

End Time Fear

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The title of the sermon today is:

End Time Fear

Just looking at the world, the way it's going and what's in the news, I thought this would be a timely subject for today. In recent weeks we've seen the fire of hatred and conflict just ratchet up another notch. It seems it's going to keep ratcheting up month by month, week by week and even day by day. Michael Behe has written about a dozen books on *intelligent design*. In his field of biochemistry there are instruments now that can analyze the actual workings of different functions—different systems—in the body. The results have been really phenomenal and he has introduced the term irreducible complexity. Take the eye for instance—I've mentioned this in a sermonette some time back—you can't remove one part or even reduce the complexity of any function of the eye, it just wouldn't work. It conflicts with evolution.

In one of his books, Dr. Behe mentioned that *intelligent design* is the elephant in the room. The problem is, there's a sign on the elephant that says "God" and what do you do with that? It's something our educational system really can't accept. The only thing they have to fall back on is evolution, which has been discredited and is an old theory, but that's all there is. As it says in Romans 1:28:

*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,
God gave them over to a debased mind.*

We're seeing this fulfilled before our very eyes. In the past few weeks, we've seen and witnessed the product of our educational system and the colleges. It seems like the whole system is imploding. Mark Stein writes quite often and in an article a week ago, he mentioned that the three R's now are *reading, writing, and rioting*. I think a lot of people in the world now are feeling that we are in a boat without a rudder. We are being driven by the wind in a violent storm and we don't know where we are going or where we are headed. God said the end time would be like the days of Noah; people going about their daily lives without any indication of what is going to happen. People will be *eating, drinking, giving in marriage*. Sometimes when my wife and I are at a restaurant, people are eating and drinking and carrying on. It's right here in scripture.

Today, people are planning for retirement, they are planning for childhood education and in the back of their minds I think they realize it's not going to happen. Our neighbors across the street have chickens. Once a week they bring us a couple dozen eggs. They have a couple of small children, about 5 or 6 years old and they bring the eggs to us and we give them the money for the eggs. The idea is this money would go into the children's College fund. In their mind I think they realize it's just a pipe dream. The

number of years between now and when they are in college, it's not going to be the same world. What else can people do? Just carry on and hope for the best, knowing that it really isn't going to be.

So, God can and does take away wisdom. I would like to go to Romans 1:22 which I quoted a little bit of already.

Romans 1:22 *Professing to be wise, they became fools,
23) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.
24) Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,
25) who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
26) For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.
27) Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.
28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;
29) being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,
30) backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31) undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;
32) who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (NKJV)*

The nation has turned its back on God. This is a very accurate picture of the way things are. It applies to the leadership of the country and the people. Not only the country but the world in general. There is great blindness that has encompassed the whole world. People don't know what to expect. They feel whatever comes is going to involve danger. People are afraid, they are buying guns, they are buying freeze dried food and their fears are not unfounded. In 2020 the doomsday clock was set to a record low of 100 seconds to midnight. In 2023 it was set to 90 seconds to midnight. This past January it remained there at 90 seconds. As the end approaches, people are going to know fear as never before. Let's look at Luke 21:25-26.

Luke 21:25 *“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;
26) men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (NKJV)*

Kind of profound, we were out last night watching the Aurora which was very intense—the news said it was visible clear down to Florida—a very intense thing that has happened. So, fear is an enemy we are all going to have to deal with. What are some of the sources of fear? The unknown, what the future holds, death—it's related to the fear of the unknown. People fear for their lives because they think this life is all there is or they believe in the "heaven and hell" myth. They don't like the idea of that. People fear chaos. Society is becoming unstable. A recent poll of registered voters reported that 41% of the people asked speculated that there would be a civil war within the next 5 years. The Bible does predict an increase of natural disasters of various kinds and it seems like our news media really thrives on sensationalism. When you turn on the evening news one of the first things is all the terrible things that are happening—floods, tornadoes, fires in the summer time. All these things that seem to show that we are involved in this global warning scare. So, they are trying to push that as well. Another source of fear is physical needs being taken away. People fear being cast away with no place to call their own. No source of income and no source of basic needs.

What is our defense in this end time fear? Come to knowing that there is an infinitely wise and powerful God Who is working a plan. He has a plan He is working out on this earth and we in God's great mercy have been shown what this plan is all about and what's happening. We don't have this sense of unknown. We shouldn't if we read the scriptures and know what God is doing. When asked, Christ gave a description of these end times. It's in Matthew 24:3.

Matthew 24:3 *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

4) *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.*

5) *For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ, 'and will deceive many.*

6) *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

7) *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*

8) *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

9) *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.*

10) *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.*

11) *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.*

12) *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

13) *But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

14) *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

15) *"Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, 'spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),*

- 16) *“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*
- 17) *Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.*
- 18) *And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.*
- 19) *But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!*
- 20) *And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*
- 21) *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*
- 22) *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. (NKJV)*

Christ gives us an outline—not in great detail—but a sequence of what will happen in these times. We can see these things being fulfilled and know what’s going on. The complete outline in the book of Revelation, again no details but we can recognize details as they happen. In Matthew 24:36, there is a caution here.

