

# Fierce Times Are Coming

by Derek Prince

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*The Bible warns of fierce times coming in the last days, but also promises a new creation through Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:21:16

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon addresses the theme of fierce times that are coming, drawing parallels between the perilous times described in 2 Timothy and the encounter of Jesus with demonized men in Matthew. The speaker emphasizes the certainty of Paul's warning about fierce times and the need for individuals to acknowledge and repent of their selfishness and self-centeredness. The sermon highlights the irreversible nature of corruption and the importance of surrendering to God, denying oneself, and following Jesus wholeheartedly.

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## Transcript

So tonight we're going to deal with the theme, fierce times are coming. I didn't hear you say praise the Lord, but I'm sure that was your response. Now this is taken from 2nd Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 through 5. Which I will read, 2nd Timothy 3, 1 through 5. But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.

For when will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away. So Paul says there, in this translation, in the last days perilous times will come.

Now the Greek word that's translated perilous, only occurs in one other place in the New Testament. Which is in Matthew chapter 8 verse 28. Which describes an encounter of Jesus with two demonized men.

And I just read that one verse, Matthew 8 28. When he had come to the other side, to the country of the Glacissines, there met him two demonized men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. That's the other place where that word is used, it's translated fierce.

And I feel that fierce much better represents what God is saying, than perilous. The NIV translates it terrible. So we are headed for times which will be fierce and terrible.

And we better face up to the fact, because it's a remarkable fact, that in that passage Paul starts by saying to Timothy, know this. I don't recall any other passage in the writings of Paul, where he laid so much emphasis on the fact, that what he was saying was absolutely certain. You can be absolutely sure of this Timothy, in the last days, fierce times will come.

Why did he put that emphasis there? I suppose it may have been because he knew something of human nature. And people really don't want to listen to that kind of message. They'd rather not hear that fierce times are coming.

They'd rather be able to think up some theology, or interpretation of prophecy, which doesn't make room for that. But the truth of the matter is, fierce times are coming. In fact, I think they're already here in a certain measure.

About 1991, Ruth and I took a quote sabbatical, which didn't work out the way we thought it would. But the Lord did not only speak to us, he dealt with us, and he saved my life from a very serious heart condition. But as we entered that sabbatical, the Lord told us that judgment was coming.

And it would come in three phases. Preliminary judgments, intermediate judgments, and final judgment. I believe we've entered the preliminary judgments, but that's only the beginning.

I wonder if you believe that God is going to judge men and women. I hear very little in the contemporary church about God's judgment. It's interesting when Paul preached to a completely Gentile audience in the city of Athens.

He declared about Jesus that God has appointed him to be the judge of all men. He didn't mention Savior, all he said was judge. And if you don't believe in judgment, you don't need to be saved, because being saved is being saved from judgment.

Now I want to analyze briefly what Paul says here about these fierce times. I want to point out three aspects of this truth. And I hope as I do that, you will have to say to yourself, that's absolutely true.

That's the correct analysis. What I hear on television, over the radio, what I read in the newspapers, it's all mixed up. But what I'm hearing through Paul, is the plain unvarnished truth.

And it's a correct analysis. Paul analyzes why the fierce times are coming. He says three things, which I will bring out in order.

First of all, the basic cause of the fierce times, is the degeneration of human character. Let me say that again. The basic cause, the root problem, is the degeneration of human character.

Don't blame it on the government. Don't blame it on a certain nationality, or a certain religious group, or the wicked people that go doing all sorts of bad things. That's not the root cause.

The root cause is the degeneration of human character. And Paul lists 18 horrible moral and ethical blemishes, which will conspicuously mark people as we come to the close of this age. I'm not going to read through the list again, but I suggest you could take time by yourself to read through that list, and check off every one that applies to people all around us, and maybe to some of us right now, today.

I believe you will find it an amazingly accurate list. The second thing I want to point out is a principle. Corruption is irreversible.

Let me say that again. Corruption is irreversible. When a thing, when corruption moves into something, takes hold of something, works in something, it's irreversible.

It cannot be turned back. Take some simple example like a peach or a pear. You have this beautiful peach with its, its, what do we call it? Well, somebody, tell me somebody.

Somebody comes from Georgia. Fuzz, that's not the word, but it'll do. Anyhow, you know that nice fuzzy, soft, it's almost like velvet.

You just want to stroke it. And it's this beautiful shades of pink and gold. There it is.

It's a wonderful. But just leave it that way for a week. Come back and it's yellow and shriveled and unattractive.

Why? Because there was corruption in it. And once corruption comes into a thing, it's irreversible. There's no way to turn it back.

You can postpone it, you can slow it down. You take that beautiful peach, put it in a refrigerator. And at the end of a week, you can take it out, looking more or less as good as it looked at first.

But you haven't changed the corruption that's in it. Sooner or later, that corruption is going to run its course. Now I think some kinds of moral religions are like the refrigerator.

