

All That Matters

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and doing God's word, and the consequences of not doing so, highlighting the process of purification and refinement.

Duration: 1:09:36

Scripture: Daniel 10:11-12, Daniel 12:8, Daniel 12:10, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 24:37-39, Hebrews 10:29, 2 Peter 3:3-7

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, Ralph begins by describing a situation where they were unable to make blocks due to the water covering the sand. He then mentions seeing two donkeys on an island, enjoying the green grass before being engulfed by the floods. Ralph draws a parallel between the donkeys and people who ignore God's teachings, warning that their lives will crumble like a house built on sand. He emphasizes the need for repentance and warns of God's wrath, using the example of France as a reminder of the consequences of forgetting God's judgment.

Transcript

Let us pray. Once again, Lord, we want to thank you that we can gather around your word. Take out the heart of stone and grant us a heart of flesh, one that is soft, that we'll see and grasp that which you have for us.

Touch our hearts that no one will harden his or her heart. Amen. Amen.

We'll read from Daniel, chapter 12, verse 8. I was blessed greatly these days when I read this word. Daniel said, Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, My Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the end of time.

Many shall be purified and made whole. Many shall be purified and made white and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. He said, I heard, but I did not understand.

It's one thing just to hear. It's something else to understand and then do it. May God help us that as we listen to his word, that we won't just hear it, but that we'll go on to understand it and then go on to do it.

That's why the Lord Jesus said, If you hear and don't do it, what I say to you, you're like one building on sand. The storms and floods will come. Temptation will come and then that house will fall.

And great will be its fall. Floods will come. We saw the Tugelaan flood these days where the water went right over the bridge.

There was water all over. There were two donkeys that were on an island. And the water rose and covered places where we previously had been getting out some building sand.

We had a problem because we couldn't get out any building sand anymore because it was covered with water. And Ralph said, Clearly, we can't make any blocks anymore because there where we got the sand to build the blocks with is covered with water. So we went down to have a look and that's where I saw these two donkeys on an island just all on their own and they were grazing there.

These donkeys had seen how green the grass was just at that particular spot. So they went there to have a good feast. And that's when the floods came.

And suddenly the river was on both sides. And they wanted to enjoy themselves there, but they ended up all alone engulfed by water. Now I thought that the water would subside and then they would be able to come back again.

But even though it had stopped raining there where we are, it hadn't stopped raining upstream. The water continued rising. It eventually went over the bridge and got to where this island was.

And this island got smaller and smaller and eventually there was just a small speck of land left. And I wondered what these donkeys would eventually end up grazing because now they had such a small piece of land and they had finished the grass that was there. But I thought well I just need to hold it out because the water will go down and they'll come back.

But instead of subsiding the water just continued rising until eventually this whole island was covered with water and you could see the donkeys standing there in water. And for three or four days they stood there in the water and all the things they'd been enjoying up till then, the feast that they were enjoying was gone because it was covered in water. And you could see after a few days how they had lost weight.

And the water just kept rising and it was very broad at that point. I've never seen so much water in the Tugela, all these months that we've been there. And then we realized that if the flood continues these two donkeys would eventually be swept away with the flood.

They'll end up in the ocean and be eaten by the fish and the sharks there. And I thought so many people are just like these donkeys. You see the grass green on the other side, you go there, you enjoy it for a while.

But the flood of God's wrath is coming. Even if you don't see it coming, it's coming from upstream. And that flood will sweep you away and you'll end up in that lake where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

So if you find yourself on an island like this, make sure you get out there quickly. Find help, get help, lest you be swept away by the flood and you'll be history. I read a story.

There's a French island where French is spoken. It's the Martinique Islands. It's the Martinique Islands.

There are many godless people living there and they've been influenced as well by people who were scoffers and mockers of God. And like it is, there are always many blind people who are led by the blind.

There are those people who are fast asleep, dead in their state.

They are blissfully unaware of what's going on. There can be lightning and thunder, they don't realize the storm is coming. They are like these donkeys and I can tell you there are many two-legged donkeys.

