

The Triumph of Godliness

by Des Evans

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a righteous life, developing a deeper relationship with God, and committing ourselves to His will in order to experience spiritual growth and transformation.

Duration: 50:50

Scripture: Isaiah 54:9, Matthew 24:36-37, Hebrews 1:1, Hebrews 11:7, 1 Peter 3:20, 2 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Godliness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Peter walking on water with Jesus. He emphasizes the importance of faith and the need to expend energy in our faith journey. The preacher highlights how Peter initially heard the word and believed, but it was not enough. He explains that true faith involves fixing our will to walk with Jesus and committing ourselves to the revealed truth of God. The preacher also touches on the idea that many people are not fully committed to heaven or hell, but rather seek a comfortable middle ground, which goes against the teachings of the Bible.

Transcript

Genesis chapter 6. We found that their character was absolutely corrupt, and their common conduct was incredibly violent. Tonight I want us to look at the triumph of godliness, the tragedy of godlessness, and the triumph of godliness. I pray Lord Jesus that the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart shall be acceptable to you, for I ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. As one looks at the life of Noah, one gets the idea that he is nothing more than some fictitious character or some fairy tale form of old, or it's just the indication of some goody-goody story where right conquers over wrong. It seems to me that I accept Noah in a different context to that, and there are about five things I want to share with you about the life of Noah.

First of all, I want to briefly touch upon the fact of Noah. If history records anything about people of old, it certainly has a great record about Noah. Not only is it scriptural, because the Bible is quite eloquent with regard to him.

It's referred to in the book of Isaiah, chapter 54, verse 9 of the Old Testament, and certainly in the New. 1 Peter 3, 20 talks of him. 2 Peter 2, 5. Hebrews 11, verse 7. Even the Lord makes reference to good old Noah in Matthew 24, verse 36 and 37.

As far as I'm concerned, because my commitment to the things the Lord says, I accept it. But not only is it scriptural, but it's also scientific. No other incident demands so much time or accent in history or tribal literature than that of the flood.

From the writings of China, even through the American Indian population, you find that all the ancients write of some cataclysmic event which they speak of with the mystery and the dynamic of what we call the flood. Each have attached some weird myths and traditions to it, but the fact is nevertheless there that somewhere, somehow, sometime, in some way, there was a catastrophic event which was manifested in a form of flood. I believe that what the tribal people are talking about, whether you go to the hieroglyphics of Egypt or to the weird scrolls and writings of primitive people in the Pacific of our day, you find that they keep on talking that something happened.

We don't know what caused it to happen from some folk who would explain that there was an explosive activity upon Earth, that something emerged which caused the Pacific Basin to be caused and shattered. The cavern over Earth, which had been of a kind of an ice ball which made the climate of man to be quite pacific and pleasant, and that in the breaking of this canopy, that suddenly all the killer rays of the sun were manifested to man, and therewith man began to live in a duration of shorter periods of time. To that, people think that the Earth swayed on its axis, and Isaiah 24, verse 17 through 20 relates that it's going to happen again in the near future.

I do not know what happened. I do not know how it happened, but I do know it did take place, that in the infinite majesty of our God, in an act to judge the world, a flood took place, and we call that flood related to Noah. But in the fact of Noah, there are three things that I want you to take note of him as I hurriedly go through it.

One, he was a righteous man. Chapter 6, verse 9 says he was just in all of his dealings to all of his generations. Noah was a righteous man.

It also says that he was a real man. The word used is perfect. This is not speaking of moral perfection, rather it's a physical attribute.

He was a real guy. And I'm so grateful that in the day in which we live for people who are righteous and people who are real, that they exhibit an evidence, they are true, make up in the grace of God, that men are real men and girls are real girls, and nothing in between. But not only was he a righteous man, not only was he a real man, he was also a related man, because he also walked with God.

The more that I've looked at this pastor's scripture, the more challenging it becomes to me, because he not walked with God, and he was not, because God took him out of the mess. Noah walked with God, and God landed him with a job to clean up the mess. And there are some things in God, friend, that you can't explain.

