

Transformed Into the Image of Christ

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering our leaders, considering the outcome of their way of life, and imitating their faith in order to live a life that is above reproach and to set an example for the believers.

Duration: 1:25:58

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:3, Hebrews 13:7

Topics: "Sound Doctrine", "Christian Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of remembering and imitating leaders who speak the word of God. He warns against the danger of seeking teachers who only say what people want to hear, rather than sound doctrine. The speaker encourages listeners to meditate on the message and apply it to their lives, rather than forgetting it and getting caught up in other things. He also highlights the significance of considering the outcome of leaders' lives and imitating their faith. The sermon is based on Hebrews 13:7 and references 2 Timothy 4:3.

Transcript

Thank you lord for an opportunity that we may sit at your feet. Speak to us lord through your holy word. May it pierce and penetrate our hearts and work in an amazing way.

May it bring life to those who listen and who obey and death to those who are disobedient. Amen. Our word for today we find in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 7. Remember your leaders who spoke the word of god to you.

Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. We'll end reading there. There are a couple of points which I'd like us to have a look at from this portion.

The first point is remember them. The second point who led you or your leaders. Thirdly, who spoke the word of god.

And then fourthly, their faith. And fifthly, consider or understand the outcome of their way of life. Finally, that you imitate their way of life and their faith.

Firstly, remember your leaders. Now in this portion it doesn't say that you should pray for them and remember them in prayer. It says remember them.

Remember those who led you, your leaders. Now in the Zulu translation it comes out clearer that those who led you. It's speaking in the past tense.

It's something that has already passed by. So it is good that we remember those who led us, those who taught us and those who preached to us in the past. This letter to the Hebrews was one of the later letters that were written that we have in the New Testament.

And so the author was reminding these Christians of those who were their leaders who are now no longer alive. There are those who are martyrs like Stephen who was stoned to death. And then James, the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ who was a bishop in Jerusalem.

And then also James, the brother of John. All of those were martyrs. They died for their faith.

So there were many of those who were their leaders in the faith, their ministers who laid down their lives for the sake of their faith. And then it says remember them. One has to sit down and ponder over their lives and think of them and remember them.

And remember in what way they died. Remember their lives and the outcome of their lives and strive to imitate them. And I'd like to add, remember those who forsake, who forsook the faith, who left the way and consider their outcome of their lives as well, how they die and died.

It's very good to consider that and to ponder over that. Now some from, in our case, haven't died yet and some have died already. But even though they haven't died yet, some of them haven't died yet.

But I say, oh God, save me from that and keep and protect me from that. Save me, lest my children should live like their children. Lest I should live as they live and be scattered as they are scattered.

Now some amongst us have died. I think of my mother-in-law when she passed away. I said, oh my, if a person can die like she died, then death is wonderful.

Because I was seated in my office, busy preparing to take to service. And while I was seated there, my wife came in and she said, my husband, it seems like my mother is in the throes of death. And then I said, I'll come.

And then she said, no, I wouldn't like to disturb you. I can see you're busy preparing for the service. Continue with that, but just pray for her.

And I got up and I went there. And I prayed with her. I sat down.

And then I beheld the way in which God took her. And then I saw as she closed her eyes and as she went. And I said, oh, it's true.

And the Bible should say that the death of the saints is precious in the eyes of God. And I said to those who were with me and with us there, that death, if death is like this, then death is wonderful. And death is still our last enemy.

But Jesus overcame death. And I said, oh, the death of saints is wonderful. Death is wonderful if a person can die in such a way.

And also when my wife was dying, I prayed. I said, oh God, if I can die and pass away in such a way, then it would be a crown to me. The word says, remember.

But it's not only them whom I've seen dying. I've also seen others dying. And when I prayed, I said, oh God, spare me from ever dying in such a manner.

Here it says, remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of the way of their life. Moses prayed and said, oh God, teach me to number my days, to count how many days I still have got left, and to remember that I have to die.

That I might gain a heart of wisdom. Now if a person is young, the last thing that ever comes up in a person's mind is death. You think that you are still going to live almost forever.

And yet, life is like mist before the sun that just disappears. Or the flowers of grass itself that just comes up and it withers in a short time. And it's a known fact that here in Africa, the youth, young people die at a higher rate than older people.

Many die before they reach the age of 20 and many before they reach the age of 30. They are driven by the lust of their flesh. And when they reach the age of 20, they go because of being driven by the lust of their flesh, they enter into the world.

When they reach the age of 20, they're already old and worn out. Now our government has agreed to distribute anti-retrovirals medicine that lengthens a person's life who has got HIV AIDS by an average of 20 years. Before they didn't want to do so, but now they've agreed to that.

