



table talk

6/21/26

“Remembering Leonard Ravenhill”

This past week I quietly celebrated the birthday of one of the greatest preachers and prayer warriors I have ever experienced in my life, Leonard Ravenhill, born on June 18, 1907 in Leeds, England. As a young man, Len physically walked across England at least twice to preach evangelistic crusades. His amazingly effective ministry was fairly unknown in the United States until he began crusades here in 1950. Disciples such as David Wilkerson, Jack Taylor, Keith Green, and Charles Stanley credited him with much of their continued spiritual formation.

I read his books and as many of his sermons as I could find on cassette tape during high school and college years. I read his books, *Why Revival Tarries*, *Sodom Had No Bible*, *Revival Praying*, *Meat for Men* and *Revival God’s Way*, often shut in the prayer room for meaningful “soaking sessions.”

The first and only time I ever heard him in person was in 1979 while I was a youth pastor in Mobile, Alabama. My schedule at that time required me to serve in pastoral ministry six nights a week, so I could only attend his week-long revival once. Ravenhill preached for almost two and a half hours. His text was Psalm 51 - David’s prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba. He poured out his heart to explain to us what true repentance looked like. “I know a man who said ‘I rejected your altar, but the words of David would not leave my mind. David said ‘my sin is ever before me’. (Psalm 51:3) In vain I tried to sleep, but I kept hearing the preacher say those same words, and all night long all my sins rose up and marched around my bed. I’ve come today to make it right by repenting of my sins and surrendering to Jesus!”

I remember one of his sayings: “JESUS DID NOT COME INTO THE WORLD TO MAKE BAD MEN GOOD. JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO MAKE DEAD MEN LIVE!”

His influence in my life is unmeasurable. In my opinion, he was certainly one of the most underappreciated, unacknowledged, and unrecognized men of God in the 20th century.

During the early days of Len and Martha's work in the United States, our own Jack Taylor said, "Leonard Ravenhill is the only true prophet in America."

A.W. Tozer said of him, "To such men as (Ravenhill), the church owes a debt too heavy to pay. The curious thing is that we seldom try to pay him (honor/recognize him) while he lives. Rather, the next generation builds his sepulchre and writes his biography, as if instinctively and awkwardly, to discharge an obligation the previous generation to a large extent ignored."

The Chittys were still unpacking in Columbia when we heard Ravenhill died in 1994. Not a lot has been written about him since his death, but, thankfully, many of his books are still available.

Ravenhill challenged America to return to her spiritual roots. He often said, "America is too young to die."

R.T. Kendall told me once that the commonality of the characters in Hebrews 11 is that they all died without receiving all they had been praying for. They knew it was just a matter of God's. The full answer is always coming, but often it is realized only after we pass on.

Ravenhill died in faith, believing God to cleanse His Church, and present her to Jesus as His glorious Bride without spot or wrinkle." (Ephesians 5:27)

I love you and believe in you,
Pastor Stephen

Leonard Ravenhill Quotes

"Why in God's name do you expect to be accepted everywhere? How is it that the world couldn't get on with the holiest Man that ever lived and it can get on with you and me? Are we compromised? Have we no spiritual stature? Paul never glamorized the gospel! It is not success, but sacrifice! It's not a glamorous gospel, but a bloody gospel, a gory gospel, and a sacrificial gospel! Five minutes inside eternity and we will wish that we had sacrificed more, wept more, bled more, grieved more, loved more, prayed more, and given more."

"Each of us are as godly as we want to be."

"A man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by men."

"If John the Baptist came back today, he would not be a voice crying in the wilderness but crying in the church."

"When there's something in the Bible that churches don't like, they call it legalism."