As much as we'd like to, as much as there are times we're intimidated and think we ought to, there are some things we just cannot explain. God is still God and has the right to rule in whatever way, in whatever fashion, in whatever manner he so desires. And so Enoch was taken out, but Noah was taken through, and both had that delightful experience of walking with him.

So some of his ways are beyond understanding, but the God who takes out is the same God who takes through, and the grace that gives us an exit is the same grace that gives us the ability to face it with dignity

and to come out gloriously triumphant. This is why it's important to be related. And so just because you see one brother escape, there's no guarantee that the rest are going to escape.

But you can be sure of this, that the God who pulls the string for one is the same God that protects the ark through the waters for another. He will not ever exhibit himself less than God to those who are related to him. I think you want to hear that again.

Because of God's nature, he will never manifest himself less than God to those who are related to him. This is part of the strategy of renewal in the grace of God. God does not reveal himself in a lesser manner than that which he has already revealed himself to the church.

This was the tragedy of the church in the Dark Ages. It had lost the revelation of God totally, that the church was buildings, righteousness was religion, and heaven was nothing more than the escape of purgatory. And so God began a new expression of revelation.

And so to Luther, he let it be seen of justification. To the Westley, he built upon justification to sanctification. And so on through.

And friend, the next move of the Spirit, whatever it may be, will take us further still. For in this context, Hebrews 1.1 is not only an indication of what God was, it's also a prophetic indication of what God is still doing. God who at sounder times and in divers manners spake of the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days cut that revelation by the exhibition of himself, is doing that today to the church.

That slowly line upon line, precept upon precept, sure a little, there a little, he is building back the fullness of revelation. But that will be exhibited in the fullness of time when Jesus once again is manifested to us. The fact of Noah.

He is more than a bedtime story. It's a challenge to realize that we too should be righteous in an unrighteous world. That we too should be real in a very phony world and that we can be related in a divorced world.

Hello? The fact of Noah. But then also I notice the favor of Noah. For the word the Lord says, but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

I don't know what this means to you. I don't know what it does for you. If it does anything at all, Noah was attracted to God.

Now for a variety of reasons, different people are attracted to others. Beautiful girls are very attractive to angry boys. Noah was very attractive to God.

Now I can understand God being attractive to Noah because of the criteria of Noah's life. Because he was a man that loved righteousness, it is only evident and natural that he would love the absoluteness of righteousness, which is God himself. But here with the absolute God, with the perfection of righteousness, findings have been drawn to a man called Noah.

There are pictures of men and ladies throughout the whole of the Bible who have this unusual character. They are attractive people. Not in the earthy sense, but they have the ability to fascinate God.

It says of Simeon, and the Holy Spirit was upon him, in Luke chapter 2 verse 26 onward, I was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, and he came by the Spirit into the temple. That sounds so simple in a

charismatic context because God is upon everybody today. In fact, it's almost the exception rather than the rule to hear someone speak rather unkindly about the flow of the Holy Spirit, because everybody is involved and taken up and blessed and touched by the Spirit of God.

But Simeon was living in the days of what theologians call the time of the grief spirit. But God had been silent for 400 years. In fact, one of the prophets of old happened to say these words, that if a father should hear his son say that God had spoken to him, that that son was to be severely whipped, and if necessarily even stoned, because God was not speaking to Israel, it is to be a period of silence.

Yet here was a man that the word of the Lord simply says, who is just, that's his relationship with his fellow man. He was devout, that's the relationship to God. And this man, so was so attractive in the eyes of God, that the Holy Spirit came to him.

I think if I have an ambition in my life, I want to be attractive to God. I want to fascinate him. I want his eyes to look again when he looks over the world and sees me.

I have known men like that. My mentor in Oxford was a man like that. Professor C. L. Parker was a man who, as far as the academic world was concerned, was absolutely brilliant.

He spoke something like 15 languages fluently. He was a Don. Here, that means he occupied a chair of authority, also a place of policy in the University of Oxford.

Yet he was a man that he was so sensitive to the presence of the Lord, that when godly people would walk by him, it would force him to want to praise the Lord. And I've seen him, I've stood by him in a street corner when a person walked by, and he said, oh dear, that was a godly man. I said, do you know? He said, I sense the aura of God in that person's life.

