

Standing for God in the Last Days

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the critical need for believers to stand firm in the truth of God's Word to avoid deception in the last days.

Duration: 1:19:39

Scripture: Genesis 6:9, Genesis 19:16, Matthew 11:25, Luke 17:26-30, 2 Timothy 3:13, 1 Peter 3:19, 2 Peter 2:7

Topics: "Righteous Living", "End Times"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of standing firm in righteousness and obedience to God's word in the last days, drawing parallels between the days of Noah and Lot with the present times. It highlights the need to be like Noah, unwavering in righteousness, and to be disturbed by the evil conduct around us. The examples of Noah and Lot serve as a call to uphold God's standards amidst a corrupt world and compromised Christianity.

Transcript

I was thinking today about the last days. Jesus spoke about the last days before He went up to heaven that it was almost the last subject He spoke on in Matthew 24 and 25 because when you get into chapter 26 you'll get into the the last supper. So when you think of the last subject Jesus spoke on before He went to the cross, before He went to the last supper, it was concerning the last days and He spoke quite a bit about it and how we need to be prepared for it and so we need to take that seriously.

I mentioned the other day that the main thing that Jesus said would characterize the last days is deception because when, let me repeat that for those who are not here, in Matthew 24 verse 3 the disciples asked Him, tell us when will these things be and the other question was what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age. What will be the one sign of your coming and Jesus said see to it that no one misleads you. In other words the last days are going to be days of great deception and if you want to avoid deception there are two things I would recommend.

One is to read the Word of God because this book, the Bible, is the only book in the whole world that we can be absolutely sure is the inspired Word of God where everything that's taught in it is 100% true and I say that after having read it for 57 years and I have found in every situation I have faced in my life that the Word of God has the right answer if I know where to find it but I shouldn't be looking for the answer when I'm in a difficult situation because I won't know where to find it but if I read God's Word regularly and develop the habit of meditating and studying the scriptures then when I find myself in a difficult situation

the Holy Spirit will remind me from what I've studied. You see in a computer there's a hard disk in which you can enter data and if you want the computer to calculate something or to give you an answer to something it can only go on the basis of the data that you have fed into it. If you have not put any data into it it can't give you any information and our mind is something like that.

I mean computers have been made based on the human brain. It stores information and it cannot give you an answer if that information is not there. So it's a wonderful thing to be able to store God's Word in our mind in our memory so the Holy Spirit can take the appropriate word and give it to us when we are in a difficult situation.

I found that in numerous situations in the last 57 years but I've never heard the Lord say something to me which I never read in the scriptures. Even Jesus was like that. You know when Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread.

Remember that Jesus lived on earth without using the resources of God because if he used the resources of God when he came to earth then as a baby his head would have had all the knowledge of the Bible. It did not. When Jesus was a baby his memory was empty.

He had to fill that memory by studying the scriptures which no doubt Joseph and Mary taught him and when he went to school the teachers would have taught him and I'm sure he'd have gone frequently to the synagogue to get the rabbi to read the scriptures for remember he never had a Bible at home. We are so much luckier. If he wanted to know the scriptures he had to ask his mother or go to the rabbi and ask him to read something from the scroll because the Bibles are very expensive and all handwritten on parchment and you probably find just one copy in a town in the synagogue.

So Jesus was diligent to go there and I can imagine even when he was a seven eight year old boy he'd go up to the rabbi and ask him to read the next chapter, read the next chapter, read the next chapter. That's how he lived up to the age of 30 and that's how he knew the scriptures and so in the moment of temptation immediately the Holy Spirit could give him a word which protected him in that temptation. Man shall not live by bread alone.

That's from Deuteronomy. Now he would never have been able to quote that verse if he hadn't stored it in his memory in earlier years. The same with the next temptation when the devil quoted a scripture.

You see when the devil saw that Jesus was one who lived by the Word of God then he quoted the Word of God to Jesus and then Jesus knew another scripture. The Holy Spirit says yeah but you shall not tempt the Lord your God. When the devil quoted scripture saying his angels will give charge, take care of you and that you don't get hurt when you jump off the roof of the temple.

The Holy Spirit reminds him of another verse and then when the devil told him he'd offer him all the worlds if he bowed down to him another verse Jesus quoted and when the Pharisees came to him also with questioning him again the Holy Spirit would remind him of a verse. So it's a wonderful thing to know the scriptures. That's the thing that will protect us from deception and I believe that's one reason why the devil has been so active in ensuring that this generation of Christians is not so serious about studying the scriptures.

When I started studying the scriptures 57 years ago there were not so many distractions. There's so many distractions today. Television for one thing and a cell phone.

You don't realize what a tremendous distraction your cell phone can be because because you have it you're frequently talking to people. We wanted to 57 years ago if I want to talk to someone I did go to a telephone in the house and pick it up and phone calls were expensive. It wasn't such a distraction.

The television didn't exist in our country at that time. It wasn't a distraction. There are so many distractions and if you don't overcome those I want to tell you in Jesus name you will not be prepared for what this world is going to face and your country is going to face in a few years.

The other thing is that can protect us from deception is what we read in second Thessalonians. I want to turn there second Thessalonians chapter 2. It's speaking here about the last days again. It says concerning verse 1 the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being taken up to meet him.

Don't be shaken. It says here let no one deceive you verse 3 because that day will not come until first there comes a great falling away apostasy means of falling away from the faith. So as we in the in the last days there's going to be a great falling away of Christians from the standards of God's Word.

We see that all over. The standards of God's Word are lowered in so many areas and we can see it all around. Things that we never saw 70, 80 years ago.

We see it today. Little by little the commands of scripture are being eroded. It doesn't happen all of a sudden.

