

5. 5 Last Days Commands-Part 5

A New Years Exhortation for 2026

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(1-25-26)

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A few weeks ago, we began a series in honor of the new year, to remind the people of God that even though the new year brings with it new hope—it often brings with it new battles as well. I say that because, the Bible says that we as Christians are soldiers fighting in a war—a war that's taking place in the last days (the time just prior to Jesus' return).

The question we've been dealing with is—*are we doing what the Word commands for those living in the last days?*

In 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 Paul gives what I'm calling, “**Five Last Day’s Commands**”—or “*Five Commands to Christians Living in the Last Days.*”

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. ¹⁴Let all *that you do* be done with love.

This morning, we find ourselves looking at the second command in this series to—“**Stand fast in the faith**”—

II. Stand Fast in the Faith—Part 2

The term “**the faith**” of which Paul speaks here is not the faith of *trusting* but the faith of *truth*.

In other words, it's referring to N.T. truth in general but in particular the content of the gospel which alone has the power to save a soul and change a life for the glory of God.

A. Stand for New Testament Truth in General

The Greek word for ‘**stand**’ means, “*To stand firm, to be constant, to persevere*”.

In other words when the devil comes against God’s Word—we are to stand firm and fight.

As Christians we are commanded to fight the “*good fight of faith*” (1 Timothy 6:12) every single day of our Christian life (the Greek is commanding us to—“*keep on continually, constantly fighting the good fight of faith*”).

The word for “**fight**” is *agonidzomi* the word we get our English words *agonize* and *agony* from—implying this battle won’t be *fun* or *easy*.

That is because we are in a war with an extremely powerful and dedicated enemy who is determined to destroy people in hell by keeping them his prisoners (we were all born captives of Satan as children of Adam).

We are the army of God commanded to go into all the world with the gospel which alone can set them free—which becomes the basis for the spiritual warfare we face as Christians.

For the last couple of weeks, we have been looking at the greatest lie the devil has ever deceived the human race with.

A lie that got started in the Garden of Eden when Satan promised Eve she could become enlightened to her own divinity and ascend to godhood if she ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

As we have said—of all the lies Satan has filled the earth with, there is one lie that is the '*mother*' of all spiritual lies that the father of lies introduced into the human race in the Garden of Eden. This one lie is talked about in Romans 1:25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:11 as "The Lie"—not "*a lie*" as in one of many, but "The Lie"—a very specific and deadly lie.

- A lie that, before it's all over, will have caused the spiritual deaths of billions and billions of people throughout the history of mankind upon the earth.
- It's the lie that the Antichrist will use to deceive the people of the world into following and worshipping him as God by becoming members of his new religion and taking his mark as a sign of their unconditional loyalty to him.

As we've already seen, his *false* 'gospel' will deceive millions and millions of people into following him (and killing anyone who won't) during the Tribulation Period with the promise of eternal life as a race of "Gods" that will rule the earth someday (the New Agers call it the 'cosmic gospel').

This morning I'd like to pivot from the *false* gospel of the Antichrist to the *true* gospel of Jesus Christ—the only power on earth that can set people free from the lies of the devil and give them true eternal life with Him in heaven.

Galatians 1:6–9 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Paul fired off this letter to the Galatians to whom he had given the true gospel.

However, after he left the region Satan sent his messengers (the Judaizers) to twist and pervert the true gospel so that it couldn't save them.

Only the true gospel can bring new life in Christ—a false gospel, no matter how sincerely it is believed and embraced—will not and cannot save anyone! Yet that is exactly what Satan has done—he has perverted the true gospel, twisting it into a false gospel, by adding religious works to the gospel of grace.

Let me illustrate this by using the words that Jesus spoke of Himself in John 10:9 when He said, "*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...*"

Jesus (and only Jesus) is the “Door” (not ‘a door’—not one of many doors that lead to eternal life) that a person must go through to be saved and enter into heaven.

Jesus said, “*I am the Way the Truth and the Life no one comes to the Father except through Me.*” (John 14:6)

Peter echoing the Lord’s declaration said—“*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” (Acts 4:12)

There’s only one entrance into salvation and that is thru Jesus Christ—He is the Door! But any door that leads to something of great value is going to be locked!

I think I can say without fear of contradiction that the ‘door’ (probably ‘doors’) that lead into Fort Knox is locked! (The same is no doubt true of the doors that lead into your own houses as well). And likewise, the door leading to salvation (priceless in value!) is locked and requires a ‘key’ to open it.

What is the key that unlocks the door and allows a person to enter into Christ and find salvation? It is the gospel! So, the gospel is to salvation what a key is to a lock.

