

Introduction

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 September 2015

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] I've had an interesting summer trying to decide on exactly what direction we need to go.

I was excited this weekend. I was over at Big Cedar Lodge in Branson, but I was preparing some things and some notes and thinking through it.

I know two books I want to teach, and I'm sure we'll get to one of them this year, but I got up at 2.30 this morning and I was still a bit unsettled.

So I'm sitting there at my computer and I'm thinking, what would benefit the men in this class the most in the particular time in which we live?

And I just kind of threw that out there. So that was what I was thinking of. Of course, I'm sure there's a lot of things we could benefit from.

[1:29] But the one thing that seems to strike a chord with a lot of people and that is prevalent on a global level is in our day, in this day, right now, the assault on truth.

It's coming from everywhere. However, let's just be point blank. We live in a hostile government. Hostile court. Hostile world. Being assaulted by world religions, by cults and occult, by Satan and demons.

But the most dangerous part of this assault is the assault within the church. And that's going on in our day.

It's been going on for 2,000 years since Pentecost, but it's accelerated in our day. And John and Jude and Peter and others said it would accelerate in the last days.

[2:56] I spoke in this room on prophecy two weeks ago. The question that we addressed was, are we in the last days? And I wanted to be prepared for that.

So I looked it up because I knew John talked about that in his epistle. And I had actually been misquoting John for a number of years that these are the last days.

John says we're in the last hour. And he said that 2,000 years ago, but he's applying God's clock. And for, you know, the Lord, 1,000 years is a day.

A day is 1,000 years. And if we were in the last hour 2,000 years ago, we're in the last minutes or seconds. And if you look at what's going on, all I can say is be ready.

Your redemption draweth nigh. Now having said that, we have to be faithful to the end. And I think this assault on truth is what's had the greatest impact on the church in my lifetime, in many of your lifetimes.

[4:19] The greatest impact in the 20th century where we saw a massive shift in the church toward liberalism. And that was a result of the war on truth.

So, the question I asked this morning at 2.30 is, what do we need to live out our lives in this part of the 21st century?

Let's say the Lord does tarry for 100 years. I'm not sure He's going to tarry for 100 hours, but let's say He tarries for 100 years. What do we need to live out our lives in the 21st century?

Now this class is made up of fathers, grandfathers, and future fathers. These guys are sitting back and going, oh good, future father.

Trust me, it will happen. In 100 years, everyone in this classroom is going to be gone.

[5:33] It's going to be somewhere. You're not going to be here. But when we depart from this life, no matter when that occurs, we leave behind family.

We will have relatives. We'll have children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren still on this planet. And let's be honest, we face today titanic problems concerning all of life.

And how much will those problems be compounded in the next half century? You know, what's life going to be like in 2025 or 2050?

I don't know what I'll teach in 2050. I'll be 102. What's it going to be like? I had a guy the other day that's basically my age and he said, you know, he said, the world you and I were born into doesn't exist anymore.

The America. To which I answered and said, the country we lived in eight weeks ago doesn't exist anymore. These things are moving with tremendous speed.

[6:51] Tremendous speed. If I could convince my sons and grandchildren, even those yet to be born, of anything, it would be the unsurpassed and infinite value of these books that are on the tables.

I would want them to read it, to understand it, to embrace every truth taught in the Bible, the Holy Bible, and to live it to the best they can.

But in regards to truth, there is a foundation that I want to lay that will impact everything I will say on this topic in the next few weeks.

And we're not going to spend a whole lot of time. This isn't going to be two years. Okay? And we've had some of this. I'm reminded of the five-week series we had by John MacArthur on video, Does Truth Matter Anymore?

Great series. We are faced with a cosmic assault on truth.

[8:06] John MacArthur and others have termed this the truth war. It is every bit as real as any war that has ever been waged.

The victims of this war who have lost not only their lives, but their eternal lives number in the billions.

As I speak right now, at this moment, there are people entering into a Christless eternity because they have rejected the truth of that book.

