

The Battle Over the Testimony of Jesus

by Lance Lambert

Lance Lambert's sermon emphasizes the ongoing spiritual battle over the testimony of Jesus and the believer's role in overcoming through faith and self-denial.

Duration: 1:14:08

Scripture: Isaiah 14:12-14, Mark 13:32-37, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 6:10-13, 2 Peter 3:8-13, Revelation 3:15-20, Revelation 21:18-21

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "End Times"

Description

This sermon delves into the themes of awaiting and hastening the coming of the Lord, emphasizing the ongoing spiritual battle and the importance of surrendering our will to God. It explores the continuous enmity of Satan towards God, the significance of the testimony of Jesus, and the need for believers to be refined like gold, precious stones, and pearls to prepare the bride for the Lord's return.

Transcript

Would you turn with me to the second letter of the Apostle Peter to the passage that gave us the theme for this time, 2 Peter chapter 3, I'm going to read from verse 8. But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering to you, Lord, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. But according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence, that ye may be found in peace, without spot, and blameless in his sight.

Then I would like to read in the Ephesian letter in chapter 6 verse 10. Finally be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles or stratagems of the devil.

For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore, take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. And finally in the gospel of Mark in chapter 13.

Mark's gospel, chapter 13, from verse 32. But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.

It is as when a man sojourning in another country, having left his house and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore, for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all.

Watch. We have a word of prayer. Beloved Lord, we thank you that we're found here in your presence this evening, and we thank you that you have made provision for us in every need that we have.

We thank you for the anointing of power and grace, which you have made available to us through the finished work of our Lord Jesus. And into that anointing we stand by faith, for the speaking of your word, for the translating of your word, and for the hearing of your word. We pray that somehow you will get your word into our hearts.

Lord, we can be lost in charts and outlines and confused by a thousand and one things about the coming of the Lord, but the one thing that you have said again and again and again is take heed. Lord, help us to take heed. We are living in days of great crisis and of danger.

Lord, speak to us this evening. We ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Well, the theme of this conference, as you all well know, is waiting for and hastening the coming of the Lord. My responsibility tonight and tomorrow night is the battle over the Lord's coming. I think all of us brothers must feel that we need at least three or four sessions to cover these aspects of the Lord's coming.

Certainly I don't know how to pack into two nights the battle over the Lord's coming. Tonight I will talk about the testimony of Jesus and the battle that rages over that matter. Tomorrow I will speak about Israel and the battle that rages over the survival and the salvation of the house of Israel.

So, I won't say any more, but get into the matter straight away. The first thing I want to say is this. I want to underline the fact that Satan has an undying and continuous hatred for God, for the Lord Jesus, for the Godhead.

I don't know quite how it all began, but the word of God calls it the mystery of lawlessness, which whilst it applies to us human beings, actually goes right to the very beginning when something happened in the heart of Lucifer. And he fell, and with him he took one third of the angels of God. I'm not going to stay at that point, only to say that from that moment the pride was found in Lucifer.

The battle began. It has never ceased through the ages of time. It was Satan who captured Adam and Eve in the garden.

It is very interesting, I'm sure you ladies will not lynch me for saying this, that he went to Eve first. He apparently had watched Adam and Eve and decided that the only way to get Adam and Eve was first to somehow get Eve. And so the human story that we know began.

It does not matter where we look in the word of God, the undying and continuous aim of Satan is seen. We have four great kingdoms that are mentioned, all of which were founded in bloodshed. The Babylonian, the Persian, the Hellenic or Greek, and the Roman.

It is very interesting that in our Hebrew, both Old and New Testament, the word Babylon does not appear. We use the word Babel. In other words, we have right from the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis and chapter 11, we have a battle over mankind.

A huge battle that Satan is pursuing. Do you remember the story of Babel? Do you remember that they built a tower up to heaven or tried to? We don't really know what it is. We tend to think of them all in prehistoric days as somehow hairy kind of individuals that looked rather like apes and went around with cudgels.

