

The End of All Things Draws Near

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being serious and watchful in our prayers, overcoming temptation, and cultivating a spirit of love, hospitality, and self-control in our lives.

Duration: 1:28:03

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 24:14, 1 Peter 4:8-11

Topics: "Evangelism", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of winning people over to God. He uses the analogy of taking a bull by the tail instead of the horns, illustrating the need for effective and gentle persuasion. The preacher also highlights the significance of prayer and fervent love for one another as ways to cover sins and be good stewards of God's grace. Additionally, he addresses the issue of modesty in clothing, warning against immorality and encouraging self-control. The sermon concludes with a reminder to pray and ask for what is needed, as the Bible teaches.

Transcript

1 Peter chapter 4, from verse 7 But the end of all things is at hand, therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. Therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. Keep that in mind at all times, that the final wrapping up of everything is at hand. And the things which I was referring to earlier on, even that is going to come to an utter close.

Keep that in mind at all times, that the final wrapping up of everything is at hand. Even the depravity that one hears around across the world, all of that is going to come to an utter stop and finish. The end of that is nigh.

And you my friend, remember that it doesn't matter how you are tempted, or if Satan tries to paint a pretty picture about sin, remember that all of that is coming to an utter end. So next time the devil comes and tempts you, you ask him, look Satan, you come trying to make this a pretty picture, this sin, and you try and beautify it, when all this comes to an end, and the end of all things happens, including you in this temptation, will you help me out of trouble? Because temptation will be there right to the end. Satan walks around seeking whom he can tempt, it is always there.

It is not that it means that temptation is finished already. So expect temptation, but with it the Lord gives the victory. Wasn't our Lord Himself tempted? In a very difficult way.

Satan even used scripture, he used the Bible to tempt Jesus with. You who are listening, just see what that means behind it. But Jesus overcame.

And this Jesus, if He lives in you, He lives His life of victory. Doesn't matter what's put before you, whether it's a bottle of alcohol or anything it might be, He gives the victory. If I go into a shop and they happen to be selling alcohol, it doesn't trouble me a little bit, not in the slightest.

But if you are still in bondage, you're enslaved by that, you'll find that that will be a temptation to you. It is said of one man who was troubled by lust, his eyes would follow after prostitutes. He was once driving his very expensive nice car in the city.

And then an attractive looking but immoral person who was A person who was a prostitute with the clothing that goes with it as tight as possible, trying to reveal as much as she could. He was a prostitute with the clothing that goes with it as tight as possible, trying to reveal as much as she could. You know the type of clothing with the latest in fashion, The type that reveals as much as possible from the front, the chest, or leaning over the other way, the back or the stomach.

And I see even Christians trying to be with it. Wearing something that is like very short shorts and just the smallest bending over would just show so much more. A person who is alive spiritually will recognize this is an immoral, promiscuous person.

She's a prostitute. She's a prostitute, a thoroughbred one, a purebred prostitute, but she hasn't sinned, hasn't got the chances yet. She's a prostitute, a thoroughbred prostitute, but she hasn't sinned, hasn't got the chances yet.

So this man who was now looking at this girl while he was driving, his eyes just could not be taken from her, he slammed straight into a pole. And his brand new car was badly damaged. And he got out the car and he shouted at the girl, Why do you dress like that? Why have you made me to slam into the pole? He passed the buck, he blamed the girl, saying it's the girl to blame.

And would flirt with cell phones, SMS's. Although cell phones have their place, but remember it is a hellish thing. You parents who buy cell phones for your children, remember what you are doing.

Everything is possible on a cell phone, they can go to pornographic sites. They can see. All the pornography available on the internet is available via a cell phone.

Remember that there are many children of Christian parents who are ending up in hell because of this which they have. You as a parent you don't know. You parents, you might be quite comfortable thinking, well at least they are not looking at pornographic magazines or things like that.

But all of that is available via that cell phone. And they flirt with each other, they simply switch it off or change the topic when you come in. And remember that that shows that spirit, that prostitute spirit that is within a person.

And you find the pornography on the internet which hamstring Christian leaders, preachers, who have been besmirched by this and are not able to preach in authority. To such a point. To such a point.

To such a point that people are defiled by the utter depravity and perversion that is there available to them. I'm tempted to ask you, troubled by lust and looking at things on the cell phone, that you put up your hand and we pray for you. Or come afterwards and ask for prayer.

You see, these are shameful things. The Bible does say that towards the end, the defiled will be more defiled. Let the filthy be filthy still and let the holy be holy still.