Little by little and you all know as you look around there are things which if you compare today's Christianity even among nominal Christians to what it was a hundred years ago in the United States. It's so much different because so many biblical values that people had a hundred years ago are gone. How did that happen? I mean even the man in the street had some biblical values a hundred years ago but today even so-called Christians don't have it.

This is called a great apostasy, the falling away which is one of the signs of the end and in relation to that it says here that the devil is going to come along with verse 9. There's going to be the activity of Satan in powers and signs and false wonders. There's going to be a lot of false deceptive miracles in the last days and that's one of the things that we've seen particularly if you read Christian history particularly in the last 50 years. There's so much of talk about healing and miracles and supernatural gifts.

99% of them fake and Christians are swallowing it and being deceived because there's a longing in man for the supernatural. That's why people go to witch doctors and deal with black magic and the thing is Christians who don't know the word are deceived by this and it says here the devil will come in the last days with all types of false manifestations of miracles and signs and wonders. Now you got to be alert to that.

How do you distinguish between what is of God and what is of Satan when you see something apparently done in the name of Jesus. It's very important to know that because otherwise you'll be deceived. So let me just mention one or two things in that connection before I go further.

If you turn with me to Matthew chapter 7. Jesus said in the final day when he comes to judge the world. He says in Matthew 7 21. Not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Who are the people who say to Jesus Lord Lord? They're not the Hindus or the Muslims or the Buddhists. They don't call him Lord. They may call him a prophet.

But it's Christians who call Jesus Lord Lord. And not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. It's so crystal clear.

But who's going to enter? The one who does the will of my father in heaven. And then he says that in that final day of judgment these are the people who will come and say Lord Lord. He gives a description of some.

He says many. Not many means in the day of judgment in a world population of billions of people. What is what does many mean? You think many means 50, 100? Far from it.

Compared to the world's population 50 or 100 is just a few. Many means they're going to be hundreds and hundreds of people probably thousands who will come to him and say Lord Lord we prophesied in your name. And here it is we cast out demons in your name and we did miracles in your name.

Now you would think that these must be men of God if they did miracles in Jesus name and cast out demons in Jesus name. And Jesus said I will declare to them I never knew you. Is it possible for a man who does not know Jesus whom Jesus says I never knew you to cast out demons in Jesus name? Yes because I believe Jesus words.

We can use logic and say well how in the world can someone who doesn't know the Lord cast out demons in Jesus name? I'll tell you I don't know but I believe Jesus. In the realm of the supernatural and the spirit world you and I don't know enough. I accept that fact.

So I believe what Jesus said and I believe that there are people to whom Jesus will say I never knew you. Not that I knew you once and then you backslid. That's another thing.

I never knew you in your entire Christian life. I never knew you. You called yourself a Christian.

You called me Lord Lord and you did miracles in my name but I never knew you. Depart from me in other words he's telling these people who did miracles in Jesus name to go to hell. Do you believe there are today people doing miracles in Jesus name on Christian television who one day Jesus will say go to hell? I'll tell you 90% of Christians don't believe it.

I believe it because I have a respect for the words of Jesus. He said that heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away. This is part of the great deception and it's very specifically mentioned that Satan will come with false wonders and why does he tell them to depart from him? Because you practice iniquity.

That's the only reason. There is sin in your life that you never dealt with. So that teaches me one very important lesson that in the final day when I stand before the Lord, the important thing will not be my ministry but my life.

See they boasted about their ministry. I did this for you. I did that for you.

Now you may not have the ability to do miracles but you may say Lord I give some money for your work. Maybe that was what you considered ministry. Everything here is ministry.

We prophesied in your name. We did miracles in your name. We cast out demons in your name.

In your case it could be something else that you did in the name of Jesus. You went to church services in Jesus name. You prayed in Jesus name.

You gave money in Jesus name. You supported orphans in Jesus name. You did missionary work in Jesus name and maybe a lot of things you did in Jesus name.

Ministry, ministry, ministry and Jesus says that's not what's gonna count in the day of judgment. And yet most Christians evaluate their life by what they are doing for the Lord. Whereas God's interested in what you are more than in what you do.

If you find a satisfaction in what you're doing, you're gonna get a good big surprise in the day of judgment because the Lord says you did all those things that's fine but think of what you are. There's sin in your life which you never dealt with in all those years. So that teaches me that a man can be living in sin in his private life and still do miracles outside.

Isn't that clear from that passage? Because the Lord doesn't tell them, hey you're telling a lie. You never did any miracles in my name. You never cast out demons in my name.

He never says that. He acknowledges it. You did it.

But there's sin in your life. And the question comes to me, can a man who's got sin in his private life do miracles in Jesus name? According to this passage, yes. That's what we see in the world around today.

You see some of these great preachers ultimately falling into adultery or divorcing their wives and marrying somebody else and they're doing so-called ministry. It's the life that you live that's gonna matter in the final day. Let me tell you that.

And so I learned from that what's going to count in the last day and I want to be prepared for the last day. I want to be, I want to say Lord, you know I've been engaged in ministry, full-time Christian ministry for 50 years and I say Lord that's not going to count for much in that day. It's a question of how I live these 50 years.

What was my attitude to sin in these 50 years? That's going to be more important. It's not that the ministry is unimportant but it must come from a life of purity. Remember Jesus said that out of His innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

If it doesn't flow from an innermost being of purity, it counts for nothing. So turn back to 2nd Thessalonians 2 in relation to the last days. When all these things are happening it speaks here in verse 10 of the deception.

2nd Thessalonians 2 10. The deception of wickedness. There's a deception in wickedness and for those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

Saved means saved from sin. Wherever you read about saved in the New Testament it's always being saved from sin. They did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved from sin and for this reason, this is a very very important passage.

I often call this the most scary verse in the New Testament for Christians. The most scary verse in the New Testament for Christians. What is that? God Himself will deceive you.