Now, the war on truth has been around for millennia. As it pertains to the human family, this war began a very short period of time after the creation of our parents, Adam and Eve.

That amazes me. I mean, they may have only been there for days or a few weeks. I know it before their kids were born. They were placed in a perfect environment.

[9:23] They enjoyed a beautiful fellowship with God, walked in the garden with God. And by the way, when it says they walked with God in the cool of the evening, I would submit to you this divine person was none other than the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father is Spirit. Christ had many pre-incarnate appearances. We called them, the theologians call them theophanies or Christophanies.

Now, the Lord gave to our first parents through Adam, and a lot of this happened before Eve was created, many positive advantages and commands.

He was given a self-conscious life. He understood what was going on around him. Given a conscience. He was told to subdue the earth and fill it.

He had the privilege of enjoying the tree of life. He could enjoy almost every tree in the garden. He could name all the animals.

[10:40] And he was given a wife. I saved that to last. He was given a wife. The Lord also gave one negative command to Adam.

He said, you cannot eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's like telling Logan, I'm going to walk out of the room, don't touch the lamp over there.

What's he going to do? Probably be broken when you get back. I would have done the same thing. Adam was warned. He said, Adam, the day that you eat from that tree, you will die.

You will die. And I have to presume the Lord explained to Adam what death was. Adam and Eve enjoyed the peace, comfort, and beauty of the garden.

And while they were enjoying it, the war on truth was declared. And it got nasty. Let me set the stage for this declaration of war.

[12:05] Because prior to the war in the garden, there was a war in heaven. The exalted angel, the highest created being in the universe, Lucifer, declared war on the Trinity.

and we know he was cast out along with millions, tens of millions, I've heard some say maybe billions of fallen angels who threw in with Lucifer.

And he was cast to earth. As the man and woman were enjoying the garden, they came upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And they knew of the prohibition placed upon them by the living God.

In that tree, there was a serpent. Now, don't think of the serpent as a snake. That is what it became as punishment from God.

I mean, first of all, if there was a snake in that tree, I ain't going near it. Not going to happen. this wasn't a snake yet. The serpent in the tree was crafty and spoke words, and there can be no doubt that they were enjoyable to hear.

[13 : 41] He did so because this serpent was indwelt by Satan, the arch enemy of God. And this is how the serpent began the conversation with Eve.

He said, now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, this is the serpent talking, indeed has God said.

my brothers, mark this thought down in your minds. Teach this to your children, teach this to your grandchildren as long as you have breath.

Every untruth that has ever been told by Satan, by fallen angels, or by humans, flows from that very lie.

It all started there. And all lies have flowed from there from the human perspective. And the devil really, if you'll think about it, spoke this lie in the form of a challenge.

[14 : 56] He's really gotten into the mind of Eve. Poor Adam, he was probably thinking of football scores or something. But he's into Eve's mind here.

Indeed, has God said? All untruth, and we live in a world of untruth, flows from that colossal lie.

This phrase is a direct and universal challenge that God cannot be trusted. That's what Satan was saying.

You can't trust God. He's not looking out for your best interests. When this lie was told, our original parents bought into it.

Now, I've always liked to pause here and say, poor Adam, you know, he was four counties over putting in a new garden, and my wife is quick to point out, and she gets the Bible. She goes right to the sources.

[16 : 03] It says right here, and Adam who was with her. Why'd the Lord include that? And Adam who was with her.

What should he have done, guys? Shut her down. Protect her. Take her. Put his arm around her.

Get her away from there. He was mesmerized with the thought, maybe God lied to us.

Maybe this guy's got a better offer. this serpent. When our parents bought into this lie, the dam that held back the waters of untruth broke.

Now we have a raging torrent, and over thousands of years, the waters of untruth have spread across this globe to poison and kill billions of people.

In the billions with a B. As to the human race, this is like poison the wellhead. Picture the Garden of Eden as a spring of beautiful water, and it's the human race, and when we, and people say, well, I wasn't there.

