

The Last Days and the Lord's Coming - Faith That Overcomes Fear

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the last days by seeking God's kingdom first and being filled with the Holy Spirit, and warns against false prophecy and the dangers of fear and anxiety.

Duration: 59:22

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1, John 14:26, John 20:19, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 8:11

Topics: "Last Days"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the fear that many people experience when thinking about the future and the events that will occur in the last days. He mentions that God will shake everything that can be shaken, as stated in Hebrews 12, and that this shaking will cause fear among people. Jesus also spoke about this fear in Luke 21, saying that men will faint from fear when they see the things that are coming upon the world. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not succumbing to fear but instead straightening up and lifting up our heads, as Jesus instructed. He also highlights the tendency for convictions and truths to evaporate over time unless they are set on fire by the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes by referencing the disciples' fear even after witnessing Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, emphasizing the need to overcome fear with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

God gives us his word to prepare us for the future. That is the meaning of prophecy. In the Old Testament, prophecy was meant to direct people.

Even a king would have to go to a prophet and ask him, shall I go to battle or will I get healed from this sickness? And the prophet would say, I will tell you after a couple of days and he'd wait on the Lord. There was a time we read when Jeremiah was locked up in a prison by the king because he wanted to please the false prophets who accused Jeremiah. But the king went down to the dungeon and talked to Jeremiah and said, tell me, is there a word from the Lord? He knew that there was one man who had a word from the Lord.

So that was how it was in the Old Testament. Direction, this is what you got to do, this is what you got to do. But in the New Testament, the Bible says under the new covenant, they shall not teach every man his neighbor, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.

The Old Testament, they didn't have the Holy Spirit. Only the prophet had the Holy Spirit, so they had to go to him. But now every child of God can have the Holy Spirit.

You can have the Holy Spirit directing him. But there is still prophecy in the New Testament. But prophecy in the New Testament is not to direct people.

Don't you believe any prophet who comes and tells you, this is what you got to do. This is what you not got to do. This is whom you got to marry.

This is what you got to go. Those are all false prophets. Or people who are speaking from their own spirit.

In the New Testament, prophecy is only stating something that can happen in the future, like Agabus did twice in the Acts of the Apostles. To prepare us, Agabus said, there'll be a famine. But he never told anybody what to do.

Agabus told Paul, if you go to Jerusalem, you'll be caught by the people there and imprisoned. But he never told Paul whether to go or not to go. So prophecy in the New Testament is never to tell a person.

It's never directed. But it prepares us for the future. And the Bible says that in a real New Testament church, there should always be a spirit of prophecy.

If you read 1 Corinthians 14, it says there when there's prophecy, the secrets of a person's heart are made manifest. And it prepares us for the days to come. You know, if you listen, if there is a church where there's a word from the Lord, a prophetic word, that word will prepare you for the immediate future, what you're going to face.

In Agabus' day, it was a famine. And when he spoke to Paul, it was an imprisonment. And in your case, it may be some trial or temptation that you're going to face in the coming days or months.

And if you listen to the prophetic word, if it is a prophetic word, it'll prepare you for it. And that's how it should be in every church meeting, a prophetic word, which prepares us for the future. And if we listen to it, but the Bible says that when we listen, we must judge every prophecy to see whether it's really from the Lord or it's really for us, because there's a human element in immature people when they attempt to prophesy.

It's very important for us to understand this in the last days, because just like in the days of the Old Testament, there were true prophets and there were false prophets. And the proportion was about one to a hundred. There'd be one true prophet to every false prophet.

The false prophets came out of the school of the prophets. They had Bible schools in those days. You read about them in Second Kings and all about the school of the prophets and it's called the sons of the prophets.

They were the Bible school students. Those fellows got their Bible school degrees and called themselves prophets, but they were all false prophets. There was never in the history of the human race has never been a true prophet that's come out of a Bible school.

You never read it from Genesis to Revelation. They came out of a lonely walk with God. That's how every prophet came.

Christianity has gone astray today because of a lot of false prophets. False prophets who believe the whole Bible, who preach the right doctrine, but were not in touch with God. The word of the Lord was rare in the days of Samuel, it says.

It doesn't mean they didn't have the Bible, but they didn't have people who were listening to what God was saying. People are too much in a hurry to do things for God, but they didn't have time like Mary to sit at Jesus' feet and listen. So when we hear God's word in connection with the last days, remember, it's to prepare us for the future.

And there are many things that Jesus said, which prepares us for the future. We must beware of false prophecies. Very often, I'll tell you, it's amazing how much Christians all over the world have been influenced by the, influenced in their understanding of the meaning of the word prophecy, by a lot of teaching that has come particularly from the United States and from charismatic circles, which have got absolutely zero foundation in scripture.

Many people think prophecy is where a man closes his eyes and speaks in a funny voice or probably raises his hand and speaks for two or three minutes and says something that's prophecy. It's a lot of garbage. You read 1 Corinthians 14 verse 3, go by scripture.

