

Fair as the Moon

by Chuck Smith

The church should live in anticipation of Jesus' return, spreading the gospel and being a witness to the world, reflecting God's light in a dark world.

Duration: 35:29

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Brian leads the congregation in reading Psalm 45, emphasizing the greatness and majesty of God. He encourages the congregation to focus on spiritual matters and not be weighed down by worldly possessions. Pastor Brian also highlights the imminent return of Jesus and the need for believers to be prepared and watching for his coming. He cautions against engaging in sinful activities, such as watching inappropriate movies, and emphasizes the importance of living a pure and holy life in anticipation of Christ's return. Additionally, he challenges the notion that democracy is what made America great, suggesting that there are other factors at play.

Transcript

Now let's turn in our Bibles to the 45th Psalm. I'll read the first, the outnumbered verses. Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses as we stand to read the Word of God.

My heart is indicting a good matter. I speak of the things which I've made touching the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips. Therefore, God hath blessed thee forever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty, write prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness. And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.

Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness. Therefore, God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

King's daughters were among thy honorable women. Upon thy right hand did stand the queen and the gold of Ophir. Hoken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear.

Forget also thy known people and thy father's house. And so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy lord and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with the gift.

Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor. The king's daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is of wrought gold.

She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework. The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, and they shall enter into the king's palace.

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest to make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore, shall the people praise thee forever and ever.

Let's pray. Father, as we have again gathered together today to learn more about your plan and your purposes for your church and for our lives as individuals, we ask now that our hearts might be open to the work of your spirit, that which you're desiring to do in our lives today. Give us ears to hear what the spirit would say to us today as to our relationship to you, our relationship to each other, and our relationship to the world in which we live.

So, Lord, bless now we pray this study of your word in Jesus' name. Amen. This morning, we're going to draw attention on the sixth chapter in verse 10.

This song of Solomon is seen as a love song between Solomon, written by Solomon and concerning his first love, Naamah, the wife of his son, Rehoboam. Though Solomon had many wives and many concubines, he had only one true love, and that was Naamah. And it is thought that this song of Solomon was written for her and describing that special relationship that he had to Naamah.

This song of Solomon is seen as the love relationship between husband and wife and was seen allegorically by the Jews as a reference to God's love for the nation of Israel and their love for God. From the standpoint of the church, it is seen allegorically as the love of Jesus, the groom for his bride, the church. And thus, most of the interpretations that we read of the song of Solomon look at it as an allegory that explains the relationship of Christ and the church, that love bond between them.

Now, as we get to verse 10 of chapter six, there is that third part of this sort of cantata, and it is the daughters of Jerusalem who are interjecting in chorus about the bride, about the groom, and about the bride's love for the groom and the groom for the bride. And this is a description in verse 10 of the bride as they declare, Who is she that looketh forth as the morning? Fair is the moon, clear is the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Seeing this as the bride and in the allegory, seeing the bride as the church, this then would become a description of the church.

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning? Fair is the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Looking forth as the morning. The morning tells us that a new day is coming, and thus the church looks for that new day.

I believe that the Lord intended that the church in every generation from the beginning look for that new day, that he intended the church to expect him to return at any moment to set up his kingdom upon the

earth. That glorious new day that is spoken to us of that new day in the scriptures as it talks about the glories where there will be peace like a river, where there will be no pain, no suffering, no sorrow, where there will be no wars, there will be no striving. The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness, peace and joy, and righteousness shall cover the earth as waters do cover the sea.

The early church did believe that Christ was coming during their lifetime. When Jesus talked to his disciples about waiting in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit, he said, which will be given to you in a few days. They then questioned, Lord, will you at this time set up the kingdom? Or, Lord, are we only a few days away from the setting up of the kingdom? During the writing of the epistles, the churches were warned that time is short and they were warned to live or encouraged to live in the anticipation of the soon return of Jesus Christ.

There was actually a rumor that was going around in the early church that Jesus would come again before John died. And John, as he wrote his gospel, because of this rumor and because he was nearing death, he sought to correct the rumor. He said, that isn't what Jesus said.

