

The Last Days Will Be Like Noah's Days

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of remaining faithful and upright in the midst of challenging times, drawing parallels between the days of Noah and the present day. It highlights the need to love God above all else, avoid sin, and walk in purity, focusing on developing a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus to overcome temptations and trials.

Scripture: Luke 21:26, Luke 21:28, Colossians 3:2, Psalms 139:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:15, Genesis 6:11, 2 Timothy 3:1, 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Faithfulness in Trials", "Intimacy with God"

Description

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Transcript

We've been thinking about this theme of the last days and Christ's return. So there are a number of passages in the Gospels, particularly Matthew and Luke, where Jesus spoke about certain things in relation to that. And for the particular time in which we are living, when we see all the things that are happening around the world, I think of one verse which we can begin with thinking.

Please turn with me to Luke's Gospel in chapter 21, Luke's Gospel chapter 21. It says here that in these days, Luke 21 verse 26, men will faint from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world or the powers of the heavens will be shaken. So that's, I mean, men afraid of the things that are coming upon the world, you begin to see that already nowadays.

Maybe they haven't started painting yet, maybe in some places they have, but fear as to what's going to happen, when's all this going to end. And at that time, that's where the time where we need to be, like Jesus said, a light in the midst of the darkness. We don't hide our light under a bed, but let it shine bright for everyone to see.

And what does that mean? In the next verse it says, in verse 28, when these things begin to take place, because soon after this, it says in verse 27, you'll see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, approaching the return of Christ. But don't wait for that. When these things begin to take place, what is when you begin to

see men fainting from fear? Straighten up, don't bend down, looking down at the things of earth.

Straighten up and lift up your heads to the heavens. In other words, the meaning is not just physically lifting up our heads, but in our heart, our vision is going to be up more than down. While the whole world is looking down at the things it says here, the things that are happening in the world, verse 26, in the midst of it are a group of people who love Jesus, whose heart and mind is set on the things above.

And I really believe this is a time when many believers are being tested as to where their heart is set. You know, we've read many times in Colossians 3, if you are risen with Christ, set your mind on the things that are above and not on the things of this earth. But we probably never had much of an opportunity to have that tested.

But now we have the opportunity for that to be tested to see whether, and each individual, I cannot judge for you because I do not know where your mind is set most of the time. But I know where mind is when I get up in the morning and what I'm thinking of. We have to be concerned about our earthly affairs, especially those who have small children.

They could be sick, they're hungry, they need to be fed, and we need to think of providing for them. All that is essential. And that is perfectly right.

But in the midst of all that, that's part of our responsibility. It's towards God. If God's given me children, then it's part of my responsibility towards God to feed them, clothe them, educate them, bring them up properly till they're able to stand on their own feet.

That's part of a divine calling. There's nothing wrong in that. But I'm not to be so occupied with earthly things that my mind gets weighed down, weighed down, like a drunken man.

The Bible speaks about that in the last days. People will be in their mind so weighed down that they'll be like drunken people. A drunk is not looking up to heaven, he's looking down all the time.

I've often mentioned the fact that God created animals on the sixth day. Many people don't know that. All the rest of the fish and birds and all were on other days, but animals were created on the fifth day.

The fish were created on the fifth day. The animals were created on the sixth day, the first part of the day, from the same dust that God picked up and made man. The only difference was that God created the animals by just a word of his mouth.

And all the animals, all the thousands and thousands of different creatures just came into existence. But man, he did not create with just a word saying, let a man be made, like let a lion be made. No, he took dust and made it as it were.

And God doesn't have hands, but the nearest we can think of God's personal touch out of the dust of the ground. It says he made a man. That means he first made the man, the body, and then he breathed into him.

That is also on the sixth day. And man became a living soul. Man got a spirit, which the animals didn't have.

But both men and animals were both made on the sixth day from the same dust to teach us one lesson, that if you don't live by the spirit that God breathed into us, you will end up being like the animals. The only

difference between Adam and those animals was that God breathed into Adam. No other difference.

Many of those animals had eyes and legs and hands and a heart and a kidney and all types of internal organs, just like man. And some of those monkeys look like man too. But there was one big difference, and that was God breathed into man.

And that made man look up, not down. If you look at every animal on earth, they're always looking down, whether it's a cow or a dog or you look at any animal, they're looking down most of the time. You never see an animal looking up.