They were pressurized into doing it. In Germany, they say it can lengthen such a person's life by an average of 30 years. But what does it help you? That you're alive, but you've got AIDS? If you don't live for the Lord and serve the Lord in that time that you are given, that extended time, if you continue living in your lust and your sin, and you continue injecting others with that disease, and you destroy them, you are a disease in society.

It says, remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Remember and consider the outcome of their lives, how they died. Oh, it's wonderful when one sees how those men of God died, like Stephen, for example, who saw heavens open before him, and who saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father.

Like Moody, when he was dying, he said, oh, I see how the earth is drifting away and disappearing, and now heaven is drawing nigh and coming closer to me. Isn't that wonderful? Well, if you live in the world, then that's terrible. But if you're living for heaven, such a thing is wonderful.

Let me leave that point. As I said, I need to leave for somewhere, and so I cannot go into further depths into that point. Remember them, think, consider how they died.

The second point, your leaders or those who led you in the past, who led you spiritually, who spoke the word of God to you. Remember those who are your leaders or who were your leaders. In the Greek, it says, those who have had the rule over you.

Does that sound strange? Remember those who had the rule over you. That's not sound doctrine today. In this evil time in which we live, who will rule over me? Nobody.

If you speak to carnal Christians, they say, nobody will rule over you. If you speak to carnal Christians, they say, nobody will rule over you. Only God.

I won't listen to any man. I listen only to God. Strange that such a thing should be in the Bible.

Strange that such a thing should be in the Bible. Your spiritual leaders are those people who watch over you and take care of you. And they are responsible for you before God.

And you owe something to them as well before God. Those who forsake, they say, we want to do what we want. want to do.

Nobody else should tell us what we have to do. We are all on the same level. There's truth in that, but hell is in that as well.

Because he can't tell me anything anymore. Now, just listen to this. You've got a Bible, underline it.

Timothy chapter four. Second Timothy four from verse three. Second Timothy four verse three.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. This is the type of time, the kind of time in which we are living in today.

The Bible speaks our language. It is a time when men will no longer put up with sound doctrine. But according to their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers.

To say that which their itching ears want to hear, that which pleases them. They will gather around them a great number of teachers. To say that which their itching ears want to hear, that which pleases them.

They will go from one teacher to another teacher just to hear that which their itching ears want to hear. Just that which pleases them according to their own desires. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to fairy tales.

But you, keep your head in all situations and endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Today is such a time in the world. We Christians gather around them a great number of teachers who say that which they want to hear, that suit their own desires. So be careful and see where you stand concerning this.

Remember your leaders. Those who led you. Those who went before you.

And you should imitate them. There where they put their foot, you should put your foot as well. Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

There are those backsliders who say, well, I don't follow anybody. I only follow God. I don't listen to anybody except God.

Consider them and their ways and realize that they are an idol unto themselves. They only worship themselves. Remember those who led you.

Maybe you've already forsaken them. Maybe you are now following others. And yet the Bible says, remember them.

Maybe you go to a certain minister and you are blessed by him. And then you say, well, here is my minister for I've been blessed by him. And then a person might say, well, I'm this person's spiritual father.

But it's not like that. Can it be that when a child or a mother goes to the hospital to bear a child that the doctor or the midwife after the child has been born says, well, I'm the spiritual parent of this child. Not spiritual.

I'm the biological parent of this child. No, that doesn't make sense. In the same way, spiritually, it also doesn't make sense.

Maybe that person that you've helped to be born spiritually, to be reborn, has been worked on a long time. That person has been prepared for a long time spiritually to come to that point of spiritual rebirth. So you cannot say that you are the spiritual parent of that person.

You are just the midwife. There's a difference between a midwife and a parent, or isn't there? Maybe you'll have to go back to first year to learn the difference between the midwife and a parent. Don't get things back to front.

It's as if nonsense is being seen as that which makes sense. It's as if nonsense is being seen as that which makes sense. It's as if nonsense is being seen as that which makes sense.

You have been preached to for a long time. You've heard God's word over a long period of time. Now maybe there's someone that helps you just to go that last step, to be born again spiritually.

Now will you take that person who's just the midwife, who just helped you there at the end, to be your spiritual parent, whereas the breast that suckled you, you reject that, and you reject that seed that was within you. Oh my, it becomes dark during midday, if that is your reasoning. Remember your leaders, those who led you.

Maybe that leader hasn't yet died, and yet you've already buried him because in your life he's dead to you. You've rejected him. But you take that other person as your spiritual parent because that person suits your desires.

