

Judgment to Come Pt 2

by Martyn-Lloyd Jones

The sermon emphasizes the importance of righteousness and temperance, the reality of judgment to come, and the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation.

Duration: 29:39

Scripture: John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Acts 17:30, Acts 24:24-25, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, 1 John 5:19

Topics: "Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a scene of indulgence and pleasure, where people are eating, drinking, and dancing into the early hours of the morning. He emphasizes that every good thing must come to an end and questions whether people truly understand their need for God's forgiveness and salvation. The preacher warns against the modern philosophy of living only for the present and disregarding the concept of judgment to come. He urges listeners to repent, confess their sins to God, and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. The sermon concludes with a mention of a sequel to the story, which is not elaborated upon but is said to make the listener's position even more urgent.

Transcript

When their friends did exactly the same thing in principle, when a friend of theirs would enter into another man's married life and home and steal the affections and even the life of another man's wife, they said nothing. Why shouldn't we, they said? You see, we can get eloquent about righteousness, but if you don't apply it in detail in terms of temperance, your interest in righteousness is of no value at all. You see, here's a man, Felix, he's a governor, he sits on the bench, he judges cases.

Yes, but what's he doing in his personal life? It's all very well to be interested in righteousness, but is he righteous in his personal dealings? Is he temperate? Is he self-controlled? Is he disciplined? Now, this is what Paul reasoned about. Let me put it like this in its modern form. Don't you see how this is so needed at this present time? The gospel is that which reminds us that we are men.

Men and women, not animals. What's the difference between a man and an animal? Well, it's quite simple. The animal is controlled by its instincts, by its desires.

It's got a desire for food and for drink and for sex. And the stimulus comes and the animal responds. It's quite right.

It's perfectly right in doing so. God created the animal. He put the instincts and the desires into the animal.

And when the animal obeys its desires and its instincts and its impulses, it's behaving according to the law of its nature. That's an animal. What's the difference between an animal and a man? Well, you see, the Bible teaches us this, that the man, he has a body.

And in this body there are instincts and impulses and desires, as with the animal. The desire for food, the desire for drink, the desire for sex. There's nothing wrong in sex.

It's God who's created it. And he's put it into our bodies. There is nothing wrong in all these impulses.

Well, what's the difference between a man and an animal? Oh, it's this, that man is not only a body, he's got a soul and a spirit. And because of this, his whole position is different from that of the animal. Man has got reason.

He's got understanding. He's got the power of judging himself, condemning himself, evaluating himself. He can look on at himself.

The animal can't. Man has got this great power of reason and this spiritual element that links him to God. And because of this, man is not to be governed by his instincts and impulses and desires.

He is to govern them. He doesn't crucify them. That would be quite wrong.

The Roman Catholic Church went wrong, and that with their monks and their nuns and their monasteries and all the rest of it. No, no, man isn't to put an end to these things, but he's to control them. He's to discipline them.

He's to be temperate. He's to exercise this great quality of temperance. And the whole tragedy of the world tonight is this, that men and women are not behaving as such.

They're behaving like animals. They want a thing and they immediately take it. They don't stop to think.

They don't reason. Any impulse must be obeyed. Any instinct must be followed.

And so you've got license in temperance. No discipline in the home, no discipline in schools, no discipline in colleges, no discipline in industry, no discipline anywhere. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes.

If I want a thing, I take it. Why shouldn't I? That's the argument. Now that is the lack of temperance.

So the apostle reasoned with Felix and Drusilla about righteousness and about temperance. He reminded them that they were a man and a woman. They were not animals.

They were not to be governed by their lower instincts. They were to govern them and to control them and to use them to the glory of God, righteousness and temperance. And then thirdly, judgment to come.

What's this? Well, this is the thing that you never read about in your newspapers. You never hear a politician talking about judgment to come. Alas, you very rarely hear it in the so-called Christian church even today.

It's gone out. And that's why the church is as she is. And that's why the world is as it is.

Men and women have forgotten judgment to come. What's the modern idea? The modern idea is this. This is the only life.

And when we die, well, it's like the death of an animal, the death of a flower. Death is the end. There's nothing else.