Dressing up should not be to stir up the lust of the opposite sex. Dressing up should not be to stir up the lust of the opposite sex. And also, clothing where you cut it for girls, cutting it as low as possible, you're not a cow, you're not meant to say or pass a message, Hey, look here, I'm rich in chest.

A cow can reveal its udder, but you're not a cow, or are you? A damned cow, better the cow that is milked and we drink its milk. A damned cow, better the cow that is milked and we drink its milk. Job records where he said, I have made a covenant with my eyes not to gaze upon a woman.

Those are the heroes of heaven with whom we'll be seated in heaven one day. We hope and I hope with all my heart that I may sit next to such a man in heaven. And he says, a virgin, not a prostitute, even a virgin.

I made a covenant with my eyes, I won't look at her. You say, I don't look at pornography, but you look after the girls. Your eyes are running, you're still a slave of sin.

A person complains, but I'm troubled by lust, it doesn't want to leave me. Is there such a thing as full salvation that one can be delivered from this and from this while we're still on earth? The reason why you're troubled by lust and the power of your eyes on the wrong thing in this bondage is because you're busy feeding the habit. In those stories written about Jungle Doctor, there's a particular story, I've forgotten the details, where there's a certain monkey because people can be illustrated.

The name of that person, a monkey can be symbolic of a person. Monkey symbolizes a human being and now there was a vulture coming and landing close and he would throw out food to this vulture. And then this vulture brought its friend along and then another friend.

Until it was a whole group of vultures together and so this person was so happy. And to the point that he was so glad to see the rapidly increasing collection of vultures coming from afar up there and coming down as a flock and landing. Until he got closer and closer they were like his little puppies.

Like his pets. They increased and called their pals. One day though there was a shortage of food and since he was around they targeted him and they ate him up.

You feed your vultures, the day will come when they will feed on you. Feed your evil thoughts and one day you'll land in the same soup as this man whom I told you about in the service in the beginning. It also means, and in other translations it says, be self-controlled, meaning be self-disciplined.

You discipline yourself, control yourself, otherwise you'll end up where you don't really want to be. There are things in you, if you let them go, they'll destroy your life and your family life and your salvation. We are commanded to be in self-control, to be self-disciplined.

So regarding lust, let it be self-controlled. Discipline yourself. Don't allow those things.

Deal with them ruthlessly. Say, no, such a thing can't be in my life. You are still in the flesh.

You are still in this body. Rebuke your eyes. Rebuke the direction of your thoughts.

Be self-controlled. Be self-disciplined. That's why I say to people who have come to the Lord, you need to be on your guard and be strict on yourself.

Rebuke these lusts. Rebuke these animal baser instincts which can make you bestial if you're not careful. Is it necessary to continue? Do I need to expand upon this point? That you would not be destroyed like others just because you weren't self-controlled and self-disciplined.

Let me continue to another point. Pray. Pray is a major theme in the Bible and it must be the major theme in the life of a Christian that you continue to pray.

The Bible says you don't receive because you do not ask. Some people just live off the goodwill of other people. Begging from others.

They cannot pray for themselves that the Lord would provide for them. They don't know how to pray. They don't know how to pray.

Remember that Jesus said don't pray like the pagans do where they use repetition and quantity of words to try and impress God. No. Be short and to the point.

Speak directly to the Lord and remember to pray in faith and you'll experience what he says. When you pray be specific. Be direct.

Don't be hesitant. Don't beat about the bush and where your mind is distracted by other things while you pray but know that in prayer you seek God about specific things and at the end of the day you can say yes Lord you've answered me. You're seeking the Holy Spirit.

Seek him with all your heart. Let the prayer be a total prayer that consumes you. Some people are not serious in their prayer.

They begin to just predict and they say well it's just like that it'll be God will land everything on my lap. God is obliged to just give me everything from heaven landing on my lap. The Bible says wake up oh you sleeper.

You need to be fully concentrated in prayer devoted serious about prayer so that you pray in faith specifically that you can at the end of the prayer say amen meaning may it be so. Let it be. Some of the Christians are doped by God's grace.

It's all grace. They don't do a thing but the children of this world are wiser than the believers. If you want to build a house you think you'll just fall asleep at night.

Tomorrow morning suddenly the house will stand there just come up like a mushroom. You're a silly fool. You're mad.

You're a silly fool. You're a silly fool. You're a silly fool.

You're a silly fool. You're a silly fool. You're a silly fool.