You can put a person in the refrigerator, which has probably got more than one point of the comparison. And they come out, you know, a week later, a year later, ten years later, looking pretty good. But they haven't changed inwardly.

They're still corrupt. And you can postpone it, but you cannot prevent it. Sooner or later, that corruption is going to take over and finish off the peach, the pear, or the person.

So please see this, because it's so important. Corruption, moral corruption, ethical corruption, is irreversible. Once it's in a situation, or a person, or a community, it cannot be reversed.

And God has no program to reverse the corruption of sin. He's not going to do something to improve it, or make it last longer, or turn it back. God's program is a new creation.

And he will not settle for anything else. Lots of human programs are trying to, what would I say, put the peach in the refrigerator. Or put it somewhere where it won't look so bad.

Or find some chemical process which will slow up the corruption. But none of them are acceptable to God. And God is not interested in Christianizing our civilization.

He's not interested in Christianizing our culture. I believe we can bring forth an alternate culture, which is Christian. But we cannot change and improve to the degree that God requires, the corruption that's in our present culture, society, and total condition.

So God says, I'm not going to mess around with it. It can't be saved. All I'm going to do is produce something totally new.

And there are three scriptures about this. 2 Corinthians 5.17 Which says, I could quote it, but I'll read it. 2 Corinthians 5.17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

That's God's solution. Not improving, not patching up, but producing a totally new creation. And every one of you who are in Christ here tonight, God has made and is seeking to perfect as a new creation.

If you are here just a nice kind of person who does nobody any harm, maybe goes to church on Sunday, but has never had a life-transforming experience with Jesus Christ, you are not in God's plan. You are lost. You have to change.

You have to be changed by God. If anyone is in Christ Jesus, and it doesn't say he is. It's very dramatic.

A new creation. It should come with an exclamation mark at the end. That's what God is going to do.

Don't offer him your good works, your religious efforts, your niceness. One of my granddaughters got involved. And I have so many, you wouldn't know who it was.

Got involved with an unsaved man. And her father, who is my son-in-law, was speaking to her about that. And I praise God, she was rescued.

She made the right decision. But she said to her father, he's such a good man. And my son-in-law replied, hell is full of good people.

Have you grasped that? Hell is full of nice good people. But they've never been changed. Corruption has never been dealt with.

Then in 2nd Peter 3 and verse 13, God goes a little further. Peter is speaking about God's program. And he says, nevertheless, we according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

So God is not only going to make new people. He's going to make a new heaven and a new earth. In which there will be no sin.

Sin is going to be totally banished forever from the presence of God. And if you have sin in your life and you do not repent. You are going to be totally banished forever from the presence of God.

You cannot make sin acceptable to God in any way, whatever. So God is producing a new creation. He's going to produce a new heaven and a new earth.

And then the most amazing statement of all is in Revelation 21. Where John records this. Then he who sat on the throne said, behold I make all things new.

Nothing of the old is going to persist. It's all going to be done away with. And then he says to John, write, for these words are true and faithful.

It seems to me that John couldn't really believe that that was going to happen. So the Lord said to him, put it down. It's all true.

It's all going to happen. I'm going to make all things new. There's going to be no corruption left.

No taint of sin. No stains. Not even any guilty consciences.

That's God's program. As high above the earth as heaven. As high above our program as heaven is above earth.

So that's the second principle. Corruption is irreversible. It's irreversible in our society.

It's irreversible in this nation. It's irreversible in the world. It's hard to accept that fact.

But when you can see it and see the alternative. Your heart will sing for joy. Now the third principle is the most important of all.

Let me repeat the first two. The basic cause of these terrible times, these fierce times. Is the degeneration of human character.

And any solution that bypasses that will fail. Any solution that doesn't deal with human character is doomed to failure. Second principle.

Corruption is irreversible. Physical corruption, moral corruption, ethical corruption. It's irreversible.

So God is not going to mess around. Try to patch it up, improve it. He's going to do away with it.

And produce a new creation. Now this is the most important one. Especially for us who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ.

The root of the corruption. The root of the moral decline. Is stated in the first word.

Love of self. That's the root under which all these other evil characteristics develop. Selfishness, self-centeredness.

Caring for me, putting myself first. And Paul says people can have a form of godliness. But they're denying its power.

What is the power of godliness? The power that deals with self-love. Because so many of you are, whatever you want to call us. Pentecostals, Charismatics, whatever.

You would be inclined to say, well the power is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues, miracles, healings. It's not.

Thank God for all those things. But the only power that's relevant here. Is the power that can change a selfish, self-centered person.

Into a loving, outgoing, caring person. And if we don't have that. We may have all the other things.

The tongues, the miracles, the prophecies. But we are denying the power of godliness. I want you to ponder on that for a moment.

Because it's so very out of line. With much of what's being said and taught in the contemporary church. There is a hunger for power.