They don't have a calling to look up. But then we see so many men and hear men and women also in their heart, they're always looking down, worried about the things on this earth. Now to be responsible as parents and to do our work on this earth for our family and in our job, that's absolutely important.

If you're a true Christian, you'll be a very good father, a very good mother, a very good brother and sister, and a very good worker in your office or your factory or wherever you work. If you are not that, then we are a failure. But along with all that, unlike the people in the world, our mind is not occupied only with that.

In the midst of all that, we do that with our heart and mind set on the things above. It's very, very important that we never lose that upward vision. Otherwise, you know, it says here, when these things begin to take place, straighten up.

Why straighten up? Because most people are looking down. And the Lord says, you, my disciples should not be looking down like that, worried what's going to happen, worried what's going to happen. Straighten up and lift up your heads, because Christ is coming back.

So we, especially in these days, we lift up our heads, expecting the Lord to come. Is it right for us to expect the Lord to come in our lifetime? I'll tell you, I was born again 60 years ago. It's more than 60, 61 now.

And all these years, I'll tell you honestly, I have never expected that I'm going to die. I say, I'm going to see the Lord coming. I expect that.

I've always expected that right from the time I was born again. And I shall see the Lord face to face when he comes. I'm not prophesying anything.

Please don't misunderstand me. I'll show you from Scripture. And that is the right attitude to have.

Turn with me to 1 Thessalonians in chapter 4. That's where I learned it from. I learned it from Paul. Paul had this attitude that he would see Christ in his lifetime coming back.

See 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. It says here in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, it's speaking about the Lord's coming. We who are, verse 1 Thessalonians in chapter 4 and verse 15. This we say to you by the word of the Lord.

Remember, this is the word of the Lord. We who are alive. Notice the word we.

He's not saying those who are alive. If he says those who are alive, then we can understand that somebody is talking about somebody else. We.

Paul, you include yourself as one of those who's going to be alive when Christ comes? Yes. If you had asked him just when he wrote that letter, hey listen Paul, you said we who are alive. You believe that you're going to be alive when Christ comes? He says absolutely.

And I remain until, we who will remain until the coming of the Lord will not be taken up before those who are dead. We'll go up together. And the Lord will ascend.

And verse 17, we, again we who are alive. Not those who are alive. When we talk about other people, we don't say we.

We say those. Paul never said those. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he said we.

So that's where I learned that all my life I have to have the attitude that the grave is not my goal. You know we sing that in one of our songs. The sky, not the grave, is our goal.

Yeah. So. But later on in his life, when he was about 66 or 67 years old, he writes his last letter, 2nd Timothy.

And now see what he says. In 2nd Timothy, in chapter 4, he says in verse 6, the time of my departure has come. I fought a good fight.

I finished my course, 2nd Timothy 4, verse 6, 7 and 8. And you say hey Paul, I thought you were going to be alive till the Lord comes. No. Now the Lord has shown me the time of my departure has come.

And so I'm not going to be alive till the Lord comes. The Lord's going to take me home. And I finished my course.

For the appointed number of days God set for me. I kept the faith. I did not deny the faith.

I fought a good fight all these years. And now there's laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord will reward me in that day. That day I'll come out of the grave, Paul says.

I won't be alive. So when do we decide that we're not going to be alive? When the Lord specifically shows us that you're not going to be alive. Now if the Lord hasn't specifically shown that to you, anybody, even if you're 100 years old, say the sky, not the grave is my goal.

So we have to look up all the time, like Jesus said, and not be looking down. And let's turn now to a verse I want to show you from the book of Leviticus. It's a very interesting verse that's been a blessing to me for I think more than 55 years.

More than 55 years when I first studied the Bible as a young man in the Navy. I read this verse and I've never forgotten it. It challenged me then and it challenges me today.

You know the Old Testament redemption from Egypt is a picture of our redemption from sin. And when they got out of the slavery of Pharaoh, it's like our getting out of the slavery of Satan. And when they came through the waters of the Red Sea, that baptism is a picture of our water baptism and coming out into Canaan's land of the land of victory.

And here the Lord says in Leviticus 26 verse 13, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. You can say, applied to today, I'm the Lord your God, your heavenly father, who brought you out

of slavery to Satan. And so you don't be their slave.

So you don't be a slave of sin. And I broke the bars of the yoke of sin. I broke it on the cross and through my resurrection.