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You're a silly fool. You're a silly fool. You're a silly fool It needs healthy, devoted work.

Hard work. You wake up and you expect that because of that little prayer of yours everything will be finished and done. In spirit we need to be fervent in prayer, fervent in the Lord's work.

Look, you find people might pray a bit, but they're actually spiritually asleep. A person seeking food. A person who prays about food, he does something about it.

That person will be diligent in removing the rocks from the field, removing every obstacle, sowing, looking after it. And if there is a crop, a harvest, that person, that farmer is thankful and says, Lord, I thank you for your gracefulness. That's grace, not grace that you just sit there and sleep.

That's not grace. That you plow. Spiritually, that's how we ought to live, that we are plowing spiritually, that we are sowing, that everything is done with a fervent spirit and that you are busy with the things of God.

And it's a prayer that is completely direct and serious. Otherwise, you have a flippant type of prayer that is just so light-hearted and you have nothing with it. If you pray, be zealous.

Your prayer needs to be in earnest. It needs to be a prayer that's serious with zeal. Pray with faith, not with doubt.

Pray with the expectation that God is going to answer your prayer. Don't doubt in your prayer. You find people who aren't able to pray because they don't take their prayer seriously.

They don't expect anything to come of it. In 1 John 5 verse 14, and in Hebrews 4 verse 16, it says, This is our joy. That we have in Him, Jesus.

That if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. He does hear. In the time of the beginning of the revival at Mapumulo, a person came from Ladysmith and said, Pastor, I believe that God wants me to preach the gospel together with you.

And he was staying at a certain place near Dalton. And he said, Pastor, I'm trying to preach. He would be phoning every second day.

He would phone every so often and say, Pastor, I don't have sugar. Pastor, I don't have bread or this or that. Milk or coffee.

And I thought, well, doesn't he know how to pray? I'm not the one who has called him into the ministry. If he's called by the Lord, he needs to pray to the Lord and receive from Him. If he's called by the Lord, he needs to pray to the Lord and receive from Him.

He needs to pray to the Lord and receive from Him. That you pray in faith. If I had been like that man who was only asking from people, I definitely would not have this around me.

I wouldn't be here. This place wouldn't be here. You wouldn't be here.

By that, I don't mean to dampen your prayers, but pray with zeal, seriously and in faith. And did you tell them, as long as there is bread in my house and you haven't got bread, feel free to come. What's mine is yours.

And I won't say, why you come to me? Haven't you come? Can't you pray? No. Feel free to come. Share with me.

But I don't want to deaden your prayers and kill the faith in God. And that the person can speak to God and God answers. And the Bible says, this is our confidence.

This is our joy that we can ask and it being in His will, we receive. I'm sorry, time has gone on and it's a pity watches are just too fast. I leave this point to rush to the next because of time.

But you go and take this and chew the cud, think about it, ponder upon it, meditate on this word. And above all things have fervent love for one another. God Himself is love, perfect love.

Pure, holy love. God has revealed that love by sending His only begotten Son to come to this earth and to die for us. His beloved Son, His only begotten Son, sending Him to die for us, on the cross to suffer for us.

And the Bible also says, how can God ever hold back everything else? If He's given us the Son, won't He give us all things together with Him? So let me reiterate that and paraphrase it in this way. You're seeking God for protection, you're asking Him for victory and deliverance. How can God not answer prayer like that? If He who is love is present in our midst, doesn't that automatically mean that we should be loving each other, fervently helping each other, being there for each other? With a holy love, pure love, that has got nothing to do with lust.

And it says, love that has no end, it's consistent, persistent. This is a love that continues, it doesn't adjust itself because of tiredness, exhaustion or different circumstances, it is a continual love. This is the love that has for us covered a multitude of sins.

It covers, it covers, it covers. But some Christians can't do that. They criticize, they talk about it, they shout about it, they broadcast it.

Damned people they are. It says also not grumbling. Not moaning.

Being hospitable, be hospitable to each other with the gift that you have received. Just think, if there is a house, and in this house resides a person who is full of the devil and anger. It's correct what he says, but I said a devil of anger.

Because if you get angry, most probably you've got the devil of anger in you. In German you can say it nicely, Zorn Teufel. An anger demon.

If the home, if the household is conducted or ruled over by this The spirit of anger, you'll find that the people who live in the house will be rubbing each other up the whole day continually with anger and irritability. There will be cursing, there will be cursing, there will be cursing. People... Pity you don't know German.

Pity you don't know German and the children at DSS that you don't learn German. Because it means that people just explode with rage, they blow their top continually in such an atmosphere of anger. Night and day.