The devil knows that in the last days, Christians will be more familiar with the books that other Christians have written than the scriptures. And that's why he's got a field day to deceive Christians. 1 Corinthians 14 verse 3 is the clearest definition of prophecy in the entire New Testament.

Prophecy is that which speaks to men, to exaltation, to edification and comfort. And you don't have to speak in a funny voice. You don't have to close your eyes.

You don't have to raise your hands and you don't have to speak for three minutes. You can speak for one hour. Let's get all these false ideas of prophecy out of our head.

You'll get it all out of your head if you stop reading Christian books and start reading the Bible. Very simple. So prophecy in relation to the last days, prepare us for the coming days.

One of the things that Jesus said, we've looked at a number of things so far. Now I want you to consider what Jesus said in Luke 21 to prepare us for the days to come. Luke 21.

And Jesus said in the last days, men are, verse 26, Luke 21, 26, men are going to faint from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then after that, they will see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things, not after these take place, begin to take place, straighten up, lift up your heads.

That's the opposite of fear. A man who's afraid doesn't straighten up and lift up his head. There are two groups of people going to be on the earth in the last days.

One who are gripped by fear when they think of what's going to happen. The cost of living is going up. The value of currency is going down.

The economies of all countries are going to be shattered. I might as well tell you that's going to happen. Because there's a verse in Hebrews chapter 12, which says that God is going to shake everything that's going to be shaken.

It's in the last few verses of Hebrews 12. So that the things that cannot be shaken will remain. Please remember that we are approaching, if you like, keep a finger here and turn to that verse in Hebrews chapter 12.

If you're not familiar with it, because this is, we're going to see it the coming days. Be prepared for what fulfillment of this verse. Verse 27, Hebrews 12 27.

And this expression yet once more denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken as of created things in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Whatever people place their confidence in, other than God, will be shaken. You place your confidence in money, in the stock market, in trading, in real estate, and land, and banks, and deposits, and whatever it is.

If it's a created thing, I can tell you right now in Jesus name, it's going to be shaken. And if you're standing on that, you're going to be shaken too. The things that cannot be shaken will remain.

It's very important to have our feet firmly founded on the rock in these days. A lot of things are going to shake around us. Who are the ones who are going to find themselves unshaken? Those who got their feet on the rock.

And when things are failing around us, who are the ones who are going to lift up their heads and not faint in fear? I'll tell you, those who have spent their life seeking the kingdom of God first. That doesn't mean full-time workers. Every child of God, and 99.9% of children of God are not full-time workers.

Every child of God must seek God's kingdom first. In other words, the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14 17.

That must be primary in their life. Seeking the kingdom of God does not mean, here's another wrong understanding, does not mean missionary work, seeking the spread of the gospel. No.

Romans 14 17. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Pursue righteousness, joy in the Holy Spirit, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, and you'll be pursuing the kingdom of God first.

And if your whole aim in life is to be filled with the righteousness of Christ, the character of Christ, the joy of the Lord at all times, and to be at peace with God, and peace with all men, you're seeking God's kingdom first. And I guarantee you, on the basis of the greatest guarantee that you can ever have, God's word, all the things that you need for your earthly life will be added to you. You can be sure.

And the people who place their confidence in money and resources and savings and this that, you just wait and see what's going to happen. They're going to be shaken. So people, people are going to faint for fear.

Two groups, those who faint for fear, and those who stand upright. So I want to say a few things about this matter of fear. Because very often Jesus came to his disciples, I don't want to show you all the references, but he would often say, fear not, or don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Even after his resurrection, turn to John's Gospel chapter 20. You read in John 20, it says here in verse 19, the disciples, John 20, 19, the disciples were inside a locked room, shut there for fear of the Jews. Even though they had heard preaching from the greatest preacher that ever walked this world, Jesus

Christ, for three and a half years.

You would think that if you had heard Jesus himself speaking to you and walking with you for three and a half years, you'd never have any fear left in you. No, sir. You're not better than Peter, James, and John.

Don't be conceited. These people walked with Jesus, heard him, touched him, ate with him, and listened to him, the greatest preacher that walked on the earth, the most anointed preacher for three and a half years. At the end of it, what were they doing? They were sitting in a room, locked up for fear, and Jesus came into the midst.

You'd say, ah, now at least the fear will go, because they have seen, they saw Jesus crucified, and they see him risen from the dead, and him speaking, peace be with you. As the father sent me, I send you, verse 21, and he breathes on them, something happened, received the Holy Spirit. Boy, now you think the fear is gone.

No, sir, it hasn't gone yet. Eight days later, verse 26, again the disciples are inside with the doors shut. They were still sitting inside with the doors shut for fear.

What do we learn from that? You can walk with the greatest, with the Lord Jesus himself, personally for three and a half years, listen to him, and be full of fear. You can see him actually, physically coming, and touch him, and still have fear. You can have him breathe on you, and say, receive the Holy Spirit, and still have fear.