That person goes along with your lusts and that which you would like to hear. Remember your leaders then, and thirdly, who spoke the word of God to you. Don't allow anyone to lead you who doesn't speak the word of God to you.

That person must go along with the word of God. You need to take the word of God, and then compare it and see, does it go along with what God's word says. In the book of Acts, there's a church.

I won't tell you what the name of that church was. It was said of them that they were a better church than other churches or another church because they investigated that which they were told to see whether it went along with the word of God, to see whether those men were true apostles of God or not. Now you also need to do that.

If you don't do that, you'll be led astray and deceived. You will be, otherwise you will be deceived. Take that which is being said, investigate it, examine it, see whether it goes along with the word of God, and

also that which is said to be the working of the Holy Spirit, because the working of the Holy Spirit will always be in line with God's word.

The Holy Spirit will never go and work contrary to God's word because the Bible and God's word is inspired by God's Holy Spirit. Take that which is being said, investigate it, examine it, see whether it goes along with the word of God, and also that which is said to be the working of the Holy Spirit, because the working of the Holy Spirit will always be in line with God's word. A person preaches to you, and examine it, see whether it is in accordance with God's word, and not only partially, but completely, everything, lest your faith is built on just somebody else's idea.

The fourth point. It is spoken about their faith, their faith, which goes along with their way of life. I once heard something very heartbreaking.

A person who preaches, and he really preaches, let me tell you that I know him, but he has made children pregnant, a child, a young girl. God says that we should consider the outcome of their life right till the end. Now this person, this man, hasn't yet reached the end, and yet along the way he's made this young girl pregnant.

Consider the outcome of their way of life, the outcome, the end, the result of their life, right till the end. Oh, we are sick and tired of people who believe and have faith, but not till the end of their life. Halfway, they give up.

No more 20 years, no more 50 years. The book of Hebrews says, blessed is the one who has a steadfast heart and spirit, who remains unmoved and unshaken, whether you see him after 10, 20, 30, 50 years, you see he's still exactly the same. He hasn't budged.

He's not like a chameleon that changes its colors. Amongst the disciples of our Lord Jesus, the 12, it was only Judas Iscariot, the son of perdition, who went lost because he loved money, but all the other 11 were faithful till the end, till death. And Demas, one of Paul's co-workers, he was like Judas to Jesus, he was to Paul, because he forsook the faith, he loved the world, and so he turned his back on Paul.

Let me tell you a secret. If I cross and travel through countries, and I get there, they ask me, is so-and-so still with you? Is that child so-and-so still there with you? And they will mention different names and number them and then they say, are they still with you? And I say, yes, they are still with me. And they say, are they still with you? And I say, yes, they are still with me.

And I say, yes, they are still with me. And they will reply and say, oh, that person, he stands like a rock, that person is like a pillar, yes, they are faced with problems and difficulties in their lives, but yet, they are persevering and they are more than conquerors in that. Their faith and their way of life, which is an example, a good example for us.

I've just touched the fringe of the matter. Now, if you don't have another service after this one, or other work that you need to go and see to after this, then go and take your Bible, go through this again, through these different points, chew the cud, meditate upon it. That is what a person does who is alive and well spiritually, and that person will profit by that.

But the person who just goes out and who just forgets about what he's heard and does other things, that person is a spiritual dullard, that person won't get anywhere. That person is just like rubble and just dirt that has to be swept out and won't get anywhere spiritually. The fifth point.

Now, I'm just combining two points here. Understand and consider the outcome or the end of their life. Now, I've already touched a little bit on the end of one's life.

Now, this word, understand or consider the outcome of their life, what does that mean, this word, understand or consider? Looking up to. Or diligently contemplating all over. Or contemplating all over.

Or contemplating all over. careful that your life will not be despised that there'll be nothing that anybody can point a finger at but that people will be able to look up to your life where now oh sure you'll go to whom Christ you are a Christian you need to live a life that is above reproach. Remember there in the letter to Timothy where Paul wrote to Timothy where it says you need to set an example and be an example.

Verse 12. Chapter 4 verse 12. First Timothy 4 verse 12.

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Now these words also directed at schoolchildren. Your life should be like precious gold.

It should shine brighter than the shining of the Sun. That it shouldn't just be like rubbish that people despise and look down upon. That's it.

An example for the believers not just for the unbelievers but especially for the believers. They are the ones who need this example who need this help because oh my how the believers stumble and fall into mistakes and so you need to set an example for them. Set an example in speech.

