

A Powerless Form of Godliness

by Aaron Hurst

This sermon delves into the warning about perilous times in the last days, where people may have a form of godliness but lack true power and fruitfulness in their lives. The speaker emphasizes the importance of genuine repentance, embracing the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and living a life of holiness and mercy. The message urges listeners to avoid deception by mere profession without a transformed and obedient life in Christ.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:1, Matthew 23:28, Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:22, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Luke 13:6, James 3:8, Matthew 23:23

Topics: "Genuine Repentance", "Living a Transformed Life"

Description

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Transcript

Open your Bibles to 2nd Timothy chapter 3, 2nd Timothy chapter 3 verse 1. This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof, from such turn away. Would you stand with me for prayer? Father, thank you for your word. Father, thank you for your Holy Spirit.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus that your Holy Spirit would anoint your word, make it alive unto us, and Father, we ask in Jesus' name that your Holy Spirit would reveal the beauty of your holiness and would shine into our hearts, establishing truth in our hearts, and Father, that your Holy Spirit in your goodness and your mercy would bring conviction of sin and grant us honest and open hearts to receive what you are speaking to us. Father, do not pass any of us by. We need you, Father.

I ask in the name of Jesus that there would be no condemnation but the beautiful presence of the Lord and the power of his Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated.

Scripture we have before us speaks of last days being perilous days, and when it speaks of perilous days, definition of that is difficult days, troublesome days, hard to bear. He gives us a list of description of these perilous days. It's quite a list.

The one that I would like to focus our attention to is the last one that he mentions. For men shall have a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Do we have markers up here? Oh, yes, we do.

A form of godliness. When we think of a form, we think of something that has a semblance befitting a certain thing, whether truly expressing what that really is or not. It is a form that when we see that form, we have recognition of what we are observing and beholding.

Is that right? You see the form of a cat. What do you expect? You see a form of a man. What do you expect? The scriptures tell us that in the last days, there will be difficult times.

There will be times of trouble. There will be times of distresses. Times that will be difficult and hard to bear and to discern and judge.

Because there will be men who have a form of godliness. They appear to be righteous. Jesus mentioned this in Matthew 23, 28.

He said, And even so, ye outwardly appear righteous unto men. You have a form that appears to be righteous unto men. When men meet you, they expect to be in the presence of a righteous man, of a godly man.

It has all the appearance of a righteous man, a form of godliness. But these are perilous, difficult, deceptive times. Because there's men who appear righteous, but within, they are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

The form that appears is false. It's very deceptive. It appears righteous at first glance or first meeting.

A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Maybe we should amend the title. Why don't we amend the title? A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Another way to state that would be a powerless form of godliness. I would really be disappointed if all we did was look out there and say, Yeah, you know, they allow divorce and remarriage in their church. Yeah, they dress really worldly over there.

Thank God we're not like that. Yeah, they've embraced false doctrines over there. They're really compromisers over there.

You know, some of that may be true, but remember, remember the Pharisee stood thus with himself and prayed, Lord, I thank you that I'm not like these other people. I'm righteous. They're unrighteous.

A form of godliness, but denying the power. So we can rightly say a powerless form of godliness. So what does a life of godliness look like? What is a life of godliness that is full of the power of Christ Jesus? The power, ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

You shall receive power to be witnesses unto Christ. Out of your life shall emanate Christ himself, Christ in you. Just listen to these words.

Jesus traveling with his disciples on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry, and seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves. He came if happily he might find anything their own. And when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet.

And Jesus answered and said unto it, no man eat fruit of thee henceforth, hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it. Jesus walking along with his disciples, and they came into Bethany, and Jesus was hungry.

And seeing the fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came if happily he might find anything their own. That he might find some fruit on this fig tree. He might find some figs to satisfy his hunger.

How many people are looking on your life and my life, and they're hungering for righteousness. And they're expecting in you my brother, my sister, here is a righteous person who knows the Lord. Maybe they could help me.

Perhaps they could point me in the direction. Of where I can find answers to my life. Where I can find healing for my wounded heart.

Where I can find nourishment for my hungry soul. And as they see us from afar, they say surely there is a righteous woman, a righteous man. And they come to us seeking food to satisfy their hunger.

Everything looks good. There's leaves on the tree. It looks like it's flourishing.

Looks like it's prospering and doing well. The talk is great. But when they come to us for spiritual food, they're disappointed.

Because my life is an outward display of leaves. It looks good on the outside, but the fruit is sadly lacking. And they're disappointed because it's a form of godliness.

Godliness without power. The power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God. The power of a holy life.

The power of a crucified life. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

Now this story can be a little perplexing because it says the time of figs was not yet. But as we look into that deeper, it has the meaning that when the figs begin to grow on the fig tree, at the outset, and they begin to develop, there's really not much leaves yet. But then as the figs begin to grow and mature, then the leaves come out to shade them from the sun.

And when you saw a fig tree with lots of leaves, it meant that the time of fig harvest was not yet complete. There's leaves still present, and the figs should be hidden underneath those leaves. Not visible too clearly from a distance, but as you get close, as you lift up the leaves, you find fruit.

