

Standing Apart From The World (Video)

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the second coming of Jesus, drawing parallels between the days of Noah and the present times. It highlights the need to have a clear line drawn between living for eternal values and worldly pursuits, encouraging believers to be zealous for good works and to be a blessing to others. The speaker urges listeners to change their way of thinking, to be different from the world, and to focus on what truly matters in light of eternity.

Scripture: Matthew 24:37, Mark 13:32, Hebrews 11:7, Titus 2:13, Galatians 6:14

Topics: "Preparation for Christ's Return", "Eternal Values vs. Worldly Pursuits"

Description

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Transcript

When Jesus spoke about his return to earth, he said in Matthew chapter 24, that the coming of verse 37, Matthew chapter 24 and verse 37. For the coming of the Son of man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark.

And they did not understand until the flood came and took them away. And so will also the coming of the Son of man be. Two will be in the field and one will be taken and the other will be left.

Two will be working in a mill. One will be taken and the other one will be left. So stay awake and be alert.

He especially, Jesus especially warned us to be ready. Many Christian groups spend their time studying about the details of prophecy. What's going to happen? What's going to happen to Russia and Israel and Iraq, and what the Antichrist is going to be like, and the church is going to be raptured and all that.

But Jesus never concentrated on that. He always said in relation to second coming, you've got to be ready. It doesn't matter if you don't understand all the details of prophecy.

If you're ready, you'll be taken up with him. He said there'll be two people working in the same place. One will go, the other will be left behind.

That's literally going to happen. So many things that the Old Testament prophets said, people never believed, but it took place. Even Noah.

I don't know whether you know that up until Noah's time, which is about Noah lived about nearly 2,000 years after Adam. The flood came then. There was no rain that had ever fallen on the earth for 2,000 years.

Bible says in Genesis 2, a mist would go up and water the earth. So when Noah stood up in the streets and preached that rain is going to come, people really thought the guy is crazy. He said nothing's ever happened like that before.

He kept on preaching that for 120 years. Of course, nothing happened. Then all of a sudden it came.

Jesus said it's going to be like that. His return to earth when he waits a long time, like he waited a long time in the days of Noah. I've often wondered whether in Noah's time, that only eight people were saved finally in the last day.

He said, let's get inside the ark because only his family. I'm sure he would have had little meetings in his home. I wondered whether there were some people who heard Noah's preaching, and came along to some of the meetings in his home, but then dropped out after a few years.

He said, well, nothing's happening. This is crazy. I mean, I got a little scared when I heard him preach the other day on the street, and I thought I'd come along to the meeting, but I've been with him for a whole year, and they just talk about being holy, and everybody else in the world seems to be having a good time.

Why should I miss out on that? I wonder whether there were people like that who might have been in the ark who dropped out. Well, there's certainly going to be people like that in the church, who come along and stay along faithful for a while, and then find that I'm missing so much of the good time that people are having in the world. I'm missing what they're having, so they go away.

It's exactly what it says here. They were all carrying on as usual, having a good time right after the day that Noah boarded the ark. They knew nothing until the flood took them away.

In Hebrews, when we read a commentary about Noah's attitude, I mean, the reason why this is important is because Jesus specifically said that the last days, and I'm absolutely convinced in my life that we're living in the last days. I don't have the slightest doubt about it. Many people have said during the past years, yeah, Christ is coming and all, but if you read church history and you read the books written by great godly men through the centuries, I've noticed one thing.

In the first century, they spoke a lot about the second coming of Christ. I mean, in the episodes in the book of Revelation, Christ is coming. I think a lot of people in the first century thought Christ would come right then because the Roman Empire was so bad.

Certainly, when Jerusalem was destroyed 40 years after Christ's crucifixion, they really thought Christ is going to come now. But from the second century onwards, that preaching died out. They don't speak much about the coming of the Lord after that third, fourth, fifth, sixth centuries.

There were people who pursued godliness and all that, but the truth of the second coming of Christ was almost not preached. Even Martin Luther, when he brought people back to the truth of justification by faith, he almost never preached about the second coming of Christ. In the 16th century, in the 18th century, John Wesley was a great man of God, and in all his writings, you hardly ever hear preaching on the second coming of Christ.

And it's only about 100, 150 years ago that, again, once again, there was a revival on preaching the second coming of Christ. It was as if God was preparing people. And there's something significant that has happened in our generation that's never happened in 2,000 years.