Sometimes one is shocked when one hears what some believers can say what comes out of their mouths and you ask but my does this person hear what he is saying? Oh my how blunt and how blind do those believers become when they forsake the faith and turn their back on God? Here is God's standard and God's requirement for us whether young or old and not just for the beginning of your life but right till the end. That you set an example for the believers in speech and in life, in your conduct and in love and in faith and in purity. Oh Christians set an example in purity even in the way in which you dress.

Not that the way in which you dress will cause the lusts of dogs to be woken up and to become alive or other wild animals but that people can see from your dress this is how the temple of the Most Holy God is adorned. That is sound you set an example in purity, absolute purity and holiness that by your dress not that you reveal your body to the eyes of men who are driven by their lusts and that their lusts are aroused. I was speaking about those dogs just now.

You need to set an example not to follow the example of the world in their fashions and the way in which they comb their hair and have their hairstyles that you follow after them. Oh you are to be pitied you who conform to the pattern of this world. The Bible says if anyone should love this world he's an enemy of God.

If you love the world you are an enemy to God. And you brethren who have a TV in your home you are destroying your children. You are destroying your youth, your children.

By exposing your children to the music and all the other things that are portrayed and shown on TV you are sacrificing your children on Satan's altar. You don't know what battle we are facing concerning your children after the holidays when they come back they're absolutely wild. And I've got the question concerning you parent have you got converted yet? Do you know God? Well don't cry in the end when your children go astray and they enter into gross sin because that which you have sowed that you will reap and it will only be the result of that which you have planted in your children.

Do you ever gather your children together and teach them from God's Word and remind them of examples of the men of God and also of those that have forsaken the faith and showing them what their outcome was? Do you ever do that? Where are your children today? Are they going to inherit heaven or are they going to It says consider the outcome of their way of life and I say that means to look up to. Are we living such a life that people can look up to us? We need to consider carefully and look at their whole life right till the end and the final result and outcome of their life. And do it in such a way as an artist An artist will take a model whatever the object is that he wants to paint whether it's a person whether it's flowers or some animal a lion that person will study that object in the smallest detail and then will paint that and in such a way we need to study in the smallest detail the lives of those who have gone before us.

Behold study the life of Jesus and the life of Paul and the testimonies of other children of God and that you then imitate them and until that picture that was in them is realized in you and in your life. But you look at TV that is what you are busy studying and what you are busy looking at and there you see immorality, adultery, homosexuality and that's why those things are sticking out their head in your life and why you come out now with the stars that you see over there. Your way of walking is now copying their way of walking and the fashions that you wear your clothing is copying their kind of clothing.

You know pastor Hum who's from Germany originally from Russia he came here as well to preach here. I loved his sermons and also his way of life. He would preach and say you are watching TV the Antichrist will come and through TV write his 666 on your forehead and I want to agree with him in that but even though it hasn't yet physically happened in that way but you already have the spirit of the Antichrist and the sign of the Antichrist in your body because of that which you watch.

And so remember from today on that the life and the standard of a child of God should be up there and not a low standard. My final point Consider their outcome or their end There isn't anything as wonderful as Psalm 73 But as for me, verse 2, my feet had almost slipped. I had nearly lost my foothold for I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked Now I've often noticed that here at the mission that when a child has forsaken the Lord, turned his back upon God, was maybe expelled from the school, that person goes away and after some time comes back in a smart new car and then all the young people, all the school children, all the young people, they flock around that person like flies flocking to dung and this person is now their hero and everything about this person is so wonderful.

But yet this, the person who wrote this psalm says, I nearly slipped, I found myself on a slippery place when I envied the arrogant and I saw the prosperity of the wicked and I say they are wicked through the lives that they lead, the spiritual life. And then verse 4, they have no struggles, their bodies are healthy and strong, they are free from the burdens common to men, they are not plagued by human ills. From their callous hearts comes iniquity, the evil conceits of their minds know no limits, they scoff and speak with malice, in their arrogance they threaten oppression, their mouths lay claim to heaven and their tongues take possession of the earth.

I say well we used to be under bondage but now we are free, we can do what we like, life was so wonderful and I said says when he beheld that he got confused when he saw how these arrogant people prospered. Now listen to verse 16 he says when I tried to understand all this it was oppressive to me 17 till I entered the sanctuary of God then I understood their final destiny Asaph says when he saw all this it confused him he couldn't understand it it was oppressive to him how is it possible that these people forsake God they turn their backs upon God they are arrogant they are callous and yet they are healthy they seem to prosper and everything seems to go well with them he says until I entered the sanctuary of

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