When did that fear disappear? When they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost. That is why I keep telling born again Christians, you know what you need? You need the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and fire. You don't need to be just immersed in water, you need to be immersed by Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, and fire.

Then, it's reading the day of Pentecost. Suddenly, they opened the doors, and they could come out. What could not be accomplished by three and a half years of walking with Jesus, listening to him, seeing him resurrected from the dead, his breathing on them.

I think they were born again there, perhaps. They needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Then, the fear disappeared.

So, what is the word for the last days? If men's hearts are going to faint for fear, and some people are going to stand upright with their heads lifted up, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Not once, but continuously. Ephesians 5.18 says, be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.

That is the greatest need to be prepared for the last days, because that's the only thing that helped those apostles to be free from fear. You can listen to a message like this right now, and I can tell you a number of things that will educate you, so that you don't have to be afraid of anything in the last days. But, do you think I'm a better preacher than Jesus? You can listen to the most anointed sermon against fear, and in the time of crisis, you'll be afraid.

The disciples are an example. For a moment, you know, at the end of the sermon, you say, boy, I'm really free from fear now. But, this is not the first time we have preached against fear, in this pulpit.

We're stirred in a moment, but it disappears, it evaporates. And, that's true of many, many other things. We get convicted about something in a meeting, and it evaporates after some time.

The only way to hold it in, any truth that we hear in the meeting, is to let the Holy Spirit set it on fire, and then it'll remain there forever. Otherwise, even the Word of God can become stale. You think that's blasphemous? You know, in the Old Testament, they got manna.

It was completely untouched by man. Miraculous food from heaven. No human beings ever tasted food that dropped from heaven, except them.

Every day, manna bred from heaven. And, the Bible says in Deuteronomy 8.3, that God gave you the manna every day, to teach you that every day, you need to live by the Word that proceeds from God's mouth. So, the manna was a picture of the Word of God.

But, you know what happened to that manna, if you kept it for 24 hours? Just 24 hours. By the next morning, the Bible says, it began to stink. It was stale.

You hear a message, and in 24 hours, it can become stale for you. But, God told Moses, take that manna and put it inside the Ark of the Covenant. And, Moses put a little bit of manna in a pot inside the Ark of the Covenant.

And, that manna didn't get stale for 40 years. When they carried it around for 40 years in the wilderness, it never got stale. What is the secret? Was it some different type of manna? No, it was exactly the same manna.

But, the difference was, this was kept in the most holy place, where the fire of God was burning. All the time, the living presence of God was there. And, in the presence of God, the manna never becomes stale.

So, we live in a day, when many people go for experiences. They ask people, are you baptized in the Holy Spirit? Have you heard this expression? Are you a spirit-filled Christian? Do you know that 99.99% or 99.99% of Pentecostal charismatic people, when they ask that question, what they mean is, are you baptized in the Holy Spirit, and do you speak in tongues? But, when the Bible spoke about Stephen being full of the Spirit, or somebody else being full of the Spirit, when they wanted to distribute food to the widows, they said, select seven men full of the Holy Spirit. They were not asking them to check up whether they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, because those days, everybody was baptized in the Holy Spirit.

What do they mean by saying, select seven men full of the Holy Spirit, when everybody's baptized in the Holy Spirit? To be spirit-filled does not mean to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. You'll learn a lot of things from me, from Scripture, which go contrary to all the rubbish that's being taught in Christendom today, for people who don't know the Bible. To be full of the Spirit, according to Scripture, is to be continuously filled with the Spirit.

It's not that 30 years ago, I got baptized in the Spirit, and so I call myself spirit-filled. A lot of people who were baptized in the Holy Spirit 30 years ago, are not only not baptized in the Spirit today, they have lost their salvation. They're not children of God.

They're backslidden. So, it's so important to be spirit-filled Christian, which means right now. It's like a water tank being full right now.

Not that it was filled three years ago. It's like a petrol tank in your car being full right now. Not that you filled it up at the gas station three months ago, or something like that.

No. Filled with the Spirit. Spirit-filled.

So, that's how we are to be continuously, if we are to be fresh. So, please keep that in mind. What is to be our attitude in relation to, you know, I told you how Jesus often said, fear not, fear not, fear not.

It was one of the main things He told people, just like He told people, sin not, sin not, go and sin no more. Jesus was as much against fear as He was against sin. Now, many of us know that sin is wrong.

I don't think there's a single person sitting here who would, you may fall into sin, but you don't condone it. I mean, if you've heard the preaching in this church, you will never condone sin in your life. Even if you fall, you'll recognize that you're wrong.

But the danger is that many of us sitting here, when you get afraid, you don't think that's wrong. You think that's, maybe that's just a weakness, or that's normal human reaction. So, we take one command of Jesus seriously, sin not, and we realize that we need to obey that.

But the other command of Jesus, fear not, we don't take so seriously. You know, Christians have the habit of picking and choosing favorite verses in the Bible. Sin not is important, fear not is not so important.

Do not commit murder is important. Do not be anxious for anything. Well, we'll try.