And we've never heard it so good. We've all got motor cars, television. Marvelous.

Never have it so good. Affluent society. Isn't life wonderful? Oh, yes, of course.

It was all right for people to listen to preaching in the past. Life was so hard in this world that they looked forward to some wonderful world beyond the skies. But now we've put an end to all that.

And this is the only life. And this is the only world. And they're lying to the fool.

They don't think of the moral. Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. This is the philosophy of the modern man.

And what he needs to be told about is judgment to come. What is this? Well, this is the great theme of the Bible, from beginning to end. That God has made man, as I've told you, in his own image and likeness.

Man is a responsible being, whether he believes in God or whether he doesn't. He is held responsible by God. And every one of us has got to die.

Now this is the thing, my friends, that people don't like hearing. And this is why mankind is so foolish. Every one of us has got to die.

Every man who lives is born to die. It is appointed unto all men once to die. And after death, the judgment.

This is the greatest compliment to men. That he's not an animal. He's a responsible being.

And God is going to demand a reply to his questions. Every one of us will have to stand before God. You see, I don't like this.

I don't believe it. Do what you like, my dear friend. I'm simply telling you the teaching of the Bible.

Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and all these apostles. If you think you know better, well, all right, you carry on. It's your responsibility.

I'm telling you what the Son of God preached. What the Apostle Paul preached. Judgment to come.

And I can hear him speaking on this to Felix and Drusilla. And I can hear him saying something like this to Felix. Felix, you're the Roman governor.

I'm the prisoner. I was in court before you the other morning. I've been there several times.

You were the judge. And I'm the prisoner. Let me remind you, there's a day coming when you will be the prisoner.

And God will be your judge. And as I have to give an account to you, you will have to give an account to God. Every one of us will have to.

God will say to us, I gave you a soul. What did you do with it? Did you ever think about it? I gave you reason. Did you use it? I meant you to control yourself.

Not to be an animal, but to live like a man. How have you lived? I made you that you might love me with the whole of your being. Have you done so? Now, my dear good friends, the tragedy of the modern world is this, and it's the cause of all lawlessness and all the troubles in every realm and department of life at this present time, is that men and women do not realize they're living their lives under God.

Our times are in His hands. You don't know whether they're going to be alive tomorrow morning. But I can tell you this, that the day is coming when every one of us will have to go, and then we shall have to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad.

Judgment to come. That's the theme of Christianity. Not apartheid, not Vietnam, not any one of these things, but righteousness, temperance, judgment to come.

But thank God, the message of the gospel doesn't stop at that point. If it did, there'd be no hope for any one of us. There is none righteous.

No, not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The whole world lieth in wickedness.

Thank God. What I've been talking about, righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, is but the introduction to the gospel. And they sent for Paul, asking to speak about what? The faith in Christ.

Here's your gospel. But let me emphasize this. I can tell you why people don't listen to the gospel and won't accept it.

They've never seen any need of it. What's missing in the church today is the introduction to the gospel. It's no use getting up and saying to people, come to Jesus.

They say, we don't need your Jesus. We've never had it so good. Why should they come to Christ? You know, there's only one reason that brings a man to Christ truly.

What's that? That he's terrified. That he's alarmed about his eternal destiny. And he flies to him.

How I to the fountain fly. Wash me, Savior, or I die. The faith in Christ.

Oh, thank God that there is still such a message. The day of grace is not ended. The faith in Christ.

What is it? Well, this is the great theme, as you know, of the New Testament. And I can hear Paul expounding it to Felix and Drusilla. He said to them, look here, though you know you're unrighteous and intemperate, and though you know you're not fit to die and to stand before God, let me tell you, says Paul, that God, in spite of all that's true of you and of all of us, that God has so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Listen, says Paul. God has sent his only Son into the world. What for? To justify the ungodly.

I'm here to tell you, says Paul, that you'll never put yourselves right, but that if you recognize your sin and your hopelessness and your helplessness and believe that the Christ of God can save you, that he's died for your sins, risen for your justification, if you but believe in him, have faith in him, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Your sins will be blotted out. You'll be made children of God.