Jesus said, if I will that John should live until I come again, Peter, what is that to you? In other words, he didn't say that he would, but he said, if I will that he did. And so John was seeking to correct that rumor that Jesus had actually said that he would return before John died. But the belief in the immediate soon return or imminent return of Jesus Christ at any moment has a powerful effect upon the church.

First of all, it gives to the church a great urgency to the task of getting the gospel out. We don't have much time. We need to expend the energies of the church in reaching the world with the good news of Jesus Christ.

And it gives an urgency to our task of getting the gospel out into all of the world. I just returned from Brazil where I spent the week looking at facilities down there that we might possibly have turned over to us for use as a Bible college and a use as it is being used as an orphanage and a summer camp down there. And the missionaries are old and wanting to retire and they're wanting us to take over the ministry.

And we want you to be in prayer about that. We are praying about it as to whether or not the Lord would have us involved in this. But we did see a tremendous opportunity to reach this nation of Brazil.

And so we're in prayer about whether or not the Lord would have us to accept this responsibility. However, time is short and we do need to get out as much as we can the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world in which we live. But not only does it give us an urgency knowing that time is short, but it also gives to us a proper attitude towards the things of the world.

It's awful easy for us to get involved in worldly things. The Bible tells us that we should lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset us. We seem to be weighted down with material things, weighted down with worldly things.

And to realize that the Lord is coming soon and we're not going to take any of this with us. It gives us then the proper attitude towards the material things of this world. As Paul writing to the Corinthians said, time is short.

Let your every contact with the world be as light as possible. Hang loose. Don't get weighted down by the materialism of this world where it is occupying your whole life.

But keep a loose touch with the things of the world. The third effect of knowing that Jesus is coming at any moment is a purifying effect. I don't know when he's going to come.

I know it's going to be sudden. It's going to be unexpected. He said in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man is coming.

Paul said it's going to be so quick it will be like just a twinkle of an eye. He said that I'll show you a mystery where not all of us going to die, but all of us are going to be changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye at the last trump for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. And so what do you want to be doing when the Lord comes? I know what I don't want to be doing.

I wouldn't want to be sitting in a theater watching an R-rated or X-rated movie. Tell you that for certain. I wouldn't want to be watching in my own home on the video an X or R-rated movie.

I would just as soon be right here when the Lord came and just, you know, ready. I want him when he comes to find me watching and he said that he wants us to be watching. He wants us to be ready and prepared and and thus it has a purifying effect upon me.

If I do that, would I want to be doing that when the Lord would come for me? John wrote, beloved, now are we the sons of God? It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know that when he appears, we're going to be like him for we shall see him as he is. And John said, he that has this hope purifies himself even as he is pure. It's a very purifying hope realizing that Jesus could come at any time at any moment.

As we look at our world in which we live today, we see that it is in a state of chaos. We see the insurmountable problems that have been created by the development of weapons of mass destruction. We see religious fanatics who are ready to use these weapons indiscriminately to destroy themselves and other human beings.

Just this past week in Jordan, they uncovered a plot to detonate chemical weapons. The men involved in the plot had already smuggled three carloads of materials into Jordan. They were planning to detonate this chemical bomb that the government estimates would kill 20,000 people.

They have the technology, they have the materials. And of course, this is the one thing that our government is fearing the possibility of such an attack here in America. Fortunately, in Jordan, they were able to discover the plot and they arrested the men and have the materials that were brought to detonate this chemical bomb.

None of us are really over yet the shock of 9-11. We still in our minds can see but not understand or really accept that it happened. That men would get in aircraft and deliberately fly that plane into these twin towers and destroy so many innocent lives.

For what purpose? Why? For what reason? We don't understand the mindset of these people that are determined to destroy those that will not adhere to their beliefs. The world leaders are wringing their hands in despair, not having answers to the problems that exist. But the church looks beyond this dark day.

It looks to the glorious new day that is dawning. The church looks forth as the morning. And we knew that these things would come to pass before the morning would dawn.