There's no verse in the Bible which tells me that God will deceive me except this one. Whom does God deceive? He doesn't deceive everyone. Now I know that Satan deceives people.

That's well known. He's called the deceiver of the whole world. The Bible says in Jeremiah 17 9, the heart, the human heart is deceitful.

So I know my heart can deceive me. The Bible says in Ephesians 4 22, our lusts are deceitful lusts. The lusts in our flesh deceive us.

They deceive us in the sense that they say this is good for you when it's actually going to ruin me. Every lust, sexual lust, will give you pleasure but it ruins you. So there are these, the heart is deceitful, the devil's deceitful, my lusts are deceitful and I'm going to fight against all this.

My only hope is if God protects me from this deception. And here it says that God himself will deceive certain people. Not everybody.

God will send upon them, upon whom those who don't receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. So I remember when I understood this, these two verses, I realized that here is a tremendous secret of how to escape deception. One, as I told you, is the knowledge of the word.

The other is, if I love the truth so as to be saved from sin in my life, God will protect me from deception. But if I don't love the truth so as to be saved from sin in my life, God himself will send upon me a deluding influence so that, listen to these are scary words, so that I believe what is false. God will allow you to believe you're born again when you're not born again.

I've met numerous people like that. God will allow you to believe you're filled with the Holy Spirit when you're filled with some other spirit. I've met numerous people like that too.

God allows people to believe what is false. I mean this is, it's almost unimaginable that such a verse is in the Bible. God will allow you to believe what is false.

And it's happening. It can happen to people sitting in this church. Not to everybody.

To those who don't receive the love of the truth to be saved. For example, in a particular situation, if the Holy Spirit shows me that I was wrong, but I'm not willing to admit I was wrong, or the Holy Spirit shows me that a certain attitude in me was sinful, and I'm not willing to admit it. That means I don't love the truth about myself.

I'm in a very dangerous position. The Spirit of God showed me that that attitude was sinful, and I tried to justify myself. Or the Spirit of God shows me that that way I spoke to someone was not Christ-like.

It was rude. And I tried to justify myself saying, yeah, but it was necessary. I want to tell you, you're in great danger of God sending a deluding influence upon you, even though you've been a believer sitting here for 10 years.

And you will believe what is false. You'll believe that everything is okay with you, and everything is not okay with you. That's why I say this is one of the most scary verses for believers in the New Testament.

I've never found a more scary verse, because there's no other verse that tells me that God will deceive me. I can fight against the devil. I can fight against the lusts in my own flesh.

But imagine if God himself turns around to deceive me. There's absolutely no hope. And there are a lot of Christians I have met in my life who are living in this delusion.

People who think they are spiritual, when they're not. They imagine they're spiritual. Why does God allow them to believe what is false? God is truth.

Why in the world would He allow somebody, one of His own children, to believe what is false? Because God sees that person, though he claims to be a child of God, does not love the truth. When I show it to him, when I speak to him through my spirit and tell him, that attitude in you was wrong. The way you spoke to your wife was wrong.

The way you spoke to your husband was wrong. And you don't accept it. You don't accept it immediately.

You justify yourself. Your attitude to that brother is wrong, or that sister. The way you ask those questions is all curiosity.

There's no need for you to know all that information. It's not going to make you spiritual. It's just curiosity to find out more about other people.

That's wrong. And you say, no. You are a candidate for deception.

And you will live, you will continue to be in this church, imagining that you're spiritual, when you're not. Till the day of judgment comes, and you stand before the Lord, and you get a shock. Lord, is it really true that I've deceived myself all those years I sat in RLCF? And the Lord will say, yes.

Not because you didn't do any ministry. Not because you didn't put money in the offering box. But because you did not love the truth about yourself, when the Holy Spirit said something to you.

I have learned, therefore, from my life, I say, Lord, I never want to be deceived. Never, never, never. I don't want to be deceived for one day, or for one second in my life, about my true condition.

I don't want to stand in the day of judgment before the Lord, and the Lord say to me, I never knew you. And I know my salvation is by changing my attitude to sin. I never knew you, there's sin in your life.

And the Holy Spirit tried to show me that sin, and I didn't accept it. Is that going to be true of any of you? I hope not. So this is the way to protect ourselves from deception, in the last days.

Remember, Jesus said, this is the one sign of the last days, deception. And it's a wonderful thing that we have God's Word to protect us from deception. And secondly, to love the truth about ourselves.

To love the truth so as to be saved. Look at this expression in verse 10. Because they did not receive the love of the truth, so as to be saved from sin.

How many churches in the world are preaching today about being saved from sin? How many messages on the internet do you hear about being saved from sin? It is the most important message that any preacher should preach. But there's so much preaching on missionary work, and all the needy people out there in the world, and that's all fine. I'm not against all that.

I'm not against healing the sick, or casting out demons. I mean, I've cast out numerous demons in my own ministry. I've seen healing in answer to prayer.

But I say that's not central. It wasn't central in Jesus' ministry. The central thing that Jesus preached, that I want to preach to the end of my life, is to be saved from sin.

Because then I know that nobody's blood will be on my hand. If I don't tell the people I preach to how to be saved from sin, their blood will be on my hand. And if you know people well enough, and you know fellow believers, and you feel they're going into sin, and you don't say anything to be saved them from sin, their blood is on your hands.

I mean, not if it's a stranger, but if somebody you know very well. Your own children, as they grow up, if you find that they're going in sinful ways, and you don't correct them, you don't want to offend them. First of all, you'll see them in hell one day, eternally lost.

But the Lord will also hold you responsible for that. It's a very serious thing, because the command is very clear. Fathers, bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

I took that very seriously from the time all of my four children were born. The instruction of the Lord and the discipline of the Lord, because that's God's command to me. My ministry is secondary.

How well I can preach is unimportant if I don't bring up my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. That is more important to me. I say, Lord, you can take away my ministry.