You'll be given a new nature and a new hope. He'll put his Spirit into you, and he'll make you heirs of his eternal bliss. That's the faith in Christ, that the way of salvation is not that you do a number of good deeds or that you're better than somebody else, but that you see you're a hopeless, wretched, vile sinner and that you believe that Christ has died for you and that you're offered freely by the grace of God not only forgiveness and reconciliation, but as I say, a new birth, a new start, a new life, and an everlasting hope of joy eternal in the presence of God.

The faith in Christ. My friends, that's the Christian message, showing us the need, showing us the perfect provision that God himself has provided for us in the person of his own dearly beloved Son. Very well.

That's our second lesson. Oh, how I wish I could go on to say before I sit down that as the result of hearing this sermon on righteousness, temperance, judgment to come, and the work of Christ, and salvation through grace by faith, and justification by faith only, oh, how I wish that I could tell you that hearing this, Felix and Drusilla repented and believed the gospel and went on their way rejoicing. But unfortunately, I can't tell you that because they didn't do it.

What the story tells us is that hearing these things, Felix trembled and stopped Paul and sent him back to the cell and said, I'll hear you on some other occasion concerning these matters. They rejected the gospel. They refused it.

Why did they do so? Here is my third and my last point. Why is it that men and women reject this gospel? Do you know, my friends, this to me is the most urgent problem in the world tonight. Much more serious than the pound and what's happening to it.

Much more serious than unemployment and all these other problems. The world is hurtling itself to destruction. There is only one thing that can save it, this gospel.

Yet it's the one thing the world rejects and thinks it's clever in doing so. Why do men and women reject the gospel? Is there someone here tonight who has rejected it until this very moment? Why do you reject the gospel? Ask people that and the answer they'll give you is this. Oh, the men will say, it's perfectly simple.

I reject this gospel because I'm a 20th century man and because I've got a mind, I've got reason, I've got brains, I've got an understanding. Your religion, it's sentimental, it's slop, as I was saying at the beginning. It stops people thinking.

It's been the brake on the forward march of the human race. It's been the dope, the opium of the people. People have been drugged.

They've lived in slavery almost simply because they were drugged by the gospel. They didn't think. But now we've fought and we've emancipated ourselves and I reject your gospel because I reason, because I think, because I've got brains.

My dear friend, if I've got nothing but this one story, I could easily prove to you how that is hopelessly wrong. Because if you tell me that the reason why people reject the gospel is that they have great brains and understanding and can exercise logic, well then what you're telling me is this, that Felix and Drusilla had greater brains than the apostle Paul. Paul believed the gospel.

They rejected it. And you're asking me to believe that they've got greater brains than Paul, one of the greatest brains the world has ever known or ever will know. It's ridiculous.

No, no. People don't reject the gospel because they've got brains and reason. I'll tell you why they reject the gospel.

Because they cannot reason or because they won't reason. Had you ever thought of that? Look at the way people in this country and other countries are rejecting the gospel tonight. Had you realized this, I wonder? If only everybody in this world tonight lived according to the teaching of the Bible, there'd be no war in Vietnam, there'd be no apartheid in South Africa, there'd be no drunkenness, no divorce, no theft and robbery and pilfering, none of the tragedy of the modern world.

If only people believed this gospel, the most elevating influence the world has ever known or ever will know. But they reject it. Why? Reason? No, no.

It's irrationality. It's the lack of reason. The world is mad.

People are cutting their own throats. You can see them doing it in almost all departments of life at the present time. They will not think.

They're governed by desire, by lust. It's the opposite of reason. That's why people reject the gospel.

Felix and Drusilla acted contrary to reason. But they not only acted contrary to reason, they acted contrary to their own consciences. And any man who rejects this gospel is defying his own conscience as Felix did.

How do I know that Felix went against his conscience? Quite simple. Felix trembled. Why did he tremble? Because he knew that what Paul was saying was right.

He knew he was wrong in living in adultery. He knew what Paul was right, but he liked what he was doing. So he violates his conscience.