[17 : 24] Yeah, our DNA was in Adam and Eve. And when the human race chose disobedience, everything that flowed from that wellhead has been tainted with sin.

And let me say this, if nobody had ever sinned, from Adam and Eve to right now, and I won't pick on any one individual, but if Mike Dursham committed the first sin, we would all be plunged into a sin nature.

Mike wouldn't do that. I'd be more prone to do it. But it didn't take all those thousands of years, it just took our first parents. As to the human race, this lie poisoned the wellhead.

Everything that has flowed from there has been tainted with sin. We call that the sin nature, everyone has it. We are all trapped within a nature that is motivated by sin.

And on our own, we are incapable of escaping this trap. We can't get out. Only God can free us from our human nature to sin and give us His nature.

[18 : 45] Now, just how bad is this sin nature? It is so bad that from a spiritual standpoint, God says, you're dead.

He says that in the Old Testament, He says, you're dead in trespasses and sin. The Bible in many places says we are dead in trespasses and sins.

Even when fallen man does something good, and there's been a lot of good people. I think of Jonas Salk who created the polio vaccine. He saved tens of millions of people, maybe hundreds of millions, and died an agnostic Jew.

never believed in God that we know of. We have this sin nature.

We do things that are tainted with sin, and that nauseates the nostrils of God. He says, all our works are as a filthy rag before God.

[19:48] And this nature to sin is global. It drives individuals, families, it drives governments, we have had the privilege to this point to live in the greatest and most free nation on earth.

But in this day, sin has so permeated our culture, our society, it's taken over government, it's taken over law, it's taken over medicine, it's taken over education, and in many quarters it's taken over churches and denominations.

God has, through His prophets and writers of the New Testament, given ample warning concerning the war on truth.

But we live in a day when many churches and denominations are asking, does truth matter anymore? and no one will stand before God ignorant of the assault on truth.

We will stand before Him as defenders of truth or as opponents to truth. Two of the many writers that God sent to author His inspired word were John and Jude.

[21:07] They were not the only ones, but they gave very important writings in declaring the warning about the truth war.

Peter did as well. Now, we've studied John's writings many times. He dealt in his day with the Gnostics. These were the people who believed they were the ascended learners.

They believed more knowledge than anyone else. And so, they told people what to believe. The Gnostics were deniers of the faith. The Apostle John warned us about them and so does Jude.

Why in our day are these warnings so pertinent? I mean, this was nearly 2,000 years ago. And I think there are a number of reasons why the war on truth is important in our day.

First of all, fellows, I am convinced as I stand before you, the time is short. I'm convinced that the time of the return of Christ is near.

[22:22] I heard one guy the other day say, you know, all the players in Armageddon are in place right now? All of them, including Russia and Syria, building military bases, including Israel, which today, I'm sad to say, stands alone.

They stand alone. I can't picture the American government coming to their aid in any major way. I'm throwing some of this in for free, so I have to catch up.

John had these Gnostics and they're around today. The time is short.

Nothing in my view has to happen for the Lord Jesus to return for His church. And I hear this all the time. Well, they've got to find the ashes of the red heifer. They've got to build the third temple.

That's tribulation. It's not the church. church. The next tick on the prophetic clock is the return of Christ for His church.

[23:31] Now, do a mental flight right now. How many people in your extended family would miss the rapture of the church if it occurred today? How many would miss that?

And this is one of the reasons we do business with the war on truth. Another reason this topic is important is because our relationship with Christ.

He described Himself as truth. I love what Dr. Schaefer says about that. He called Him true truth. You know, he said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

And I think that is appropriate. He's true truth. If we're going to be true disciples of Him who is ultimate truth, we have to embrace truth and defend truth at every opportunity.

You know, we're not given the luxury of saying, I'm a follower of Christ, but I don't believe this, this, or this. I do believe this over here, and I might soften it a little bit, but we don't have that luxury.