However, we all know that a key won’t unlock a door if it’s somehow gotten *bent* or *twisted*. The key must be straight and true if it’s going to be used to open a door—and the same is true with the gospel!

If Satan can twist and pervert the gospel (Galatians 1:6-7), he can keep the door of salvation locked to people (even though they believe in a false gospel with all of their heart).

That’s why the devil has been working very hard for 2000 years to pervert and twist the gospel in an effort to keep the door of salvation locked to seekers—and this is where we, as the people of God, come in!

The Lord has commissioned us to go into all the world preaching the gospel to the lost—which is why we must know the *true* gospel and share it accurately with those we come in contact with! Unfortunately, the Church in our day is failing miserably, to properly understand and faithfully preach the true gospel in these last days of spiritual darkness and deception.

The title of a recent article caught my eye—**‘Dilbert’ Creator Scott Adams on His Deathbed: ‘I Accept Jesus Christ as My Lord and Savior’**

“Scott Adams, creator of the famous *Dilbert* comic strip, publicly accepted Jesus Christ as “Lord and Savior” on his deathbed while labeling himself “not a believer.”

Adams died at the age of 68 Tuesday morning after a public battle with prostate cancer and, according to a statement shared by his ex-wife and caregiver...he had some final words for his Christian friends:

“If you are reading this, things did not go well for me,” said the statement from Adams. “I have a few things to say before I go. My body fell before my brain. I am of sound mind as I write this January 1, 2026 [article]...Many of my Christian friends have asked me to ‘find’ Jesus before I go.”

While Adams said that he is “not a believer,” he ultimately decided to accept Christ as part of a “risk reward calculation” – a variation of Pascal’s Wager.

“I’m not a believer, but I have to admit, the risk reward calculation for doing so looks so attractive to me. So here I go—I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and look forward to spending an eternity with Him,” he said. “The part about me not being a believer should be quite quickly resolved if I wake up in heaven—I won’t need any more convincing than that. I hope I’m still qualified for entry...”

Now folks, that is one of the saddest things I have come across in a long time. It's sad for 2 reasons—first of all, because Adams thought that by verbally praying to accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, without really believing in his heart—would be enough to save him.

Secondly, I'm grieved by the lame, superficial and empty 'gospel presentation' his Christian friends gave to him when they encouraged him to 'find Jesus'.

What in the world does that even mean!? And for that matter, how is a person supposed to 'find Jesus' if we don't tell them Who He is, what He did to save us, and what a life of 'finding Jesus' is going to mean to them going forward.

This so-called 'gospel presentation' produces, what evangelist Greg Laurie called 'kind of Christians'—he elaborated:

"I'm referring to people whom we're not really sure about. They're 'sort-of', 'kind of', or 'could-be' Christians... You may see some things in their lives that lead you to believe they might be followers of Jesus Christ. They go to church and talk about God periodically. Maybe they even pray before their meals. Yet there are other things in their lives that seem to contradict what they say, and it makes you wonder where they really are spiritually.

I think a lot of people believe they are Christians when they probably aren't. And one of the reasons for that is shallow and anemic preaching. I'm afraid there may be a generation of people running around today who believe they really know God when they don't know him at all. It's because they have been told to 'believe', but they never have been told to repent. They have been promised the hope of Heaven, but they never have been warned about the reality of Hell.

In fact, I question whether most Americans have ever heard the authentic Gospel message. I know we've heard a lot of preaching and a lot of sermons—but have most Americans actually heard the Gospel? And do they have even a basic understanding of it?"

Several years ago, we did a whole series entitled—"I want to be saved—can you help me?" where we studied the true gospel in detail. (Acts 10) At that time, we said that there are many genuine Christians who really don't know what's involved in a biblical presentation of the gospel.

We introduced that study by asking the church—"If someone came to you and asked you, 'I want to be saved—can you help me?'—what would you say?"

"Well, I'd just tell them to 'believe in Jesus!'"

While it's true that we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone—is all 'faith' saving faith? The Bible tells us that 'even the demons believe in Jesus and tremble'—are they saved? For that matter what "Jesus" are you asking them to believe in?

Is he the "Jesus" of the Mormon's who believe He is the brother of Lucifer; or the "Jesus" of the Jehovah's Witnesses who believe He's really Michael the Archangel—a *created* being who is mighty, but less in power and glory than Almighty Jehovah God?

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (NLT2)

³ But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent. ⁴ You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed.

Let me stop here and say that this is the reason I feel so strongly about this subject—because nothing is more basic, nothing is more foundational to the Christian life than knowing and sharing the gospel.

The term “*evangelical*” comes from the Greek word we get the words, ‘*gospel*’ and ‘*evangelize*’ from.