If the Word of God says, don't commit adultery, do you say, I'll try? Or do you say, oh yeah, I want to take that seriously. What about when the Word of God says, don't be anxious for anything? What about when the Word of God says, put away all anger? We are selective. So, I want to say to you, remember this, the same Lord Jesus, who said, sin not, said, fear not.

That means, if he has made provision for us, through the grace of God, to be free from the power of sin in our life, he has also made provision by the grace of God, to free us from fear, totally. Let me ask you, think of these two things, sin and fear. How much sin does Jesus condone in your life? Two or three? I mean, if you've got only two or three sinful habits, will the Lord say, well, that's okay.

I mean, two or three is okay, you know. You used to have about a hundred, now you've got only two or three, praise the Lord. Those you'll have to keep.

Is there any verse like that in Scripture? I mean, you may condone it, because you're not wholehearted, but Jesus never condones it. Tell me any verse in Scripture, where Jesus condones one sin. We saw how Timothy had frequent stomach infirmities, that okay, the Lord said, okay, that'll help you.

Paul had some type of sickness, which he called a thorn in the flesh, the Lord permitted it. But sin, can you imagine Timothy having a sin, and the Lord saying, okay, that's okay, keep it. Or Paul saying, that's okay.

No, sin is serious. Fear is just as bad. Do you hate sickness? Good, I hate sickness too.

What about fear? Do you hate it? You say, Lord, you never told me never get sick. Do you know there's no verse in the Bible, which says, don't get sick. There's no verse in the Bible that says that.

There are verses that say, don't sin. But we're so careful not to get sick. Why not have that same eagerness not to have fear? Because there are verses that say, do not fear.

I mean, there is no verse that says, don't get sick, but we don't want to get sick. But there are plenty of verses which don't fear, and we don't take it seriously. When I was in the military, we were taught that the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war.

The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war. Meaning, it was a proverb, that the harder you work to prepare yourself for wartime against your enemy, when the enemy comes, there's more chance of you conquering him, instead of being dead yourself. But the great danger is that when there's peace, we can relax.

That's what happened on the India-China border in 1962. I remember, I was in the Navy those days. India said, oh well, Chinese and China and India were good friends.

And so the Indian soldiers relaxed and China occupied such a lot of property. India's territory in Kashmir and in Arunachal Pradesh, they've still got it. They've got it permanently.

You know why? Because they took it easy. The time of war, they were not ready. They didn't even have warm clothes for those cold climates.

Indian soldiers, they didn't have weapons. Something like that, you know. And then after the, you know, like you can bolt the stable after the horses run away.

It's no use. So after the property was lost, then they got the Indian soldiers all with warm clothes and guns and all that. It was too late.

Something like that can happen to believers where we try to get ready after the trials come or after the persecution comes or try to overcome fear in the middle of the war. No, the time to overcome it is now. In little, little, little things.

You see, overcoming fear is something like going to school. When you go to school, you don't, I mean, a four-year-old, five-year-old child who goes to school doesn't start learning geometry and trigonometry and all in the first class. No, A, B, C, 1, 2, 3, etc.

And then gradually progresses in school. In the same way, we progress in our freedom from fear from little things to big things. It's not the big things.

The big things will come later. But little, little things, you know, worries and anxieties that plague our mind. The devil is a great master at telling you what will happen to you if such and such a thing happens.

What will happen to you if your husband dies and you have no income left? What will happen to you if you don't have a house of your own? You're always a rented house. You don't have enough money. Things are going costly.

Do you know that more than 90% of the things that we are afraid of never happen? Look back in your past life and see if it's not true. This is the devil's work. Putting all types of fear about what will happen if this, what will happen if this, what will happen if that happens, what will happen.

No. Those little things, let's conquer now. Be anxious for nothing.

Philippians 4.6. How to overcome it? In everything. By prayer and supplication. I'm quoting Philippians 4.6. Supplication means specific request.

Prayer is general. Lord, please deliver me from anxiety. Supplication is Lord, this particular thing is what I'm anxious about.

I want to be free from it. And the third thing is with thanksgiving. Lord, thank you.

You heard my prayer. It's like in the government offices, you know, a little clerk gets a file on his table, some complicated matter, and he forwards it up to the higher office saying, sir, this is not in my department. It's too much for me.

You handle it. The file is gone from his table. Have you put all the files away from your mind? Send it up to heaven and say, Lord, this is too much for me to handle.

I can't handle this. It's for you to take care of. Thanksgiving means, Lord, I believe it's arrived on your table.

Now it's your business. You see, that clerk in the government office is not worried about that file once his senior officer has received it. But we Christians, we pray, we believe that God's heard it, and then we still keep worrying as if the file is still on our table.

No, it says the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. These little, little things that happen today, if you say, Lord, I want to be free from anxiety, you'll be prepared for the days to come when men faint for fear. Yeah, that's the way to do it.

We don't suddenly jump into the 12th standard in one year. We progress. But if you keep failing in the first standard, you can sit 20 years in the same class.