But in fact, they were incredibly more intelligent than 21st century men. For one thing, they lived a good deal longer. Not that that's anything to go by, but they did live a good deal longer.

I've often wondered what they were doing in Babel when they built a tower that they said should reach to heaven. Was it the first skyscraper? Oh no, you say, that was in America. That was in the United States.

They couldn't have been as clever as that. Well, I'm not so sure about that. What were they trying to do? Was it the first space program? Oh, you say, don't be ridiculous.

The Russians and the States have had their space programs, and it's because we are clever people. They were nincompoops in those days. They had no understanding of these things.

They couldn't have possibly got a spacecraft off the ground anywhere. They couldn't even form one. We don't know.

All we know is one simple thing. They said, we will make a name for ourselves. And Satan put it into their heart to call it Bab-el, the gate of God.

In other words, it was the gateway into a golden millennium of fraternity, equality, and prosperity. So important was what they were doing that God said, if I don't stop them, nothing will be withheld from me. In other words, if the Lord had not brought this confusion of languages which we have today with the translation, we would have cloned sheep and dogs thousands of years ago, and possibly men and women.

We would have got a spacecraft to the moon, to Mars, and beyond. But God put a divine brake on Bab-el. It's interesting that when Nebuchadnezzar had his great dream in Daniel chapter two, he saw the history as a human being, a statue.

Interestingly, it was the statue of a man. But it was a statue, a monolith, a colossus. He couldn't walk, he couldn't think, he couldn't do anything.

It was a great idol. And it is very interesting that when Daniel saw the same four great empires, he saw them not as a human being, not as a monolith or a colossus, but as four wild beasts. Now, a wild beast

can be gentle and loving and sweet and kind, but at any single moment a wild beast can turn on you and kill you.

And it is very interesting that when God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar, it was as a human being without a heart. But when he spoke to Daniel, he revealed the real nature of those four great empires. Now, I'm not going to stay with the matter, but all I want to say is this was part of this undying and continuous hatred of Satan for God, for the living God.

It is interesting that when you come to the book of Revelation in chapter 13, you find that God revealed to John that there would arise a huge empire in the last days, in the very end of time. And that great empire would have features of Babylon, of Persia, of Hellenism, and of Romanism. And it is very, very interesting that we are living in the days, in my estimation, when this is happening.

This huge battle that we're in, is any child of God born of the Spirit not aware of a battle? Even the youngest among us, saved only for days, must be aware that you're born into warfare, you're born into battle. I have said for, I don't know how many years, ten years at least, that the United States was heading for judgment. And that the only way this final great empire could come would be when judgment fell upon the United States.

I saw it rather like the Titanic, sailing unbeknown into an iceberg. All lights on, dancing, bands playing, food being served, everything. And they had no idea that what the captain has said about the Titanic, even God could not sink it.

It was heading into an iceberg, and would sink within minutes. I don't think that I have to say this evening that that judgment has begun. It is interesting that in the book of Revelation and chapter 12, it speaks of the man-child being caught up to heaven and war on earth.

Satan cast out of heaven onto the earth with very little time left to him. And it says they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives even unto the death.

It seems to me that we, excuse my English, but it seems to me that we are in the penultimate attempt of Satan to frustrate God's eternal purpose. The penultimate attempt, meaning that at the end of the millennium, there is one last great attempt of Satan to unseat the Lord Jesus, to destroy the people of God, and to frustrate God's eternal purpose. Someone may well ask me, is Satan so dumb that he cannot see that everything he does, God overcomes? Can he not see that he is losing? Have you ever met a proud person? I mean, have you ever met a really proud person? Just arrogance seeps out of every pore of their body.

Have you ever met such a person? You will find them stubborn, you will find them self-willed, and you will find them often deluded. They believe against all the evidence and against all the facts that they can win. Satan is the very amazing example of pride.