And you find that in that household, with this demon, the spirit of anger, there is constant hitting out at each other, complaining, criticizing the whole time. Swearing. Which comes out of their mouths.

It's a noisy, horrible atmosphere that even the cats and the dogs don't want to be there. From morning till night, this rage which rules there, what would you think about such a home? It's a house where the tongue of a person is expelling... The tongue is spewing forth poison, more poisonous than that of snakes. Gossiping.

Using the names of other people. Tell me, can the Holy Spirit live in such a home, in such a life, where it's a house of hell? What are your tongues like? Can you gossip? Can you gossip? Can you gossip, you women? Can you gossip? And you men? The women walk around in men's clothing today, but you men who walk around in the skirt of a woman, that's what you are. You're a female.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love and compassion and kindness. But the evil spirit contains anger, friction, hatred, jealousy, and lack of working together, lack of unity. If you belong to the devil, if you cannot respond to God's Word being preached to you, what will you respond to? What will help you? I'm sorry that we need to rush by these points.

I'm actually only touching on them very superficially. I haven't gone deep into them. I deserve at least a full sermon each, so that you'd really get the point.

What do you want here, dear white, if you don't practice what you hear every Sunday being preached? There must be demons in your ears. You must be gospel hardened. Let the devil succeed in hardening your heart.

We are to serve each other and minister to each other in love. It says in verse 9, being hospitable, that each one is open with their house or their room, bringing each other in. I remember my late dear wife when we were just married.

I can't blame her. She was just a teacher. And I got some visitors.

She brought some food on the table. So much when the two children had eaten it. They said, Papa, wir sind hungrig, wir möchten was zu essen.

She had no children. She didn't know better. She was a teacher.

She came out of an English house. A bit different to the Germans. I just got a letter some time ago.

They said, oh, I'm in England and how different we are. Customs are different. And they're just different.

And they're just different. Are you more bound by your culture of stinginess and being small hearted instead of being generous and open, making all food available to those who come that you are truly hospitable? I apologize to all the English, pure English people. You are good.

Very good. But there are some English that are not so good. And they stingy.

And they can't offer you something at the table. You've got to get it by hook or by crook. And asked the owner of the house or the lady of the house, wouldn't you like some more bread, please? Well, then she's got to be gentleman like and said, what about you? Otherwise, you can starve.

I don't get it. Be hospitable. Be hospitable.

Be hospitable and kind to other people. Actually, in the African culture, there is that friendliness towards the stranger hospitable to others. But I still address you as Christians.

You say you civilized and yet you put away that good culture of hospitality. Sometimes our Christianity rejects that which is godly. The word also says that by being hospitable to strangers, some have entertained angels.

Not knowing. To think of lot. Homosexuals are sodomites.

Where he lot had seen two men approaching. Now, the others in the city of Sodom also saw them because of their homosexuality. That is why we refer to it today as being sodomy.

Oh, Lord. Invited these young men in unknown to him. They weren't just young men, but they were the angels of the Lord.

By that, he was bringing a rescue plan for himself and his family. These were the very angels that saved his life. He didn't know it.

He just brought in two men. He didn't know if those were angels that came for his salvation. Abraham saw those three visitors.

He quickly said to his wife, make food. Bring everything that you can. Also unknown to him that it was a visitation of God himself as in three angels, whether it may be reflected the trinity of the Lord, I don't know.

In Matthew 18, Luther translates that as when you bring in visitors, you're bringing in the Lord himself. Receiving others, other Christians into your home, you're receiving Jesus Christ. The one who said, what you do for the least, you're doing for me.

The one who's least in your eyes, you're actually doing it for my sake. One day, Jesus will say, thank you, you took me into your home. And the person will respond and say, Lord, when did that happen? And the Lord will say, when you brought in that friend, that person, that was me.

It is said that there was once upon a time, a king who was very wealthy, had a huge castle in which he lived. And he had very faithful officers and helpers, servants. He said to one, how can I please you? You have served me so unselfishly with such devotion, what can I do to bring you pleasure? I want to make you happy.

So he suggested, because he had a very big dining room table, at least 20 people could sit there. He said, my servant. I will lay it on.

I will arrange the spread, complete with gold platters, silver cutlery, whatever, it will all be there with every type of food, and you can invite all your friends, whoever it is, and you can come and help yourselves. He said, your highness, your highness, I thank you. The king said, on Friday from 5pm, you can come and spend the rest of the night with him.