They may have a big head but there's nothing inside. They may have big ears as big as a donkey's ears but they hear nothing. I don't know why there were two of them that ended up on this island, whether they went there together or whether one went and the other one then later followed.

Now on this island, people were just living godless lives. They were just concerned about their own things. They did not look up, they were just looking down for their own and seeking their own welfare.

Like it says in our text that the wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand. But the wise will understand. And then on the island, they found out that there was a mountain that was volcanic.

But the person in charge of the island told the people living there that it's not a serious threat. And they told the people, they consoled them and said, look, it's not such a threat, you don't need to make any arrangements, you don't need to move. They said, look, there's no reason why you should leave your homes and move away to a safer place, to get away from this.

Even the scientists said that, look, there's no real threat here, don't be concerned. And they said to the people, don't worry, just be comfortable at home, sleep peacefully, nothing will happen. The next morning, But the next morning, 30,000 people were found buried under this burning lava because the volcano had erupted overnight.

Even the governor and all the scientists that had made their predictions and told the people not to worry were all buried alive in this burning mess. They experienced hell even before they got there or before they died. 30,000 people were found.

30,000 people were buried in their sleep. 30,000 people were found. 30,000 were buried there, including those who had told the others, don't worry, it's not so serious, there's no real threat here, don't be so concerned.

But you can imagine the terrible death that they died when they were buried under this burning mess. And I'd like to challenge the French, have you forgotten what happened there? If one thinks of the lifestyle of the people, the way they're living, have they forgotten what happened there? And that's the problem with people, they tend to forget. So the flood of God's wrath is surely coming, as it says in the New Testament, that God has revealed His wrath over all iniquity and ungodliness.

So even France needs to take note, if they don't repent, that fire is coming and they will be consumed. So I heard but did not understand. Then I said, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? If you read this book and this chapter, you'll read about Daniel where the angel refers to him as Daniel, the beloved of the Lord, the one whom the Lord loves greatly.

We can hear that and it doesn't even touch us. You can hear that leaves you cold, you carry on with your demonic wisdom and what you think you're so clever and you don't realize how much God loves you. Daniel was old at this time already, 90 years old and God says to him and says of him how He loves him dearly.

So he is referring to the time in which we are now living. Many shall be purified made white and refined. Daniel was a wise man and he was instructed and taught by the Holy Spirit.

When he saw these visions and he didn't understand he prayed and he said Lord please reveal to me the meaning of this. And the Lord said Daniel you go your way these things are meant for the end of time not your time in which you are living. Many shall be purified made white and refined.

There are many people on earth they say these things and their opinion of things and try and interpret things and others disagree with how they interpret it. The Bible speaks of the end time when the trumpet will sound and those that are found in the Lord will be taken in a rapture and all the others will be left behind. And then thereafter there will be seven years of tribulation such as the world has never seen before and especially Israel will see.

Now people say different things some say the rapture will take place before the seven years of the great tribulation others say the rapture will take place thereafter and then there are others who say it will be in the middle of that seven year period. So you can take things written in the Bible and people see them in a different way and they even debate them. And so one can say many things.

There was once a conference on holiness. The theme was be holy as God is holy. And the leader of the one group got up and said this and the leader of another group said something else.

So we see that groupings have been things that have existed for many many years. It was not just something new. And they debated the point to such an extent that eventually it got quite hot and they were both quite hot under the collar.

They had a go at one another and eventually they were almost physically almost beating each other up and all this around the topic and subject of holiness. On a convention of holiness. There are no greater fools than those that call themselves Christians.

And so Daniel was one who wanted to understand the mysteries of God. He didn't want to miss out on anything. But there was this where the Lord just said Daniel you go your way.

Don't you worry about what will happen at the end of time. It's not for you. But for you and for everyone you be purified.

May be made white and refined. Now here it says many shall be purified. Now in Hebrew the word purified means this.