And I'd go running up and say, excuse me, sir, do you know God? The person would say, what made you ask that question? I said, well, I got a quack over there. I was with the foggiest thing, doesn't have the foggiest idea what's taking place, but he has the sensation that you could be religious. And every time the response was, no, I'm not a religious man.

And then they talked about the relationship with the Lord. America is poorer because it was not exposed to the ministry of Dr. Walter Buechler. Buechler was a teacher in the Assembly of God Bible College in Greenland, Pennsylvania.

But because he was so much of a mystic, he couldn't find a place to minister in the summer on his vacation, so he spent every vacation on the foreign mission field, speaking to people. He was a man born on a blue season. Buechler was this kind of a man.

Wherever he went, he seemed to attract the presence of the Lord. I would hope that the day will not be too far where, all for truth, his church will be like that. That whether it be large, whether it be small, whether it be in the glorious country of America, or whether it be in the primitive areas of the world, that such will be the nature of his church, that it will be attractive to him.

We know this is going to happen eventually. Because Paul, speaking of the occasion where the church is presented to him, goes on to say, and he shall be admired in us. It always reminds me of a wedding.

I guess I've conducted hundreds of weddings. In fact, I know I have. Some, kind of cutely, in jungle country, where everybody in the ceremony was dark naked, which is interesting.

Ah, no, the exceptional one, I wasn't. I better qualify that, otherwise folk will put it on record. I've been in some sophisticated weddings.

I thought we've had some elaborate weddings here at Bethesda. I've been in some very simple weddings. But you know, I am yet to see a bride who is not beautiful.

Oh, I've seen some very, very young and excited. I've seen some very, very old ones, and very, very nervous. But I am yet to see a bride who does not have that something which you call magic, which exudes from her.

You look at them and say, boy, she's beautiful. In fact, I have a happy habit of talking to the party when they stand before me. It is very, very easy to say, wow, girl, you're beautiful.

Because she is. And other folk look on and say, boy, he's lucky. Look what he's got.

And then they say, poor girl, look what she grabbed. Oh, no. I want you to know, church, that that is what Paul says about the presentation of the church to Jesus.

Not that we shall be admired because of him. I can understand that. The Lord was absolutely wonderful.

The Lord was absolutely all-glorious without and within. The Lord that, in the picture of Psalm and Psalm, what is your beloved more than my beloved? Well, he said, I've got an hour to spend, because my beloved is the fairest of a thousand. He's more sweeter than the lily of the valley, more radiant than the star of the morning.

Do you want me to tell you about my beloved? The guy said, no, I think I've heard enough. You're crazy over him. I can understand the church receiving that about the Lord.

But what boggles my mind is this. Paul is not saying that we shall be admired because of him, but that he shall be admired because of us. In the presentation of the church to him, the angels, I don't say this literally, but it's a figurative language.

The angels will whistle because of us. I can't explain it. I don't understand it, but I know it's true to be attracted to him.

Out of all the millions of desires, out of all the drives, all the yearnings of heart, I pray that the church will yearn to be attractive, not to the Lord, but to him. Noah was attractive to the Lord, and for this reason he found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Let me hurry.

It was this grace which saved him from the corruption of the world. As the world was literally going to part, here was Noah coming to God. It was this grace which steered him from the course of the world.

His walk with the Lord changed him and spoiled him for the rest of humanity. It was this grace which spared him from the condemnation of the world. As God looked down, he said, I'm not clouded then, but I can't do to Noah.

Noah was the exception to the rule in the eyes of God because of his attractiveness in grace. But having noted that, I also want you to note with me not only the fact of Noah, and he is a real life character, not only the favor of Noah, but I want you to look at the faith of Noah. And I submit to you that we need to re-evaluate what faith is all about.

For in the criterion of his faith, I notice his faith was formed in the living word of the Lord. God had spoken to him, and even as we hear in Paul speaking to the church of Rome, when he says, faith cometh, cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord. Faith is not established in an emotional setting.

