

## TEXT SERMONS

**“GOD’S MESSAGE FOR THIS MESS AGE”  
II Timothy 3:1-5**

***“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”***

What is a “mess” in the sense that I have used it? To make sure that I understood what a “mess” is, I consulted Webster’s New World Dictionary. This is that dictionary’s definition of “mess”: “A jumble, hodgepodge, a state of embarrassment, trouble, difficulty, confusion, muddle; a state of being disorderly, untidy, or dirty.” The word “mess” certainly captures the overall description of conditions *“in the last days”* as outlined in II Timothy 3.

Our present age has been referred to as the Atomic Age, the Space Age, the Age of Aquarius, the Information Age, also commonly known as the Computer Age, etc. However, I submit to you that the most descriptive phrase is the Mess Age! We are in:

A social mess -- one of luxury, and lawlessness;  
A political mess -- one of graft and greed;  
A religious mess -- one of apathy, apostasy;  
An international mess – one of tension, turmoil and terrorism.

By any honest evaluation of the world of mankind in general, one would have to say that it is more exactly as the apostle Paul described it in his second letter to Timothy. However, do not despair! There is help and hope! God has a message for this mess age!

The remedy for a world gone wrong is not to be found in socialization, organization, reformation or education but in the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel of the Grace of God! God's message is the Good News message which is:

**A MESSAGE OF HOPE FOR AN AGE OF DESPAIR.**

The world is confused and in despair but the Christian should not be. The Apostle Paul said: *“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.”* (II Corinthians 4:8,9)

The definition of despair is, “to lose all hope or confidence.” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) Life without Christ is a hopeless end; life with Christ is an endless hope!

John Donne said, “Despair is the damp of hell, as joy is the serenity of heaven.” God does not promise skies always blue, however, as Paul stated, the trusting child of God is *“not in despair.”* Outwardly there may be calamity but inwardly we can have calm.

On the other hand, despair characterizes much of the world of mankind. “Sin misery and

despair darkens the earth and air.” The Gospel message is the only message that addresses hopelessness. Paul wrote to the Christians in the city of Colosse about *“the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”* (Col. 1:5)

Having believed the Good News about Jesus Christ, I can sing:

*“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly trust in Jesus’ Name.”*

### **A MESSAGE OF FAITH FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT.**

We live in perilous times when faith is giving way to doubt, when science is becoming a god and the Bible is being relegated to the category of a myth.

The atheist, Stephen Hawking, has written a book titled, *“The Grand Design,”* published in September 2010, in which he postulates that, given the existence of gravity, “The universe can and will create itself from nothing.” As a result, “Spontaneous creation is the reason why there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist.” He asserts that something can arise from nothing, therefore, no God is needed to explain what exists.

Hebrews 11:3 states, *“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”* In this age of doubt the message of faith still offers hope. The Christian life is a life of faith. By faith we believe: that the Bible is the Word of God; that it warns of Hell and tells of the way to Heaven; by faith we believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son, our Savior.

Faith is never out of date – it may be out of favor with skeptics, but it is never out of date. “Faith is to believe what you do not yet see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.” (Augustine) The Apostle Paul said, *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”* (II Cor. 5:7) Hawking is appalling; Paul is appealing!

### **A MESSAGE OF PEACE FOR AN AGE OF WAR.**

**Matthew 24:6** *“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.”*

**Illustration:** A news commentator asked, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could have just five minutes of peace in the world? How refreshing it would be to pick up one newspaper or hear one newscast without any reports of violence, hate, injustice or war. Maybe someday, and I hope it will be soon, we can.”

Can you remember when, in your lifetime, there has not been war somewhere in the world? For the past 10 years we have been locked in a land war in Iraq and Afghanistan with threats elsewhere. This should not be a surprise to the Bible student. However, it will not always be like that. There is coming a time when the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come and set up His Kingdom effecting peace throughout the world.

Even though there is no global peace, there is personal peace available. Paul wrote, *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ....”* (Romans 5:1) And, he later wrote, *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ....”* (Gal. 5:22) Even though there are wars without, we can have peace within.

**Illustration:** I was called to the hospital and to the bedside of a lady who had wounded herself by shooting herself in the heart. The bullet grazed her heart. The doctors were working feverishly with her to save her life. As they did so they gave me permission to talk with her. I tried to give her comfort. She said, "I just had no peace." She died in a few minutes without trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation and consequent *“peace that passes all understanding.”* (Phil. 4:7)

When we are right with God as individuals, the inner conflicts cease and personal peace comes into our souls. When members of a family are right with each other and are faithfully serving the needs of each other, domestic harmony and tranquility prevail. The formula for world peace or personal peace is the same and is plainly stated in God's word. This is the formula: complete and unconditional surrender to the Prince of peace, the Lord Jesus Christ!

**Illustration:**

Years ago, I went to hear the the famous British historian Arnold J. Toynbee (1889 –1975) lecture. At the time his popular twelve-volume analysis of the rise and fall of civilizations, *A Study of History*, was highly acclaimed. In his lecture he said, “The history of human existence is one of progression. Man is getting better and better and climbing higher and higher with every century. In 25,000 years we will have built our own utopia. Now, 25,000 years may seem a long time, but it is only a brief span compared with the millions of years we have inhabited this sphere.”

I heard him speak in the late 1960's. If he were alive today, I wonder if he would change his prognostication? The world of mankind, instead of “climbing higher and higher” as Toynbee anticipated, has descended lower and lower. The Apostle Paul, not Arnold Toynbee, correctly described the future of earth's inhabitants in *“the last days.”*

It is quite evident that this old world is not getting any better but it will become worse and worse until the judgment of God falls upon it. However, there is a "utopia" awaiting all who by faith believe God's message for this mess age. That "utopia" is called “heaven”!

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