Jesus said that evil days would get worse and worse. Jesus said that unless the Lord would shorten those days, no flesh would remain upon the earth. And for the elect's sake, those days would be shortened.

Jesus said that nations would face perplexing problems for which there seemed to be no solution. Right now our nation is looking for the solution in Iraq. How can we force democracy on a people who do not understand it or really want it? And why would we want to force democracy on them? One of the mistakes that we've made is the interpreting of the history of the United States.

And that is to think that it is democracy that has made America great. It isn't democracy that made America great. It was God who made America great because our founding fathers believed in God and they founded a nation established upon the principles of the Bible and what God did teach.

A nation where people could worship God in the freedom of their own consciousness. And because of the founding of our nation on godly principles, our nation became strong. But in the same token, as our nation is forsaking God and trying to actually legislate God out of the national life, our nation is in a free fall morally and spiritually.

And as righteousness exalts a nation, sin is a reproach to any people. And so we see the dilemma that we are faced with today as we are trying to promote democracy. But that's not going to save the world.

Only a turning to God can save this world in which we live. And so we as the church look forward as the morning to that new day when the Lord shall come and establish His righteous kingdom upon the earth. And He will be the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Lords and shall reign forever and forever.

They say that the night is darkest just before the dawn. Now I don't know if that is scientifically correct or not, or maybe it's just an old wives tale. But I do know that it is getting dark.

It is getting so dark as far as the world is concerned. But the church looks beyond the darkness. They realize the new day is coming.

The day of the Lord is at hand. The second description of the church here is fair as the moon. Now we know that the moon is a satellite orbiting our earth and that it has no light of its own, but it reflects the light of the sun to help dispel the darkness of the night.

At night the sun is still shining, but it's shining on the other half of the earth. But as it shines, it strikes the moon and the moon reflects that light down to the earth. But the light of the moon tells you one thing, and that is the sun is still shining.

Though we can't see it, though it seems to be dark, yet as I look at the moon, it says the sun still shines. The church fair as the moon. We should be a witness to the world that the son of God still lives as his light shines forth through us to dispel the darkness of the world in which we live.

Our lives, our church should be a witness. The sun still shines. So the message of the church to the world is that the son of God is alive and though they cannot see him, he still lives and a new day will soon dawn as he is coming again to dispel the darkness.

Another description of the church is clear as the sun. Jesus said to his disciples, now you are the light of the world. I think of the total darkness that the world would be in today if it were not for the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Wherever the gospel has gone, it has always brought light. Hospitals were opened, orphanages were built, schools were developed. How many universities, hospitals, and orphanages do you know of that were inspired and built by atheists? They like to take them over once they are built, but they don't build them.

Look at the living conditions of people and the living standards of those that are living in nations that are under the influence of pagan religions. How would you like to be living in India or living in Africa? Look how our nation is today going downhill so rapidly because of our trying to get rid of the Christian influence within the nation. How foolish, how foolish can people be trying to put out the light that is there.

And of course, as Jesus said, if the light that is in them be darkness, then how great is that darkness. The Lord desires that his church be clear as the sun. The sun enables life to exist upon this planet.

Without the sun, we could not have life. It provides the energy, the light, and the heat necessary for us to survive. So the church enables a quality of life to exist on our planet.

And wherever Christian witness has gone, it's created a high value and respect for human life. It tells every person, you are important in the eyes of God. God places great value upon each individual.

Jesus said, what would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Your soul is worth more than the whole world, Jesus is saying. And that's what the Christian gospel teaches, man. You are important in the eyes of God.

You have great worth in the eyes of God. And thus, it teaches us great respect for life and the life of others. And thus, we don't go around indiscriminately taking life from people, but we see how much God values life.

And the church has that duty to be clear as the sun, bringing the light of God upon the earth. Without Christian values, life is cheap. Look at the mass killings that take place, the genocide there in the continent of Africa.

Look at how little value is placed on life among the Muslims. Their God, Allah, demands that they give their sons to die for Allah. Our God tells us that he gave his son to die for us because he considered us so valuable.

Finally, the church is to be terrible as an army with banners. This should be the attitude of the church towards the enemies of our Lord. We should be terrible as the army with banners.