I believe it's a natural soulish hunger. Psychologists, some psychologists have said that. The desire for power is the strongest single motivation in humanity.

And it's not evil. But, let's desire the power that works. Let's desire the power that changes lives.

Particularly that changes selfish people into unselfish. Is there selfishness in the body of Christ tonight? Certainly there is. We don't demonstrate the power of godliness.

That word godliness is such that I don't believe Paul would ever have used it. Except of professing Christians. He's not talking about the world.

He's talking about people who claim to be Christians. Followers of Jesus Christ. That have never dealt with self-love in their lives.

You know what I feel like praying right now? God, deliver me from selfishness. I grew up an only child. No brothers or sisters.

I was in a fairly... My family were fairly prosperous. Not extremely wealthy, but they always had enough. And everything in my childhood and background caused me to focus on myself.

And it's taken me many, many years as a Christian to realize how easily I can become self-centered. So my prayer tonight is, God, deliver me from selfishness. Would you like to pray that? Think it over for a moment.

Would you like to pray that? From your heart. Let's all say it together shall we? God, deliver me from selfishness. Say it again.

God, deliver me from selfishness. Once more. God, deliver me from selfishness.

Amen. May it be so Lord. Now, I just want to do something to acquaint us.

To confront us with the situation in our nation today. The result of self-love. The result of backslidden church that doesn't present the truth and demonstrate it.

Because this nation of the United States has had a greater share of God's blessing than any other nation I know of in history. No other nation has been blessed spiritually, materially, culturally, in every way as the United States of America. Most of you were born American citizens.

I'm different. I chose to become one. And I consider it a privilege.

I obtained my citizenship in 1930. I have to tell you. The nation that I became a citizen of in 1930.

Not 1970. 1970 is not the nation that I'm living in today. My wife Ruth was one of few people born in South Dakota.

She's a real Native American. Only in a certain sense. And she says to me, when we returned from our overseas trip.

She says, this isn't the country that I grew up in. It's changed completely. I'd have to say the same about the country that I grew up in, Britain.

People whose memory doesn't go back to World War II. There's no way to tell them what it was like. It wasn't perfect.

There was a lot of mistakes and wrong things. But it was totally different. In Britain, before World War II, a woman could walk alone, day or night, in any city of Britain, without any fear.

Now let me give you a few statistics. I'm not great on statistics. But these are taken from a report in the US News and World Report.

Which is basically a reliable source. And it's speaking about, it's headed in one day in America. In one day in America.

And it's speaking particularly about what happens to young people. Because remember, the young people are the future in this nation. This is, these are the details.

In one day, 2,753 teenagers get pregnant. 1,099 teenagers have an abortion. 367 teenagers miscarry.

1,287 teenagers give birth. 666 babies are born to women who have had inadequate prenatal care. 72 babies die before one month of life.

That's every day. 110 babies die before their first birthday. Every day, 9 children die from gunshot wounds.

5 teenagers commit suicide. 600 teenagers get gonorrhea or syphilis. 988 children are abused.

3,288 children run away from home. 49,322 children are in public juvenile correction facilities. 2,269 illegitimate children are born.

And 2,989 kids see their parents divorced. Every day in America. Do we care about that? Does our faith have anything to say to that? Or is that just something that belongs in another world? I thank God there's a little phrase that comes from time to time in the Bible.

It says, but God. Thank God there is a but God. The situation is appalling.

But God has not gone out of business. In his mercy he has not washed his hands of America or the other Western nations. And said, I'll give you over to yourselves.

You've gone too far. You've trespassed too much on my grace. He has not said that.

There's a scripture in Isaiah that I like very much. Isaiah 59 and verse 19. It's the second half of the verse.

When the enemy comes in like a flood. The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. So when the enemy has done his worst.

That's when God is willing to intervene. Through his Holy Spirit. And lift up a standard.

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Through his Holy Spirit. And lift up a standard. Now in warfare in biblical times.

Every military group had a standard bearer. Who was a very important person. And each group, say in the Roman army.

Had its own particular sign on its standard. An eagle or a bear or a lion or whatever it might be. And if a military company.

Whatever it might be. Is being defeated, scattered. The commander will tell the standard bearer.

If possible. To find some elevated piece of ground. And lift up the standard.

And the soldiers are trained. When they see the standard lifted up. To regroup around that standard.

And take up the battle once again. And I think that's what God wants to do. He wants to lift up a standard.

By his Holy Spirit. And when those who are really the soldiers of the Lord see it. Whether they're Baptists or Presbyterians or Catholics.

Or even Pentecostals. They will say that's my standard. That's where I belong.

I'll take my stand there. With the other people that get around that standard. Whoever they are.

I may not agree with all their theology. But if their standard is that. That's mine too.

I believe God is doing that. He has begun to do it. And he's going to continue.

Out of his mercy. Out of his grace. We have no claim upon him whatever.

