

This Is Our Hour

by Thaddeus Barnum

Thaddeus Barnum emphasizes the empowerment of the laity and the urgent call for the church to rise and be a light in dark times.

Duration: 26:49

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the church and its role in the world. He encourages believers to rise above their excuses and be a light to the next generation. The speaker emphasizes the need for unity and support within the church, rather than tearing each other down. He also highlights the empowering of the laity and the importance of knowing Jesus in order to fulfill God's calling. The sermon references the current cultural and political climate, expressing concern over the lack of honesty and morality. The speaker concludes by reminding listeners of the hope found in Job's declaration that his Redeemer lives and will ultimately bring justice.

Transcript

Almighty God, Almighty Father, we come before you this morning with thanksgiving and praise for the sending of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to meet us, to know us, to rescue us, to intercede on our behalf, and to send your Holy Comforter upon us. Lord, we pray, by the grace of your Holy Spirit, open your word that we might behold you, see you, know you, love you, and be empowered to serve you as long as we have breath. For this we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. I bid you good morning. I would like to take as the text this morning from Luke in chapter 20, if you could go there, the gospel reading that we had for today.

It is a joy for my wife and I to be with you. We have come to attend the Synod and Conference of this past weekend, where I was asked to speak on the empowering of the laity, the empowering of the laity. And this was the theme of the conference, and I can think of no greater theme in our day than that one.

Can you not see the culture and the times that we're in? We're on the eve of the election, are we not? What a confusing time. Why the scandals? Why the corruption? Where is honesty gone? Where is honor and dignity gone? What have our children and grandchildren had to see and had to hear in these months? Things that never should have been done, never should have been spoken out loud. We are watching the

morals of our country be ruled by the polls.

Our Supreme Court tells us what morality is in our country. When life begins, what marriage is, they're beginning to dictate these things. What was immoral back in the day has become moral by legislation so that you fear that what is immoral today for our children will become utterly moral.

Does it bother you? Does it concern you? The confusions, the darkneses amongst the racial tension in our country, the concerns over issues of authority, and all of it is just a darkness has come, a confusion has come. We've lost something essential, have we not? Have we not? And somewhere inside this is our hour. This is where the church in the dark has always shone as a light.

This is the time when our Lord sent the church out in the early days. Out, you'll find it in Revelation 2 and 3. You'll find it in the epistles. These were churches in Asia Minor.

The places were darkness, the occult, the cult, the worship of the emperor, all kinds of things. You had to bow before the emperor and worship the emperor to maintain your job. And Christians could not bow down and they suffered persecution and he sent us out as lights into a dark world.

Our brothers and sisters are suffering all over the world today. First Peter 5.9 tells us to remember them. My friends, that suffering is coming to us.

When our sophomores in school wear a cross upon them and bear the name of Jesus and are mocked and ridiculed, when our teachers cannot pray for our students in the public schools, when government officials have to be quiet about Jesus, my dear friends, something's got to change and it's got to start with us. Why? Because our children need to know. Because the secular world is so strong and the devil behind it and somebody's got to raise up and say, you cannot have my children, you cannot have my grandchildren.

But I have come to a grave problem. I was quite moved by this conference. We have lost the fundamental understanding of what laity is.

The definition of laity. There are two working principles. What does laity mean to you? The working principle from the Bible is quite simple.

The word is laos. It means people. The laos of God.

The people of God. We hear it at the table. The gifts of God for the people of God.

The gifts of God for the laity. The people of God. You hear it in the epistle of first Peter chapter one, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.

That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the laos, the people of God. Now you are the laity.

Once you had not received mercy, now you've received mercy. Who are the laity? We are the laity together. There has been in our world too long a division between the clergy and the laity.

Where the clergy are the first class citizens, and this is the testimony we heard in our midst as a person who belongs to Jesus rose in this assembly, in this place, standing right there. He rose in the assembly. Here is a man of God who knows our Savior.

He is not ordained to the order of deacon or priest or bishop. He is just a layman. Just a layman.

He testified, I feel like a second class citizen. Clergy have pushed down the people of God to be raised up, and that is wrong. How do we hear the word laity in the secular culture? Not the biblical laos.

In the secular culture, Google it. Layman, it's simply this, a person without specialized knowledge. And so in the medical world, you've had this experience.

You've been around a bedside, have you not? You've been through all the things in medical ease, and you stand there as a deer in the headlight, feeling entirely ignorant. And you have to say, look, speak English. Tell me it.

I'm only a layman. I'm just a common person. I'm an ignorant person, but my loved one, what's going on really? What's happening? The other day, we were in a men's Bible study in Columbia, South Carolina, and we got into our small groups.

And a man looked at me and another person who happened to be ordered in the order of a priest. Oh, he said, I'm just a layman. I said, what do you mean you're just a layman? I said, do you know Jesus? He said, I've been a Christian for 40 years.

He was on the mission field. He had been serving the Lord. Oh, he's just a layman.