So my brothers and sisters, I want to challenge you to take this seriously from now on, to prepare for the days to come. Do not fear. Do not be anxious.

There are many, many things that can cause us anxiety on this earth. God has made this world a very uncomfortable place so that people realize sin is a terrible thing. Every, all the chaos and sickness and problems in the earth are the result of sin.

And God has ensured that life on earth will never be easy and relaxed and comfortable in any part of the face, any part of the earth. There's no place on earth which is safe. I'll tell you that.

You can go to any country. You think you're going to be safe there? No. You can go to the safest country on earth.

You may not be killed by a terrorist, but you can be killed by a drunken driver on the road, no matter how carefully you drive. Which country in the world are you going to escape that? So we have to be free from anxiety, which prepares us to be free from all fear. And the reason for this is because if we have committed our life to the Lord, he takes care of us.

He says, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. I want you to turn to Hebrews in chapter 13. Hebrews 13 says in the last part, he's particularly talking about, you know, being worried that we won't have enough money to live on this earth in the future days.

I think a lot of poor people, maybe the rich people don't have that fear, but a lot of poor people do have that fear. And most of God's saints are poor. Most of God's saints are poor.

God has chosen the poor of the world, rich in faith. And I've seen poor people like that, who have faith, much more faith than rich people. Rich people have faith in their money.

The poor people don't have any money to have faith in, so they have their faith in God. And you will discover in the final day, who is more prepared for the final day. We have to learn to free ourselves from putting our faith in our money, or putting our faith in people, and learn to put our faith in God, even if you have plenty of money, even if you have very secure surroundings, even if you're living in a very safe country.

We must discipline ourselves to say, Lord, I will not put my trust in man. I will not put my trust in my earthly resources. I put my trust only in you.

So Hebrews 13 says, verse 5, let your character be free from the love of money. Being content with what you have. It's a wonderful, I think there's a close connection with being content with what you have, and being free from fear.

You'll see that in a If you're not going to be content with what you have, what God's given you, you'll have a tremendous problem being free from anxiety and fear. Be content with what you have. Don't compare your lot with somebody else's.

Don't say, I want to have what he has. That's how a lot of people get into debt. Be very careful.

That's how we buy things on credit. All my life, I have urged people never to buy things on credit. Try your best to live within your income.

And don't borrow it unless you're in an emergency. And if you have borrowed, return it as soon as possible. But don't borrow to satisfy your covetousness.

Never. Never. You won't grow spiritually.

I can prophesy that. I've seen that many, many people. Be content with what you have.

Because God himself has said, I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you. And somewhere I read that in that translation, it comes three times. I'll never, never, never.

As if the whole Trinity is promising. I will never, never, never leave you or forsake you. That is our confidence.

My confidence is not in my bank account, though I may have one. It's not in my house, though I may have one. It's in God.

It's in God. You know, in India, a lot of people place their confidence in everywhere. They place their confidence in money.

But particularly in India, they place their confidence in, in my old age, my children will take care of me. In western countries, where particularly socialist countries like in Europe, Australia and all, they place their confidence in the social security system of the government, which says, well, when you're old, we'll give

you a pension. You'll never be in need.

Many, India, of course, doesn't have such a thing. But what should we place our confidence in? When you're old, who's supposed to take care of you? There are a lot of people who never want their children to go away from them. Because they say, who'll take care of me when I'm old? I brought you up to take care of me when I'm old.

Dear me, then you're not a good father. If you brought up your children just to take care of you when you're old. You know what God says? He says in Isaiah 46 verse 4, even to your old age, I am the same.

What a word. This is only for those who have faith in God. Even to your old age, I shall be the same.

Even to your graying years, I shall bear you. I brought you into the world, and I shall bear you, and I shall deliver you. I have made you, I shall carry you, I shall bear you, I shall deliver you.

Our confidence is in Him. Not in our money, not in our children, not in a good church. Some people, their confidence is in a good church.

Oh, we got a good church. If I'm in any need, all the brothers and sisters will rally around me and help me. I feel sorry for you, brother.

I really feel sorry for you. You're going to have a tough time in the last days. Do you know how many people, their confidence is in something earthly? Some human being, some earthly resource, shake it off and say, Lord, I'm going to trust you.

Like Peter stepped out of that security of that boat, and Jesus said, come, and he stepped out in the insecurity of that roaring sea, and he walked. Yeah, that was quite an experience. You can have that experience if you trust the Lord.

Because He has said, I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. Hebrews 13, 6. The next verse, it says, therefore, we can boldly say, the Lord is my helper.

I will not be afraid what man can do to me. You'll need this in the days to come. Because the Bible says that we're going to have a lot of calamities that are going to take place on the earth.

Let's turn back to Matthew 24. Matthew 24, there'll be wars. Verse 6, rumors of wars.

