

Matthew 24:12

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a holy and righteous life in the face of increasing iniquity and temptation.

Scripture: Matthew 24:12, Hebrews 2:1

Topics: "Spiritual Vigilance", "Overcoming Temptation"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the urgency of keeping the fire of faith burning amidst the signs of Jesus' return, particularly the abounding iniquity in society and the church. He warns that many have allowed their love for God to grow cold due to distractions from the world, flesh, and devil, leading to spiritual drift. Smith encourages believers to remain vigilant and not succumb to the temptations that extinguish their zeal for God. He highlights the importance of recognizing the dangers of worldly influences and the need for spiritual renewal through Christ. Ultimately, he calls for a return to fervent devotion and reliance on the Holy Spirit to overcome the challenges of the present age.

Transcript

Keep The Fire Burning

I. Jesus is giving the Disciples the signs that shall precede His coming

again.

A. One of the signs will be the abounding iniquity.

1. As we look around our world today, surely we see

iniquity abounding.

2. We used to have laws that protected us from much of the

iniquity that is filling our land today, but one by one

these laws have been struck down by the Supreme Court,

or new laws have been enacted, some of them giving

special privileges to those who do those things that used to be illegal.

a. I think of the obscenity laws that used to protect us from the tons of filth that now fill our land.

b. I drove by Paddy Murphy's yesterday and I saw many brave and courageous people with signs asking for the closing of that place of evil.

The tragedy is that the city fathers would like to close it, but the courts declare any ordinance that they seek to form, as unconstitutional.

c. Soliciting someone for homosexual purposes used to be a crime, but just try to get a conviction on that count today.

d. When a body gets so weak that it cannot purge its system of the poisons, then death will quickly follow.

e. The body politic is no longer able to purge itself of the poisons, and you can be sure that death is not far off.

f. When a nation can no longer judge the evil within walls, then God steps in to insure judgment.

B. The effect of the abounding iniquity is even felt in the church, and love of many has waxed cold.

1. There are those who used to burn with holy zeal for the

Lord, who were delivered from the mire and muck of the world, but like pigs, they are wallowing in the mire once again.

a. The enemy has gradually crept in, they started out watching R movies, but it soon became X rated movies, now their minds are addicted to this sexual stimulus, and it has become as a narcotic.

b. In the book of Hebrews the believers were warned:

HEB 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let [them] slip.

HEB 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

HEB 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard [him];

c. The phrase translated "let them slip" is more literally translated, we should drift away.

Drifting is a slow, almost unperceptable process, you do not perceive that anything is happening because you are moving with the tide, but in time you can get so far away from your mooring that you are lost.

d. Some of you have drifted pretty far away in

your heart from the place of devotion that you once experienced.

II. What are the things that put out the fire?

A. Luke in recording this same discourse by Jesus to His disciples adds,

LUK 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and [so] that day come upon you unawares.

LUK 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

LUK 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

1. Surfeiting is living a life that is dominated by trying to appease the appetites of the flesh.

2. Drunkenness is the clouding of the brain until you are not thinking rationally. This can be done with alcohol, drugs, or watching too much T.V.

3. The cares of this life are self explanatory. Just so busy trying to keep even that you begin to neglect the

things of the Lord. B. The big three enemies that we have to contend with are the world, the flesh and the devil. 1. These three work in concert against you putting out the fire. Any one or two of them is no problem. but you get all three in concert, and you have a real problem. a. The world and the devil would be no problem for me except for my flesh. b. The world and my flesh would be no problem if the devil wasn't around. c. The devil and my flesh would be no problem if it were not for the fallen world in which I live. d.

Satan draws my flesh after the things of the fallen world in which I live. 2. We are commanded in the scriptures to love not the world neither the things that are in the world, if any man the love the world the love of the Father is not in him. a. When we speak of the world, we are not speaking of the earth as God created it. We are speaking of the fallen world that is under the control of Satan, and is in rebellion against the righteous laws of God. b. This is the world that Satan showed to Jesus and offered to give it to Jesus with the glory of it, if Jesus would just bow down and worship him. c.

Paul writes of Demas who had forsaken him, because he loved the present world. d. In Romans 12, Paul tells us not to be conformed to this world. e. Paul reminded the Ephesians that in times past they walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air that even now works in the children of disobedience. 1. The word translated walked here is better translated meandered. It is interesting that the Meander river passed through the ancient city of Ephesus.

It snaked its way through the Meander valley above Ephesus. 2. Paul identifies Satan as the one directing the course of this world. Satan has come out of the closet, he used to direct in subtle ways from behind the scenes, but is not very blatant. Movies, Rock music, all have occultic overtones. f. James said, Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? he that would be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. g. The appeal of the world is very strong, and Demas is not the only one that has left the service of God having been succumbed by it. 3.

What are the basic attractions of the world? a. Money. The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith. Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and Mammon." b. Glory. Satan offered to Jesus the glory of the kingdoms of the world. Your name in lights, the world adoring you. 1. Look at the pain, the sacrifices, the torture that men are willing to put their bodies through just to be admired as the best in the world. 4. How does Jesus give us victory over the world? a.

Paul said, GAL 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. b. We have victory over the world by reckoning our old man to be crucified with Christ. ROM 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. c. You can put the most alluring enticements in front of a corpse and it will not even stir.

C. The next great enemy is our flesh. My body appetites. These are a part of my biological makeup and were marvelously designed by God for the maintenance and perpetuation of life. 1. The body is designed to function independently, to think, to love, to repair itself. a. For this my cells need fuel to burn, and fresh supplies of minerals and vitamins. b. Look at the marvelous design. 2. Satan has a way of taking the natural purposes of things and perverting them to unnatural use. 3.

Alexander Maslov sought to identify the body drives that were designed to keep the homeostasis, or the body balances. a. He sought to list them in the order of their strength. Air, thirst, food, bowel and bladder, sex etc. b. These are all proper and necessary to keep you going. They are designed by God and when used for their God given purposes are good. c. There is nothing sinful, or wrong with the sex drive. If God had not created it, man would not be on the earth today. Adam would have said to Eve, "Nice to meet you, and now if you will excuse me, I think I will go fishing."

End of story. 4. God never intended that you should be a slave to your body drives. This is what happened at the fall of man, he yielded to the appetites of the flesh over those of the spirit. a. Paul tells us that the flesh is lusting against the Spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. 5. How does Jesus give us victory over the flesh? a. Romans 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. b.

As Paul cried out in distress because of the weakness of his flesh, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" He answers his own cry with the words. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which be in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life

in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Walk after the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

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