But God. And I tell you brothers and sisters. Wherever I see the standard.

That's where you can look for me. Even if I have some minor theological differences. I want to be.

Where the Holy Spirit is lifting up a standard. And the name on the standard is. Jesus.

That's right. Where he is lifted up. I'll gather with those that are around that.

And I believe God has predicted. And is in process of carrying out. A promise.

Of lifting up the standard. By the Holy Spirit. It's the words of Peter.

On the day of Pentecost. After the Spirit had been poured out. And the people had gathered.

He quoted a prophecy of Joel. Acts chapter 2 verses 17 and 18. And it shall come to pass in the last days.

The last days. That's where we are. That I will pour out of my Spirit.

On all flesh. That's an amazing statement. Doesn't mean on the whole human race.

But it means on representatives. Of every section of the human race. When I came to the United States.

And began to minister in the 1960's. Early 1970's. I was a pretty.

I had a pretty Pentecostal mindset. I thought there were certain kinds of people. That could be baptized in the Spirit.

And others couldn't. Well I started my American career in Minneapolis. And I met a Lutheran lady.

Well I knew God didn't do anything for Lutherans. Of course I was somewhat brainwashed. Because my first wife had been a Lutheran for years.

And had a running war with the Lutheran church. But I met this Lutheran lady. And she said to me.

God filled my tooth. I said. God filled your tooth.

I didn't know God filled teeth for Lutherans. I said. What did your dentist say? She said.

My dentist said. We don't use material. Well then a little later.

Believe me. I got involved with Catholic charismatic. I mean.

We all Pentecostal knew. That you didn't. I mean.

Catholics were just out. There was no hope for them. But I met some.

I would have to say they were real saints. I think I was invited once in an extraordinary way to a. What do you call those things? Not a priory. A monastery.

In Georgia somewhere. I only went there once. And I was invited to teach on deliverance.

I mean. Pentecostals wouldn't listen. Catholics wanted to hear it all.

And. At the end. It was an abbey.

The abbot. The top number one man. Came to me and he said.

I believe I have a demon. Would you cast it out? I thought to myself. That's a different way of thinking.

Totally different. Later. It was in Canter actually.

I conducted a deliverance service. And. Pentecostals were criticizing me.

God bless them. And. This.

Catholic. Priest. Came up to me.

And he said. It's all in our liturgy. And he showed me.

And I said. That's it. That's what I'm doing.

How did they discover? So. Don't be too choosy about the people around the standard. If that's their standard.

It's your standard. It's my standard. And if the Holy Spirit doesn't lift the standard up.

It will not be lifted up. Now I don't get around a lot. And I spend very little time in America.

But I do have the impression. That the Holy Spirit is lifting up the standard. In Pensacola.

I've nothing to do with it. Nobody has hired me. I'm not an advertising agent.

But I think I'd feel disposed. To go and see what's happening in Pensacola. What I like about what I hear.

Is the first message is repentance. If you miss out repentance. You get a mess.

You get all sorts of people. Getting in with all sorts of things. But when the emphasis is on repentance.

I don't mind strange phenomena. I've been. I've had them all my life.

I'm not afraid of people. Quivering or shaking. Or lying on the floor.

Or rolling. Or doing all sorts of things. Provided it's the Holy Spirit.

I didn't intend to say that. Nobody hired me to say that. But maybe I said it for the sake of somebody here tonight.

Wherever that standard is lifted up. I want to be. Let's go on with this.

I'm going back to Acts 2. It shall come to pass in the last days, says God. I will pour out of my spirit on all flesh. You know he's pouring out his spirit on Muslims.

In quite an extensive way. All sorts of supernatural revelations. Dreams and visions.

I have to tell you. I enjoy the supernatural. Maybe I'm very carnal.

But I like it. And I think the Lord likes it too. And now this is what Peter said.

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions.

Your old men shall dream dreams. And on my menservants and on my maidservants. I will pour out my spirit in those days.

And they shall prophesy. So that is the Holy Spirit lifting up a standard. And notice the emphasis is on the young people.

Your sons, your daughters, your young men, your maidservants. So bear in mind. That's what we need.

How will we achieve it? Well we really can't tell God what to do. He does surprising things. But there is one key to seeing God work.

And that is prayer. And more prayer. And more prayer.

And I believe for most congregations in the United States today. The number one priority. I had a friend who was a pastor.

And he was talking about getting people to do things. So he said if I want my congregation to do something. I preach it for six months.

And by the end of that time they think they thought it themselves. So that's a word of suggestion to the pastors and leaders here. If you want your people praying.

First of all start praying yourself. And then preach it. And preach it.

And preach it. The situation in this nation is such. That the most important meeting in any same congregation.

Should be the prayer meeting. Have a prayer meeting on Sunday morning. These are just wild ideas that are coming to me as I speak.

You see. I have a picture in my mind which is so vivid to me. Years ago when we lived on Sunrise Key.