If you read in Isaiah and chapter 14, we have an extraordinary picture of Satan. Many of you will know it. Here it is.

I'll read just these few verses, verse 12 and 13. How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, sun of the morning? How art thou cut down to the ground that didst lay low the nations? And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit upon the mount of congregation in the outermost parts of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.

I will make myself like the Most High. We are in this great battle. Praise the Lord.

At some point, I don't know when, we shall be caught up if we're ready. How far we have to go in this battle, this final battle, this penultimate battle, I don't know. But all I know is that the Word of God describes it as something fierce, terrible, such as has never happened before in the long and bloody history of mankind.

Now, I would like to stop for a moment. Perhaps you've fled. I'll stop for a moment because I don't want to bring a pall of death upon you all, depress you, demoralize you.

When you read that marvellous vision of John contained in Revelation chapter 4 and 5, it is something incredible. He sees a throne and round the throne 24 elders on thrones, and the four living creatures, the living ones. He says the throne is like an emerald.

Brother Stephen has already described this, so I won't go further, except to say that this lion, which is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, is not an antique title. It is not just looking back. It is not just gathering up the Old Testament.

It has something to do with the future. When John could have seen the little lamb standing in the throne as slaughtered from the beginning, but instead when the elder said to him, behold the lion, it was the lion. He introduced the king as the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, and John looked.

He knew this had to be Jesus. He looked and instead he saw not a lion, he saw a little lamb as slaughtered, standing in the throne. And then as he watched, he saw the whole great concourse bow and worship and heard that amazing song about the lamb, the little lamb.

With your blood you have purchased men and women of every tribe and tongue and nation and people and made them to be a kingdom and priests unto our God and they will reign forever. Now Stephen has already spoken about this. I am not going to go any further.

All I am going to say is this. When did the little lamb stand in the throne? I think it was at the ascension. He went up beyond the clouds as we heard this morning to the throne.

And the most quoted Psalm, Messianic Psalm in the Old Testament is the 110th Psalm. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet. Let the rod, the scepter of your strength go forth from Zion.

Rule thou in the midst, listen, rule thou in the midst of your enemies. This means that Jesus has won. It doesn't matter how great the battle is.

It doesn't matter if the world is filled with demons. It doesn't matter if there is an Antichrist that is all powerful and his government that seems all powerful. The fact of the matter is Jesus is involved at the right hand of the majesty on high.

He is not fighting. He is not struggling. If I may be so irreverent as to say he is not New Rock, New Rocket.

He has not any neurosis. He's not saying to himself, can they, will they? He is seated. Why? Because the father has said, I will make your enemies the footstool of your feet.

That means that all the work that he has completed and finished, which has yet to be established and all the victory and triumph that is within that finished work yet to be fulfilled. He is still seated at the right hand of God. No wonder dear child of God that those that overcame, overcame by the blood of the Lamb.

That is the finished work of the Lord Jesus. In that completed work, every single thing to turn you from a sinner into a saint, to turn you into some twisted human being, into a child of God with the likeness of the Lord Jesus. It's in the finished work.

The Holy Spirit never comes on any other basis. You can weep yourself for hundreds of years if you could so live so long and you would not obtain the Holy Spirit. Your zeal, your devotion, your good works, that will never obtain the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is given to us on the basis of the finished work of the Lord Jesus. In that full salvation, in that completed work is everything you and I need to overcome the world, the sin and the devil. Oh for eyes to see it.

Oh that the Spirit of God would open the eyes of our hearts to see what has happened. Jesus has won. The evidence that it is a finished work is that he is seated at the right hand of God and the Father has said, leave it to me.

May I put it so colloquially, leave it to me. I'll see that all the fruits of your finished work are fulfilled. Let it sink in or the enemy will get you.