And I want to show you that before I go to Hebrews 11, and that's in Luke's Gospel, something that Jesus said in Luke's Gospel, and I think it's chapter 21, verse 24. First, he spoke about, verse 20, about Jerusalem being surrounded by armies. Then you know that Jerusalem is going to be destroyed.

That happened about 40 years after Christ's crucifixion. I don't know if it's right, but perhaps it's true that God gave all those Jewish people 40 years to repent for crucifying his son. They didn't repent.

Then they were scattered and led captive, verse 24. All those Jewish people fell by the edge of the sword to the Roman soldiers, and they were led captive into all the nations. That happened 40 years after Jesus said it.

And then in 70 AD, the Jews people were scattered all over the world. And then he said, Jerusalem, which is the capital, will be ruled, trampled down means ruled by, Jerusalem was supposed to be for the Jewish people the holiest place on earth where the temple was. It's going to be trampled down by non-Jewish people ruling Jerusalem.

That's the Gentiles means non-Jewish people, until the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled, and then Jerusalem will come back into the hands of the Jews. Jesus said that in way back, 29 AD. Even when he said it, Jerusalem was not in the hands of the Jews, it was in the hands of the Romans.

You read throughout church history, 1st century, 2nd century, 3rd century, never did the Jews get Jerusalem. All through the centuries, different people ruled it. And then the Turkey and the Muslims ruled Jerusalem for a long time, and the British ruled it.

And even when the British and the United Nations gave the land to Israel, they still didn't get Jerusalem. They finally got it only in 1967. Some of us were alive.

From the time that Jesus spoke those words, for more than 1900 years, it was not fulfilled. Many of the other things he spoke about like wars, earthquakes, famines, that have happened all through the centuries. Maybe it happens a little more now.

But this never happened. He said, they'll be scattered through all the nations of the earth, Jerusalem will be ruled by non-Jewish people, but one day, the non-Jewish people will not be ruling it anymore. And that's the time when that time is going to be fulfilled.

And then, very soon after that, verse 27, they'll see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up, lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing nigh. In another place, Jesus compared this to the birth of a child.

He said the new earth that's going to be, this earth's going to be recreated, and the new heavens and the new earth is like a birth of a child. It's something you've got to look forward to, like every mother looks forward to the birth of a child. But he said, just like a mother goes through tremendous pain, I mean, such unbearable pain that some women almost feel like dying, just before the childbirth, Christians will go through a time of pain before this child is born.

He said these are the, when you see some of these little things happening, these are the beginning of the birth pains. So Jesus said that Christians will face a time of persecution and tribulation, but it's going to be a very short time, you know, a mother's birth pain doesn't last for months, it's just sometimes just a few hours, and then the baby's born. And then Jesus said when the baby's born, she completely forgets about her birth pain, she's so delighted.

It's going to be something like that, that was Jesus' exact words, these are the beginning of birth pains, when preparation takes place for the baby to be born. So I personally believe we are living in such times, and we need wisdom to understand how we should live in this time. Jesus said we've got to straighten up, not be like all the others, because he said what's going to happen is, verse 32, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place.

Now that's my personal conviction. The generation that sees these things happen is going to be the generation that sees the coming of Christ. There are two generations that are especially blessed.

One is the first one that saw Christ come to earth, and the other is the last one that will see Christ come to earth a second time. So I look forward to that. I'll tell you honestly, I'm not looking forward to death.

I don't believe I'd look forward to death even if I'm a hundred years old. You know, we sing in that song, the sky, not the grave, is our goal. Even the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, he wasn't looking forward to dying.

He says in 1 Thessalonians 4, we who are alive will be caught up. Those who are dead will be raised from the dead. But he says we, includes himself, who are alive.

That was written about 54 AD. He was really looking forward to being alive for the coming of Christ, and that's the way all of us should be. But about 12, 13 years later, the Lord told him, you're not going to be alive.

Then he writes in 1 Timothy 4, the Lord has shown me that I'm not going to be alive, but I'm going to die for the Lord's sake. So my time of my departure is at hand. But until the Lord shows us that, we must always live as those who are expecting the coming of Christ.

And most important, we don't know the time, Jesus said, nobody knows the day or the hour, but you will know when it is near. And then you must be ready. Important thing is to be ready for his coming, not to know the time and all that.

And then he said in this connection, verse 34, be on guard so that your hearts are not weighted down. You see, if I want to be taken up, I shouldn't, I should be a little light. You know how light things float, have you seen feathers flying in the sky? You don't find bricks and all flying in the sky, too heavy.