That's fine. Ministry is not important for me. My life is important, and my attitude to sin, to obedience to God's Word.

So I want to share that with you, dear brothers, because as you approach the end, you'll find it's going to be very difficult to be a Christian. So 2nd Timothy chapter 3 tells us that. 2nd Timothy 3, 1. Realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

And if you read that verse just by itself, you'd think the difficulty is going to be, that's going to be financial difficulty. It's going to be difficult to make ends meet together in the last days or something like that. But that is not what's referring to.

If you see God's kingdom first and His righteousness in your life, the promise of God is that even if the world around you is starving, He will meet your need. I believe that with all my heart. I remember a brother who had such faith in this, who said, put it like this.

He said, if there's going to be a time of tremendous famine and there's only one loaf of bread in town, it'll come to my house, he said, because I'm seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness. It will come to my house. And I won't selfishly keep it to myself.

I'll share it with as many people as I can, because I'm a Christian. But it'll come to my house, because I'm seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness first. And he said that if you seek, all that you need will be added to you.

So we're not worried about those things. A lot of people in the world are worried about all those things, saying you better store up enough for the last days, etc, etc. I'm not worried, because Jesus said, don't take care, don't worry about what you eat or drink for tomorrow.

Tomorrow will take care of itself. You seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first, and all the other things will be added to you. I proved that, and already in the years when my wife and I were extremely

poor, now God took care of us without our ever mentioning our need to any human being except to God.

And there are wonderful experiences that we can have, you know, when when you come to a tight spot in your life and you have some sort of shortage, learn to go to God rather than to man. It's been some of the blessed experiences we've had in our life and in our church as well. So the difficulty is not talking about those type of problems the world is concerned about, you know, shortage of food and things like that.

It's talking about another type of difficulty, and that you can know from the remaining verses. Why will it be difficult in the last days? Because men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers. You say, well, that's always been true from the time of Cain onwards.

From the time of Cain, which is the entire human history, men have always been lovers of self and lovers of money and boastful and arrogant, but here it's different. It makes a big list of people with all types of sins, unloving, unireconcilable, malicious gossips. Verse 3, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, but along with all these sins, they will hold on to a form of godliness.

They will claim to be believers. That's the danger. We're going to find in the last days, a lot of people hold on to a form of godliness.

That means the language of Christianity, the language of the new birth, and the language of holiness, but without its power, avoid such men. So it's going to be very difficult in the last days because there are going to be around us a whole lot of people who claim to be believers, but who don't have that inner power that keeps them free from sin. They don't seek for power to be free from sin.

They're only occupied with ministry. This ministry or that ministry, maybe healing the sick or casting out demons or preaching or whatever it is, and when there are going to be a lot of people like that in the last days, who've denied the power of godliness, speaks in verse 5 about the form of godliness and the power of godliness. They got the form, but they don't have the power.

Not the power to heal the sick. It's talking about here the power of godliness, the power to live a godly life, which God offers us. The power to heal the sick is not given by God to everyone.

He gives gifts according to His sovereign choice. For example, preaching. You can't preach just because you feel like it.

God's got to give you that gift, and if He doesn't give you the gift, you can't do it. If He gives you the gift, it'll flow from you like a river. If He doesn't give you the gift, you can struggle and struggle, and it won't be.

I'm not talking about the testimony. Every Christian must testify about what God has done, but the ability to preach is not given to everyone, and the ability to heal the sick is not given to everyone. So we're not talking about that powerful ministry.

It's talking about the power of godliness. The power to live a godly life is offered to everyone. Every Christian can have the power to live a godly life.

There's a difference between the fruit of the Spirit, which God offers to everyone, and the gifts of the Spirit, which God sovereignly chooses whom to give to. We cannot seek for a particular gift. You can't say, I want to be an apostle, or I want to be a prophet, but you can say, Lord, I want to be holy.

I want to love everyone. That you can ask for. You can ask for joy all the time.

You can ask for peace. So the power of godliness these people don't have, but they will have the form. So there will be in the last days in every church, including this one, and including my churches, people who have a form of godliness, but who don't have that inner power to live a godly life in their home, or in their private life, or in their workplace.

But they'll have the form, and it'd be very difficult to be a Christian in the last days, because it's a mingling of people who are genuinely godly, and people who only have a form. And you'll be confused, and you can be influenced by people who only have the form. That's why it's going to be difficult to be in the last days.

The Living Bible paraphrases it as, it's going to be very difficult to be a Christian in the last days, because of this type of deception all around. And so that's why it's very, very important, as I said, these two things. One, to know the scriptures really well.

Cut out some of that television time. Cut out some of that unnecessary speaking on the telephone. So many people nowadays, just because they have a telephone, a cell phone, they are constantly on it, particularly young people.

Talking to this person, that person, the other person, I'll tell you what, talk a little more to God. You'll get a lot more by talking to Him, than talking to a whole lot of people. Because it's just to satisfy a lust, you know, the lust to be able to converse with people on a phone.

I mean, I speak to people on the phone when it's necessary, but I want to be listening to God most of the time. That's the only way, I'll tell you, that's the only way to survive in these days. Men won't be able to help you.

God will. And the wonderful thing about listening to God is, He'll warn you in advance about things to come. He can protect you, if you keep listening to God.

So, when you live in such a surrounding, it's very important that we have our priorities right, to know the scriptures, to take time to know the scriptures. And the second thing, as I said, is always love the truth about yourself. In other words, here's an example.

Supposing you read something in the scripture, and you discover in your life, you're not following that. Maybe a very small thing. You read that in the New Testament, and you discovered you are not following that in your life.

What are you going to do about it? Just ignore it? Argue against it? You're a prime candidate for deception. I wouldn't do that. I say, Lord, this is what your word says, all these years I've not obeyed it.