So that from now onwards, you'll walk erect or upright as the King James Version says, upright, never bent down. Boy, that encouraged me more than 55 years ago. And I read it and I said, Lord, I never want to forget it.

You delivered me from the slavery of sin so that I'll never be bent down in discouragement and gloom. And no, let anything happen. I'm going to walk upright with my head held up because I'm not an animal.

Animals put their head down. God has made me from the same dust, but he breathed into me the Holy Spirit. You see, it was Jesus out there in the beginning, the second person of the Trinity who breathed into Adam.

Don't forget that. Jesus breathed into Adam and made him a living soul. The same Jesus, when he came to earth, we read in John Chapter 20 and John's Gospel Chapter 20.

He was among his disciples and we read there in John Chapter 20, he came into the midst of his disciples, verse 21, and he said, peace be to you. And then it says here in verse 22, when he said that, he breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. 4,000 years earlier, when Jesus breathed on Adam in the Garden of Eden, he said, receive your spirit, your human spirit, which will make you a living soul, not a dead soul, a living soul, which is in touch with God.

Living means spiritually living. God breathed, Jesus breathed into Adam and gave him a spirit, a human spirit. And that's why today man is spirit, soul, and body.

Soul is our mind and our emotions. But the spirit is what has our conscience, the deepest part of us, which contacts God. Animals don't have that.

They don't have a conscience. They can't contact with God. Jesus breathed a human spirit into Adam, and now on his disciples, he breathed the Holy Spirit.

That's the new covenant, where he breathed into us and gave us the Holy Spirit. And that's why we're not going to live like the animals with our face down to the ground. We're going to look up.

We've been called to walk erect, not looking down, never. I want you to remember this, dear brothers and sisters, as we approach the end of time. It's not going to be easier as we approach the end.

It's going to be more and more difficult. Because Jesus said, turn with me to another verse. I'm not trying to picture a very dismal future.

No, the future is as bright as the promises of God. It's a beautiful expression. I don't know whether you've heard it.

The future is as bright as the promises of God, who said, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I will be with you.

I will make you more than a conqueror. Neither death, nor persecution, nor sword, nor peril. Nothing will separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

So, we don't fear anything. We know that well-known verse from Isaiah 8, verse 12 and 13, the Living Bible says, Isaiah 8, verse 12 and 13, Living Bible, if you fear God, you need fear nothing else. Nothing.

No person, no event, no circumstance, no pandemic. Nothing means nothing. Nothing means zero.

If you fear God, you need fear nothing else. If you don't fear God, and fear means reverence God, if you don't have a reverence for God, then you better fear all the other things that are going to happen to you and to the rest of the world. But if God is the one you fear and reverence, you don't have to fear anything else, because He's your Father.

So, here it says in Matthew 24, when He said some of these things, you know, they asked Him, what's going to be the sign of your return? He said, first of all, verse 4, don't let anybody deceive you. That's one of the things we've got to be very careful about, because there's a lot of deception going on in the last days. A false gospel.

I'll come to that in a moment. Many will come to say, I am the Christ, and will mislead many. Read that carefully, Matthew 24, verse 5. It's not that somebody comes and says, I am Jesus Christ.

You're not going to believe that. Nobody will believe that. Read it like this.

Many will come in Jesus' name and say that Jesus is the Christ. You understood? They're not going to say they themselves are the Christ. They're going to come in Jesus' name and say, Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is saying, many will come in, and remember, think Jesus saying, many will come in my name and say, I am, that is Jesus, is the Christ. That's the meaning of that sentence. And we have lots of people today saying, yeah, Jesus is the Christ, and they deceive people.

If they took the name of some other heathen God, you can't deceive Christians. Impossible. Christians are deceived when somebody comes saying, yeah, Jesus is the Christ.

Of course, I believe He's the Son of God, and we trust Him. He's the one who died for the sins of the world. You think the devil doesn't believe all that? You're going to ask the devil, do you believe Jesus is the Son of God? Of course.

You believe He died for the sins of the world and rose again? Of course. You believe He's coming back? Of course. These things mean nothing.

So, but he says there'll be many, many things, rumors of wars, and, you know, it says here about famines and earthquakes and all, verse seven, see to it, look at this word in the middle of verse six. Take that word to your heart. Make sure you don't get frightened.