There are going to be famines, earthquakes. Verse 7, famines, earthquakes, war, rumors of war are going to take place in the last days. What shall I pray? Shall I pray, Lord, don't let there ever be a war? Shall I pray, Lord, don't let there ever be a famine? Don't let there ever be an earthquake? You're praying against the Word of God.

I never pray such prayers. You know, there are a lot of prayers I don't pray. I never pray, Lord, let the whole of India get converted.

It sounds very spiritual, no, if you pray like that. I don't pray it. You know what I pray? Lord, you said, there are a few, the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it.

Lord, bring me in touch with those few. I want to build your church with them. That's what I pray.

I pray according to scripture, not according to the super spiritual garbage that a lot of people pray. Dear brothers and sisters, think whether a lot of your Christianity has come from super spiritual garbage that you've heard from other Christians, not from the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. That's why your life is so shaky.

Your life won't be shaky. Your life will be firm in the last days. If you spend your time studying scripture and base everything on scripture and refuse to believe what anybody teaches, if it's not in scripture, this is the Word of God meant to give us light in the darkness of this world.

Study it. It's the only book written by God. It's the only book in the world that tells us how we should live.

Yeah, I spent nearly 50 years studying it and it's changed my life. And it saved me from all the deception going on in evangelical and charismatic Christianity today. I'm not shaken by it one bit.

I can discern straight through and see through the hollowness and emptiness and unscriptural things going on all around. Can you see it? Or are you deceived by what you see? I'll tell you why you're deceived because you don't know the scriptures. And if you don't study the scriptures, you're not going to be bold in the days to come.

When Satan comes against you, what weapon did Jesus use? He said, it's written. Satan came a second time. He said, it's written.

Third time he came against Satan. Satan came against Jesus. Jesus said, it's written.

That's all. No discussion with you, Satan. It's written.

That's it. And Satan went away. I wish Satan would find more believers like that today, who when he comes against them with his deceptions and his fears and his persecution, you say, it is written.

Satan, can you say that? Can you know what's written? Let me tell you some things that are written. Here it says there'll be wars. There are going to be earthquakes, famines, all types of things which can produce a lot of fear.

And then that is fear because of the circumstances that are going to happen on the earth, the terrorism, the wars, the insecurity. And one more thing that can cause insecurity. We read in Revelation and chapter six, speaking about the last days, listen to this and see what you can understand from this.

Verse five, Revelation six, verse five, speaking about the last days, he broke the third seal and the third living creature said, come. And I looked and behold, a black horse is a picture of famine. And he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

That's a picture of, you know, selling food. And I heard as it were a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, a quart of wheat for a denarius. A denarius is one full day's wage.

For one full, whatever you, you know what your one day's salary is. With that one day's salary, you can get a quart of wheat, a little bit of wheat and three quarts of barley. Also for one day's wages, but don't harm the oil and the wine, the oil and the wine referred to the, you know, wheat and barley are the things which we all need for food, oil and wine are for the rich.

And what I get from that verse is that it looks as if in the last days, the poor will suffer a lot more than the rich. We see that in India, you know, we see how, if I were to paraphrase that, the rich are going to get richer and the poor are going to struggle in the last days. Do we see that happening around you? I see it happening in India.

I mean, I never dreamt 20 years ago or even 10 years ago that three Indians would be among the 10 richest people in the whole world. Did you ever dream of that? Isn't India supposed to be a poor country? It's true. There are three Indians in the top 10 richest people in the whole world.

But go down to the villages and see the condition of the poor. That's what that verse says. Go to Africa and see the condition of the poor.

It's going to be terrible in the last days. It's going to happen. It doesn't mean that those poor will go to hell.

I think God has mercy on them. Many of them are getting saved. But what I mean is, there's going to be a lot of fear and insecurity because cost of living is going up.

We're not all millionaires. Cost of living is going to go up. It's going to affect all of us.

That's one type of fear. And the other type of fear can come from Matthew 24 9. They will deliver you to tribulation. Men will persecute you.

They will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of the name of Jesus Christ. Because you take the name of Jesus Christ, you will be hated by every nation.

And that time is going to come. And at that time many will fall away. They will deliver up one another and hate one another.

In another place Jesus said, your brother will deliver you up to betray you and they'll persecute you. So Christians are going to face persecution in the last days just like in the first century. Can't God protect us from being persecuted? Sure.

He could have prevented Jesus from being killed. He could have prevented James the apostle from being beheaded. He could have prevented Paul from being beheaded at the age of 67 by Nero.

Why not? He could have prevented Thomas from being speared to death in Chennai 1900 years ago. He could have prevented all the apostles from being killed. But he didn't.

Could God have prevented all those wonderful martyrs who were burnt at the stake and thrown to the lions? Of course he could have. He who shut the mouth of the lions in Daniel's time could have shut the mouths of all those lions in the Roman amphitheaters when Christians were thrown to the lions. But those were old covenant people.

These were new covenant Christians. He could have let the people, the martyrs at the stake, escape the fire just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the old testament. They were old covenant.