I'm gonna obey it right now, from this day onwards. I don't care whether everybody around me is disobeying it too. They can do what they like.

I'm not answerable for them, I'm answerable for myself. There are so many things like this I've discovered. Christendom has drifted so far away from the standards of scripture, and they don't even realize it.

And we are living in such a day. So it's my duty to warn you, it's going to be difficult to be a Christian in the last days, a wholehearted, dedicated Christian. And our protection is, when you read something in scripture, love the truth.

Lord, that is the truth. I want to love it. And if God sees I read that, and I ignore it, then I'm ignoring the truth.

Then you're a candidate for deception. But if you love the truth and say, Lord, that I'm not doing that, I'm sorry, I'm not doing it, but I want to do it from now on. You often heard me speak about forgiveness.

It's a very, very important area. If you don't forgive others, it's a clear statement of Jesus, God will not forgive you. You can pray and pray and pray and imagine that the Lord has forgiven you.

He has not. I believe there are lots of people who claim that verse. If he confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

They claim 1 John 1 9, but it is not true in their life because of one reason. They have not forgiven somebody. 1 John 1 9 does not work in their life.

Because Matthew 6 15 says that you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you. So what's use claiming 1 John 1 9? It's not working. I mean, we can imagine I've been forgiven by the Lord.

It's amazing how that our deceitful heart can make us feel I'm a child of God. Well, you better be sure because if you don't love the truth, God will allow you to be deceived. So I find great comfort in this.

God's not asked me to do something very complicated. Just love the truth which your conscience tells you. Love the truth which you'll see in scripture and I can guarantee you'll be protected.

And you'll shine as a light for the Lord in the last days. I want to turn also now to what Jesus said in Luke's Gospel chapter 17 about the last days. Luke 17.

He specifically mentioned two periods of time in the Old Covenant, Old Testament, not Old Covenant, Old Testament, which would be a picture of the last days. One was Luke 17 26, the days of Noah and the other is verse 28, the days of Lot. So the two periods in the Old Testament which the Lord particularly said would be a picture of what the last days were like.

Verse 26, as it was in the days of Noah and as it happened, verse 28, in the days of Lot. So there's certain things that characterize the world in the days of Noah and Lot. So I turn back to Genesis in chapter 6 to see what the days of Noah were like.

Because this is, Jesus said the last days will be like this. It says here in Genesis chapter 6, it's talking about the days of Noah. Verse 5, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth.

That's the first thing. In the last days the wickedness of man is going to be great all over the earth and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The terrible state of affairs when all over the world people are always thinking of something evil.

All the suicide bombings and it's people planning and thinking evil all the time. Trying to blow up planes and blow up houses and every intent of the thoughts of his heart is only evil. How can I harm others? Jesus said the last days will be like that.

It was like that in the days of Noah. And it was so bad, it says in verse 6, the Lord was sorry that he made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart. I believe that God is grieved in his heart when he sees all this going on and man whom he created to be in his image.

And the Lord said, I'll blot out man whom I've created. But, verse 8, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord and he was a righteous man, blameless in his time, verse 9, and he walked with God. So what I see from there is there's going to be all this terrible evil around us but here and there there's going to be a man like Noah, a family like Noah's family.

See, it was not just the man. Noah was a man who walked with God but he had a family, he had a wife and three sons who were also walking with God. And here's the amazing thing, in the midst of such an evil world, Noah found three good wives for his three sons.

That's how parents found marriage partners for their sons in those days, just like Abraham. And Noah found good wives for his son so that his sons and their wives were saved. This is the type of family that God is looking for in the last days, in the midst of a wicked world.

And the thing that's mentioned here particularly about one type of sin is mentioned here, one is the wickedness of man. It says the earth was covered with violence, verse 11. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence.

That means a lot of murder and killing and all that was going on in those days and there'll be a lot of that in the last days, mass killing. And the other evil in the days of Noah was sexual sin, not just ordinary adultery. It says in chapter 6, verse 2, the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful and they took wives for themselves whom they chose.

And verse 4, the Nephilim were on the earth in those days and afterward when the sons of God came to the daughters of men, they brought children to them. Those were mighty men who were all men of renown. Now that's a very difficult passage to understand because there were no born-again sons of God in Noah's time.

If you study scripture, the word son of God is used for God's direct creation, always. In Luke chapter 3 where the genealogy of Mary is mentioned, it says so-and-so was the son of so-and-so, son of so-and-so, son of so-and-so, son of so-and-so, and it says finally Adam was the son of God. Because all the others were not direct creations of God.

They were all born through other human beings, but Adam was a direct creation of God. He's called the son of God. That's just a little bit of Bible study for you to know.

And in the book of Job, you read about the angels being referred to as the sons of God because they are the direct creation of God. So when it says in Genesis chapter 6 about the sons of God, it's referring to angels. Now angels are not supposed to have sexual activity with human beings, but these angels did.

Now they don't have organs to have sexual activity, but I believe the way they did it was they got into human beings. They possessed human beings because they lusted. It's an amazing thing.

These angels lusted after pretty women and they couldn't do it themselves. So they got into men, possessed them, and had sexual abnormal unusual perverted sex. That's how it was in the days of Noah.

Now let me show you this passage here in 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 19. It says that Jesus, after he died, went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison.

Certain evil spirits have been locked up in prison who were once disobedient in the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah. You see there? Those are angels. These are not human beings.

Angels who have been locked up in prison. Demons. Some demons are free, but these demons have been imprisoned by God because they went outside their boundary in the days of Noah.

So that's how we know that it's this demonic sexual activity. And the last days are going to be like the days of Noah. There's going to be demonic sexual activity in the world.

And the other days, I told you, it says were the days of Lot. And what do we read about the days of Lot? Again, perverted sex is a characteristic of Sodom. That's how the word Sodomy has come from that town of Sodom.