Did you hear that? Make sure you don't get frightened, because these things have to take place before the end. Isn't it good to have a warning about things that are coming? If you're warned about something, you're going to be prepared for it. It's when you don't get a warning that you get a shock.

Hey, I didn't know that it was coming. But the Lord has warned us. You read Matthew 24, you read Luke 17, read Luke 21, particularly these three chapters where the Lord warns about His coming, and don't be

frightened.

Lift up your head. I called you out of sin so that you can walk erect. Please remember these words.

And then it says, when it says there'll be famines and earthquakes and shortage of food, so many people dying. I told you in Revelation, it speaks about a time in the future when one third of humanity will die. It's some type of pandemic, worse than what we're seeing today.

And today people get disturbed when they hear that one million people are sick, or a hundred thousand people died in the last one month just of this one sickness. Well, wait till the world hears one day over the internet or the television that one third of humanity has died. Don't be frightened.

It's all written in Scripture. God will never forsake His own. He's still on the throne.

There's a beautiful song. God is still on the throne, and He will remember His own. Though trials may press us and burdens distress us, He never will leave us alone.

The song that I sing often, it's a little chorus. You should learn it and sing it. God is still on the throne.

He will remember His own. Yeah, look, if you don't know the words, look it up on the internet and you can learn it. Just the chorus.

He'll never forsake His own. It's something we can sing to ourselves. You know, the Word of God is what strengthens us.

And then it says here, in verse 8, this is what I want to show you. These are just the beginning of sorrows. They're going to be many more.

There's a lot more. And it says here, birth pangs. Yeah, women know this, that before they deliver a baby, they go through what is called birth pains.

Tremendous pain. I've heard women who say they feel like dying because the pain is so great when they have to deliver the baby, crying out in pain. But at the end of it all, they're smiling with happiness because a baby is born.

So that's the picture Jesus uses of the last days. Birth pains, because a new world is going to be created by God, a new heavens and a new earth. And Jesus is going to establish His kingdom.

It's like a birth of a completely new world. And there had to be some birth pains before that. But in those days, verse 11, there'll be many false prophets.

First of all, verse 10, many will fall away. They'll fall away. They won't deny that Jesus is the Christ.

You don't have to fall away by saying Jesus is not a Christ. You can fall away with the love of money. You can fall away by watching pornography.

Definitely. You know, it says here, Jesus says the last days will be in verse 37, Matthew 24, 37. The coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

He repeated that again in Luke's gospel also, where he said in Luke 17 about the same thing. Because just like in the days of Noah, they were eating, verse 38, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in

marriage. And suddenly one day Noah entered the ark.

It'll be like that in the day of the Son of Man. And the Lord comes. Two will be in the field.

One will be taken, the other will be left. Two women will be in the middle. One will be taken, the other will be left.

So, he reminds us of the days of Noah. And if you turn back to the days of Noah, there were two things that characterized the days of Noah, which we see today. Turn with me to Genesis and chapter 6. One of the things that's mentioned here is that the earth was filled with violence, verse 11.

Genesis 6, verse 11. In the days of Noah, the earth was corrupt in the sight of God and filled with violence. You know what violence means? Murders, terrorism, kidnapping little children for sexual sin, kidnapping for selling little girls to be prostitutes, and violence, murder, terrorism, wars, wars between nations, and all types of evil ways in which man discovers to kill one another.

Earth is filled with violence and the earth was corrupt in God's eyes. And it's an amazing word here in verse 6. Have you ever thought of this verse? It's an amazing verse to me. Genesis 6, 6. The Lord was sorry.

He was sad that he made man on the earth and it grieved him in his heart. You know the difference between somebody being angry and somebody being sad? If a good father sees his son go astray or his daughter go astray, he's not really angry. It grieves him in his heart and he's sad.

God is not angry with his children. He's angry with the wicked, the Bible says. He's angry with evil people.

But with his children, those who have received him, he's sad when he sees them like animals looking down. He's not angry. When he sees a worldly-minded believer, God is not sad.

God is not angry. He's sad. Look at that son of mine.

Just like you would be concerned if your son was wayward, wasting his life, when he could be productive and useful on earth instead of that, wasting his time and money on useless things. You'd feel sad as a father or mother. God is a father and mother and he feels sad.