Faith is not even based in existentialism. Faith is the outworking that you have heard distinctively, directly from the Lord himself. It's what charismatic theologians call the differentiation between the rhema and the logos.

Pentecostals do not subscribe to this, but they can't be right all the time. The logos, which is a Greek principle for reason, for rationale, or for the basic principle of life itself. Jesus, in his coming to earth, was essentially that.

He was the expression of every divine principle, actualized in human form. A rhema is that personalized expression to an individual. Now we know that God sees all things, but that is of not much comfort to us if we find ourselves in a jam.

We want to cry out like Hegel, of all thou God seest me. We know that God hears all things, but when you're in a congregation of several thousand, and everybody's babbling at the top of your voice, and you have a desperate need in your heart, you want God to hear you a personal cry. So it is in the expression of the economy of God.

It's not simply an omnipresence, it's a manifest presence. It's not merely a generalized word, it becomes a personalized word by the living of His Spirit. In which you know without a shadow of a doubt that God has spoken to you.

When you come to grips with that personalized expression, there is no alternative than to believe it. No matter what anybody else says, no matter what anybody else does, you have heard it with the hearing of your word. You have sensed it with your spiritual faculty.

What anybody else does is of no account. No one instinctively, definitely, dynamically heard from the Lord. My friend, in the day in which you live, though the ability of man is continuously growing, the faculty of brilliance is continuously being exhibited, it is a tragedy that the church seems to be so deaf when it comes to the hearing of the Lord.

What is God saying to you today? Has the Lord spoken to you this year? Has He? What is the Lord saying to you? Because that personalized expression is the thing which is going to release dynamic faith. It's not enough for me to go and simply say, well, I can do this because of what God has said to Brother Leonard. Now, I'm grateful that God has talked to Leonard.

But if I'm going to do something, I better let God talk to me. His faith is not going to see me through my hour of need, though His prayers will be greatly preceded. No one got an actualized expression from the Eternal of what He was to do.

It had already been evidenced what He actually was in the sight of the Lord. Church, God is speaking to His people today. And it's not contradicting the canon of Scripture, but in many cases it's an enlargement of it, or it's the personalizing of it, so that your life becomes suddenly dynamically altered because of what has been deposited within your life.

The criterion of His faith was formed in the Word. But then it had to be fixed in His will. For there comes a moment in the life of an individual when you not only become aware of sounds, but you begin to identify yourself with that sound and you commit yourself to it.

There are many people in the world that they don't want to go to hell. Nobody wants to go to hell. In fact part of the tragedy of America today is so many people think that they're living in hell.

They don't want to go way down below, but they're not all that anxious to go way up above either. They just want to find a happy medium. And you know, you should always strike a happy medium.

Though that might take you to court in some instances. You missed it? Okay. People are looking for an easy way out.

Every time you ask for faith, you will be challenged to commit yourself to it. The hearing of the Word, the continuation and development in the hearing of truth will depend upon your commitment in conduct to the last expression of truth. The church can stop the flow of revelation simply through disobedience.

In Noah's case it would have been obvious if he didn't listen. If he did not commit himself to do what the Lord had told him to do, he would have drowned with the rest. Even though he was the most attractive man on the face of God's earth, even though he drew the attention of God to him, and God walked with him over and over again, the very fact that when you hear truth, if you do not commit yourself to it, then you have peaked as far as understanding and revelation is concerned.

And this is the tragedy of denominations. Denominationalism in the Western world is an indication God did speak to them. And that's it.

And every monument, because the way of digression in religious circles is this, first of all there's a message. Whatever that message is, to Luther it was that just shall live by faith. To William Booth it was evangelize the world with a burning flame of purity.

Whatever that message is, in the Pentecostal church it was basically related to this. These signs shall follow them. We believed it.

We began to enter into the arena of speaking in tongues, and prophecy, and interpretation. And the Lord kept going on. And every time you see a denominational church which is boxed in to the primitive revelation, you know that God hath spoken.

Many, many, many years ago, it starts with a message. That message is not abstract. So that message has to be embodied in something which is flesh and blood.