Matthew 24:36 *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. (NKJV)*

Continuing in Verse 42)...

42) *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (NKJV)*

God has left timing for Himself. The things He has not revealed to us. He’s given us the basic outline but time is withheld. Notice 1 Thessalonians 5:1.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1** *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.*
- 2) *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*
 - 3) *For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*
 - 4) *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*
 - 5) *You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*
 - 6) *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*
 - 7) *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.*
 - 8) *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*
 - 9) *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*
 - 10) *who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*

11) *Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.* (NKJV)

What about death as a fear? I think we all know that God has designed the human body as a temporary thing. Human life—physical life—is a stage that we are to go through. We are born, He has given us a fixed length of time to learn in this world and hopefully learn His ways and learn to love what's right and hate the evil. The next stage is the resurrection and being a part of God's very family. 1 Corinthians 15:49.

1 Corinthians 15:49 *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

50) *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

51) *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—*

52) *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53) *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

54) *So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (NKJV)*

Another verse in Matthew 10:28.

Matthew 10:28 *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* (NKJV)

In general, because of not knowing what's going to happen people have a fear of death. We can see beyond death to what's ahead. I have a very good friend in the church who died some months back. He said I know where my place of safety is and he wasn't concerned. That's where he is. He's dead now and waiting the resurrection.

What about chaos? Psalm 91 talks about that. I'll just read a little bit of it. Starting in verse 5.

Psalm 91:5 *You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,*

6) *Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.*

7) *A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you.*

8) *Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked.*

9) *Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place,*

10) *No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;*

11) *For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.*
(NKJV)

We're going to see all these things happen. God has promised to take care of us in every instance, if we just have faith and look to God. Look at 2 Timothy 1:7.

2 Timothy 1:7 *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* (NKJV)

Keeping close to God, having faith and God has provided a sound mind to keep us through all the chaos that is around us.

What about physical needs? That is in Matthew 6:25.

Matthew 6:25 *Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?*

26) *Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

27) *Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

28) *So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;*

29) *and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30) *Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

31) *Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'*

32) *For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

33) *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* (NKJV)

First thing is of course being close to God. Relying on God for our physical things. It's hard not to fear terrible things that are going on, but God in His infinite mercy has given us understanding about what He is doing and what's going on in this world. We don't need to fear the unknown because God has shown us what He's doing. He is showing us the final result of His plan. Creating spirit beings—His very children. Let's look at Romans 8:11.

Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

12) *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.*

13) *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

14) *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

15) *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

16) *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

17) *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

18) *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

19) *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. (NKJV)*

That's talking about people who God is working with right now in this day and age. God has ordained that we be exposed to the evil of this world, that we thoroughly learn to abhor the evil and love the good. There's a principle that God uses that I think we need to keep in mind. The principle is being fulfilled at this time and I call it the darkness before the dawn principle. Christ describes this in John 16:21.

John 16:21 *A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. (NKJV)*

God has many times provided this principle—you might call it a test or perhaps some kind of a final exam. He's done it many times. You might think of Abraham, traveling to Mount Moriah and God had commanded him to sacrifice, as a burnt offering, his only son. If you can imagine his mindset and what was going through his mind at that time. On his way to Moriah and it went as far as raising the knife to kill his son before he was stopped. Let's look at Genesis 22:10.

Genesis 22:10 *And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.*

11) *But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."*

12) *And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." (NKJV)*

Continuing in verse 15) ...

15) *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven,*
16) *and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—*

17) *blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. (NKJV)*

After this test was over, Abraham was given great promises, which I think we have also been the recipients of even to this day. God the Father allowed this to play out in the life of Jesus Christ when He was a human. Look at Matthew 26:36.

Matthew 26:36 *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane [this was after the Passover service], and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."*

37) *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.*

38) *Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."*

39) *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (NKJV)*

So, Christ went through this. When it was over, He received glory and honor forever. It's like a final exam or test or perhaps sometimes God wants to see how badly we want something. In Hebrews 1:1.

Hebrews 1:1 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,*

2) *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

3) *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

4) *having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (NKJV)*

Christ went through the crucifixion and all that happened to Him that day and within a day or so it was over and He was back at God's right Hand. I do think that God has used this principle and is using it as a type of final exam or test of faith or perhaps just to see if we really want something badly enough. We see this principle being worked out in this world today as we speak. I covered Matthew 24 but let's look at Matthew 24:21.

Matthew 24:21 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

22) *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (NKJV)*

The world is going through this. What's the result? The result is in Revelation 21:3.

Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."*

4) *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*"

5) *Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."* (NKJV)

Just as we're going to see a time that as the scripture says, *man has never been through before; a trouble time*. When it's over there is going to be a joyous celebration like the world has never seen. This vision is something we need to help keep us going. We do know that God is in control, we know He is doing precisely what He has planned to do and He will complete it. That's a promise. The fear of God is a deep respect for God and an appreciation for what He is doing and what He has done. It's a fear to disobey. If we surely have faith in God, He will remove all these fears or at least help us endure them. Remember the scripture:

Fear not little children for its God's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.