We're in or out.

[24:37] And a final reason which kind of touches on my first reason is the last days, the last hour. We live in a period of church history where the church in my lifetime, has transitioned from the church of Philadelphia to the church of Laodicea.

Now when you read the seven churches of Revelation, remember those are real churches. I've been to some of them in Turkey called Asia Minor in the Bible.

I camped out for a week in the church of Smyrna. Went there several times and looked at it. they were real churches. They also describe types of people.

There are Ephesian type people in Ephesian type churches. There are Smyrna type churches.

VOM deals with them. I just had our board meeting retreat in Branson in Big Cedar Lodge.

We're going to spend \$36 million this year on the persecuted church. Have all kinds of things going. But there are periods of time and we're finishing up the Philadelphia period which was the church of

global evangelism in Philadelphia no means brotherly love.

[26:03] I've been to the city of Philadelphia. They're not so don't associate that with them. I find it interesting our president and the pope are going to meet in the city of Philadelphia. but I think we're in Laodicea.

Now let me read about that church. I know your deeds. This is Jesus talking. I know your deeds that you are neither cold nor hot.

I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold I will spit you out of my mouth.

Pretty graphic picture there coming from the God of the universe right? The creator. Because you say I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing and you don't know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

This is the church that has all the tramps. They got huge buildings. Huge bank accounts. Big bank accounts. And Jesus here says you're poor.

[27:20] He only declared one of the seven churches to be rich. That was Smyrna. The church under persecution. He said you think you're poor but you're rich.

Because they were faithful, the Laodicean church was Christless. In fact the Holy Spirit closes out that chapter by revealing that Christ is standing outside the church.

He's knocking at the door. We've used that for decades as an evangelism thing and I'm not going to object to that. We can do that. But that's not evangelism. That's Christ standing outside the door of a church saying if you'll open that door I'll come in.

Now let me tell you something about Jesus. He could have kicked that door off the hinge. I mean I've done that to a few doors in my career. And Jesus couldn't kick that door down.

He didn't do it. Why wasn't He inside that church? Because there wasn't any believer in there. If there had been one believer inside the church of Laodicea He would have been in that church.

[28:31] Through His Spirit indwelling and never leaving nor forsaking. That's what He does to believers. The fact that He wasn't inside there tells us in the Laodicean period which I believe we've entered into and there are Laodicean churches in this town.

They're Christless. They'll talk about Him and they'll paint pictures of Him and they might even put Him on a cross but He's not in there.

Thousands of churches today throughout America and the world are without Christ. These churches had chosen to not engage in the truth war.

When you choose to do nothing you become a combatant on the other side. There's no neutral ground here guys. You know Jesus Himself said He who is not for me is against me.

There are no neutral parties in this conflict. So how do we become engaged in the truth war on God's side?

[29:48] I mean we want to be on God's side. We do so by heeding and obeying His Word.

And we're going to look at what the Lord has to say about the truth war. We're not going to spend a lot of time. We'll be through before Christmas.

That's pretty fast for me. But we're going to look at God's teachings on the truth war. Our primary focus though not our only focus will be the small book known as Jude.

That's right before Revelation by the way. What if the Lord comes back before I finish? We'll sit at the feet of Jude and let him finish the lesson. But Jude says something very interesting.

In the second part B of verse 3. Something very interesting. And I want you to ask a question to yourself and I want you to answer internally.

[31:02] Don't yell out an answer. Just look inward. Because Jude said this, I appeal to you that you contend earnestly for the faith.

And are you doing that? I know my answer but I'd be embarrassed to tell you. I'd be embarrassed to tell you. Do you contend earnestly for the faith?

That is a command from God. We are to contend for the faith. We live in a day when if we don't start contending for the faith, there may not be much faith left for us to contend for.

Guys, there's whole denominations whose faith is gone and never underestimate how close we came as a denomination to become the next Episcopal denomination or the next liberal Presbyterian church.