When we call ourselves ‘*Evangelical Christians*’ we are saying we believe in the gospel as presented in the New Testament and are committed to sharing it with others.

That was the passion and mission of Jesus who said, “*I have come to seek and to save those who are lost*” (*Luke 19:10*)—and that is the mission He passed on to His Church.

We call it the *Great Commission*—where we are commanded to go into all the world and share the gospel with everyone. Because of this you would think that nothing in the Christian church would be more important than teaching and training young disciples of Christ to know what the gospel is and how to share it with those who are lost—yet sadly that is not the case.

As we have said, only the true gospel can bring new life in Christ—a false gospel, no matter how sincerely it is believed in, will not save anyone.

As we study the New Testament and the various gospel presentations—they all share the same core elements.

A succinct presentation of the gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15—

1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (NKJV)

¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

A fuller and more detailed presentation of the gospel is the one that Peter gave in Acts 10 when he was sent by God to preach the gospel to Cornelius the Roman Centurian and his family and servants (Acts 10:36-42).

The first element to the gospel presentation I’d like to share with you—isn’t really part of the gospel itself—in other words, it isn’t essential doctrine for salvation.

It is more the introduction—in other words, it’s the *motivation* to get people moving in the direction of *salvation*.

1. There is a day of judgment coming.

I feel the need to start with this point because in our day many begin their gospel presentation with the ‘good news’ that ‘*a day of health is coming*’; or ‘*a day a wealth and prosperity is coming*’ if they will receive Jesus as their Savior. However, that’s **not** what the Bible teaches:

Acts 10:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

2 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word...[preach the gospel].

1 Peter 4:5 (NKJV)

⁵ They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The word **gospel** literally means '*good news*'—which implies the presence of something *bad*.

The '*bad news*' that makes the **gospel** such '*good news*' is that—man having rebelled in the Garden of Eden was doomed to spend eternity in hell.

This would be the judgment that all of Adam's descendants (the whole human race) would be forced to endure—and there was nothing any of us could do to escape this eternal judgment.

The good news is that God loved us and saved us from hell by sending His Son to die in our place.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish [in hell] but have everlasting life.

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Many Christians today would say in response to this—

"I don't believe we should talk about judgment when we present the gospel. God is a God of love and we should use love not judgment and fear to win them to Christ."

If that's how you feel, I understand where you're coming from.

I too, prefer talking about God's love—but know this that deleting any talk of hell and judgment from the gospel presentation—is simply not biblical:

Jude 1:22-23 (NKJV)

²² And on some have compassion, making a distinction; ²³ but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire...

Look, Jesus talked about hell more than anyone else—in fact, He talked about it more than He talked about heaven or even love because He didn't want anyone to go there!

Without any talk of coming judgment, the gospel is reduced from an "*emergency alert siren*" to 'happy talk'.

The gospel isn't a message that is designed to make people feel good about themselves or happy—it's a brutal indictment of our sinful lives and how only by Jesus dying for us on the cross is there hope of escaping the fires of hell.

In that regard, the gospel is a *warning* for people to flee judgment by running into Christ for safety (like a tornado siren today—no one feels comforted or happy when a tornado siren begins to sound). But that's its purpose—it's designed to alarm people, to encourage them to take shelter in a safe place because something deadly is coming!

Too many pastors and preachers have stopped urging people to receive Jesus as the One Who will save them from hell—and instead, they have turned Him into a sanctified ‘butler’ whose job it is to save them from all the discomforts of life.

As one pastor put it—“*For these folks, prayer then becomes ‘ringing a little bell’, calling for Butler Jesus to bring them up another pillow!*”

John the Baptist and Jesus Himself were both ‘*hellfire and damnation preachers.*’ (John 3:16 is really a version of hellfire and damnation preaching—but done in love and with compassion)

The whole point in preaching the gospel is to tell people that they are lost and hell-bound—but God loves them and gave His Son to save them!

But we’re living in such a post-Christian era that nowadays many are left to wonder—“*save me from what?!*” Unfortunately, the answer from many pulpits today seems to be—save them from poverty, depression and low self-esteem?! → NO! Save them from eternal judgment in hell!

The preaching of coming judgment used to dominate pulpits all across this nation and was used by God to bring about periods of revival and the Great Awakenings.

Men like Jonathan Edwards in his sermon, “*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*” said,

“*Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The wrath of God burns against them...*”

Can you imagine a message like this being preached in this day of political correctness where the goal of so many preachers is to keep things positive, upbeat and non-confrontational?

How does a person escape the judgment of hell? Very simply by believing the gospel.

Okay, but what are the truths that make up the gospel?

We’ll look at that next week.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Catch this weeks’ audio, video, study and sermon notes [HERE](#).