And it's amazing to see how there were these two beautiful angels who looked like human beings that went to Sodom to deliver Lot. They must have been perhaps more handsome than any human beings. These two angels came looking like men and came to Lot's house.

And when he went into Lot's house, Lot invited him in. And it says here, the people of that town of Sodom, Genesis 19 and verse 4, the men of Sodom surrounded Lot's house. Not just the older people, even young people, young men.

And said, bring out these men, verse 5, who came. They thought they were men. They didn't know they were angels.

They said, bring out these good-looking men who came to your house because we want to have sex with you. We want to have sex with them. Verse 5, the last days will be like the days of Lot.

And Lot said, please my brothers, don't do this. This is evil. I know this is your habit here in this town of Sodom.

You guys do it with each other, but don't do it with these men who come to my house. And if you insist, verse 8, here are two of my daughters who are not yet married. They were engaged to two men there, but they're not yet married and they never had any sexual relations.

Let me bring out these daughters of mine. And they said, no, we don't want to have sex with the women. We want to have it with men.

And they almost broke down his house. The last days will be like the days of Lot. Jesus predicted things that are happening in our time, 2000 years ago.

So when I see these things happening around me, the perversion and the activity of demons and the devil in the area of sex, I am not surprised. In fact, I say, Lord, this is an indication that your coming is near. Your coming is soon.

So when I read all these things in the papers and I hear about what's happening in the world around, I see these are indications that the Lord predicted this. It's not going to change. You know what the other thing the Bible says about the last days, we saw second Timothy three men who have a form of godliness without the power.

They're going to be Christians who claim to be believers who will engage in this type of sexual perversion. And it goes on to say in second Timothy and chapter three, verse 13, evil men will go from bad to worse. You want a prophecy about how things are going to be in the coming years in the sexual area worldwide? Bad to worse.

It's not going to improve. You think it's already pretty bad. Well, you haven't seen anything yet.

It's going to be much worse. They will keep on being deceived, it says. Christians who claim to have a form of godliness.

And we see that exactly like that happening in Christian churches, pastors and preachers, perverted sex, demonic activities. But in the midst of this, there was this man Noah and his family who was upright. So that's what we want to look at.

Our calling in the midst of all this is to follow Noah. The Bible calls him a preacher of righteousness. Second Peter and chapter two, it says, second Peter two, verse five, God did not spare that ancient world.

First of all, verse four, God did not spare the angels who sinned. That was in the time of Noah. But cast them into hell, into pits of darkness.

Those angels who went into sexual sin. And he did not spare the ancient world which also followed in the direction of the angels with sexual sin and perversion and violence. But he spared Noah.

He was a preacher of righteousness and seven others. That's his wife, his three sons and their wives. So the message to us is, God wants in the last days, if the days are going to be like the days of Noah, God wants people like Noah.

God wants people like Mrs. Noah who supported her husband in the building of the ark. God wants families like Mr. and Mrs. Noah who brought up all their children in godly ways who helped their father to build the ark. God wants people like Noah who will get godly wives for their children and godly husbands for their daughters.

Is he going to find them? I believe he is. There is going to be a remnant like that all over the world. And the calling to you, my brothers and sisters, is to be a part of that remnant.

To me, it is very clear, it came to me very clearly 41 years ago when we started our church that we were not called to bring multitudes to Christ and build mega churches. Noah never built a mega church, but we were called to be a remnant that would be absolutely true to all of God's standards. Not 90% of God's standards, but to all of God's standards in the midst of a corrupt world.

He was yours to hear, let him hear. That's all I can say. I know that everybody will not respond to this message.

Some people will think it's extreme. Well, may God have mercy on you, that's all I can say. But I know that some will respond and I've seen people respond to it from almost every part of the world.

There is a remnant that really wants to follow God's call to be like Noah. Who want to bring up their family the way Noah brought up his family. You know, Noah's children were pretty old when they were in the ark.

They were married. And Noah was still one whom they respected. It's wonderful when a married son can still respect his father because he sees his father as a man of God.

That's the type of man who respects the mother because he knows the mother is a woman of God. That's the type of family God wants in the last days. Upright who preach righteousness.

Noah is called here a preacher of righteousness. And the Bible says in Genesis 6 that he preached for 120 years. He was 600 years old when the ark, when the flood came.

The Lord had told him, I'm about to destroy the earth. Yet his days, Genesis 6, I will give man 120 years to repent. And during that time Noah was 480 years old when he started preaching.

And he preached for 120 years. And what did he preach? Righteousness. He had no time to preach anything else.

He preached uprightness, obedience to God, turning from sin. And he didn't lower that standard. And he had his little church.

And you ask Noah, how many people in your church? Eight people. Eight people? What type of church is that? You wouldn't think much of a church today which has only eight people, right? I mean, if they said 800, wow. No.

I'll tell you, Noah could have made his church 800. He just had to lower his standards of righteousness a little bit. The eight would have become 80.

If he lowered it a little more, it would have been 800. Lower it a little more, it would be a mega church. You keep lowering the standards of God, no problem building a mega church.

But you preach all of the standards of God, and you're going to have a problem. I remember when another son of mine started a church in his house in California a few years ago. And there were a number of people who came along.

Just a small group of people. Multiracial, different Caucasians, Indians, and other races too. And he began to preach holiness, and people were interested in that, and obedience to scripture.

And then he went to the passage of scripture in 1 Corinthians 11 which says that a woman, when she prays, must veil her head. So well, God's word says that we obey it. You know what happened? Half the people left.

Half that church. It suddenly became small. And I saw it and I said, son, I'm proud of you.

That you're not going to compromise anything in scripture to keep a crowd. Let them go. They can go where they want.

There are hundreds of churches where they can go and join. Well, we want to build a church that believes in preaching righteousness and obedience to everything in scripture. We're not here to judge anyone.