So I don't want to be weighted down. I want to be light so that when the Lord comes, I'm ready to go. Don't be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness.

Now, what type of drunkenness is he talking about? He's not talking about drunkenness of the mouth and the stomach. Make sure your hearts, what did he say? Make sure not your stomachs, but your hearts should not get drunk with the worries of life. What does it mean for the heart to get drunk, saturated with things of this world? And then that day will come on you suddenly like a trap, but it will come like that on all those who dwell on the face of the earth.

So keep on the alert at all times and pray, especially verse 36, that you will have the strength to escape these things, to overcome, to go through this time of birth pains, that you will have the strength to face persecution and to stand before the Son of Man. God gives us little trials in life to prepare us for bigger trials when we may have, I mean, you may be called upon to deny Jesus Christ if you want to save your life. I remember some years ago when there was some wave of anti-Christian feeling in North India at a particular time, there were some of those anti-Christian activists who were standing on the roads, stopping the vehicles, and asking everybody to say victory to some non-Christian God's name.

And if you didn't do it, they wouldn't kill you, they'd just deflate your tires, and then you've got to fix the puncture and move on. But if you're willing to say that, just one sentence, like in the first century they used to tell people, say Caesar is Lord, and they'd say no, Jesus Christ is Lord, and their head would be chopped off. So here, if a person didn't say victory to the name of that heathen God or idol, he'd be deflated.

I remember once when we were traveling in Bihar and we were traveling in a bus and there was this festival going on and people stopped the bus and said we're going to, they had this idol and said give us some donations. What do you do in such a situation? Yeah, I mean, they may deflate your tire or, it's only that stage now, but a time may come when it'll be worse. And you know, if you're not prepared for it now, if you don't think about it now, you won't know what to do then.

You'll say okay, it doesn't matter, it's a small thing. You know, Christians are, lots and lots of believers have got used to saying, oh that's a small thing, it's not important. Let's obey the major commands of scripture, these are small things.

Those are the ones you'll find ultimately compromising because their attitude is oh that's a small thing, okay, for one minute we'll say victory to whatever God it is, I don't mean it in my heart. But I'll go on and I'll say Lord forgive me. God tests us today in small things to see, to prepare us for the future.

That's always his way. So when the little things that come your way, don't take them lightly. Don't think that losing your temper is a small thing.

It's not a small thing. God will allow you to be provoked, to be irritated by others, and that's just a little thing to overcome. God will allow you to lose a promotion, and if you can rejoice in that, or lose a job, it's okay, fine.

If I'm a Christian and because I stand as a Christian I lose my job, or I lose my popularity with my colleagues, or lose an increment, or lose popularity with my relatives. That can be sometimes a terrific test. Many believers I have found, they don't want to lose popularity with their relatives for the Lord's sake.

They want to make sure they keep their relatives happy, keep their religious leaders happy. Well, we're going to get a big surprise when Christ comes again. You know these are little things along the way where Jesus tests us to see whether he means more to us than all these people.

So that's the way we pray and seek for strength to escape the things that are taking place, and finally to stand before the Son of Man. So turning to Hebrews 11 now, what did Noah do? When he was building the ark, it says here, By faith, Noah, verse 7, being warned by God about things that had not yet been seen. That means he had not yet seen all those things.

Jesus has also warned us through some of these scriptures that I read about things that are going to happen. Noah was warned about things that are going to happen. The Lord told Noah, this whole world is going to be destroyed, and only those who get inside this ship, which you build, will be saved.

That was his message. The whole world will be destroyed, and those who get inside the ship that you build will be saved. So concentrate on building the ship quickly.

And it says here, when he got this warning, he was reverent, in reverence. That means he had a tremendous respect for what God had said. And with that reverence, he took God's word seriously, and he built this ark, and he saved his family.

And not only saved his family, every nail he put into that ark, he was condemning the world. That's what it says here. He condemned the world.

How do you condemn the world? It says in the Message Bible, his act of faith drew a sharp line between the evil of the unbelieving world and the rightness of the believing world. Have you seen these roads where the dividing line has sort of been rubbed out through the years? That clear yellow line down the middle of the road where you're not supposed to cross. Traffic that way, traffic this way, through the years it gets erased, and then the police come and paint it again.

I've often thought of that as a picture of the Christian church, the Christian church going this way, the world coming the other way, going in two opposite directions, and this line, this clear line that Jesus drew between the church and the world being erased. And the traffic, now you don't know who's going where. That's what the devil is aiming at, to erase the line between Christ and the, between the church and the world.