We had a house with a swimming pool. And one day one section of my family. Came over to share a fellowship.

And their youngest son, who is my grandson. Was I think four years old at the time. And running around the pool.

He fell in. While somebody fished him out. And he stood there in front of us.

Dripping water. And he said indignant. Do something somebody.

And I feel like saying that to the church. Do something somebody. But do something.

Do something. Don't just sit there. Don't just be good.

Sunday attendant. The crisis is much more serious. Than that can do anything to help.

Now. In response to what I've been saying. I want to ask this question.

I suppose we've got time. I don't know. How should we conduct ourselves? How should we respond to this situation? And I think my first recommendation is.

It will surprise you. But recognize. That all these things.

That we've been speaking about. Confirm the reliability of Scripture. Because they're all clearly predicted in Scripture.

So when they happen. In a certain sense we should say. Well thank God the Bible is true.

If they didn't happen. The Bible would be unreliable. So you may not enjoy them.

I don't enjoy them. But bear in mind. They confirm the accuracy of Scripture.

Secondly. Each one of us needs to deal personally. With the root problem.

Which is? Self-love. That's right. As I've said.

This is the demonstration of the power of godliness. Something that can change. Selfish, self-centered people.

Into unselfish, loving, sacrificing people. And you and I. Need to experience that change. See this is not some special version of Christianity.

It's just returning to the original version. In Matthew 16, verse 24 and 25. Jesus said to his disciples.

If anyone desires to come after me. Let him deny himself. And take up his cross.

And follow me. To me the simplest definition of a Christian. Is someone who follows Jesus.

But there are two preconditions. You cannot follow Jesus. Until you've done two things.

Which are? Deny yourself. Take up your cross. You can try to follow Jesus.

But you can't do it. He's ruled it out. It's impossible.

What does it mean to deny yourself? It's to deal with self-love. Self says, I want, I like, I think. Help me, pray for me, heal me.

And you say, shut up. I'm not listening to you. I'm listening to what Jesus has to say.

I'm listening to what the Holy Spirit has to say. You know, being in the ministry. I get many pathetic people.

Just had a letter the other day. From people whose lives are in a total mess. I mean, everything's gone wrong.

Financial, physical, relational. And I think, dear God, what can I do about that? But I'll tell you that in most cases. They're very self-centered.

It's me, my problems, my pain. And I tell people sometimes, listen. Stop focusing on the problem.

And focus on the Lord. There's no solution, while you focus on your problem. So, every one of us has got to do two things.

Deny ourselves. Take up our cross. What is your cross? Well, somebody gave this definition.

Your cross is where God's will and your will cross. You cannot follow Jesus doing your own will. It's impossible.

Revelation 12-11 has got a picture of some glorious people. It's a scripture that many of us quote often. I could quote it, but I'll read it.

Revelation 12-11. And they overcame him. That's the saint, that's the devil.

By the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. But it does not stop there. I've taught people many times, in many places.

How to testify to what the word of God says, the blood of Jesus does. But that isn't all. And they did not love their lives unto the death.

Those are the only people that overcome Satan. Satan is not afraid of our theology. He's afraid of our commitment.

Committed Christians cause him to tremble. What does it mean to be committed? Deny yourself and take up your cross. The cross is the place of execution.

I didn't intend to say this. But I happen to be writing a teaching letter. And it's so fresh in my mind.

Years ago. I mean if you can believe that people were alive. When I was young.

Fairly young. In the 1950's. I used to preach in the center of London.

At a place called Speaker's Corner, Marble Arch. Where anybody could go and say anything. Provided you didn't attack the royal family.

That was the only boundary. And I preached there three times a week. For about eight years.

In the middle of that period. I had a very vivid dream. And in this dream I saw a man preaching.

Like at Speaker's Corner. With a crowd around him. And I thought, what he's saying is good.

But when I looked at him closely. I said to myself, but I don't like the way he looks. Somehow his body is crooked.

And he seems to have a one foot. What do they call this thing? Club foot. Thank you.

What would I do without my congregation? And well I thought that's a strange dream. But I didn't bother about it. Well a week later I had precisely the same dream.

So I said to myself, God is trying to say something to me. So I prayed. I said God, now what about that man? And what he was saying was pretty good.

But I didn't like the way he looked. Who was he? And you know, that's what the Lord said. You are the man.

And it caused me to do a whole lot of thinking and researching in the New Testament. And about that season, it was Easter time. And I was meditating on the crucifixion.

And I had this mental picture, as I walked around, of the hill of Calvary. The three crosses. But the middle, the central cross was taller than the other two.

And I had a little, the Holy Spirit had a little conversation with me. And he said, for whom was the middle cross made? And then he said, be careful before you answer. So I thought it over, and I said it was made for Barabbas.

But at the last moment, Jesus took his place. So the Holy Spirit said, but I thought Jesus took your place. And I said, yes he did.