In the old covenant they glorified God by escaping the fire, by escaping the teeth of the lions. In the new covenant they glorified God by being burnt in the fire and by being eaten up by the lions. God has got a people on earth whom he can point out to Satan and say, Satan you can do whatever you like to them.

They will not deny me. They will not give up on me. He didn't have many people like that in the old testament.

Why? Because the old testament people didn't have the power of the Holy Spirit. Nobody in the old testament was baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is the whole thing.

You remove the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are like old covenant people. And I've seen a lot of Christians today who don't value the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They are like old covenant people.

Yep. So in the old covenant because they didn't have the power of the Holy Spirit, a few of them had. You know I think of people like Enoch.

Let me just mention this. There were two people who were raptured in the old testament. That means taken up alive to heaven.

A picture of how we'll be taken up when Jesus comes again. God's given us a glimpse of that in the old testament. Two people who didn't die.

I say, I tell you honestly, I'm not planning to die. I expect to live when Jesus comes. I hope you do too.

I'm looking forward to that. That Christ will come and I will be taken up alive to meet him in the air. And I believe that we should all have that goal.

I think I'll have that goal even if I'm a hundred years old. The sky not the grave is our goal. You remember that song we sing? It is well with my soul, it is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

And one line of it says, the sky not the grave is our goal. I'm not like those, some, even some believers, old people who say, oh I want to die, I want to go. I don't want to die, I'll tell you that.

I'm not going to say that even when I'm 90 years old. I'm waiting for Jesus to come. I'm waiting for, not because I love this rotten old world, but because there are a lot of people on this earth who need to hear about Jesus.

There are a lot of Christians who need to live an overcoming life. For their sake, I want to live. I hope you want to live for that sake too, not for any other reason.

So the sky is our goal. But think of two examples God's given us in the Old Testament of Enoch and Elijah. And there's something we can learn from them, how to be ready for the rapture.

We believe that the trumpet will sound and the skies will open, Jesus will descend from heaven with multitudes of angels. And the graves will be opened and all those who died there trusting in him will rise with resurrection bodies. And we who are alive, it's going to be a wonderful day.

And it'll be like lightning, the whole earth will see it. I'll be taken up straight up immediately. This rotten old body will be transformed into a body just like his.

And brothers and sisters, you're not going to be taken up. And God's given us an example of two men in the Old Testament who are taken up. Learn from them to be ready to be taken up.

Let's look at Enoch first. It says about Enoch in Genesis chapter 5 that for 65 years he lived a wayward life. He didn't care for God.

Enoch verse 21, he lived for 65 years and then he had a child called Methuselah. I want to tell you something that happened at the birth of Methuselah which is not written in scripture but which I derived from what I see here. We're supposed to meditate on scripture.

The word Methuselah means at his death it will come. That is the judgment. That means when Enoch was 65 years old, he got the Lord when his child was born.

He never had any children for 65 years and the child was born. He got some revelation from God. When this child dies, I'm going to judge the world.

That shook up Enoch. I hope it shakes you and me up when I, when God says this world is going to be judged. Do you believe the world is going to be judged? I believe it.

The rotten sin that there is going on in the world was there in Enoch's time too. And so he began to take it seriously and it says from that day he walked with God for 300 years. Next verse.

And then one day he walked with God and he lived a normal life. He didn't become a hermit. It says here he lived a normal family life.

He had sons and daughters. After that he lived with his wife. He had children.

He was a good father. He brought up his children well. And then one day, verse 24, he just went up to heaven.

God took him. He walked with God and God took him. But before God took him, Hebrews 11, verse 6 tells us, Hebrews 11, verse 6, verse 5, sorry.

Enoch was taken up by faith. How did he get raptured? By faith. Lord, I trust you.

He was taken up and he had this testimony that he pleased God before he was taken up. And that's the testimony that you and I need to have. That you have pleased God in this earthly life.

That's what we got to learn from Enoch. And what did Enoch preach? The book of Jude, verse 14 and 15. Enoch was a preacher.

He was the first preacher mentioned in the Bible. What did he preach? He preached judgment. He says, I see the Lord coming with ten thousands of holy ones.

He's speaking about the second coming of the Lord before the first coming of Christ. Imagine a man who prophesied the second coming of Christ before Christ had come even once. That was Enoch.

He says, I see the Lord came with many thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all, to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done, their ungodly ways, the harsh things which the ungodly sinners have spoken. This is what he preached. It wasn't a comfortable thing listening to Enoch preaching.

He walked with God. And I tell you a man who walks with God will preach against sin. He'll preach judgment on sinners.

He's not going to be like these preachers who study psychology and make people comfortable in their sin. So that's the first type of person. Do you want to be like that? Preaching against sin and pleasing God.

The second person was Elijah. And the Bible says in the last verse of Malachi, Malachi chapter 4, it says in verse 5, I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And when John the Baptist came, they asked Jesus, is this the Elijah? They knew it was not literally Elijah, but someone who's coming in the spirit of Elijah.