So yes, there are things in a Christian's life that are marks of a Christian, that you can maybe somewhat identify outwardly, but the real test is the fruit. Is there fruit? Is there the power of a godly life? I'll share a testimony here, and a confession. I was at Mendon, Ohio this past week at the Kingdom Discipleship for Ministers.

A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Brother Dale Heise shared this testimony. He said, I was sick.

I was so sick. I didn't know if I'm going to live or die. The elders of my church came and anointed me with oil, but he said, nothing happened.

I was so sick. Then I thought of Brother David Allspall, and he said, I told my wife, Susan, Susan, call David Allspall to come and anoint me with oil. David Allspall came with a few other men, entered into the house, and cried out to the Lord, and touched heaven, and heaven came to earth.

There was a little archway in that doorway into his sick room. The door of the post moved. As Dale was sharing the testimony, David Allspall was sitting there, and when Dale began to share the testimony, he said, now David Allspall, you just hold your ears shut.

You're not supposed to hear this. But he did ask him then, he said, David, do you remember the post moving? David said, yes, I do. Those men anointed Dale Heise with oil and cried unto the Lord.

After the anointing of oil, David Allspall prophesied. He said, Dale, you are going to rise up and preach the word of God. Tomorrow morning, about this time, you're going to get out of bed and be healed.

The anointing was in the evening. The next morning, Dale called for his wife. He said, Susan, I am so hot.

I'm just so hot and sweating profusely. Please take these covers off of me. And she did.

Then he said, now get a hold of my feet and move them out of the bed so that I can sit up, put my feet down on the floor. And she did. And I sat up.

Strength began to flow into me. And I stood up and I went out to the kitchen and got some drink, got some nourishment and was healed. Wow.

Then he said, now, brethren, while I have your attention, how many times have you and I gone through the motions of a religious exercise? We went through the motions of anointing with oil, without burden, without faith, without heart. I was smitten. I knew I'm guilty.

I've done it. I didn't feel the deep cry coming out of the heart that was asking for anointing. A form of godliness.

An elder in the church, a weak, sick, fainting brother or sister crying out to God for intervention. And I, oh, I went through the motions without power, without passion, without faith, without a cry. That evening, Brother Paul Weaver, excuse me, I didn't know if I was going to be able to talk this morning because I had been coughing for over a week.

Brother Paul Weaver brought an anointed message on the life of the minister, empowers his message. And I thank God that as I responded to the Lord in repentance and acknowledging of my need, he broke my heart and granted me the gift of repentance. You know, it's a very terrifying thing when I know in my head that I've done my sin, but it doesn't affect my heart.

That's really scary. And I felt some of that. I felt love growing cold, lukewarm.

So that night, I didn't feel much emotion, but I went to the altar and I opened my mouth and I confessed my sin. And when I did that, the Holy Spirit of God came down upon me and just broke my heart. And I just wept and wept.

And I thank God for that. I thank God for that. Embrace the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Embrace the truth that God shows you in your heart. Embrace reality of where I'm really at. So dear brothers, sisters here today, I confess my sin of having gone through anointing services.

This one in particular came to my mind and I shall go to that individual. That individual is not here today. But I shall go to that individual and confess my sin and ask for forgiveness.

But for you that are here today, I'm very sorry and I repent for having gone through the motion, going through the formal exercise without heart, without weeping with those that weep, without crying with those that cry, without feeling your pain. Please forgive me. Can you forgive me for my sin? And if there's anyone here today that this strikes a chord in your heart and you've had a hard time with me because you recognize my lack of empathy, my lack of compassion, and it's been a burden to you, I welcome you to come to me and tell me how you really felt or feel so that there can be healing, so that there can be cleansing and forgiveness.

A powerless form of godliness. Listen to these words. It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison.

Therewith bless we god even the father. And therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of god. Out of the same mouth proceed his blessing and cursing.

My brethren these things ought not so to be. Does the fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries or a vine figs? A form of godliness. Jesus said you indeed appear righteous unto men.

We're going to skim through a little bit, just dropping in on a few places of Jesus discourse with the pharisees in Matthew 23. He said to the disciples and to the multitude saying the scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do but do you not after their works for they say and do not.

They say and do not. You know we know the right words to say, don't we? But the question is does what we say add up to how we live? They bind heavy burdens grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. You know they demand a higher standard of others than themselves.

They judge others with a high standard but do not judge themselves. They demand a high standard of holiness and perfection from their spouse, from their children, from their brothers and make strong statements and lay it upon others demanding perfection and performance but they themselves not move it with one finger. A powerless form of godliness.

All their works they do for to be seen of men. They're very man conscious. They want the praise of men conscious of what men will say about me when really we ought to be conscious of what god says about me.

We ought to live to please god. How do they do this? All their works they do for to be seen of men. Well they do it in the way they dress.

They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments. They want to appear very righteous before men through religious garb and robes. We're not talking about modesty.