And Noah drew a sharp line. He condemned the world, and he says, this is it, this is the line. You're going another way, I'm going another way.

I want to ask you, right from the time you're in school, is there a sharp line between you and the children, other children whose values are not the values of the Bible or of Christ? You parents, do you encourage your children to have this yellow line very clear in the things they talk about, the way they dress, and everything else, their whole behavior and conduct? And then in college, is there a clear line between you and the other students, the type of music you listen to, the type of music they listen to, the type of movies they want to watch, and the type of things you're interested in spending your time with? Or do you seek popularity, and when they speak about worldly things, you also say, well, I've got to be accepted in this society. And you can have a, you can, you know, justify yourself with it, well, I've got to be friends with these people to win them. But after many years, they are winning you to the world.

You're not winning them at all. You haven't even won one of them. But they have won you to their way of thinking.

And Satan has won a victory. It's happening to our young people. That sharp line that Noah drew, it's gone.

Noah condemned the world, and he got his children together. They were grown-up children. They were not little babies.

They were grown-up. They were married. But he said, I'm your dad, whether you're married or not, I have a responsibility for you.

I don't want you to be lost. I don't want to take that attitude which says, oh, well, now they're married, and my responsibility is over, I am before God. They would have gone to hell if he had taken that attitude.

My responsibility for my children is not over just when they get married. Noah certainly teaches me that. God didn't give a revelation to Noah's children.

He gave it to Noah. And he had to explain it to his wife, convince his wife, first of all. And I don't know how much time he took convincing his children, but he was determined to convince his children, this world is going to perish.

Don't live for it. Don't live for it. It's going to perish.

Yeah, you need to eat food and earn your living and all that, but remember that you don't belong here. Draw a clear line between you and the people who think this world is going to last forever. There should be a clear line.

And you know, the result was Noah had only three sons. All three of them got saved. And all their wives got saved.

So he made sure that those three children married God-fearing women. He was a pretty strict father, I think, you know, to control children that were two, three hundred years old. Look, you must have been a really strict father.

Say, fellas, you've got to come and help me build the ark now. And I tell you, when they came out of the ark, they were thankful for their father. Your children will be thankful for you in the day Jesus comes, if you keep on exhorting them.

Your life must demonstrate that you don't live for this world. Then only you'll have the moral authority to tell your children that. Otherwise, you know, like Lot one day got up and told his sons-in-law, we read in Genesis 19, hey fellas, God's going to judge Sodom and Gomorrah.

Let's escape. Ha ha. They laughed at him.

The Bible says they laughed. They mocked him. You fellow, you left Abraham and came here to make money and now you're trying to preach to us.

Don't talk so much. We know what you lived for all these years you were in Sodom. You came here to make money, not to be a witness for God.

Don't try and talk to us. Your sons-in-law, your children will say that to you. Dad and mom, you live to make money.

You had a little bit of religion and whitewash. We never saw that you were wholehearted for God. You had a little religion.

It's good, decent to have a little bit of religion. Are you like that? Or can you see, can your children testify that though you earned money to take care of your earthly needs and their needs, that was not primary in your life. God was first.

That's what people saw in Noah. They'd see him get up early in the morning and pray. And they'd see him get up much earlier nowadays because he had gone chop down wood, hire people with his own money to chop down wood to make a ship.

He there said, Dad really believes it. He's not just preaching. I mean, if he were just preaching there, that'd be one thing.

But he really believes it. He gets up two hours earlier and goes and chops wood. And he's spending all the money he has earned to hire people to build a ship.

He really believes it. And it says, it was this act of building the ark by which he condemned the world. That's what it says here.

He prepared an ark by which he condemned the world. In other words, how did he draw this line between him and the world? It wasn't just by preaching. It was by his whole being being taken up with what he knew would last after the world was destroyed.

I want to ask you, it doesn't mean Noah didn't eat. He ate. He drank.

He slept. And for 120 years, I'm sure he had to buy new clothes and how do you live in the world for 120 years? You need food. You need clothing.

Maybe the house leaks. He needs repairs. He'd take care of all that.

Everything necessary for his earthly life, he had to feed his family, earn his living, take care of the vineyards, take care of the fields so that they can earn money to take care. He was a good father, good head of the home. But in all this underlying they saw, this is not what this man's living for.

This is just means of earning a living. This man's got to go. I find him going out there and building the ark, building the ark, hiring people, spending money, building the ark, building the ark.