He stops Paul. And any man who rejects this gospel is going against his conscience. You know that when you deny the belief in God and in Christ and the Christian way of life, you know that this is right and that you are wrong.

Why do you go and do it? Because you love the darkness and hate the light. Instead of loving the light and hating the darkness, you're attacking and violating your own conscience. And the third element in the rejection of the gospel is this.

Felix not only went against reason and against conscience, he even strove against and fought and quenched the Holy Spirit. When this man Paul preached, he was preaching in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. And the spirit of conviction was there.

And Felix trembles. The Spirit of God is dealing with him, but he doesn't want to give in. And so he quenches the Spirit.

He struggles. He stops the preacher. And you know, I've known many people do this.

People have told me many times that prior to their conversion they'd come under conviction, but they could see the consequences of giving in. They'd have to go home and tell their family. They wondered what would be said in the office or in the farm or in the factory the next morning or in the college or the school.

And they deliberately shook it off. They opened a hymn book and turned it over or they began speaking to their friends. They fought the Spirit of God that was leading them to repentance and to conversion and salvation.

Deliberately resisted the Spirit. It's a terrible thing to do. But that is what every unbeliever does.

That's the explanation of unbelief and the rejection of the Gospel. There are other elements which are put before us here. What a terrible thing unbelief is.

What a debasing thing the life of sin is. Did you notice what we were told here about this governor? Let me read it to you. He hoped, Felix hoped also, that money should have been given him of Paul that he might lose him.

Have you ever heard such a thing? Here's the Roman governor and he hopes that the poor prisoner is going to give him money. A man in such an exalted position, the representative of His Imperial Majesty, hoping to get money from an impecunious prisoner. Why is this? I'll tell you.

That's the result of a life of sin. He was keeping two wives. And if you start playing that game, you'll soon be in financial trouble.

You go into the life of sin. You'll soon get yourself in trouble financially. Look at the poor prodigal son.

All his money had gone. He had plenty of companions while he had money in his pockets. But then the money finished and then no man gave unto him.

And he's in the field with the swine and the husks. That's what a life of sin does to you. And here's a great man in a great position hoping to get money from a poor prisoner.

What a disgraceful thing a life of sin is. Even further, worse, after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix's room. And Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Well, this is amazing. Why does he need to show any pleasure to the Jews? He's the governor and they're the conquered people. But he leaves Paul bound.

He should have set him at liberty. He had no business ever to have arrested him and to have kept him in the prison. But now he goes to another post.

And instead of setting Paul at liberty, in order to please the Jews, he leaves Paul bound instead of setting him free. Why did he do it? In order to have the good opinion and the favor of the Jews. Isn't it pathetic? A man with such power, sensitive to popular applause, to popular approval.

You're Hitlers, you know. Great men striding the world like a colossus. Oh, how anxious he was to have the plaudits of all the people.

They even organized hand clapping. This is sin. It fools men and makes them fool themselves.

Men and women who reject the gospel are irrational. What they do is to put the opinion of men before the opinion of God. They put time before eternity.

The pleasures of this passing evil world before the joys of everlasting and eternal bliss. That's the cause of unbelief. Are you in that position? My friend, have you rejected this gospel? Are you ready to die and to

face God without believing in Christ? Have you learned the lesson of Felix and Drusilla? Here it is speaking to you.

Showing you the nature of the gospel. Showing you the only reason why men and women reject it. God grant that we all may have learned this lesson.

Will you bear with me for a moment if I tell you the sequel to this story? It'll make your position still more urgent. It's not here, but it's in the secular history books again. Do you know what happened after this? I'll tell you very briefly.

Quite soon after this event, Pallas, the twin brother of Felix, fell out of favor with the emperor. Why? Nobody knows. That's the sort of people tyrants are.

You may be the great favorite today. You'll be on the scrap heap tomorrow with no reason at all. Suddenly, the emperor who'd exalted Pallas threw him down.

And because Felix had got his post because of his brother, when Pallas went down, Felix went down as well. Lost everything. He'd held on to it and rejected the gospel.

But now he's lost what he held on to. And there he is. What about Drusilla? Well, this is an extraordinary story.

