He is as at home in the intellectual capital of the w orld, Athens, as he is in the religious capital of the world, Jerusalem.
God never, never intended His church to backslide. God never intended His church to function with anything less than A postolic Christianity. And it's time to call the church to prayer. I believe if we were as spiritual as we think we are we woul 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.

I can almost hear Duncan Campbell saying how they cried in Scotland, "Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heaven and co me down."
You see, we've never seen God move 'til He's stopped the traffic.

'Til people in the shops are singing.
'Til the lights don't go out week after week.
'Til the Holy Ghost is moving in factories. He's done that in other revivals.

He has called us to stand in the gap.

To be the repairers of the breach.

To bring the powers of the world to come on this materialistic blind day in which we live and this sleepy Lao dicean church. When He was on earth He cleaned the temple. I feel it needs cleansing again, from worldliness... from m aterialism... May the Lord help us to search our hearts as well as search the Scriptures. Help us to be honest and admit t hat we've failed, seek the place of prayer, and the place of cleansing and the place of anointing.
May we be a vital link between His Eternal Spirit and this troubled, lost world outside.

May His glory shine forth again.

Weeping Between the Porch and the Altar - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/9/11 0:17

I am glad he didn't have to live to see this day ... of the church.