We're talking about a religious garb. You can still see that today when you look at the history and even present day religious exercises by popes, by cardinals and priests and so forth. But what about me? Do I take pride in the way I'm dressed more modestly than that other person? Do I take pride in my dress that it's just so right into the tee it fits just perfectly and I look down at someone else who's not as capable, a gifted sewer and their dress is a little more sloppy? What about my prayer life? Oh they love to pray on the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men and for a pretense they make long prayers.

Examine yourselves, judge yourselves. Is my prayer life more eloquent in public than in private? Is my prayer more longer in public than in private? Do I pray for to make a show, pretense, long prayer? Therefore they shall receive the greater damnation. Like I said, we're just skimming over this, didn't have the time to go deeply into the chapter.

Verse 23 of Matthew 23. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithes of mint and anise in common, but have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. Am I consumed with the lesser things of scripture that are taught and should be all obeyed of course, but am I consumed and focused on the least of these when I should be concerned about showing mercy, when I should be concerned that my life would be a life of faith and faithfulness versus unbelief? He says, you know, if your life is like that, where you're so detailed on the finer details of the Christian life, like Zach Poonen said it this way, you're so concerned about this little finger and you focus so much on the little finger.

Well, yeah, it's good to have a little finger, but if your focus is just on that little finger, on that one little detail of the law of God, of the commandment of God, soon that little finger grows to be longer and longer and it becomes a nuisance wherever you go. The weightier matters, mercy, showing mercy. See, that's how God is.

God is merciful. He shows mercy. And remember, I and you have received mercy.

We ought also to be merciful. How does the scripture say? He that has showed no mercy shall be judged without mercy, something to that effect. You know, as we're harsh and critical and demanding of others and put a high standard on them, but we exempt ourselves and we're unmerciful.

Verse 25, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you may clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. The inner life, that we live before God who sees everything and knows everything.

Oh, I want to be approved of God. I want to live my life before God. Cleanse within, cleanse first within that the outside may be clean also.

Yes, when we are clean within, the outside will show it as well. Yes, it will. In Luke 13, verse 6, Jesus spake this parable.

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down, why cumberst it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it.

A form of godliness, but denying the power. We're not talking about power to do miracles or power to raise the dead. We're talking about a fruitful life in Christ Jesus, where the fruit of the Spirit is eminent and flows out in love, unselfish concern for others, in joy in the Holy Spirit, in peace, in long-suffering and patience, in gentleness and kindness, in goodness, in faith, in meekness and in temperance, self-control, putting to death that carnal nature that wants to be on the throne.

Do you have power in your life? Power to die to self, power to love your enemy, power to respond in patience, power to respond in meekness and gentleness. You know, I believe, as the scriptures say, we live in great perilous times, where there is a testimony or confession of godliness of being a Christian, but without power. So I do believe I should give a little bit of warning yet in this message, and that is that we not be deceived in these last days by profession without a holy life.

Profession of great things of God, but an unholy life. A life that does not embrace the truths of scripture that are clearly taught. When God said something is an abomination, did he change his mind? No.

If it was an abomination to God then, it's an abomination to God now. So dear brothers and sisters, like I said, we don't want to just look out there, but I do want to give this warning, that there is great signs, wonders, Satan's angels transforming themselves into the ministers of God, and the only way brother sister, that we shall escape this great flood of ungodliness is to know Jesus Christ, and to know his word. We must know him, the other means which is absolutely paramount.

We must walk in repentance and obedience before the Lord. Let me ask you a question, what do you think would have happened to me if I had hardened my heart when the Holy Spirit convicted me, and I would have said no, I'm pretty good, I think I'm okay. What do you think would happen? You all know, father hardness comes, and father blindness.

So my dear brothers and sisters, my beloved in Christ Jesus, this morning is Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Ghost, digging around you, and pruning you, and showing you of sin in your life, where I got angry at my son, I got angry at my wife, I got angry at my husband, I demanded a higher standard than I give myself, I sinned against the Lord in looking at that woman with lust, I sinned against the Lord in being impatient with my wife, or my husband, or my child, I sinned against the Lord by being unkind. Like the one woman said, would you please show me as much kindness as you do to the stranger that comes to the door? Today, if you hear his voice, today, if the Holy Spirit is convicting you of an area in your life where you're putting on righteousness before men, Sunday morning, here at church, but during the week, you're responding out of the flesh in some way, and God is laying his finger on your heart. Today, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart, welcome conviction, and respond, and repent in the godly repentance that is described in 2 Corinthians 7. Oh, it's a godly sorrow, and I know we can't work that up, but we can do this, we can be honest before God, we can be honest before God, and we can cry out to him, Lord, grant me the gift of repentance, I confess my need, I will not just go on with business as usual, going through the motions when I recognize I'm an angry man, a powerless form of godliness.

You know, it can look very religious, it can look very good, it can be very plain, it can be very separate from the world in tradition and so forth, but it can also be very worldly, if you want to use that term. You know, sometimes we think, oh, a form of godliness, yeah, that's those plain people, but you know, you can have a form of godliness at charity Christian fellowship, you can have a form of godliness right here, where you're living in pretense that everyone who sees you says you're such a godly person, but deep inside you know different. What a blessing it would be if the Lord would grant judgment to come to his

house, and we would truly repent and get honest before God.

Selah.

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