To discern. To separate that you put one group this side and the other group that side. Paul wrote to Timothy and said Timothy take note of so and so and so and so because those people caused me much grief.

And then he says purify yourself from those people. Of those people. Because if you stay with them and are in their company you'll be defiled.

There's a very famous painter. A painter. Very famous.

And he himself was extremely famous. He said He said that I will never look at a bad painting. Because if I should look at it I may be influenced subconsciously by what I see.

And that could then influence the way that I will paint in the future. It says in Daniel 11 verse 35 That some of those of understanding shall fall and then to refine and purify them. 1135 many leaders, spiritual leaders will fall.

But that happens so that the right ones and the wrong ones will be brought to light. And then it will become clear who those are that are on the road and on the track and those that are offered. So many will be purified.

And that doesn't only refer purification from sin. But also from people like Paul said to Timothy. That you need to purify yourself from them.

Let's take this instance. You go to people who have gone away, who have fallen. You want to hear their side of the story, what they have to say.

And that influences you that thereafter you cannot paint that painting that you would have painted. Because you've been influenced by what you've seen and heard. You can no longer paint a perfect picture, something that is pure because some evil has crept in.

You look at something and hear something, listen to it and you absorb it. And then that little leaven leavens the whole lump. It spoils everything.

It defiles you. They will purify themselves. Make themselves white.

Now that doesn't mean doing what Michael Jackson did, who made himself white. Then you can make yourself white on the outside, but it's pitch black inside. And he was evil.

He misled people all over the world, taking them to hell. He was immoral. An adulteress.

Homosexual. And he always sang his rotten songs. And he sang songs and in public would stand in front of them and hold on to his private parts.

And people, despite all these things, they listened to him and they even defend him. So making yourself white is not in the sense that Michael Jackson tried it, who was black and tried to make himself white. Isaiah 1 verse 18, the Lord says, come, let us reason together.

Even though your sins may be red as scarlet, they will be white as snow. And in Revelation 7, where the Lord speaks to John and says, Lord, he says, John, who are those there dressed in white? And John said, Lord, I don't know. You know all things.

And the Lord said, those are those who came out of the great tribulation and have made their garments snow white, pure white. In German it says it so nicely that they washed their garments and they made them bright. And the Lord said to them, let us reason together.

And they said, Lord, I don't know. You know all things. So Daniel was told, the Lord said to him, Daniel, don't be so concerned about whether the Lord will come today or tomorrow, or is it the next day, trying to figure that one out.

What you need to be busy with is purify yourself, make yourself white and refine yourself. What should we do? We should be purified, made white and refined. And to be made white.

In Hebrew, it's the word Laban. And you remember that man Laban in the Bible, who was a foolish man. In spite of the fact that his name meant to be white, yet he was not white before the Lord.

And to be refined. What does that mean? To be refined by fire. As silver and gold are refined in fire.

Like it says in Malachi 3 verse 3, that the Lord will sit and he will refine the sons of Levi as gold and silver are refined. The refining process is when you put it in this pot, you make a fire under it, and the heat brings out all the impurities and the refiner just sits there, taking off the impurities all the time, removing them as they come to the surface. That's how they did in times past.

And then the refiner would look into this pot. And the refiner would continuously look into this gold while it was being refined. Until the point came where he could see when he looked in his own reflection being mirrored in this gold.

Then he knew that the gold was ready. And if he wasn't satisfied that he could see his reflection in this gold, he would continue refining it. Because he'd know then that it's not ready yet.

And so he would continue refining it. And so the Lord Jesus will take you and he'll refine you, he'll put you into that boiling pot, he'll refine you until all the impurities have come to the surface and they've been removed. And he can see his image being reflected in the gold and he'll say, now it's good.

So if there's any impurity in you, you won't be able to reflect his image. And then the Lord will have to continue that process of refining you until he can see his image in you. That's all that matters, do you hear? Understand for the rest of your life.

If you don't do that, you're a fool, a spiritual idiot. Now there may be things you don't understand. Don't be busy with what you don't understand.