Then the Holy Spirit said, then you must be Barabbas. And I had a revelation, which I never argue about. But I suddenly saw how totally corrupt my whole nature was.

There was nothing in me that was pure, or good, or meriting God's favor. And I saw there was only one remedy. Execution.

I coined a little phrase, God's solution is execution. And that's where you and I have to come. The place of execution.

Where we deny ourselves, take up our cross. And follow Jesus to the place of execution. After that, we can follow.

You say, well brother Prince, that's very radical. It is, but so is the New Testament. It's a radical book.

Christianity is a radical religion. And I don't believe we'll survive in the pressures that confront us now. Unless we are radical.

I want to offer two suggestions. As to how we can face the situation. First of all, tribulation pressures some people to God.

It makes some hard and bitter and rebellious. But it makes some open and responsive. And there's a beautiful picture in Revelation chapter 7, verse 9. John the Revelator is speaking.

He says, After these things I looked and behold. A great multitude which no one could number. Of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues.

Standing before the throne and before the land. Clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands. And crying out with a loud voice saying.

Salvation belongs to our God. Who sits on the throne and to the land. And then one of the elders said to John.

Who are these? And John said, I don't know. You'll have to tell me. And in verse 14, the elder replied.

These are the ones who come. But the Greek says, who are coming. John actually saw them streaming.

More and more and more. Who are coming out of the great tribulation. And have washed their robes.

And made them white in the blood of the lamb. There is coming a great tribulation. It isn't here yet, but it's coming.

But one of the things that will happen in that tribulation. Is a huge multitude who no man can number. Will turn to the Lord.

Furthermore, if you'll accept my little prophetic theory. The people who will turn them to the Lord. Will be 144,000 Israelite believers.

And God will send them out into all nations. Revelation 12,11 has got a picture of some glorious, glorious people. It's a scripture that many of us quote often.

I could quote it, but I'll read it. Revelation 12,11. And they overcame him.

That's the devil. By the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. But it does not stop there.

I've taught people many times in many places. How to testify to what the word of God says. The blood of Jesus does.

But that isn't all. And they did not love their lives unto the death. Those are the only people that overcome Satan.

Satan is not afraid of our theology. He's afraid of our commitment. Committed Christians cause him to tremble.

What does it mean to be committed? Deny yourself and take up your cross. The cross is the place of execution. I didn't intend to say this.

But I happen to be writing a teaching letter. And it's so fresh in my mind. Years ago, I mean if you can believe that people were alive.

When I was young. Fairly young. In the 1950's.

I used to preach in the center of London. At a place called Speaker's Corner, Marble Arch. Where anybody could go and say anything.

Provided you didn't attack the royal family. That was the only boundary. And I preached there three times a week.

For about eight years. In the middle of that period. I had a very vivid dream.

And in this dream I saw a man preaching. Like at Speaker's Corner. With a crowd around him.

And I thought, what he's saying is good. But when I looked at him closely. I said to myself, but I don't like the way he looks.

Somehow his body is crooked. And he seems to have a one foot. What do they call those things? Club foot.

Thank you. What would I do without my congregation? And well I thought that's a strange dream. But I didn't bother about it.

Well a week later I had precisely the same dream. So I said to myself, God is trying to say something to me. So I prayed.

I said God, now what about that man? What he was saying was pretty good. But I didn't like the way he looked. Who was he? And you know, guess what the Lord said.

You are the man. And it caused me to do a whole lot of thinking. And researching in the New Testament.

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And I don't believe we'll survive in the pressures that confront us now. Unless we are radical. I want to offer two suggestions.

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Is a huge multitude who no man can number. Will turn to the Lord. Furthermore, if you'll accept my little prophetic theory.

The people who will turn them to the Lord. Will be 144,000 Israelite believers in Messiah. And God will send them out into all nations.

And they will win countless millions of people to the Lord. But the people will not come. Until the pressure of tribulation is on them.

So one purpose of God in sending tribulation. Is to turn people to himself. And make them realize their desperate need.

Luke says in chapter 21 verse 26. That in the end men's hearts will be failing them for fear. And for looking for the things that are coming on the earth.

That's when we need to be able to tell them the truth. When they are desperate. When their hearts are failing.

In Hebrews 12 it says. God is going to shake all things. Both heaven and earth.

But he says we have a kingdom. That cannot be shaken. At that time the unshakable kingdom will be demonstrated.

Because it will be the only thing that isn't shaken. And many will turn and say. I need that.

But let me ask you this question. Are you in the unshakable kingdom? Are you in the unshakable kingdom? That's what it's going to take. Jesus said if you come after him.

You have to lose your life. Literally your soul. Are you willing to let self go? To lose your soul.

Not necessarily to die. But to save your self-seeking, ambitious, greedy, selfish soul. You're on the cross.