I tell you, when people see that, that's what will convince them. That you mean what you say. Otherwise, you know, Christianity can be just another religion, another philosophy.

Oh, you believe that? Oh, you believe it like that, is it? Well, I believe it like this. Let's discuss this and discussion and all that, but it doesn't change either person's way of life. That fellow believes in one God and this fellow believes in another God and this fellow believes in a third God.

But they all live for the same things. They all live to make money, to get the honor of the world, to get out of the world, but they have different religions. No, it's not like that.

In the midst of all the religions, he says, I'm different. I don't just say I believe in this God. Here's my proof.

What do I spend my time for? Building the ark. Where do I spend most of my money? Building the ark. When people see that, there's a clear line drawn between you and the world.

Otherwise, if we say the only place where I draw the line is Sunday morning when I go and praise the Lord for some time and raise my voice and sing some songs, and the rest of the time my values are exactly the same as the values of people in the world, I have not condemned the world, no. My values are the same Monday through Saturday. On Sunday, that guy goes to the temple, the other guy goes to the mosque, the other guy watches television, and I go to church.

Each worships their own God, but it's only for a few hours on Sunday, and the rest of the six days of the week, we have the same values. We have not drawn any line between us and the world. So that's something we must bear in mind.

I want you to see Galatians in chapter one. Galatians chapter one, it says, Jesus Christ, verse four, gave himself for us. Not only to die for our sins, to save us from our sins, that's one thing.

He gave himself for our sins, number one. But also, that he might rescue us from this evil world, according to the will of God, our father. What did he want to save us from? We are not physically saved from the world, we are living in this world.

But he wanted to save us in our spirits, from the spirit of this world, which is completely contrary to God. So he died not only to save us from our sins, but to rescue us from this spirit of the world in which we were trapped. That means a mindset where all my values are the values of the world, he came to rescue me from that.

He came, first of all, to get rid of all my past sins. That's right, that's why he died. He said, all my past sins are cleansed away.

But even when a person's past sins are cleansed away, his mindset is, according to the values of the world. Because that's what we have grown from childhood, to do and believe. And Jesus came to rescue me from that, so that I have a different attitude while living in this world.

So that's what I want to ask you. Your sins are forgiven, that I know. Has Jesus rescued you from this way of thinking? It says in 1 John, in chapter 2, please try and remember these verses, what scripture says about the spirit of this world.

It's quite an amazing thing. We know that Jesus said that you cannot love God and money at the same time. Here it says, the Holy Spirit says, the words of Jesus really, 1 John 2, verse 15, don't love the world or the things in the world.

Anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Or as this translation says, love of the world squeezes out love of the Father. The more we love the world, the love for God is squeezed out of our life.

And you see that. You see that in your lack of devotion to Christ, lack of time to read the Bible. You know, that's what television does, robs you of time to spend with God.

Tell me honestly, those of you who watch a lot of television, hasn't it squeezed out time for God in your life? You may say I'm watching good programs. I remember a brother who, in another country, who ordered a television set and he was doubtful about it. Should I get it or not get it? And then anyway, he ordered it and the Sony truck brought the television to his house with a big advertisement, Sony brings the world into your home.

That was enough for him. He said, God spoke to me. He asked them to take it right back.

It does. It brings the world right into your living room. And your children may not have as much discernment as you.

Many of us, in our younger days, we grew up without television, we spent a lot of time studying the scriptures, reading the Bible, praying, and we've got a solid database. So even when we see some of these things, we can reject it. Our children don't have that database.

They never had the time that we had to study the scriptures. They've grown into a world flooded with these values. They're not able to resist it like we can, older generation.

You've got to be careful. And I believe that's one of the main reasons why we don't have a spiritual generation growing up that values God more than everything else in this world. I don't believe merely by getting rid of television you get rid of the world.

You can get rid of it and still have the worldly people long before television was invented. Thoroughly worldly people. So I'm not saying the solution is to get rid of television.

There may be some good things you can get from it. But all I say is, remember that there is a potential source of danger there. It's not just television.

It can be your computer with the internet connection. So the solution is not to get rid of it because it has some advantages. But remember that that is a source of danger.

Don't play the fool with it. It's like a plug point. Electricity is very useful, but I don't go putting metal things into the plug point.

It's dangerous. Children don't know that. They'll go putting those metal things into the plug point and get a shock.

So we have dangers not only in the television and internet. We have dangers in the plug points. So I'm not saying we get rid of all that.