God is the only judge. Our calling is to proclaim the truth. Noah was not a judge.

He was a preacher. But he would not lower the standard of righteousness in any area. He loved the truth.

And I said, if we want to build a church according to God's standards, we've got to go by God's word. Not go by what we think is important, what we think is unimportant. Those are all for clever people.

And God has hidden his truth. Matthew 11, 25 says, God hides his truth from the clever and the intelligent. That's another scary verse.

Matthew 11, 25. Jesus said, I praise you, Father, that you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent. Do you know that clever and intelligent people have a handicap when they come to God's word? Their cleverness and intelligence can lead them astray.

But he reveals them to babes. And I remember when I read that verse and began to understand it, I said, what shall I do, Lord? I'm clever and I'm intelligent. I'm not a dumb person.

I did pretty well in school. I'm clever and intelligent. That means I'll be deceived? No, the Lord said, be like a babe.

It's revealed to babes. And the one condition that babes have is humility. Jesus picked up a baby and said, humble yourself like this child.

He told grown-up people, if you humble yourself like this child, you can enter God's kingdom. So I understood from that that what he meant by it's revealed to babes, it's revealed to people who will humble themselves and say, Lord, all my cleverness will not help me to understand scripture. That'll help me in the world.

My cleverness is extremely useful in my business. And out in the world, to make money, to earn my living. But when it comes to scripture, the most important requirement is not my cleverness.

It's my humility. What's the other thing that babes have? Helpless dependence on their parents. So I say, Lord, when I come to scripture, I want to come with humility and a helpless dependence on you to tell me the truth.

And that's how I discovered the truths of scripture. The amazing things that God's shown me in scripture about the new covenant and about an overcoming life, which I never heard from anywhere. And then it's all here.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. And he never lowered his standard. I tell you, he's one of my great heroes.

A man who preached for 120 years without compromising so that his church never grew to more than eight people. I mean, if he had to send a report somewhere to show about church growth and all, he'd have been considered a total failure. Thank God he didn't have to send reports to anybody about his work.

I never sent a report about my work in my entire life because I'm not interested in man's opinion. I said, God sees everything. And God saw Noah and bore witness to him.

And because he stood for the Lord, he saved his family. And if you stand for the Lord, you can save your family. It's an amazing thing.

God cares for us. The other person is Lot. Now, Lot, you know, I always thought of Lot as a bit of a compromiser.

The guy went to Sodom to make money. It's very clear. You read that in Genesis 13.

Abraham was gracious to say, okay, you want to go take whichever side you want? And he saw Sodom as prosperous. Let me go and settle there. People were wicked.

And he lived there and he became a leader there. And he got into trouble, you read in Genesis 14, when some other king came and captured. All those people in Lot and his family were taken captive.

It's an interesting story you read in Genesis 14. And Abraham, if you want to see what a man of God Abraham was, you see his reaction to that. When you see a person has become worldly and gone somewhere just to make money and gone astray.

And he got into a lot of trouble because of that. Most people would say, serves him right. I hope he's learned a lesson now.

But that's not what Abraham said. He gathered his 318 servants and went to fight against those kings to deliver this wayward, backslidden nephew of his. That's a mark of a man of God who wants to go and help someone.

And when he came back, I'm sure Lot learned what godliness was looking at Abraham. That this uncle of mine, who I took the best part of the property and yet he comes to rescue me in the time of need. He's the only one who can help me.

And he helped him. And I believe that Lot had some type of inner conversion. But what could he do? He had a wife who was a thoroughly worldly person.

Delighted with the riches of Sodom. It's unfortunate. Sometimes there are godly men who got worldly wives who are interested in wealth and the honor of this world.

Noah had a good wife. Lot had an evil one. But that did not corrupt Lot.

It's a wonderful thing. If a man can be a man of God, even if his wife is like a witch. I don't know whether you've read the story of John Wesley.

John Wesley was one of the greatest men of God that Christendom has seen. In the 18th century in England, he brought revival into England that saved England from a revolution. Hundreds and thousands of people he brought to Christ and preached holiness like nobody had ever preached it in England till then.

He made one mistake in his life. He married a very worldly woman. I mean when he was late in life, when he was in his 50s.

Such an evil woman who did all types of evil to him. And he never spoke one word evil about her. He bore with her evil.

She used to pull the hair from his beard and insult him before his colleagues and many many other things I don't want to mention. But it never made John Wesley ungodly. He was upright and godly till the end.

That shows us that nobody can say that I became evil because my wife was bad. If anybody says that to the Lord in the final day, Lord I couldn't be holy because my wife was so bad. God will say, let me let me call you, call John Wesley here in the day of judgment.

And he'll say let me show you the videotape of John Wesley's life. And your mouth will be shut. Yeah.

Lot had a very difficult wife. So God gives us two examples. One is of Noah who had an excellent wife, excellent children.

And Noah and Lot who had a very difficult wife but we read about Lot in 2nd Peter in the same chapter we were reading about Noah, 2nd Peter chapter 2. We read that God rescued righteous Lot, 2nd Peter 2 verse 7. When I read that I was amazed. The Holy Spirit calls Lot righteous? I'd say the guy was an absolute compromiser. He was a lover of money.

I think what happened to him was he was a lover of money, he went there. But perhaps after Abraham, he saw Abraham's goodness in rescuing him. The guy had a change of heart.

And he became righteous. So that's a great testimony that people who start out on the wrong path. Noah was righteous from the beginning, walked with God.

But Lot was not like that. He was a person. But a time came in his life where he got grip and became righteous.

So he ended his life in a good way but he could not convert his wife. And even his children were pretty worldly. But it says here, this righteous man, verse 7, was oppressed by the sensual conduct of these unprincipled men in Sodom.