You have no more power than me. In Matthew 24 Jesus lists a whole series of things that are going to happen. Mostly very unpleasant.

We can look at that for a moment. He talks about the beginning of birth pangs. The birth of God's kingdom.

He says in verse 9. They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you. You will be hated by all nations. That's part of what lies ahead.

Verse 10. Many will be offended. Many believers will betray one another.

Hate one another. Verse 11. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Verse 12. Because lawlessness will abound. The love of many Christians will grow cold.

But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Now the natural response would be. Well Lord, show me where to hide.

I want to get away. I want to be in a secure place. But the amazing thing is.

Jesus then goes on to say. This gospel of the kingdom. Shall be proclaimed in all the world.

As a witness to all the nations. And then the end shall come. When? In the midst of all the disasters.

When the pressures are greatest. When the opposition is the strongest. God's people.

Are going to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. To all nations. In all the world.

See, it's going to take a different kind of person. From what many of us are used to thinking. The end time is going to bring out.

A new kind of person. Not new in the sense that they've never been there. Because they've been there all through history.

But it's going to bring out a new surge. Of men and women. And mainly young people.

Who are totally sold out to Jesus. Have no other aim or ambition. I was involved with a lot of the Jesus people.

In 1960 and 70. But afterwards I said to them. The problem with you people.

Is you've become too respectable. Years ago if you had to go to Montana. You'd just get a car and drive off.

You wouldn't worry whether you had enough gas. You wouldn't worry whether you had enough money. You'd just go.

Now you've become respectable. You're going to church. You're not nearly so useful to God as you could have been.

God is looking for fanatics. Of the right kind. Somebody defined a fanatic.

As somebody who loves Jesus more than you do. Then Matthew 5.16. We're coming near the end. I have no idea how long I've been.

Probably longer than I should have been. Matthew 5.16. Jesus speaks to his disciples and says. Let your light so shine before men.

That they may see your good works. And glorify your father in heaven. So your light shines through your good works.

Through the things you do. Not through the things you say. Or the sermons we preach.

But through the things we do. And I want to plead for one particular. Plead for one particular type of good work.

In James 1.27. One of the most neglected verses in the New Testament. James 1.27. James says. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father.

Is this. To visit or care for orphans and widows in their trouble. And to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

What is the first demonstration of pure religion? Is to care for who? Orphans and widows. How many contemporary Christians. Pay any attention whatever to that verse.

I've been reading recently in the prophets. Especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And I have been impressed again and again.

With God's concern for the fatherless. And when he lists the sins of his people. He lists idolatry and adultery.

And not caring for the fatherless. In other words in God's standard. Not caring for the fatherless.

Is the same category as idolatry and adultery. And when James put this verse in the New Testament. He was simply carrying over.

The whole teaching of the Old Testament. Pure religion and undefiled. Before God and the Father.

Is to care for the orphans and the widows. And then keep himself unspotted from the world. I just want to suggest to you.

That we need to do something. Let me give you a startling and fearful statistic. It is estimated that by the year 2000.

Which is what only three years away. There will be 10 million AIDS orphans in Africa alone. Did you hear that? 10 million AIDS orphans.

And Africa will not be the worst. Asia ultimately will be worse still. So what do we do? Just say that's too bad.

Glad I wasn't in Africa. Well you don't have to go to Africa. Because there are needy children very close to you.

Have you ever considered your responsibility. To do something about fatherless children. Now I don't want to boast.

But I have to say. Between us, Ruth and I have accepted responsibility. For 12 fatherless children.

They are our family. It's not always been easy. When you adopt a child.

You adopt somebody else's problem. Because otherwise the child wouldn't need to be adopted. But I have to say.

Oh God I'm so glad. I'm so glad. We did it.

We've had our disappointments. We've had our struggles. Ruth has soaked her pillow with tears.

Many times. Over her adopted Jewish son Paul. But in the last four years.

After 20 years as a street alcoholic. He's turned to God and he's fully delivered. And when Ruth was sharing her sorrows with me over Paul.

I always say to her. But listen. The last chapter hasn't been written.

And many of you. You have deep problems somewhere. With loved ones.

Family members. Husbands. Wives.

Who knows. If you are sincerely and honestly seeking God in prayer. Remember.

The last chapter hasn't yet been written. Don't give up. But give out.

I want to suggest. To Christians in America. That we need to be far more earnest.

About caring for the fatherless. Than has ever entered our religious heads up to this time. I used to say.

If every Christian family in the United States. Could adopt one fatherless child. Think of the oceans of suffering.

That people would be scared. Now I know today because of abortion. It's not altogether easy any longer to adopt children.

Although handicapped children or mixed race children. Are probably available. Well.

They're still children. You know that. And God still loves them.

Are we going to do anything about all that? Are you going to do anything? Are you going to teach your children. Or your congregation to do something? Remember. That's the first mark of pure religion.