Be aware of the danger. Be careful. Plug points are dangerous.

Danger. You know, you see outside these electricity things when they come into the house. Danger.

140 volts. Skull and crossbones. You need to put something like that in front of the television and computer also.

Use it. I mean, people use those electricity cabinets when the fuses go. They've got to change it.

I'm not saying we've got to get rid of it. If we get rid of it, we lose all the advantages of electricity. But put a skull and crossbones there and say danger.

And then handle it. People who play the fool with electricity and say, oh, I'm okay, they die. It's the same with people who indiscriminately watch programs on television or watch anything on the internet.

They die. The thing is that people who get electrocuted, the death is obvious. Because it's physical.

People who get killed by television and the internet, their death is not obvious. So it's more dangerous. And so, think of Noah.

Jesus said the last days will be like the days of Noah. Plenty of sex. Plenty of violence.

That's what it was in the days of Noah. Sex and violence were the primary things in the days of Noah. He said it would be like the days of Lot.

Sex and violence. Abnormal sex and violence were the things in the days of Lot. And the pursuit of wealth that Lot was after.

These are two different types of believers. I mean, Lot also escaped, but he escaped with a lot of regret. He lost all his family.

He lost his daughters. He lost his sons-in-law. He lost his wife.

And when I say he lost his daughters, he lost his daughters to immorality. Because his values were not right. Noah also escaped.

But Noah escaped with his whole family. All his three daughters-in-law and all his sons. Because he drew a clear line.

Lot did not draw a clear line. So he escaped himself. And he lost his whole family.

So there are two types of people going to be there in the last days. One who escape with their family, like Noah. And others who maybe escape themselves but lose their family.

Would you like to stand in heaven without your family? Now is the time to repent and say, Lord, I want to draw a clear line between me and the world. Religion is not enough. Do not love the world nor the things in the world.

It says if anyone loves the world, love the father. It's not in him. And then it says in verse 17, The world is passing away.

And all its lusts. And that's translated in this translation as, The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting, wanting, this, wanting that, wanting this, wanting that, wanting this, wanting that, is all going to go. That's the meaning of lusts.

Lust means I want this and I want that. It's not just sexual. It's not evil always.

I see something and I want it. That's called the lust of the eyes. Sexual lust is called the lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eyes is the desire to buy everything that you see. I want that and I want that and I want that. I see somebody wearing something, I want that.

It says here the world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting, wanting, wanting is on its way out. But whoever does what God wants, he will last for eternity. There's things which we want and there are things which God wants.

And I can have a choice. I can say I'm going to live for what I want. And I want this and I want this and I want my own way here.

You can have a fight with your wife or husband, I want my way. That's your want, you want, you want, you want. It's going to perish.

That's the world. But he who does what God wants, God, what do you want? The passion of Jesus' life was that. Even if it meant death on a cross, God, if you want it, I'll accept it.

Let me show you another verse. 1 Corinthians in chapter 7. 1 Corinthians chapter 7. Verse 29 onwards. 1 Corinthians 7. Verse 29.

I want to read it in this other translation. I want to point out, friends, that time is of the essence. Time is very, very important.

We don't have endless time. All of us have got a certain amount of time. So, there's no time to waste.

Don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. There are certain essential things we need in this world. By all means, do it.

Food, clothing, education. I mean a certain decent standard of living, housing, etc. It's all okay.

But don't complicate your lives unnecessarily with a whole lot of things. Keep it simple. Keep it simple in marriage.

Keep it simple in grief, in joy, whatever. Even in the ordinary things. Your daily routines of shopping and so on.

Be sparing in your purchases. Be sparing, not lavish. Be as sparing as possible with the things that the world trusts on you.

They trust it on us through the advertisements we see in the newspapers, on the billboards, in the television. The world is always trying to trust things on us. Some of it you may need.

Sure. Buy them. I always say anything that will make your life simpler in your home, get it if you can afford it.

Because you can save time. Any time-saving gadget, I always encourage people, you can afford it, get it because you have more time for the Lord. You don't have to grind with a hand when you've got a mixer.

It saves time. You have more time to read the Bible for the Lord. Get it.

Things that will all the clothing you need etc. etc. You need to look decent when you go to work.

You don't want to look slipshod. That's not a good testimony for a Christian. Look decent.

Everything that you need to look decent. Hair oil and perfume and deodorant etc. etc.

I'm serious. You need these things. You don't want everybody to think you're a stinker.