Even when Jesus became incarnate, the manifestation of God on earth, so the message has to be incarnate. And so you have men. So it's very natural that the message begins to be identified with men.

So when you talk the faith message, you think of Kenneth Hagin, or Ken Copeland. When you think of, let's see, faith, you think of, not faith, when you think of healing, you think of men like Branham, or F.F.

Bosworth. When you think of wholeness for body, soul, and spirit, you think of Brother Oral.

When you think of holiness, you think of Leonard Ravenhill. When you think of enlargement, you think of Tosche. But when you take it back to its primitive days, when you think of justification, it's Luther.

Now we've got millions of Lutherans around, but you still go back to him. When you talk of the orderliness in the church, which is a systematized, systematized, of holiness, you think of a Methodist, but it started in Wesley. A truth must be embodied in a person.

And so a message, men. It's not long before men evidenced that they have habits. And so there were lots of people who they began to look around and saw the way Oral prayed for the sick.

And so they did it. Raise your hands. Tap on the forehead.

Bang. Because there were other men who simply said, oh, if you're going to bring it out, you cough it out. And so everybody brought their air sickness bags with them to church because that was the way their brothers and sisters did it.

And so that's the way we're going to do it. So we had the gagging services. Bring it up, brother.

And so, message became embodied in men. But now it became evidenced by Methods. And so it is no longer the message which is important.

No longer was the man so important. As long as this Method was carried on. And so you have thousands of little Orals going around the place.

I don't want to sound disrespectful. You have lots of men who copy Oral going around the place. You have men who try to copy Derrick Prince, so that would be quite different, going around the place.

You have men who copy. They emulate us. That's all.

And so the students of... I will come to that. Do you mind? I don't mind Derrick Prince praying for me, but if I've got a headache, I don't want to start my chores. You know, why can't he start it at the other end? Because he may get tired and never get to the other end.

And I've still got a problem. And so you move from a message. You come to men.

You come to a Method. When you have enough people functioning the Method, you get a movement. Of course, we don't call it that.

We call it Fellowship. And the only reason why we have a Fellowship is because they're all like us. And so we believe a little differently to everybody else, and so we become secure, cloistered in, in our little Fellowship.

It's our movement. Now, unless that movement is going to stop there and simply say, Hey, it is time for us to go back to hear again from God, to have another message in which he lifts up other men who will evidence other Methods. We will become nothing more, nothing less than a monument.

A simple indication, God has spoken. And he has. To every organization that you see which is Christian, God hath spoken.

But it's in the past. That's not what the Lord has intended. The Lord wants to continue.

And so to come out of the forming of the Word, to begin the fixing of your will, to say, I have decided to walk with Jesus. Walking in the light of the revealed truth of God. Now, Peter speaks of present day truth.

How many of you know that God accentuates different things to different peoples at different times? It's just like when you go to school. When you went to grade, whatever grade, I forget the way you identify the things over here, there was a time when he did certain truth. And you think, Praise God, I've mastered that.

I can add up to ten. I know that two and two makes five. I understand all of these things.

And from this perspective, you say, well, I guess I've graduated. Now, if that's all that you're going to graduate from, friend, you're not going to go very far, are you? The present day truth is the progression of the revelation of his person and of his grace. And the pursuit of the church is to grow with him.

That the church should be a little more like him tomorrow than it was this time last year. Growing in him. My time's almost gone.

Not only the faith, no, the criterion of faith that is formed in the Word and fixed in the Word, but it becomes furnished in the work. Because not only must there be a commitment of the mind, it must be actualized in conduct. Faith is not a mental exercise.

Faith involves and demands expenditure of energy. I am sure that when Peter was in the boat and feeling sorry for most of the other guys in the boat, and John, somebody said they'd rowed about three miles from shore, and they had about ten miles to go to cross the Sea of Galilee, but no matter what they did, they were in a rough voyage. And they said, have you been at sea? For about five hours.

And every landlubber on board the ship was in a terrible state. They said they saw the Lord walking by the ship, and he had a bit of fear. It seemed as though they were all hallucinating.

And the Lord said, don't be nervous. It is I. Do not be afraid. Now, that would have stabilized those disciples, because they'd heard a word.

