

(Clip) Difficult Times In the Last Days

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the challenges of being a Christian in the last days, focusing on the warning in 2 Timothy 3:1 about difficult times ahead, not just persecution but also the presence of false believers with a form of godliness but lacking true power. It cautions against wolves in sheep's clothing, those who appear righteous but seek to exploit and harm others for personal gain, urging believers to prioritize inner devotion to Christ over impressing others with external displays of spirituality.

Duration: 7:49

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:1, Matthew 7:15, Matthew 23:27, 1 John 4:1, 1 Corinthians 5:11, Proverbs 4:23, 1 Timothy 6:5, Romans 12:2, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Perseverance in Faith", "Discernment in Spirituality"

Description

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Transcript

Because we believe we are also in the last days now. He said Timothy remember this in 2nd Timothy 3 1 realize it understand this very clearly that in the last days difficult times will come and he's not talking about persecution. The Living Bible makes it very clear it'll be very difficult to be a Christian.

Now there are many ways in which is difficult to be a Christian because there are a lot of jobs today where it's difficult to be a Christian because you have to tell lies or cheat or you know a lot of salesmen and accountants and all that have to cheat and tell lies in many jobs. I'm not saying it's impossible. There are people who live upright lives in all those places and sometimes they lose their job because they are upright.

But it's going to be very difficult to be a Christian because of those reasons. But that's not what he's talking about. He's not talking about it's difficult going to be difficult to be a Christian there'll be much more persecution.

There was a lot I mean hardly anybody has experienced persecution like Paul. He got 195 stripes on his back stoned to death in prison so many times and people trying to kill him all the time. So that is not what he's talking about.

I don't know if Timothy ever got suffered as much as Paul but he says it's going to be difficult to be a Christian in the last days because listen to this because verse 5 the people around you who claim to be Christians in your church verse 5 will have a form of godliness but not the power. The form means the dress like I spoke earlier about the dress of humility but not real humility. It's a fake.

It's a counterfeit and there he speaks about a dress of godliness. What is a dress of godliness? That means they will they'll speak the right language. They won't be non-Christians.

They'll be Christians who say we are evangelical Christians. We are fundamental in our doctrines. We believe in the Trinity.

We believe in being born again. We believe in water baptism. We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We believe in all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We are waiting for the Lord's coming and all that. That is the form of godliness but it'll only be a form.

You know when Jesus spoke about a wolf in sheep's clothing. The sheep's clothing is the doctrine. Absolutely correct but inside that doctrine is a wolf.

A person whose nature is wanting to bite at others, grab at other sheep, look for the little lambs and exploit them. There are Christians like that. There are pastors like that.

There are preachers like that. Any pastor who tries to get money from poor people in his church. He's a wolf.

I have no hesitation in saying he's a wolf but he's got the right doctrine and it's more dangerous when he has the right doctrine and he's interested in you know if a wolf comes into a fold. He's not coming there to bless the sheep. He's coming there to bite and take what he can from the sheep.

Bite off some of their flesh and eat up some of the sheep and any person whether he calls himself pastor, preacher, archbishop or whatever it is. If he comes to take advantage of you, to get something from you for himself, maybe bring you under his authority so that you just blindly listen to him and you don't have any direct connection with Christ. He's a wolf.

Be careful. The form of godliness is there tremendously in these days. In every denomination we talk about nominal Christians as those who don't claim to be born again.

You see that that's different from churches like Brethren and Pentecostal and the CFC and etc where we don't we stand against the nominal Christianity but I'll tell you there's as much of the form of godliness in all these churches including CFC churches as there is anywhere else because as time goes on people tend to be taken up with the external, the doctrine more than the inner life and the moment you find in your thinking your inner devotion to Jesus becomes secondary to your external testimony before men you've already started drifting. That's a very good test to test yourself in. I mean I test myself in that all the time because I'm living in a corrupt world just like you know why do we take a shower? Why do we bathe? Because you smell otherwise in a hot country there you perspire so every day you cleanse yourself you

use soap and get rid of it we must do something like that every day in our Christian life as well.

What do I need to get rid of? I need to ask myself has my inner devotion to Jesus Christ been replaced by a desire to impress other people that I'm spiritual? Then you're stinking! That's a stink! Then you need to have a bath and come back to the place where the stink of wanting to impress other people has been cleansed away. I hope you will learn something today that the thing that makes you stink or me stink or anyone is when we want to desire impress other people in our church or other Christians that I'm a spiritual person or that I'm a humble person or that I'm a holy person that's an absolute stink and so then I've already started backsliding but if I can be free from that and I say my inner devotion to Christ is he is what I want to preserve that I am fervently in love with Jesus Christ because the first commandment is love your Lord your God with all your heart soul strength and mind and I want to check myself to see if I really love the Lord in the midst of a world where people don't love him that is the form of godliness and when you see people like that and you sense this guy's pretending it says here in verse 5 avoid such men you don't just say that okay be careful it says avoid them because you'll get the infection from them if you spend too much time with them you will get the infection from them no matter how careful you are if you hang around always with people who got infectious leprosy you'll get it there are infectious diseases that you can easily get we won't move around too closely with someone we won't let our children move around too closely with someone who's got AIDS very infectious a small cut on your finger and you can get it through that person so why are we so careful about infectious diseases but not careful about spiritual infection that we can get from people who only have a form of godliness I want to obey the scripture which is avoid such people people ask me brother Zach why can't you fellowship with all the believers I said because the Bible says I must avoid certain people

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