Everything that's necessary but be careful that it doesn't go to excess. That's the point. I'm not teaching asceticism where you live with white clothes and live in the jungle.

No. But you know where it is going to in excess. And don't follow the example of others around you.

Deal as sparingly as possible with things the world trusts on you because this world and everything you see on it is on its way out. And the wise Christian is the one who knows how much of all this do I need. I'm not going to be an ascetic and I'm not going to be a fashion model.

Somewhere in between I draw the line. My mind is not going to be occupied with these things because I've got something to live for. I don't have all the time in the world and I want to live for things that are eternal.

There's no time for trifling because that's not the way my master Jesus trod on this earth. Every hour and all the powers he had he used for his father. And all the time God gives me and all the energies and resources and everything God gives me, I want to use it for him because then I'll have no regret when I stand before him.

Think of Noah, how his whole mind, I think he would have dreamt about the earth. I often think about, you know, how people try to fix a computer bug. They're writing a program, there's a bug in the program and it doesn't seem to work and think about it, think about it, think about it, think about it, think about it and then they go to sleep, in the middle of their sleep because their subconscious is still working on that bug in the program and they wake up in the morning and say, Hey, I've got a solution to that.

I have a feeling that Noah was like that when he got stuck with some problem with the ark, how to fix some matter of the ark and he'd go to sleep and in the morning he'd wake up and say, Hey, that's right, that's what I've got to do. Think if we can live like that. We live in the world, we eat.

I don't think Noah wore white clothes all the time. But it's not that type of thing, it's not asceticism. He lived a normal life but his values were different.

And we can live like that where we live just like everybody else, people look at us, we're just the same, we're not reverent so and so, we don't have any cross around our neck or any such thing, we just look like them but our values are different. We don't make fun of people, for example, in the office or in the school or the college. We don't gang up on somebody, we don't bully anybody.

Our values are different. We make friends with the people who are less privileged and the weak and the lame and those who others make fun of. Our values are different and people see that.

We're not only thinking about ourselves, we're thinking about how to encourage somebody else or how to help someone who's in need. Our values are different. The world doesn't think like that.

You know, to have a mindset where you're always looking at people and saying, well, how can I help that person? Does that person look a bit discouraged? Maybe I need to go and have a word with him or I sense that this guy's probably going through some struggle of poverty. Maybe he needs a little money. To think like that.

The world doesn't think like that. The world only thinks of what can I get. It's always looking at everything.

What can I get? What can I get? Jesus taught us to live differently. I think Noah would have been like that. He'd think, how can I build the ark? How can I fix that other board there? Which is the best way to bend that board and fix it to the other side and think about it and think about it and wake up and do something about it.

You know, that's the way we're to live. You need to think about your work, but that's not all. Because you're not just called here just to earn your living, but to be a blessing.

The Lord told Abraham, I'll bless you and you'll be a blessing to all the families of the earth. I want to say to you in Jesus' name that every single one of you, if you have been blessed by God in any way, and I don't think there's a single person who can say here, you're not being blessed. If you've been blessed by God in any way, that was with the purpose that you will be a blessing to somebody else.

It doesn't happen like rivers. It starts like a trickle. So if you've never been a blessing to anybody else, will you start praying that God will start making you a blessing to one person, then two, then three, then four? Take it seriously.

In your place of work, to your neighbors and relatives, you must be a blessing, not a nuisance. There's a promise in Zechariah 8.13 I want to paraphrase it, that as you were a nuisance to other people in the past, you're going to be a blessing to people in the days to come. Isn't that a good promise to take with you? You are such a nuisance in your home.

Your mom and dad were sick and tired of you, but they're going to see somebody different from now on, because you're seeking God to bless you and make you a blessing in your home. Because your values are different. You're not going to fight for those things with your siblings, with your brothers and sisters like you fought in the past.

Because you see that thing people are fighting for and it's not the most important thing in life. And if somebody takes an extra helping at the dining table and you don't get as much as you want to eat, it's not the most important thing in life. Don't be disturbed by these things.

Have a sense of values. Be mature. Romans chapter 12, it says in view of all that God has done for you, think of all the ways in which God has been, mercies of God means the fantastic blessings God has given you.

In view of all that God has done for you, my dear brothers and sisters, verse 2, don't be conformed to this world. Change your way of thinking so that you know what God wants. And that's good for you and that's perfect.