My dear friends, I hate to say this, but what the problem is, is that the clergy for too long have had specialized knowledge because the clergy have gone to seminary. The devil can go to seminary, can he not? And do better than any of us. Do you want somebody standing in your pulpit that's been to seminary, or would you rather have somebody who knows Jesus, who can feed us with a spiritual food of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him? This is eternal life, Jesus taught us.

To know the Father and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. This is the new covenant from Jeremiah 31, 31 to 34. The law will be given to you.

It'll be put upon your heart and you shall know the Lord from the least of you to the greatest of you. We shall know the Lord. This is why Paul prayed over the Colossian church the way, well let me take it to the Ephesian church.

This one where he says in Ephesians 1, 17, I pray that God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him. You want specialized knowledge, I'll tell you, very, very easy to do. Come to know Jesus.

If you are feeling like a second-class citizen because you're just a layman, please forgive us. In 1520, Martin Luther preached a sermon that the day of the difference between clergy and laity has got to end. You are priests of the Most High.

Look at the back bulletin, you'll find who are the ministers of this church. Who are? Who? All of us, say all of us. Do you believe it? Then we've got to change our conversation because the world out there needs us to be witnesses of our Lord and Savior.

If you do not feel empowered by God the Holy Spirit to be all that God has made you, something's gone wrong in the church. The job of those who are elders in the church are to serve the people of God in the power and equipping in life that you might go out and be all that God has made you. And what I have

found in my life, which is so simple, utterly simple and yet utterly mysterious and complex, is you've got to come to know Jesus to understand what I'm saying today.

Why do I say that? Well, look at our passage here. Look at the text you've got in Luke chapter 20. Look what's happening in our text.

The Sadducees, this religious sect, this learned people, those who know the Hebrew Bible, what we call the Old Testament and schooled in it. They've come to trap our Savior. They've come to test Him.

And they give Him this great puzzle, this great puzzle. You see about the Sadducees is they don't believe in the resurrection. They don't believe what happens after the body dies.

There's no plan for us. There's no resurrection. They deny it.

And of course, they are speaking, not knowing, they don't know this, but they're speaking to the one who will say, I am the Resurrection. You're talking to the right one, at any rate. But you see, the problem is, is that you can be utterly schooled and have no idea what you're talking about.

Listen to how it's stated in the Matthew Gospel, Matthew in chapter 22, verse 29, same passage, the Sadducees coming again, denying the resurrection, pulling this passage out of Deuteronomy, trying to trap our Savior. And our Lord knows that they know the Bible, but look how He says it. He says in verse 29, chapter 22 of Matthew, verse 29, Jesus answered them.

He said, you are wrong. He said, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. You know them, but you don't know them.

Do you know what I mean when I say that? You know them, you know them, but you don't know them. And this is why, from the Sadducees to the Pharisees also schooled, you find the greatest intellect of the New Testament, that person called Saul, later named Paul, on the road to Damascus. He knew, he knew, he was learned, he was trained.

But when the Savior in His glory appeared to him, all his knowledge, all he could say is, who are you? This is my story. I grew up as an Episcopal. Boy, I was baptized.

I was an acolyte. I was confirmed. I never heard the Gospel.

I was what they call a creedal Christian, because we did the creed, but I didn't know the person of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. And it takes that simplicity, but that mystery, all at once, to come into our hearts. I don't know how it happens.

Paul would describe it this way in Ephesians 2-4, but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He has loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, He made us alive together with Him. He made us alive together with Him. By grace, we have been saved through faith.

I don't know how it happens, but it does. We were dead, and now that life, that resurrected life, that person of our Savior comes into our life and grants us the gift of repentance, that we might die to self and be made alive together with Him. I couldn't believe it when I was growing up as a young Christian man.

I went to a renewal conference. I went to a conference in the Episcopal Church in those days, and at the end of it, a priest in his mid-60s, at the end of his career, stood to give testimony. He stood.

He gave testimony with bittersweet tears. I am about to retire. I have spent all my days in this ministry as an Episcopal priest, but it is only now, in these days, my eyes are open and I have beheld my Savior.

I didn't think it was possible. I couldn't understand. How can we do this and not know Him? My first job in 1983-84 on a church staff.

Come Easter morning, on Easter of 1984, the rector of the church ascended the pulpit and teased it in no uncertain terms that Jesus never did rise from the dead. It was all a myth. It's just simply that wonderful mystical picture of winter turning into spring.

Out of death comes life. It's all poetry. And he turned to me and said, you're preaching next.

I said, I called the bishop. I said, I don't know what to do. I have met a Sadducee who publicly denied the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What do I do? He said, take the text and just simply preach it. On that Sunday, just take the gospel lesson and preach it. Huh.

Guess what I got? Jesus said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life.

No one comes to the Father, but through me. I was fired. And that began a story that I never thought would ever happen.

In the late 1990s, the Episcopal Church would consecrate the bishop of Washington, D.C., who publicly would deny the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I can't explain how the church went like this, but I know this. I know this.