He's not angry. I often have to tell believers that don't think God's angry with you, but he's terribly sad with the way you behave. And it says here, the Lord was sad and it grieved him in his heart.

And remember, this is immediately before he destroyed the world for their sin. He had earlier said in verse 3, I'm going to give man 120 years. And in those 120 years, nobody repented, just Noah and his family.

The Lord was sad that the people were going out of violence and evil. And one of the sins mentioned in those days, listen to this, violence was one of the primary sins of Noah and is true in the last days. People hating one another and hurting one another, and even among believers hurting one another.

And the other sin was sexual sin. It says here in Genesis 6 verse 1, in those days when daughters were born to men, to human beings, the sons of God. Now, whenever the Bible speaks about the sons of God, it's referring to the direct creation of God.

All of us are not the direct creation of God. We were born through our parents. Only Adam was a direct creation of God, Adam and Eve.

So Adam is called a son of God in the last verse of Luke chapter 3, where the genealogy of Jesus comes, because he was a direct creation of God. Anything directly created by God is called a son of God in vessel language, created by God, let's say. Those who were created directly by God and refers to the angels.

Here it is referring to the angels. You read in the book of Job about these sons of God are the angels. So in those days, the angels, some of the angels in heaven, saw, looked at the daughters of men.

There were many beautiful girls in the days of Noah. It's going to be true in the last days. Many beautiful girls who know how to beautify themselves in numerous ways.

And they, these angels, now they can't, the Bible said, Jesus said that when somebody asked Jesus, you know, a man had seven brothers and he died and he's going to marry his, each of the brothers had their wife, one his wife, because that is the law. Your brother dies, you got to marry his wife. All seven had them one by one and they all died.

So this man asked Jesus, whose wife is she going to be in the resurrection? And Jesus said, in the resurrection, there is no marriage. There's no sex and marriage in heaven. They'll be like the angels, he said.

Angels don't marry. Jesus said that. But here we read the angels saw the daughters of men and they took wives.

How is that? They could not do, they could not have sex with these girls. They possessed men, they lusted. Angels can lust and they lusted after these pretty girls and they possessed men.

Men became demon-possessed and then those angels could satisfy that lust through a man. Just like they possess men to do evil and they satisfy the lust to do evil. They satisfy their lust to murder people.

They satisfy their lust to hurt people. They can't do it directly. They have to possess a person and they possess these men and satisfy their lust with pretty girls that they saw.

And the Lord saw it and he was angry with the wicked and he said, my spirit will not strive with man forever. I'm going to punish him. So what is it that made the Lord say that? Perverted sexual sin.

Unnatural sex. That's unnatural. What happened there in verse two? Whatever it was they did and the Lord was angry.

And that's going to be one of the characteristics of the last days. Not only violence, but unnatural sexual sin. Not normal marriage between man and woman, which is very sacred in God's eyes.

Do you know that marriage is very sacred in God's eyes? When God created Adam, he created him, Adam and Eve with the function to be able to produce children through each other. And he said, be fruitful and multiply. That is saying you must have children.

You must have the normal intimate relationship and have children. And it says God looked at it in Genesis 1.31. He said, it is very good. The intimate relationship in marriage is very good.

God says that in Genesis 1.31. There's nothing bad about it. But when it goes outside marriage or in some unnatural way, it is very bad. It's evil.

It's corrupt. And that's one of the things that made God judge the world in Noah's time. And we see that today.

And one of the evidences is pornography. Married men who do not, who are not satisfied with what God has provided, always lusting after others. And I want to tell you this.

Whenever people go into that, the demons are pretty close. People watch pornography on their phones and on their laptops. And they look around.

Oh, nobody's watching me. Demons are there. They laugh with glee when they see this person watching pornography.

One more person that I've got in my grip. And if that person happens to be a believer who claims to love Jesus Christ, the demons are even more delighted. You know, the Bible says the devil accuses believers to God.

And I can imagine those demons delightfully going to God and saying, God, did you see this guy? He claims to be your child. He sings and preaches on Sunday morning. But see what he's doing right now.

Just because his wife is not looking. And just because nobody else watches him. Look at this guy.

God, is he your child? He accuses believers to God. And this is the last days. Remember, like the days of Noah, perverted people who try to get sexual satisfaction in not the normal way God has intended, but all types of perverted way.