In A.D. 79, Drusilla and her son were spending their winter in the famous city of Pompeii. You've read, perhaps, the book *The Last Days of Pompeii*. You may have visited the ruins of Pompeii, just to the south of Naples, as you know, in Italy.

Well, now, in the first century, Pompeii was the place to go to to spend your winter, if you were anybody, if you'd got money or position. They didn't go to the south of France, then still less to the Bahamas, but they went to Pompeii. And it was a marvelous place.

It was a wonderful climate, of course, to start with. And the wily, clever, able men had seized their opportunity, built gorgeous palaces and buildings, everything to attract tourists and the people who'd got money to spend the winter in the sunshine. And it was the thing to do.

And amongst others who'd gone there this winter were Drusilla and her son. And halfway through the season, every year, there was always what they called a gala night, generally about halfway through the season. And there was a great banquet.

And after the banquet, great dancing. And everybody looked forward to this great occasion. Well, it came along in A.D. 79, the great night, the night of knights.

And everybody was agreed that this really had surpassed and excelled anything that had ever been done before. The ladies had never been so beautifully dressed. The experts in this matter had rarely excelled themselves.

The men, of course, were suitably attired and in attendance. Everybody agreed that the chefs really had quite surpassed everything they'd ever produced. The meat was cooked to perfection, vegetables, everything perfect.

And the wine, oh, vintage. The cellars had never produced anything so stimulating, so enjoyable. And there they were eating and drinking and talking.

And the band was playing, and the maestro had selected the most perfect pieces. And the orchestra seemed to be inspired. And everybody was saying, they were all saying, well, we really have never known anything like it.

It's beyond all our wildest dreams. And on and on they went, eating and drinking and talking and listening to the music. And then at the end of the banquet, they stopped at the dancing.

And the drinking continued. And on and on it went into the early hours of the morning and beyond. More dancing, more drinking.

But at long last it came to an end. The band stopped. Every good thing must sooner or later come to an end.

And here they were, they lurched as best they could to their beds or their couches or their sofas and cast themselves upon it all, agreeing that it had been the night of nights. This was life with a capital L. This was the way to live. When suddenly, and without a second's warning, Mount Vesuvius, just at the back of Pompeii, suddenly erupted and began belching forth its molten lava and completely destroyed in but a few seconds the whole of Pompeii and its residents.

The great buildings were reduced to rubble. You can still go and visit them. And all the great people who were wintering there suddenly died and passed from time to eternity.

And in their midst, Drusilla and her son. She had heard the gospel, which had told her, Change and decay in all around I see. Set not your affections on things on earth.

Moth and rust of corrupt. Thieves break through and steal. Set your affections on things above.

Have your treasure in heaven. She had heard all this and the argument and Paul had reasoned. She had rejected it all in her irrationality, going against her conscience and against her spirit.

She had held on to the joys and the pleasures of time and had rejected the glory and the joy of eternity. But in a moment, in a flash, she has to leave all her worldly pomp and show and ceremony. Can't take any of it with her.

And is ushered in utter nakedness into the presence of her God and of her Maker. Fading is the worldling's pleasure. All his boasted pomp and show, solid joys, and lasting treasure, none but Zion's children know.

My dear friend, have you learned the lesson of Felix and Drusilla? Have you seen the relevance of this gospel to you? Have you seen that it isn't about a party of Vietnam but about you? The way you're living, the fact you've got to die and stand before God, that you've got a soul, and that there is eternity ahead of you. Have you heard it? Have you trembled? Have you seen your need, your loss, your helplessness, your hopelessness? But oh, above all, do you know and have you believed that in spite of all your folly and your sin, that God has so loved you that He sent His only Son into this world to live and to die for you, that He might forgive you freely, blot out all your sins and transgressions, give you a new life, make you a new man, give you a new start, and make you a joint heir with Christ for the glories of eternal bliss? May God bring all who have never learned this lesson to see it now, and you show that by repenting, confessing

your sin, not to me but to God, acknowledging your hopelessness and asking Him to enable you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior and Redeemer.

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