So the servant went out, and invited his friends. The king was wondering all the time, who he would invite. At quarter to five, a person came, walking with a stick, with a torn trouser or shorts, looking very poor, disheveled.

Like you find, some ladies now, buy jeans that are torn on purpose, and patched, already being bought brand new. It really shows insanity. One could say that person looked old and poor, and looked like he hadn't had a bath for a long time.

The servant said to him, what do you want? He said, well I've been invited by the servant of the king. I want to see that head servant. The servant said to him, you cannot see him, he's busy arranging a major function, a special dinner, he's busy, off with you.

He said, well that is astonishing, he had told me to come at five, I said, you must be mistaken, it cannot be him and you. Off with you, he's busy with a very important function. The king shook his head, he says, my lord, he doesn't understand, these are my friends and I want to win them and bring them to my lord.

Have you ever done that? It's easy to win people. Have you done it? Instead of taking the bull by the horns, you take it by the tail and it kicks you and you see stars and you can't understand why it doesn't work and why you can't win people. I've got to draw to a close now, come to an end otherwise you'll forget where we have started.

I've got to draw to a close now, come to an end otherwise you'll forget where we have started. I've got to draw to an end otherwise you'll forget where we have started. Serving each other with the gifts you have received as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Use the gift that God has given you, don't say I've got nothing, there's nobody with nothing. I don't have time to expand upon this for I need to draw to a close. Let me just take your tongue, just your tongue.

Some have got a long tongue and I am amazed by it, mine is shorter. I said to my grandson, who do you take after you've got such a long tongue, it's not like mine. You might have the gift of expressing yourself, that you can talk and pass on things, there's something that you can give.

So if you have a tongue, use your tongue to glorify God with. Don't grumble and criticise, don't scold. Lift up your voice and speak like a madman.

And rotten to the point that only what's rotten comes out, that your mouth itself is rotten. Instead, use that mouth, use your tongue to pray with, to sing with, to worship God with, to praise Him with and to be grateful with. If you are speaking the things of God, speak as if it's the very oracles of God, God speaking through you, ministering through you.

The Bible says, if anyone speaks differently, let him be accursed. Let me repeat that, if you are outside of what is clearly being laid out here, you are cursed. If somebody comes to you and speaks something different, no, that is a cursed person.

Again I say, a cursed person. We have no other gospel. We have no other gospel.

Remember Cornelius referred to in the Bible as the heathen commandant of the Roman soldiers? He wasn't a Christian, but Peter afterwards spoke of the kindness, the warmth, the hospitality with which Cornelius and his family had received them. No wonder that the Holy Spirit was at liberty among them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

For he lived a Christian life. So, returning now just to a summary, firstly, be self-disciplined. Take control of your lusts of the flesh.

Pray. Love each other. Be hospitable to one another.

Serving each other. And lastly, the point, use the gift God has given you, because if you don't use what the Lord has granted you and gifted you with, eventually he will come, as he says, and you will take away the very thing you've got, which you have not used. Thank you, I'm closing, and I'll ask anybody from the congregation to come forward and to close for us in prayer.

Let's close our eyes in prayer. Our God, we thank you for wonderful opportunities like these to sit at your feet. Thank you, Lord, for all that you've given us in your kindness, the mercy which we do not deserve.

Thank you, Lord, for giving us, speaking to us the things of the kingdom to us. Thank you, Lord, that you didn't just leave this world, ascend to heaven, and then forget about us, but you've come and you teach us, you make us to know what pleases you. Help us, Lord, that as we go, we would be enabled by your spirit to keep what you've spoken to our hearts.

Lord, open our minds to understand that it is indeed the end of all things, that the end of all is upon us, and that we need to walk in ways pleasing you. Help us, Lord, to also keep that which you have taught us, that we would live in that, that none of us would go and be guilty of living in a way that shows that we haven't heard. Grant, Lord, that every single person here would know what it is to be reconciled to you.

Give us the grace, also, the strength to persevere, to go forward, always with you. Help us, Lord, that we would be focused upon you and not the world or the things of the world, but be looking at you and to hear what pleases you. Help us, Lord, that we would live in a way that we unashamedly are living for you.

We ask all this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen. We ask you, Lord, that your favor and your grace would be with us, Lord Jesus, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, you've brought us together and spoken to us about being serious and loving each other, learning to pray in a serious way that we would be hospitable to each other. Lord, by your Spirit, wouldn't you enable us to stand faithfully together right until the moment where your trumpet sounds? Amen.

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