Even married people, they do perverted things with their own wives. Can you believe that? And with lusting after other women in their office, and when they walk down the street, the days of Noah, all right. How many believers take all this seriously? How many believers compare what we read in Matthew 24 with Genesis chapter six, and see how terrible this sin is.

And oh God, that is the thing that made God said, I will not let my Holy Spirit strive with these people anymore. I've spoken enough. The word is, my Holy Spirit, Genesis six three, will not strive with these people forever.

I give them a time limit. And I believe that every believer, I'm talking about believers now, because believers are the only ones who have the Holy Spirit. When believers indulge in any type of sexual sin in their thoughts or in their habits, the Lord sees it and says, my Holy Spirit is not going to strive with that child of mine forever.

I give him a time limit. Maybe so many days, maybe so many weeks, maybe so many months, and then he's going to get it from me. That's the lesson from the days of Noah.

And the last days are going to be like the days of Noah. And I tell you, see, if now the best way to avoid sin is not by being afraid God will judge me. No.

The best way to avoid sin is not by saying, oh, God will send me to hell. No. And it's not, we don't avoid sin in order to go to heaven.

That's also wrong. I want to go to heaven, so I'll avoid sin. Or I want to have a good testimony, so I'll avoid sin.

There are so many reasons why we can avoid sin, and all those reasons are wrong. I don't want to go to hell. Good, but that's not the reason to avoid sin.

I want to go to heaven, so I don't sin. Good, but that's not the reason to avoid sin. Oh, my testimony will be spoiled before others if I sin.

That's not the reason to avoid sin. Those are all good reasons. If you can't find the best reason, then use all of those.

Or I want to have a powerful ministry of preaching. I won't be able to do that if I sin. Oh, then I'll avoid it.

All these are wrong reasons. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. That's the only right reason to avoid sin and obey God.

Not I want to go to heaven, or I want God to use me, or people might catch me. Rubbish! Let the whole world watch my private life. Let the whole world watch my thought life.

I want to hate sin everywhere, because I love Jesus Christ. So, dear brothers and sisters, that is the solution in the last days. How shall we stand walk erect? How shall we value our spirit more than the lusts of our body? How shall we prevent the lusts of our body from beginning to control our mind and our thoughts? Only one way.

I make sure that in my heart, I love Jesus more than anything else. And if I seek to fellowship with Jesus and develop an intimate love relationship with him every day. You know how when a young boy and a girl are in love with each other, they can hardly think of, they will never think of anybody else.

It's just each other. And that's how we must be all the time in our relationship with Christ. We do all our earthly work.

That boy may be terribly in love with a girl, but he's working and he's doing his job and all that. He's looking forward to the day when he can marry that girl and set up a home with her. It's the same way we are to be with Christ.

Lord, I love you. You're my bridegroom. And I'm looking forward to the day when we can get married.

I have to do my earthly work. I've got a family to look after. I've got to do all these things.

I've got to work eight, ten hours a day to support myself. But underneath it all, Lord, I love you with all my heart. And that's how I want to live on this earth.

Anything that hurts you or displeases you, I want to avoid. You know this verse in Psalm 139, Psalm 139, and verse 24, Psalm 139, verse 24. It says here, Lord, you know, earlier on it says in verse 23, Psalm 139, verse 23, Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me. Know my thoughts. Tell me about my thoughts.

Are my thoughts preoccupied with something of earth? And see if there is any, the margin of my Bible says, way of pain, anything that causes pain in me. Pain to whom? Not to me. Pain to the Lord.

Lord, is there anything I'm doing that causing pain to your heart? See if there's any way of pain in me. The Living Bible paraphrases it very well. Lord, point out anything in me that makes you sad.

I remember some years ago in Bangalore, we printed out cards with those words. Lord, point out anything in me that makes you sad. I gave it out to everyone.

I said, keep it in front of you. Lord, point out anything in me not that makes you angry, makes you sad. Wonderful word to keep in front of our mind all the time.

Lord, point out anything in me that makes you sad. That's the Living Bible paraphrase of this verse, Psalm 139, verse 24. And so, you see, it's because we love Jesus that we don't want to hurt him in any way.

That is the real fear of God. You know, as someone has said, there are two types of fear of God. One is the fear that God will hurt me.

I don't have that fear because I know God will never hurt me. He's my father. A loving father never hurts his child.

The other fear is the fear that I may hurt God. Yeah, that's a fear I have. Lord, I don't want to hurt you.