He will bring, he will accuse you of this, he will accuse you of that, he will bring up this, he will bring up that, unless you learn how to hold and wield the shield of faith. Unless you understand what it is to stand. Dear, dear folks, so many Christians, they have no idea about this wrestling.

They have a tennis match. It's all very polite. You're nicely clothed in white, shorts and a racket and you send the ball over the other and it comes back and someone falls out and you know the rest of it.

For most Christians, their confrontation with the powers of darkness is really like a tennis match. Very, very pleasant, very correct, very nice, not the least bit vulgar. There is nothing more vulgar than wrestling.

For any of you young people who watch Smackdown, you know exactly what I'm talking about. There's something so vulgar about it. Half-naked men throwing one another out of the ring, up, down, jumping on one another, whole 12, 13 stone of flesh coming down on somebody else's 12, 13 stone of flesh, twisting their arm up their back, their leg up their back, throwing them out of the ring.

Isn't it interesting that the Apostle Paul used not some pleasant sport that would be so decent, but he said, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenly places. Well, most of us had never wrestled with principalities and powers and world rulers of this darkness. We have with hosts of wicked spirits.

The fact of the matter is he's talking about this huge battle that we are in. And that leads me to the heart of the matter. If Jesus is on the throne, and if the father is going to make his enemies his footstool, and if the father has said to him, let the rod of your strength go out of Zion, then whether it is the church or whether it is Israel, the victory is assured.

It leads me to say something more. That when they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, which means the finished work of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the complete full work that he has done. This is by the word of your testimony.

It is interesting that when you say with your lips, I am saved by the grace of God, a clarity comes into you. When you say with your lips, Jesus is Lord, a clarity comes into you. Have you ever noticed that? When we're all using things like maybe, perhaps, will you do this? Will you do that? There can be a great battle, but the moment you have the word of your testimony, the confession of your mouth being the expression of your heart, something happens.

Do you notice a third thing? It is very interesting how it is put. They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. The third thing is put differently, and they love not their lives, even unto death.

That is the heart of the matter. It is when we lay down our self-life, that is the heart of the matter. There can be no victory, no overcoming of Satan.

When you have a thriving self-life, when you have your own agendas, when somehow or other you've got your own will, then there can be no overcoming. It is the readiness to deny yourself, to take up your cross and follow him that spells victory. When you are prepared for his sake and to lay down your self-life, that is when you overcome.

Let me take this matter one step further. You've heard, we've all heard so much about the testimony of Jesus, and that's marvelous, because the heart of this matter is the testimony of Jesus. Dana said to us, and I find it very interesting, that the gospel of John is full of that Greek word translated witness, testify, testimony, and so on.

It meant a lot to John. What is the testimony of Jesus? Let me add my little piece to this. It's this, in the beginning was the word, and the word was God.

We've got our storm coming. This word, translated word, in Greek is logos. It means something articulated, in American English, verbalized.

Jesus is the unknown heart and mind of God, articulated. It is the unknown being of God, expressed. That is the testimony of Jesus.

Let's go one further. This gospel is built on eight I am's. I am the bread of life.

I am the resurrection and the life. I am the door. I am the good shepherd.

I am the true vine before Abraham was. I am. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

I cannot get away from the fact that John saw the unmentionable name of God. I am that I am, and linked it to everything that you and I need in salvation. And even more, if I may take it one step further, even more wonderful is this word.

I am the true vine. My father is the husband. Abide in me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine, neither can ye. Apart from me, ye can do nothing. Dana spoke about Josephus, about the great temple of Herod, how beautiful it was, how

magnificent it was.

Brother Christian spoke about it this morning, as one of the greatest temples in the Roman Empire. Josephus tells us that there was a huge vine of gold filigree that went up the side of the porch and covered the ceiling. He called it one of the great wonders of the world.

Jesus said, I am the true vine. How can he be the covenant people of God? How can he be the temple? How could he say, I am? Listen, this is the testimony of Jesus. If you are born of God, you are in Christ, and Christ is in you.