It takes, it takes an act of God, the Holy Spirit to open our eyes, to behold our Savior. It isn't wisdom that does that. It isn't the skill of the mind.

It's the gift of grace to the soul. And faith comes in to give us eyes we never had, hearts we never knew possible, ears to hear what we never imagined to be real. And the thing is amazing.

We say this at our funerals. We read it as the casket comes down the center of the aisle. Job, Old Testament, in the midst of the greatest darknesses and sufferings, we recite the words over the casket.

Way before our Savior came, way before Bethlehem, way before he walked the dusty roads of Galilee and stood there in front of the temple to make confession of his Father, way before he bore the cross of Calvary, way before that tomb and that body in the tomb, way before he had eyes to see, we just heard it read, Job, I know that my Redeemer lives. At the last, at the last, he will take his stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh, I shall see God, whom I myself shall behold.

And not another. My heart faints within me. He saw him.

He beheld him. He beheld the resurrection of our Savior. But he also knew his own resurrection, that though his body go down to the dust, this Savior would come to conquer that power of the devil, that power of darkness, that power of death, more so the power of eternal death over us, and redeem this costly soul who sinned for himself.

If Job had eyes, why don't we? Oh, Simeon, the Bible comes alive, by the way, once you grab it. Oh, once you see it, you'll begin to see it. It's everywhere.

It's everywhere. Simeon, old man Simeon, in the Gospel of Luke. If you don't know him, Christmas is coming.

The goose is getting fat. You'll hear all about him. But he, but he took, he took the baby Jesus into his, he just took him as a baby into his hands, and he said, my eyes have seen my salvation.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Jesus said to the disciples, did he not, did he not say this to the disciples, who am I? And Peter, because he's brilliant, he said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus said to him, my father told you that. There is not one person who knows Jesus, the Savior and Lord of his life, who is a second-class citizen in the kingdom of God. Nobody is a second-class citizen.

We are here to serve. There is a generation out there that needs us together. It is the devil that divides us.

The Spirit of God unites us. It is the devil that makes us feel second-class, like we're not who we should be. This testimony of this week, this man said, I feel like a second-class citizen in the church.

He's a brilliant lawyer. This man is a lawyer, and he's serving one of the churches. He's got all the brilliance anybody needs.

But in the kingdom of God, the only brilliance you need is to know the one who is our wisdom, who is our counsel. This is why I beg of you, we need to rise up to the day that we're given. We need to understand that the laity, the laity is all of us.

We are the people of God. No second-class citizen because of specialized knowledge, not boasting in degrees or in titles. The only title that means anything is the title that we belong to our Savior, that we are bond servants one to another, that we are priests of the most high, all of us.

When it comes to the ordination, the archbishop, Foley Beach, stood in this pulpit on Friday night, and he said, we are all ordained. Do you believe that? Is the Spirit of God more upon me than upon you? Well, somebody got that answer really right. No, no.

Every one of us is his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for the purposes with which God has made you uniquely. You called out in the power of God the Holy Spirit to the world you're called to. Listen to how Jesus phrases this when he looks at his apostles and his disciples and those 72 that he sends out in Luke chapter 10, verse 3. He says, I'm sending you out as wolves.

No, as lions. No, as I'm sending you out as lambs among the wolves. Lambs, lambs in front of the fierce and ferocious enemy.

Lambs in a dark culture that's turned wrong. Lambs to a generation that is spiraling into Sodom and Gomorrah. Lambs.

But here it is, you can face the wolf. Why? Because I'm giving you my name. Because I'm giving you my power.

Because you have been made by me. I have saved you. I have redeemed you.

I have called you. Go and be who I've made you. In the places that you've been called, to your families, to your children, to your grandchildren, to every one of them.

Go and be all that got. But I don't have the lips. I can't speak.

I'm not eloquent, said Moses. And the Lord said, who made your mouth? You can give me excuses all day long. But our children need us.

The next generation need us. The church, it is our hour. I don't care what happens on Tuesday.

Because I know the answer for our culture belongs here with you in us. A Savior that has come to change us, save us, and send us to this world. That our children might know the living Savior, a living hope, before he returns again in glory.

This is our hour. This is our hour. When we push each other down to raise each other up, we are messed up.

But when we build each other up and equip us as the lambs he's sending us out into that world for, then nothing will stop us. Nothing will stop us. And so I ask you, please hear me.

Forgive us. All these years, if you feel like a second-class citizen, forgive us. Please forgive us.

When the clergy have made the laity feel that they are not the people of God, we have sinned. And the devil has divided us. It is time to say no to that.

Forgive us. Take it to the cross. Let Jesus cleanse his church.

And then let his church arise. Let the gospel go out from us in character, in conduct, in all that we do, in all that we say. Because in this time in America, this is our hour.

Our Savior has come. He reigns Lord over us. It is the hour for the church to stand.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28835.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thaddeus-barnum/this-is-our-hour/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net