I don't have any fear that you'll hurt me. You'll never do that. I do have a fear that I may hurt you by the way I behave, the way I speak to my wife, the way I talk to even a beggar on the street, the way I speak to other human beings.

I may hurt you by my language or by my anger or by despising somebody or by my gossiping about someone and speaking evil, by my not loving somebody just because he doesn't love me. So what? So what if somebody doesn't love me? You know, when people killed Jesus on the cross, they were serving the devil. Now in the world, this is how worldly people live.

When somebody serves the devil and hits another person, that person says, as it were, you serve the devil, I'm going to serve the devil too. I hit you back. Two people and the devil kills two birds with one stone.

Now you heard that expression, killing two birds with one stone. So here's what happens. The devil hits one man with one stone and he goes and fights with the other person and the devil doesn't have to touch the other person.

The other person automatically fights back. The devil's got two birds with one stone. He's got two men by just provoking one person.

That's where a Christian should be different. No matter what another person says, you can't provoke me. I'm sorry.

I'm rooted and grounded in the love of God. I don't agree with you. I will not fight with you or argue with you.

Very important, my brothers and sisters, to preserve ourselves in purity and in love. The love of Christ is what makes us hate and avoid pornography. The love of Christ is what makes us hate anger and evil speaking and tearing down other people and having grudges against them or not forgiving somebody.

Do you know the number of believers I have met in my life who have sicknesses because of one reason? Only one. They haven't forgiven somebody. Many years ago, somebody did something to them.

Until today, they haven't forgiven. And they'd rather live with this sickness and take tablets and injections and go to doctors, all types of things, and they'll never heal. They don't realize that what they need to do, first of all, is forgive.

I believe God's basic will for us is help. Sickness is not from God, no. Sickness came because of sin.

There's a curse on the earth. Do you know that God never cursed man? No. Turn with me to Genesis chapter 3. Understand something in scripture.

We've got to read scripture carefully. When Adam sinned, God came to him and said to him in Genesis 3.17, because you've listened to the voice of your wife and you disobeyed me, cursed is the ground, Genesis 3.17. What did God curse? Not Adam. He never cursed Adam or Eve.

He cursed the ground, the dust. But Adam's body was made from that dust. So, therefore, there was a curse on that dust.

That's how sickness came. And do you know that's why even believers get sick? Because we have the same, our body is made of dust. If it were not made of dust, none of us would die.

He says here, because you're made of dust, verse 19, Genesis 3.19, you were made from dust and you will return to dust because you were taken from the dust in the ground and you will return to the dust. So that happens to believers. Believers die and the body becomes dust again.

The only human being whose body did not become dust was Jesus Christ. His body never became dust because there was no curse in him. He died on the cross taking the curse of man.

Galatians 3.13 says Christ became a curse for us for three hours when he was raised from the dead. He took the punishment of sin. But we, we have a body that is part of this dust.

But God did not curse Adam. I want you to return to Genesis 4 and it says here, Genesis chapter 4, God told Cain when he killed Abel, Genesis 4 verse 9, the Lord said to Cain, where is your brother? He said, I don't know. And the Lord said to Cain in Genesis 4 verse 10, the voice of your brother's blood, you've killed him, is crying to me from the ground.

Because you hurt your brother, verse 11, you are cursed. The first person God cursed was not Adam. It was Cain.

I call this the difference between Genesis 3 sin and Genesis 4 sin. Adam was not cursed because what he did, he hurt himself. Genesis 4, Cain was cursed because when he did something, he hurt somebody else, his brother.

You can smoke, you hurt only yourself. You can take drugs, you hurt yourself. You can drink alcohol, you hurt yourself.

But if you do something that hurts another person, that comes under the Genesis 4 category, where Cain was cursed when he hurt somebody else. How do you hurt somebody else? Not only by murder. You can murder a person's reputation by speaking evil of him.

It's called gossip. How many believers realize that speaking evil of somebody is worse than smoking or drinking or taking drugs? Now, if you saw a believer who's drunk and coming to your church, say, yeah, look at that fellow. But you see a believer who's gossiping, oh, he's not so bad.

Who said? This guy who's drunk is in Genesis 3 sin and this guy who's gossiping, destroying another person's reputation is Genesis 4. That's worse. Many people don't realize the seriousness of sin because their understanding of sin has come from the world or from worldly preachers. And worldly preachers are those who have never judged sin in their own life.