That's the church, nothing else. You are the church only in Christ, and when Christ is in you, that is the testimony of Jesus. It is not only the articulation of the mind and heart of God, it is also the fact that we are, he is the true vine.

He is the people of God. When we are joined to him, when we're born of God, the father positions us in Christ, and in Christ everything is found. When we're in Christ, Christ is in us.

The enemy hates the testimony of Jesus. He wants to keep people in darkness, in blindness, in disobedience, fettered in chains, in bondage. The amazing thing is that the testimony of Jesus, wherever he came, he brought freedom, salvation, healing, deliverance.

We've heard it from brother Stephen. It is the testimony of Jesus. What happened on the day of Pentecost? Oh, someone says, the Holy Spirit was poured out.

They spoke in tongues and prophesied. Yes, you're absolutely right. The Holy Spirit was poured out.

They did speak in tongues, they did prophesy, and many other gifts were manifest as well. There's no doubt about it. Shall I tell you what happened? It was the testimony of Jesus.

For the first time in the long and terrible history of mankind, that someone at the right hand of God was joined to a body on earth. 120, unknown for the most part people, were joined by the Holy Spirit to a head in heaven. Within hours they became 3,120.

Within weeks they grew to 5,000. Within a few more weeks and months they grew to 8,000. It was the most extraordinary thing the world has ever seen.

It came on the heart which was given through Moses. The Holy Spirit came to write that word on our hearts. He came not to visit us, not to use us.

He came to dwell in us. It's the testimony of Jesus. This is what Satan hates.

Why do you think he's followed this strategy of Babel, of Persia, of Hellenism with its humanism, and Romanism with its glorious communications and rule of law, and so forth. What do you really think? Why do you think Satan went in for it? In the old covenant it was my people. He tried to liquidate them.

He tried to blind them. He tried to fetter them. He tried to divorce them from God.

Again and again the whole story is the battle over Israel. When you come to the New Testament it is the church. Now the battle is over.

The battle has waged backwards and forwards. Stephen mentioned the words of the Lord Jesus, upon this rock, the mass of the rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell. I prefer that rendering of the King James actually to Hades.

The gates of hell because it is the whole idea of the government of death. The power of death. Hell.

I like it. Because it puts over to us what it's all about and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Thank God Jesus is the builder of the church.

Thank God that he is the custodian of the testimony. Thank God that the Holy Spirit has come to watch over this whole matter through the thousands of years of church history. We have seen it again and again in Bogomils, in Prasilianists, in Donatists, in Montanists, in the Albigenses, in the Prasilianists, in the Waldenses, in the Quakers, in the Puritans, in the Covenanters.

Again and again when everything has died, when it has become institutionalized, denominationalized, systematized and died. It's become religion. Then the head of the church by the Holy Spirit has initiated a new movement.

Think we've already had mentioned to us this morning the Moravians. Was there any more remarkable group? Or the early Wesleyans we call the Methodists. They were called in their heyday enthusiasts.

Slightly different. The Brethren, the Pentecostals, the Charismatic. It's right up to date.

It's Jesus. I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now I have to watch myself on time.

I get carried away in this kind of subject. This testimony of Jesus is something to do with the bride making herself ready. Isn't it interesting that Babel comes back from chapter 13 and onwards in Revelation.

Babylon. Magnificent music, architecture, literature, merchandise, big business, everything you and I are used to. And at the end of it, the angels, may I put it somewhat irreverently again, hanging over the banisters of heaven, shouting at the top of their voice, Hallelujah! For the Lord God, the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad for the bride hath made herself ready. The wife of the Messiah, Jesus, has made herself ready. What a battle.

Well when I look at the churches, there's no need for me to say anything because Dana said it all. But when you look at the churches now, it's exactly like Herod's Temple. No glory, but a lot of beauty, a lot of organization.