Peter thought, oh, that sounds great. He said, Lord, if it really is you, why did he bring me to come to you in the waters? Now, that's not the brightest thing that he had said. Suddenly Peter was now confronted with something.

He had heard the word, first of all, which is a generalized word. It then became a personal word because of what had happened. Now he had to do something about it.

He made up his mind, if he can stand in the waters, I can stand in the waters with him. And so he goes to the edge of the ship and puts one leg over the side, puts the other leg over the side, and what do you think the rest of the people on board the ship did? What would you have done if you'd been his brother? Come back in here, stupid. What do you think you're doing? Philip, and every time we see Philip in John's Gospel, he's inquiring.

Peter, do you know what you're doing? Would you kindly explain to me where you think you're going? Thomas, oh, unfortunately, has a reputation for being a doubter, but before that occasion he was known as being quite a daring individual. And then Thomas said to Peter, go on, have a go. Before you find

Thomas, let's go introduce them.

If he's going to die, let's die with him. What a way to go. Going out with the Lord.

Go on, Peter, have a go. So, Peter took a step, walked in the waters. I think immediately that got a response from one landlubber who'd had about 18 meals that day, nine down, nine up.

He looked around him and he said, I don't believe this, but does he often do this? He's walking out of sight in the water. And it was until he was far enough away from the ship that he couldn't swim back because of the intensity of the seas, that he was not quite close enough to Jesus to feel secure. He gave a look around and said, my God, what on earth am I doing in this mess? How did I get here? And the awesomeness of his predicament came to him and he says, help! And he thinks, Nathaniel, who really was a question man, said, I didn't think of it last.

These kind of wonderful things never do. And the Lord, with one great leap, took him by the hand and they walked back upon the waters to the ship. When Peter climbed on board, with a quizzical look in his eye and a smoky grin on his face, and no one wanted to look at him, when the Lord got on board the ship and suddenly the winds ceased, the waves became calm, the Lord said, what are we waiting for? Let's do it.

Faith has to be demonstrated. Once it's been formed in the personal word of God to you, once it's been fixed in your will, then it's to be worked for the glory of his name. And God said, Noah, build an ark.

I do not remember the name of the comedian who put out a series of stories, but one was on the story of Noah and the ark. Yeah, you've got this voice. Noah! Who's that? It's the Lord.

I thought that's who it was. Noah! Yes, Lord. Build an ark.

Yes, Lord. Lord, what's an ark? And he goes through the whole hilarious interaction. Noah had never seen an ark.

And this old boat was longer than a city block. It had more space than a Queen Mary, and that's an awesome vessel if you ever go to Long Beach, California and look at it. He was Noah going to build it.

Every nail, every plank, every day, every year, became an exercise. He was working out because he received a personal word, because he made up his mind. And until he received another word, it stopped.

Or until he changed his mind, he'd keep working on. This is why it is imperative that the church sometimes walk in the light of yesterday until the Lord sees fit to give you further light. For the Lord is much more interested in that revelation that he's given to you becoming a part of your character and not merely being an exhibition in your conduct.

We are interested in conduct. He is interested in character because some people do things which is out of character. But if your character is set toward the excellence of God, you will outwork godly things.

This is the criterion of faith. Next week, we'll look at the character of faith. God willing, let's stand in his presence.

I pray, my father, in Jesus' name, that you will help us to be attractive. That on a day of awesome advertising, on a day in which many voices are being heard, many ideas being promoted, and many ways being suggested, I pray that we shall hear your voice. That we shall receive your word.

We shall hearken to your ways. Not simply for the hearing, but that we might then find ourselves making up our minds to follow you and to function in your grace for the glory of God. So we are not embarrassed or intimidated to say, Speak, Lord, for thy servants hear it.

I pray for businessmen tonight, that they will hear your word, even as you shared with Brother Leonard. That we shall know what we ought to do with regard to investments, with regard to decisions. Speak, Lord, then give us the grace to settle it in our hearts, and then the wisdom to work it out.

So take us to our homes in peace and safety, for we ask it in Jesus' name. And have even said, Good night.

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