Rather be busy with purifying yourself, making yourself white and being refined. Maybe you're busy, you go to others and you say, I don't understand this and I don't understand that. You're so busy with that, whereas you should be busy purifying yourself, making yourself white and being refined.

Because it's those that have a pure heart, they will see God and they will be blessed. Daniel, don't keep yourself busy with these things that don't pertain to you. You just be busy with purifying yourself, making yourself white and to be refined.

There's much more I would have said, but time has flown. But maybe just to close that the wicked shall do wickedly. What can one say? What can you say of the wicked? Because the wicked, you can speak to them and speak to them.

It just doesn't dawn on them. It doesn't make sense to them. And eventually you get to the point where you realize you cannot help such a person.

Only God can. And that person goes his own way. Maybe one day he'll hit his head against the wall and maybe that will wake him up.

I remember Reverend Duma, Pastor Duma from Bilo Road. He passed away some years ago. His nickname was Fire because he was on fire.

One day he was preaching there in Bilo Road in Durban. And after the service, everyone left the church. And the young girls went outside.

But outside there were some young men who had not been in the service, but they were waiting there for these young girls to come out of the service. He also went out. And he noticed one of these young men flirting with the girls that had just come out of the service.

And he approached this young man and he said, Don't do that. We don't allow that. God doesn't allow it.

And then this young man had a stick in his hand and he said to the pastor, He said, You tell your God to come here now and I'll beat him up with my stick. And then they parted. That evening he got a phone call.

It was a nurse from King Edward Hospital. And she said, Are you Pastor Duma? He said, Yes. And she said, Pastor, is it possible for you to come immediately? There's someone who desperately needs to see you.

When he got there, they took him to the ICU. And they found a young man with many machines connected to him. He couldn't even breathe on his own.

He needed a machine to help him. When he looked closer, he suddenly recognized that this young man was the same young man who a few hours earlier had said to him, You bring your God here. I'll beat him up.

You bring your God here. I'll beat him up. Pastor Duma didn't even wait for the young man to speak.

He just looked at them. When he saw it was, he said, Young man, now get out of your bed. Take your stick and beat up God as you said you would.

And he turned around and left him. And the young man died thereafter. The wicked will do wickedly.

They'll continue in their wickedness. They will continue to harden their hearts. Like this young man and that Pastor Dumer just said to him, well now you show us what you can do.

You said you'll beat up my God, do it now. That's how he died. God had given this young man his chance.

There at the church when Pastor Dumer said to him, God doesn't allow it. That's where you should have repented and softened his heart. But no, he hardened it and he had to pay the price for it.

He left that place. He was run over by a car. That's how he ended up in hospital.

You cannot mock God. You cannot just put your finger in his eye and think you'll get away with it. I spoke about hell, where the worm doesn't die, the fire's not quenched, and it's not an ordinary fire.

It's not even just like that fire that came out of that mountain, that burning, boiling lava, which was terrible. Hell is much worse than that. But if you want to harden your heart, then we can just say, well, Lord, he's in your hands.

When the three young men didn't want to bow and worship that idol that Nebuchadnezzar had made, they were punished by being thrown into a furnace, and that furnace had been heated seven times more, and that the people that threw them in were even burned to death. But hell is much worse than that. And as we've heard when the Lord spoke of Daniel, saying, Daniel, you are beloved and dearly beloved of the

Lord.

Remember, God doesn't only love Daniel, he loves you too. God loved you so much that he sent his only begotten son. He gave his life for you.

That's how much he loves you. But woe to you if you trample that love underfoot. And don't be stubborn and act like that young man.

You may say, I'll just carry on living my life. Before I die, I'll call Pastor Duma. Well, that man did it, didn't help him.

He died in his state. Let us bow our heads. Lord, we hear how you instructed Daniel.

You taught him that he should not keep himself busy with mysteries and things that don't pertain to him. Things which pertain to another time. You emphasized that what is important is that people be purified, made white and refined.

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