Do you think he was more righteous than you? And me? When we see the evil around us, are we oppressed by the evil conduct of these people around us? Does that disturb us? Lord, these people are dishonoring you. And when Christians behave like that in these, you know, Sodom type of ways, claim to be believers, Lot would have been oppressed by the unprincipled the sensual conduct of these men. And what he saw, verse 8, and heard while living among them, his righteous soul was tormented day after day with their lawless deeds.

When he saw their homosexuality and their sodomy and their sexual evil, his righteous soul was tormented. He was really disturbed. Oh, how evil these people are.

You know, we can get so acclimatized to evil around us that it doesn't disturb us anymore. It's a very sad thing. This Lot whom you criticize and you may discover was a better man than you and me.

That after his conversion, he, and so the Lord rescued him. If he was the same worldly person he was when he first went to Sodom, I don't think the Lord would have saved him. But something happened.

He saw wickedness and he saw the godliness. I believe he was changed by the godliness he saw in his uncle Abraham. So God needs godly men like Noah, like Abraham, to stand for him that can convert even a backslider and a compromiser like Lot and make him righteous, as he sees around him.

These are the days we are living in and Noah and Lot are a good example for us as we stand for Christ in the midst of evil. We may not be able to save them. Lot could not save anybody.

He could not even save his own wife. He tried to pull her out but she was more interested in all the money of Sodom and so he had to leave her behind. And in that connection Jesus said when the Lord comes one will be taken and the other will be left behind.

He said think of Lot and his wife. That's a great tragedy. But what can you do? You do your best to try and save your wife.

Even John Wesley could not save his wife. He saved thousands of others. And so it is unfortunately for Lot and some others.

So we cannot be we cannot change a person's soul but we can be upright and be an example like Noah was. So this is the challenge that comes to us in the last days. When we see evil around us it must grieve us because it's hurting the Lord's name.

The name of Jesus. The Lord in heaven hallowed be thy name. Let your name be considered holy in the earth around us and it is not.

The thing is very few people pray that prayer even though the Lord taught us to pray. We'd be very concerned the way I look at it is if somebody were spoiling my name if somebody was spoiling your name or if somebody was spoiling your daughter's name in the city how would you feel? Would you be disturbed? My daughter is not like that. Why are they spoiling her name like that? The name of Jesus is being dishonored by Christians and it doesn't disturb us.

It shows how we have more concern for our own name than the Lord's name. Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Very, very few Christians are concerned that the name of Jesus is being dishonored.

I live in a country where the name of Jesus is being dishonored not by Hindus and Muslims. No. By people who call themselves Christians.

Do you know that a Hindu or a Muslim cannot dishonor the name of Jesus Christ? Because they don't take that name. You dishonor the name of Christ when you take that name and claim to be his disciple. So the name of Christ is dishonored by Christians.

Hallowed be thy name. Lord, I'm concerned. I've been praying for years in India.

Lord, I want your name to be honored in this country. I want to try to do my best to raise up a version of Christianity that's obeying God's word that honors you. Even if all Christians don't agree with me I don't care about that.

I just want to hold up the standards of God's word in relation to money, in relation to sexual evil, in relation to pride and all these things. Jesus is our example. What does it mean to build the body of Christ? This is the burden I've had for 40 years.

The burden that Paul had to build little groups of people who represent the body of Jesus Christ. Why is the church called the body of Jesus Christ? Because the meaning is that the way Jesus lived on earth in his human body is now to be reproduced in a group of people who are living by the same principles. That means we've got to study the principles of why Jesus lived.

What was Jesus' attitude to women? Total purity. Lord, I want that. What was Jesus' attitude to money? He used money but he was detached from it.

He never loved it. What was his attitude to sinners? He never despised them. He loved them in order to save them.

Lord, I want to have that attitude towards people around me. What was his attitude to hypocritical religious Pharisees? He denounced them wholeheartedly and I want to denounce them wholeheartedly. I don't want to seek popularity with Pharisees.

Jesus never sought it. I don't want to be diplomatic and say, yeah, you're all nice people. No, you're a generation of vipers.

You clean the outside of the cup and you're filthy. See, that's what it means to stand up and have the same attitude that Christ had. It's not just the nice side, you know, how Jesus was gentle towards sinners, but he also used the whip on people who were making money in the name of religion.

So to be Christ-like in the midst of a corrupt world, I've got to see the balance of the life of Christ full of grace and full of truth. That's why the church of Christ, that first body of Christ, the human body of Christ where he lived a life, the life of God, is now to be seen in a group of people who are living by the same life of God in their lives together. And this is what the Lord is doing in different parts of the world.

And this is the Noah and the Lot of the last days that's standing in the midst of a corrupt world and a corrupt Christendom and a corrupt God. And what a lot it meant for God to have a man like Noah. When I get to heaven, one of the first people I want to meet after I meet Jesus is Noah.

You know why? It's because of him that I'm alive. It's because of him that I get to heaven. I don't know whether you realize that.

If Noah had compromised in his day, the entire human race would have been wiped out. And there'd be no humanity on the earth. If there's humanity on the earth, it's because of one man, Noah.

Imagine if it was written in Genesis 6, but God found nobody. Would you be alive today? No? That's why I appreciate Noah. I'm going to be in heaven because Noah stood for God 4,000 years ago.

And you, if you can stand, and you and I can stand for God today, there'll be many people thankful for you and me as well. Because we did not lower God's standards, but proclaim the standards of righteousness. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, it's so easy for us to hear these things and in 24 hours to forget all about it. That's what the devil wants. And pray, Father, that you will keep on reminding us of eternal truths, the things that matter for eternity.

Help us to be your witnesses in these last days. As the world around us sinks into sin, as Christendom around us sinks into compromise and evil, help us to be a remnant that's true to you in every area. Saved from sin, obeying your word in its entirety.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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