And so God doesn't give them light on any other sin. They only know the Ten Commandments sins. Don't worship idols, don't murder, don't steal, don't bear a false witness in the court, don't commit adultery.

And a lot of worldly people who keep those commandments and the Holy Spirit comes in, he convicts us of a lot of things. Anything that Jesus would not do is sin. What does it mean to be a lamp in these days when there's so much of corruption and evil like in the days of Noah? Violence and sexual sin.

God's people must remain pure. Lift up your to walk erect means to walk free from sin. That's a great need of the hour my brothers and sisters.

Turn with me to 2nd Timothy and chapter 3. 2nd Timothy chapter 3 we read about the last days again. In the last days difficult times will come. 2nd Timothy 3.1. Difficult in what way? Not persecution.

He's not talking about persecution in the remaining verses. He says the living Bible paraphrases it beautifully. It says in the last days it'll be difficult to be a true Christian.

That's the meaning. Why? You got to read verse 3, 4, and 5 along with verse 2, 3, and 4 along with verse 5. So let me read each phrase in verse 2 along with verse 5. Let me read it like this. I'm reading each phrase in verse 2, 3, and 4 with verse 5. It'll be difficult to be a Christian in the last days because Christians will be lovers of self but, verse 5, holding a form of godliness.

They will be lovers of money, verse 2, but they will hold a form of godliness. That means they'll preach godliness and talk about godliness as a doctrine but they'll be lovers of self. They'll be lovers of money.

They'll be boastful but they will have a teaching of correct teaching. Their doctrines will be right but they'll be boastful, arrogant, revilers, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, verse 3, without self-control, treacherous, reckless. Verse 4, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of god.

I think there are four types of lovers mentioned here. Love is the main thing. God created man to love.

And the last part of verse 4, lovers of god. That's what we should be. The opposite of being lovers of god is, verse 2, lovers of self, verse 2, lovers of money, and verse 4, lovers of pleasure.

There are the three lovers who oppose the lovers of god. So if I want to love god, there are three things I've got to stop loving. Myself, money, and pleasure.

Self means my pride and my position and honor. But it will be very difficult to be a Christian in the last days because there are going to be people who speak godliness and talk about love for god and all but they are lovers of self. They are lovers of money.

They gossip. They are treacherous. They don't keep their promise.

They are lovers of pleasure. This is the days of Noah. So what shall we do in these days? Every trial that comes, we believe god will not allow us to be tested beyond our ability.

We believe god will preserve us in these days. But I'll tell you this, my brothers and sisters, once this pandemic is over and life has come back to normal and you don't have to sit cooped up in our homes again, we can go out to work and those who have the habit of going to restaurants to eat can again go to restaurants. And those who have the habit of going and spending money still have the opportunity to go and spend money and all that.

And you think it's all over? What about at the end of it all if you continue to be a lover of self and a lover of money and a lover of pleasure? We've learned nothing. These are the days when we should take time and we have a lot of spare time to say, Lord, you've given me time. Let me use it carefully to learn to love you more, to meditate on how much Jesus loves me, to meditate on how much I've been forgiven, to meditate on the fact that I deserve to go to hell but God saved me from it, and to meditate on how much of hypocrisy and pretense there still is in our life, how we are careless in our thoughts, careless in our words, and let's repent.

If we repent, the light will burn again in our lives and in our homes and God will not be sad. Make that your prayer in the coming days. Lord, point out anything in me that's making you sad.

And make these days eternally profitable for me that I can be ready for your coming, that when you come I'll be ready to meet you and that you'll not be disappointed in me. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, it's so easy to hear and understand to have a form of godliness without its power.

We want the power of godliness in our life, the power of the Holy Spirit working in us every day, freeing us from sinful thoughts, sinful thought patterns, sinful language, angry words, freeing us from wrong attitudes towards others, making us merciful even towards those who hate us. That if somebody else serves the devil, we don't take revenge by serving the devil ourselves. No, we serve God.

If somebody hates us, that we can love in return, that we overcome evil with good and overcome hatred with love and patience. Lord, we can't do this on our own. We ask you to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

That's the only way we can lift up our heads and walk erect in these days. Please help us each one. Help us not to forget what you've heard today.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/a-pmBmoQMfU.mp4>

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