It is amazing to me that you can have wall-to-wall carpeting and ministers of music and ministers of youth and ministers for the old people and ministers for the very young. And I don't know what else. And this church never knew the judgment was coming to the United States.

It is Laodicea, the head of the church, the savior of the body, is outside knocking on the door. I have called it the most plaintive word that Jesus ever spoke. If any man here, my boy, this church of born-again believers had everything.

The Lord's Table, the Bible study, the prayer meeting, probably evangelistic outreach, they had it all. The elders, deacons, never knew that Jesus about whom they were singing and of whom they were studying

was not within. He was outside.

He doesn't say, if any of you, plural, will hear my voice. He says, if any man hear my voice. That was his estimate of that church.

They did not hear the voice of the master. And he reckoned that it would only be perhaps one here and one there. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and will sup with him and he with me.

This great battle we're in has this testimony of Jesus at the heart of it. Satan knows that the moment the bride makes herself ready, the end will come. That leads me to say the last thing.

They take me a little time, but still, this evening. How can we hasten the coming of the Lord? That's a good question. I have to explain myself on this.

The Greek word is undoubtedly hastening, but my American Standard Version found it very difficult to put hastening in. So it says earnestly desiring. And I don't know how you get that out of the Greek word, but somehow they felt justified in doing that.

I noticed that all the modern versions, including the newer American Standard Bible and all the others put hastening. But how can you hasten? Listen dear child of God. Jesus came not early, not late when he was born and placed in a manger in Bethlehem.

Jesus came into the garden of Gethsemane not early, not late. It was an appointed time. It was Passover.

He died at nine o'clock on Passover day. It was an appointed time. He rose from the dead on the third day in Passover week.

The first fruits being weighed. Shavuot, 49 days later, the Holy Spirit came on the appointed time. Now we have this by Peter.

Hastening. If everything else has been fixed and appointed, wouldn't the Lord's coming be fixed and appointed? Here we have an amazing word. You all know it.

Of that hour and day knoweth no one, neither the angels nor the Son, but the Father. Why did the Lord Jesus say that? Why is it only the Father who can say, let the whole thing roll? It came to me in a flash of light only a few days ago, because I am by nature a Calvinist. I know that shocks lots of people, but I believe that everything is fixed.

Everything is sovereign. I don't believe God is willy-nilly laid back, sort of scratching your head and thinking, well, maybe I'll do it. Maybe.

No, no, no. But in a flash it came to me. The city of God, the capital city of that great kingdom coming, the bride, the wife of the Lamb, is produced out of gold, we heard about the old standard, precious stone and pearl.

There is no other material. They are produced out of only three materials, gold, precious stone and pearl. This is how now I see it in a moment.

What is the Holy Spirit to do if the material is not coming in to finish the work? The only thing the Lord can do is delay the return. Do you understand what I'm trying to say? I'm really just simply saying this. Thank God for all the gold and the precious stone and the pearl that has gone up from every move of the Holy Spirit in the history of the church.

If you take the first generation, you have gold, precious stone and pearl. The same things came alive in each first generation of the Holy Spirit's moving through church history. When the the Lord Jesus at the throne of God letting in fulfillment of the word of the Father, let your scepter, let the rod of your strength go forth out of Zion.

Every time he's taken the initiative and there's been a great move of the Spirit of God, there's been gold, precious stone and pearl. None of it is lost. Every bit of it is stored in heaven.

It's part of the city, the New Jerusalem. It's part of the blind. Now, dear friends, think for a moment.

Think. If that is true, then to complete the city, there has to be gold, precious stone and pearl from our generation. If the bride is to make herself ready, there has to be this gold and this precious stone and this pearl.

The gold speaks of the nature of the Lord Jesus. The precious stone speaks of the beauties and excellences of the Lord Jesus. The pearl is given to very few people.

It is inexplicable suffering that produces a pearl. Listen to the words of the Lord. How loving the Lord is, how gracious the Lord is.