In fact, it was prophesied of John that he would come in the spirit of Elijah. And he did. Jesus said, if you accept him, if you Jews accept him and his message, then he's Elijah.

But they didn't accept him. So listen, in the last days, there's going to be, God is going to send the people of the spirit of the prophet Elijah. And that is the New Testament church.

It's not a person now. It's not one individual like old covenant. It's a body of people.

That's Elijah. The last days, Elijah is a body of people who come with the spirit of John the Baptist saying, prepare the way of the Lord, turn from sin, make the crooked things in your life straight. Who come with the spirit of Elijah, who stood on Mount Carmel and said, if Jehovah is God, worship him.

If Beal is God, worship him. But don't be wishy-washy. And the body of Christ in the last days, the spirit of Elijah will say, if Christ is God, follow him.

If money is God, serve that. But don't try and mix the two. If you're going to live for God, live for God.

If you're going to live for the world, live for the world. But God is no place for lukewarm people. Because you're lukewarm, I'll spit you out of my mouth.

Be cold or be hot. That's the spirit of Elijah. Would stand before kings and not be afraid.

That's what we learned from Elijah. The two people who were raptured. Paul told Timothy, we saw that once before.

He spoke about the confession that Jesus made before Pontius Pilate. We looked at one of those confessions in a previous study, where Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. He made another confession before Pontius Pilate.

And that is John 19 verse 11. And that's something we need to learn in relation to the last days, to be prepared for. The confession Jesus made, when Pontius Pilate threatened him, like people may one day threaten you.

Please listen to this carefully. Pilate said to him, Pilate was the greatest authority there in that land. He saw Jesus all beaten up, hammered, insulted, humiliated, standing helpless there before him.

But standing upright. I don't believe Jesus was standing there saying, oh Pilate, please have mercy on me. Don't you ever stand like that before somebody who persecutes you? No, stand like Jesus.

I say, Lord, give me grace to stand like Jesus in the day I'm persecuted. Good prayer to pray. His blood was flowing down when he stood there.

And Pilate was the one who was afraid of what people say. I better wash my hands. I'm not responsible.

Okay, kill him. He was the one who was scared. Jesus wasn't scared.

Pilate said, you know, I have power to kill you, John 19 10, or release you. And here is Jesus, not worried. He doesn't say, oh, please, please, please don't let, don't kill me.

He says, you have no authority over me, Pilate, unless my father in heaven gives it to you. I'm sorry. I'm under my father's authority.

You can't touch a hair on my head without my father's permission. And you know, that's the promise he's given to us. Not a hair on your head will perish.

You're a more value than many sparrows. The hairs on your head are numbered. All things work together for good to those who love God and were called according to his purpose.

Wonderful promises all in the new Testament. And here's an amazing one. Let me close with this.

Isaiah 54 and verse 17. Isaiah 54 verse 17 says, no weapon that is formed against you will prosper. We ought to be fearless.

I remember hearing of a European lady missionary who went to China in the early part of the 20th century in the 1900s as a missionary. And she was traveling in a little ship across from one part of China to the other. And it was occupied by pirates who boarded the ship and went around with guns and came into a room and pointed a gun at her.

This lady said, no weapon formed against me will prosper. Put down that gun. The pirates had never met a woman like this in their life.

They put the gun down and treated her with respect for the rest of the time on that ship till the ship finally came to shore and the pirates left them alone. Not even a woman. I remember one of our brothers, one of our elder brothers from Tamil Nadu, he told me how he went to Bangladesh once.

He had to go on some official duty there. And he landed up in the airport very early in the morning, 3.30 in the morning or something like that. And he had to take a auto, a rickshaw, you know, these people who pull rickshaws in a cycle or something to the place where he had to go.

It's early morning, dark. And when he came somewhere, they stopped the rickshaw and two people came up to him and tried to confront him. You know, muggers, people who wanted to just mug him.

And they confronted him and he just started speaking in tongues and started praying to God. And they all got scared and ran away. This is true.

This is true. And you know that brother. Dear brothers and sisters, we're on the victory side.

Satan was defeated 2,000 years ago. We don't have to fear. God is on our side.

Keep a clear conscience. Humble yourself. Keep your conscience clear before God and before men.

God is preparing us for a land which is a place that he's prepared for us. Keep that in mind all the time. We are getting nearer and nearer to that day.

Live with eternity in view. Make full use of the few days that are left before Christ comes again. Don't have any regret in that day that you didn't live for him.

That after all the messages you heard was just information in your head, not a challenge in your heart to live for him. If Christ is God, live for him. If the world and money are more important, live for that.

But don't be lukewarm. He was yours to hear. Let him hear.

Let's pray. While our heads are bowed in prayer, I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, in the light of all that you've heard, what's your response going to be? Say, Lord, I don't want a response that's only temporary. I want with all my heart to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire, to live in the fire of God every day of my life.

I want to live for the things that are eternal. I want to live for Jesus Christ. Help me, Lord.

Help each one of us. Help us to be the church that you want us to be in these last days. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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