Is to care for the fatherless. It hasn't dropped out of the Bible. It may have dropped out of religious thinking.

But it has not dropped out of the Bible. It's still there. Then it says.

Keep himself unspotted from the world. It's funny how religious people. Myself included.

Always find it easier to focus on the negative. Well Lord. I will keep myself unspotted from the world.

I won't go to these movies. I won't read these magazines. Etc.

But what about the positive? What are you doing? This isn't the congregation to say it to. But I say to people. I'll say it to you.

How many of you believe that children are a blessing? According to the Bible. Amen. All right.

Now put your hand down. Then why do you have so few? Have you got this silly theory. That God can only care for three or four children in a family.

That's ridiculous. One of my adopted daughters. Is married to a man who is a minister.

He had six children by his first wife. And he has five by his second wife. So they have eleven children.

They've never been very wealthy. But they've never starved. They've never lacked.

And out of their six sons. Five are in full time Christian ministry. It hasn't been easy.

But whoever told you that the Christian life would be easy. Some of us have been brainwashed by our culture. Everything's got to be quick, easy and painless.

Not in the Christian life. I read a terrible statistic. I can't quote it.

I'm not good at quoting statistics. But it compared the amount of money. That American people spend on pet foods.

With the amount that's given to foreign missions. And I mean that pet foods were in a totally different level. From the money given to foreign missions.

Is that a picture of America's values? I want to say I love pets. I'm a dog lover. If our lifestyle permitted it.

Ruth and I would own a dog. But it wouldn't be fair. Because we move around so much.

But I beseech you. Please don't pour out on a pet. The love that a child needs.

Do you hear me? Pets are an extension of our ego. In a way they're there when we want to play with them. And they don't get too much in the way.

And you have to take them for a little exercise. But really they fit in with our convenience. There are two big idols in this nation.

Shall I tell you the names? Comfort and convenience. And if you want to follow the Lord. You've got to smash those two idols.

The things that God will ask you to do. Will not fit in with your comfort. And not fit in with your convenience.

Well you might say to me. I'm sure you're thinking. Well why does God tolerate all this evil? Why does he let it all go on? Why do we have to sit and endure.

And see all this evil? What is God's purpose? God's purpose was in the scripture. That Ruth and I quoted at the beginning. Ruth come up and let's say it again.

So there. I want you to listen to this. Because this is what God is after.

The grace of God that brings salvation. Has appeared to all men. Teaching us.

That benign ungodliness. And will in us. We should live soberly.

Righteously and godly. In the present age. Looking for the blessed hope.

And glorious appearing. Of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Who gave himself for us.

That he might redeem us from every lawless deed. And purify for himself. His own special people.

Zealous for good works. What is God working for? What is his aim? What is his purpose? His own special people. And he'll go on and on and on.

Until he's got that people. And all the purposes of history. Are bent to the accomplishment of God's purpose.

His own special people. Zealous for good works. That's the reason of history.

It's that Jesus Christ will have for himself. His own special people. Let me give you a word of counsel.

As I close. 1 John 2.17 The world is passing away. And it's lost.

But he who does the will of God. Abides forever. So in the midst of a totally changing.

Unstable. Evil. Culture.

Society. It's all passing away. But one thing will remain.

The will of God. And the person who has dedicated himself. To do the will of God.

He who does the will of God. Abides forever. Amen.

I would like to suggest that we pray for a moment. Wherever you are. Just turn yourself to the Lord for a moment.

You remember I said to you that. Any so called move of the Holy Spirit. That doesn't proceed out of repentance.

Is not genuine. But when we repent. Then God releases his Holy Spirit.

In fact he releases his Holy Spirit. To help us to repent. So I've spoken some rather hard.

Maybe searching words. But I would be unfair to you. If I didn't give you a brief opportunity.

To respond. I want to deal with the one question of selfishness. Self-centeredness.

If as you've listened to me. And the Holy Spirit has been dealing with you. You had to acknowledge.

God I'm sorry but I'm a self-centered person. My life begins and ends with myself. My religion centers around myself.

And I'm tired of it God. It hasn't made me happy. It hasn't fulfilled me.

But I want to change. I want you to change me. I want you to deal with my selfishness.

Release me from it. Help me to take up my cross. Follow you.

If you would make that your prayer. I would like everybody to be shut in with the Lord. I would like to pray with you for that.

If you want to make that your prayer here this evening. Would you just raise your hand. Jeff would you come up please.

Ruth would you come up. Just keep your hands up for a moment. I call Jeff up because he's the pastor.

And I would say. At least 80% of the people here. Have raised their hands.

Can you see what the problem in the church is? Self-love. Selfishness. Father you see those raised hands.

You see the hearts from which they come. And when you move in those lives. In your sovereign grace and mercy.

And when you give them the grace. And the courage and the faith. To deny themselves.

Take up their cross. And really follow Jesus. For his name's sake we pray.

Amen.

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