He doesn't just trash the church at Laodicea. He says your estimate of yourself is entirely wrong. You're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined in the fire. How can we buy gold? It's the nature of Jesus. He's given to us as God's unspeakable gift.

The only way you buy that gold is to experience. That's why we have tribulations. That's why we have difficult circumstances.

That's why sometimes we have relationships that are incredibly difficult. The Lord is working something. He says, and white garments that you may be clothed that your nakedness may not appear.

So through experience we have to learn how to hide in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. And I shall to anoint your eyes that you may see. Have you ever been in a situation where you're so confused and hopeless you don't know where to turn? And then the Lord has spoken.

I could give many instances, not for myself but for many others, of when they have been at a dead end and not known where to turn, their wits end. The Lord has given them eyeselves. You know the situation doesn't change but you change.

The circumstances may remain but you are a different person. You are an overcomer. The overcomer in you is overcome.

Dear child of God, this battle is going to get worse and worse. I don't have any doubt about it myself. Now I may be wrong and if I am I'm very happy that I'm wrong and that all that we're going through at present is

just a hiccup.

And we will return to the never never world that we were in a year or two ago. I don't think so. I think you have a president who is going to lead you into change after change after change.

I think that the world is going to follow in change after change. I believe that the European Union, 27 countries of over 460 million people, is bound to become one of the greatest powers in the earth. I won't say more about that.

The battle is over the testimony. Now I close. Some weeks ago, some months ago, I was asked to speak in what is often called the Evangelical Cathedral in the Midlands and north of England.

It was founded by Dr FB Meyer, Melbourne Hall in Leicester. Leicester is now a Muslim city. There are mosques everywhere.

The prayer, cry, call from the mosques is heard all over that great city of Leicester. I spoke in the end of it. The leader, the pastor, had been for 34 years there.

He said, dear brother, you stood in the pulpit where C.T. Studd spoke before he went to China, and then India, and then Africa. And he said, Dr FB Meyer was there on that occasion. He was leading that company of believers.

And in the vestry afterwards, he said to C.T. Studd, he was very impressed by this young man, this Cambridge graduate, who was leaving everything famed, had given away a fortune in money, and was absolutely devoted to the Lord Jesus. And he said to him, tell me, what is the secret of your life and your ministry? And C.T. Studd thought for a moment, and then he said, I have surrendered my will to God. That was the key to a life which turned the Congo upside down.

When he was dying, Norman Grubbs said to me, it was his father-in-law. He said, as he was dying, he said, I have many weaknesses, many failings, I have upset believers everywhere, and my co-workers. But he said, there is one thing that I can say, of all that the Lord has told me to do, I have done willingly.

That to me is an overcomer. To be able to do the will of God, remember the words of the apostle Paul, I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritually intelligent worship. And then he said, and be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

You young person, you may have an agenda for your life. You older person, you may be somewhat depressed or demoralized. Maybe you've got the middle age spread, that sort of is a curse, spiritually.

Lukewarm. The key is not to have the Lord as your supporter, your blesser, the cleaner up of your messes. It is to surrender your will to God.

If you are prepared, even in this place, just to bow your head and heart and say, Lord, here I am, you know me, I don't try to be a facade or anything else, will you please take me as I am? I surrender my will to you. I believe the Lord will take you at your word. There's no other way.

We want the Lord to come. Why is he waiting? Why is it that all through these years he still waits for that day when the Father will say, let's get going. Is gold being produced in your life? Is precious stone is poor?

Only the Lord can challenge you and me, but we're in a time of great crisis and a danger.

It's wonderful that the coming of the Lord is nearer than when we first believed. But we need him. We don't know what lies ahead of us.

Some people want to be taken just to escape. They want to just to escape the things that will come upon the face of the earth. That doesn't seem to me to be a valid reason.

You and I need to make the Lord not only Saviour, but Lord. Then we will be safe. We will be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/A0212tLsGl8.mp4>

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