And I say liberal because the Orthodox Presbyterian are very strong. Great reform guys like R.C. Sproul and strong believers. But the liberal wing, they stopped contending.

[32:30] The Episcopal stopped contending. We came that close. It was amazingly close. Within a hair's breadth, whatever that is.

I've heard that term on the line. There's another reason that we should contend. It has been a long war against God and against His truth in which the devil himself is engaged and in which he has deployed multiple millions of demons and he has humans, men and women, there to help him. They're helping him. Satan's most effective tool has been to use people who are associated at some level with the truth.

Now, what do I mean by that? The deadliest assaults against truth come from within the church. That's where they originate.

we expect it out there, but we've developed within the walls sort of this peace zone or comfort zone where nothing will ever happen in here.

[34:05] I talk to my bride, you say, don't ever underestimate what's going on in the life of the guy next to you. He's got kids that are joining cult or rejecting or he and his wife are on the outs or could be any other thing.

Apostasy abounds in our day. Now, just to be clear, and we've taught this before, an apostate is someone who's heard the truth clearly, maybe in some form embraced the truth, and then for whatever reason defects from the truth.

A pygmy in Africa that has never heard the gospel is lost, but he's not an apostate. He can't be an apostate because he's never heard.

Apostates know here some have held offices, high offices in the church, priests and bishops and archbishops and deacons and elders, they defected.

John MacArthur has his ordination certificate signed by three men and one of them is an atheist. He defected.

[35:26] He defected. The greatest assaults on the church do not come from outside, they come from within. That's why the Lord said, be leery of wolves in lambs' clothing, sheep's clothing.

That's people in the church. Well, I hate this. God as I perceive Him to be, it starts with stuff like that.

It doesn't matter how you perceive Him to be, it matters how that book describes Him. That's what matters. Defectors typically like to name the name of Christ.

and at the same time reject what He taught. Reject what He taught. I remember John MacArthur on Larry King Live and he's discussing with the mayor of San Francisco who said, well, I'm a Roman Catholic.

He said, I'm a firm believer. And John says, so do you believe the Roman Catholic teaching of homosexuality? It's easy to criticize the Roman Catholic, but I'm going to tell you, they're strong against homosexuality until this Pope, and against abortion.

[36:51] And boy, that mayor started crawling backward. Jerry Falwell, when he was alive, I happened to catch him on Phil Donahue, and I didn't watch these things on purpose, but this guy called in about how he was a pastor of a homosexual church.

Falwell said, really? So your church are homosexuals, followers of Christ? He said, yeah. He said, do you believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God? He said, oh, no, we don't believe that. And so he said, well, we don't have anything in common to talk about.

You know. I love that particular show because he had pictures of a homosexual parade in San Francisco and it was so horrible they had guys on flatbed trailers doing actual sexual acts of each other, men, and one of them had Jerry Falwell's face on him, and the other guy had the face of Jesus.

And he said, and they blinked out, and Falwell said to Donahue, I think that's blasphemy. And Donahue said, I think I agree. And he said, these photographs were taken by my son.

Well, some woman, this woman was irate. She said, Dr. Falwell, you know, you let your little boy go to this parade, you pretend it bothers you, and yet you let your little boy take these pictures.

[38:14] And he said, ma'am, I would have paid you to be here. Would my little son stand up, he's on the back row, 6'6", about 280, played starting tackle for the University of Virginia.

Huge kid. I'm shocked we didn't see him in the pros. I mean, he was a big lad. Big lad. Big Big lad. Defectors are the apostates of our day and they are everywhere.

You can see them every day on television. So how did we get here? How did we get to this point in church history where untruth has taken over in many quarters?

In many quarters. Well, Jude's going to tell us. He tells us. These people crept in unnoticed. Maybe we could write a book while the church slept. Jude tells us. You want to know why they're in the church? They crept in unnoticed.
[39 : 32] That's where they came from. And by the way, that's where we're going to pick it up next time.