We should be a terror unto evil doers. We should rise up against the evil in our society. Unspeakably vile and filthy music is being performed by some of the leading groups in America today.

Lyrics that are leading our children to hell. And yet, as parents, we so often allow our children to have these CDs, to listen to this music, to allow them to hear it on the radio. And yet, it is damning our children.

We should be a terror to that music industry that is seeking to pollute the minds of our children. We should be rising up against this. There are TV shows that are geared toward the teenagers and desiring to get them involved sexually, for they are stimulating their sexual passions and are just so openly opposed to anything that is pure and righteous and holy.

And we allow our children to watch these channels. Some of you are even watching these degrading videos that degrade women and degrade purity and holiness. Rather than being a terror to the evil doers, so many are actually supporting the evil that goes on by buying the products of evil.

God said through the prophet Hosea, for they have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind. And I'm afraid that's what's happening in America today. We are sowing the wind, but we're going to reap the whirlwind.

Paul said, don't be deceived. God isn't mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

And if we sow to the flesh, then of the flesh, we are going to reap corruption. The church should be terrible as armies with banners, as we face the forces of evil in our world today. The forces of evil should fear the church, but the church has become so neutralized by compromise that we pose no threat to evil.

I thought it was a compliment when the Queer Nation sent the men down here to Calvary Chapel to picket Calvary Chapel because we had men from the church who were up witnessing there in West Los Angeles. I thought it was interesting as they stood here in the street, crying as the people came into the parking lot, leave us alone, leave us alone. That's the cry of hell.

This is what the demoniacs were crying to Jesus when he came to Gadara. They were saying, leave us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou son of God? And to have them stirred up because we were invading their territory.

But yet the church should be terrible as an army with banners. But the church has watered down the gospel in order to fill the pews. They seem to be more interested in entertaining the sinner than converting the sinner.

Jesus warned that if the salt had lost its savor, it was good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of man. And I would say, if you go to Europe today, you will see that's exactly what has happened. Go to England today, you'll see that's what's happened.

The church has lost its savor, thus it is good for nothing. It is being cast out and trodden under the foot of man. I was in Copenhagen and we were on a tour of the city and they took us to this large, ornate church.

It could seat 2,000 people. It had an organ that was worth a million dollars, the guide told us. We questioned the guide, how many people attend here on Sunday morning? And the guide said, usually six or seven.

The church is dead. It's a post-Christian era because the church became interested in other things than just the proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus Christ, of declaring that there is a new day that's coming. And Europe is falling into great darkness as the light of the gospel is gradually being extinguished.

But the same will follow here in America if we don't wake up, if we don't become all that God intended the church to be, heralding the message that a new day is going to dawn soon. At any time, Jesus is going to come and he's going to establish his kingdom upon the earth. And we reflect the light of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we shine forth as a light into this dark world in which we live.

Most of the messages preached from the pulpits across America today are savorless and saviorless. They're filled with pop psychology, totally devoid of the message of the transforming power of the gospel

of Jesus Christ to break the bondage of sin that is holding people in its grip and from the consequences of sin if they continue therein. I think of the words of that old hymn, rise up, oh men of God, have done with lesser things.

Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the king of kings. Rise up, oh men of God, his kingdom tarries long. Bring in the day of brotherhood and end the night of wrong.

Rise up, oh men of God, the church for you doth wait. Her strength unequal to her task, rise up and make her great. Lift high the cross of Christ.

Tread where his feet have trod as brothers of the son of man, rise up, oh men of God. Help us, God, to do so. Father, we thank you that we are living in this day and in this age when we have such great opportunities to shine forth with the light of your gospel to this dark world in which we live.

For we know, Lord, the darker the night, the greater the light does shine. Help, Lord, us as your church to be looking forward to that glorious new day that is going to dawn. But in the meantime, may your light shine forth from us so that the world will know, Lord, that you are alive and that you are coming again.

May we, Lord, be terrible as an army with banners to this sinful world in which we live, and those, Lord, that are perpetuating the sin upon our culture. God, help us to rise up to the challenge. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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