Choose that. So allow God to change your way of thinking like Noah's way of thinking till the day God spoke to him and told him that I'm going to judge the world and only those in the ark are going to be saved. Until that day he lived like everybody else.

But the day he understood that and believed it's really going to be like that. This world is perishing. It's only what you do for Christ and for God that's going to remain forever.

Only one life and it will soon be passed and only what's done for Christ will last. That's all. All your other accomplishments and degrees and qualifications and the pleasure you got out of this and that and the other and all the things that you live for are all going to pass away.

But if you've done something for Christ, you've presented Christ to someone and shared the Lord's goodness with someone, that will last forever. Even if you gave a cup of cold water to somebody in Jesus name. Not if you just gave a cup of cold water but if you gave it in Jesus name because you're a disciple.

In other words you wanted to reflect the love of Christ. Whatever you did, however small it is it will last forever. It will last to eternal ages.

So let's change our way of thinking. It says Christians must be zealous for good works. Jesus went about doing good in the book of Titus.

Towards the end of Paul's life he spoke a lot about good works. Titus especially. He says the one reason Jesus died, Titus 2 13, 14 Jesus died, gave himself for us to redeem us from all sin.

To purify for himself a people who are zealous for good works. Zealous for good works. And so he tells people, he says them please tell our people, chapter 3 verse 14 they must learn to engage in doing good works so that they won't be unfruitful.

He speaks a lot about doing good to others. Think of how you can do good to others. Think of how you can speak an encouraging word to somebody and maybe finally draw them to the Lord.

Maybe someone in your college don't preach to them, just speak a word of encouragement to them. Let them see that you're different. That you're cheerful and speak words of encouragement and that you don't laugh at the weak and the poor.

And one day when they're in need they'll come to you and say hey I need a little help. It's great I tell you to be different, different. I remember in a ship I was on I got transferred to a ship I didn't like to get transferred to that ship.

It was a small little boat and I wanted to get onto a big ship. I said okay Lord you decided that so I went there and I praised the Lord. And somebody on that ship finally found the Lord.

I knew that's why he found the Lord. He was a non-Christian. He came to me one day and I didn't go preaching.

It was just the way I lived and he came to me one day and said I see something different. I want to talk to you. And he accepted Christ.

Boy. Then I knew I said Lord I don't care. It's the smallest boat in the world I'm willing to go to if I find someone I can bring to Christ.

So remember in those difficult places where you did not want to go or you didn't like to go and you had no choice. God has a plan. He wants to make you a blessing to somebody.

If you will keep a spirit of thankfulness and say Lord there's a clear line drawn between me and the world. I'm dead to the world like Paul says. The world is dead to me.

I'm not caring anymore for the world's opinion about me. I've got as little interest in the world's opinion about me as a dead man has. It's a good position to take.

Galatians 6.14 I've got as little interest in this world's opinion about me as a dead man has. Live like that my brothers and sisters. You mark my words.

You'll have no regret when Jesus comes again. I remember some years ago telling a brother in our church who I needed to speak straight to him for his own good like I've done to many people for their own good

and he thought Brother Zach is a bit hard. I said fine.

I think he told somebody that. I said fine. I called him and I said brother I love you.

You can think I'm hard but mark my words. On the day of judgment you will turn around and thank me for what I did and what I told you. And that's enough.

I don't care if you appreciate it now or not. I am more concerned about your eternal good in eternity than I am for your temporary feeling happy with me. I'm like a dead man.

I don't care for what people say but I'm here to seek the eternal good of people and not my own honor. Be like that my brothers and sisters and you'll have no regret in eternity. God can make you a tremendous blessing to many needy people around you.

Draw that line clearly. The way you live, the way you speak, the way you dress, the way you do everything. I'm not here to give you a dress code or a speech code or anything.

You know that yourself. Just make sure there's a line that people see that you're different. Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads before God. Our Father, you know what's good for us. Help everyone who is bowing down here before you right now to take some clear decisions that they will not be influenced by their friends or even their sisters and brothers in the church that Lord Jesus you're going to be the one who's going to guide them, lead them.

They're going to draw that yellow line very clearly between them and the world. Thank you Father. Help each one of us that we shall be like Noah in the last days and where we have failed in the past.

Forgive us our sins. We've all made many blunders and mistakes. Some of those things we can never go back and recover.

But you can restore to us the years that are eaten away. That's your word. I will restore to you the years that are eaten away.

Do it Lord. And bring us seriousness into our life that we can live for the things that are eternal. And be like Noah in these last days and not like Lot.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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