

Audio Transcript of Sermon
February 15, 2020
Godliness

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Since the beginning of 2020 we have been studying a passage from second Peter. That's where we'll start today looking at a couple of verses from second Peter one beginning with verse five, second Peter one verse five.

2 Peter 1:5-8

5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience;

All of these we have studied through 2020 and what do we add to patience?

and to patience godliness;

And looking forward,

7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Godliness is translated from the Greek word *eusebeia*, and it's spelled E-U-S-E-B-E-I-A. *Eusebeia* is Strong's Greek word 2150 and it means piety, godliness, holiness. We'll be looking at several passages from the New Testament that have this word, and as we come across the words I'll point them out to you. Godliness is an important part of our Christian development. If we do not develop godliness in our life we will not cross that finish line as we run our race. We will fall short of that finish line, and not reach salvation. Let's take a look at the first four verses of second Peter one. We just read verses five through eight. Godliness is also mentioned in the first four verses. Verse one.

2 Peter 1:1-4

- 1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:**
- 2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,**
- 3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,**

Again godliness is this *eusebeia*,

through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

- 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**

It is through the Holy Spirit and the divine nature of God that we are given access to everything we need to know for salvation, eternal life, and including this godliness. There is nothing that is required of us that we do not have access to the spiritual tools that we would need to attain that final prize, and godliness is one of the tools that we must have in our tool belt. These tools are given to us because we have been given this incredible and precious promise of salvation and eternal life. And, these tools also help us to escape the evil and the corruption that is in this world. Godliness is important to us and has to become part of who we are because as we look forward to this future Kingdom of God, which is this incredible time of happiness, there are certain realities we need to face in our life and if we do not face these realities of what could possibly and negatively impact us we could find ourselves coming up short on our race of salvation and not cross that finish line, and that's something that we need to avoid. Let's see what was written in second Peter the third chapter beginning in verse one, second Peter three verse one.

2 Peter 3:1-13

- 1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:**
- 2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:**

3. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

If you are a person of faith in 2020, or in some future year if you are hearing this recorded down the road, you will know and understand what is being talked about in these verses. There are people who reject the prophecies and scripture simply because what has been promised has not immediately happened. Verse five.

5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Very interesting that the dry land being described in verse five by Peter is being described as both out of and in the water. When we look at the geological history of different parts of land including my hometown of El Paso, Texas, we see evidence that at some past time, the land was below the surface of the water. Verse five is talking of that geological history. Verse six.

6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

And again in verse six, we are not only talking about that past geological time in verse six, we're also talking of Noah's flood. Verse seven.

7. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Godliness is the opposite of ungodliness, and ungodly men are the opposite of who we should be. Instead of being ungodly men and women, we should be godly women and men. That's what we are called to do, and it begins by understanding godliness. Verse eight.

8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

God does not count time the way you and I count time. The lifespan of the average person is going to be about seventy to ninety years. Some people might live a fewer number of years, some people might live longer years than that. But generally most people will live somewhere between seventy and ninety years. God has no such limitation on His eternal existence. Therefore, he doesn't count time the way you and I would count time. Just because God said something thousands of years ago and it hasn't happened does not mean that it will not happen. If God promises something will happen, it will happen. Verse nine.

9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

When we do not have the immediate deliverance of a prophecy and many of the prophecies are prophecies of doom for those who are not saved, it is because God wants the most number of people saved. God knows the best time to make that happen for not just you and me, but for all people here on earth including those who may be presently ungodly but who may at some future time be called to repentance. Verse ten.

10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Everything that we know in this physical plane, in this physical existence, in this future time will cease to exist. Everything will become a spiritual existence for us. There will be no more mortality with men, animals, or plant life. Everything will be a spiritual existence forever. With that in mind, verse eleven.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

We know as Christians what will be happening down the road. We know that this earth, this universe as we know it will cease to exist, and unless we are a spiritual being at that point, we also will cease to exist. That's why in our life, we have to focus on what Peter writes as holy conversation and godliness. And again the godliness is going to be the term and the word *eusebeia*. Verse twelve.

12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

If you want a more thorough explanation of what this new heavens and new earth will look like, look at the final few chapters of the Book of Revelation. You'll get a very good explanation and description of what people will see.

As we read the New Testament, and we go through the Book of Acts we come across the story of Saul who persecuted the church and through a strange and divine intervention, Saul becomes the apostle Paul who went on to become the most prolific writer of scripture that we have access to in the New Testament. Paul wrote to churches and he wrote to people including Titus. Let's take a look at Titus chapter one verse one.

Titus 1:1-3

1. Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

As Christians we are according to the faith, God's elect. God's elect are those people who will endure to the very end holding fast the faith that was once delivered. The truth is after godliness. The faith that we have in everything that we do is based on godliness. There is nothing that we do that is ungodly in our practice. Verse two.

2. In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

We have this hope of eternal life, and if we have hope of eternal life, that means we do not yet possess eternal life. We know that eternal life is promised before the world began but as of now if we have hope of eternal life, that simply means we do not yet possess it, because if we possessed eternal life, we would have no need of hope. We would already have it. Verse three.

3. But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

Godliness is the foundation for which God's teaching and God's way of life is based. What we think of as godliness are the stepping stones we need to take to get from a mortal human existence to the divine nature of God. In addition to writing to Titus, Paul also wrote to Timothy and to Timothy he wrote two different letters. We'll take a look at both of those letters, but we'll start with the second letter to Timothy, specifically looking at second Timothy three beginning with verse one.

2 Timothy 3:1-7

- 1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**
- 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,**
- 3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,**
- 4. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**
- 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**
- 6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,**
- 7. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

What Paul wrote to Timothy is exactly what we see in the modern world today. In verse two when Paul said men shall be lovers of their own selves, the whole concept of self-love is alive and well. People say day in and day out, "Oh, you have to love yourself." That's what Paul is writing in second Timothy. It should be a very normal natural part of our existence to take care of our own selves. We should take care of the people around us to the degree that we take care of ourselves. But, to focus on our own needs so significantly, is an error and something we shouldn't be doing. In verse three, when Paul talks about people who are incontinent, keep in mind that what the translators meant hundreds of years ago is much different than the modern usage. If somebody is incontinent today, that's somebody who's probably wearing a diaper as they are going about their life. That's not what is being talked about. Incontinent as used in verse three simply means somebody who lacks self-control. There are people out there who

cannot control their actions. They lack self-control. In our life, we need to be in control of our existence, in everything that we do. In looking at this description, you might think this describes people who are totally unreligious in nature. Verse five clues us in on the fact that these are people who may very well appear to be very religious. Notice again what is written in verse five, *“Having a form of godliness...”* These are people who on the surface appear to be religious, who appear to be pious, who appear to be following what God would have them do. But these are people who only have a form of godliness, and they deny the power of God. From such people turn away. That is what Paul is writing to Timothy. We cannot presume that all of the descriptive words in verses one through four are people who will so obviously and blatant ungodly that we would be able to know right away that that’s not a person of God. What Paul is writing about are people who appear godly, people who may be sitting with you in a worship service, in a Bible study, people who you know very closely. These are people who have a form of godliness, but they are not godly in any sense of the word because it’s all very phony. It’s the optics. It’s how they come across. Verse Six. *“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* People who are ever-learning come up with new ways to solve old problems, without ever solving the old problem. We need to solve the problems that we have and move forward in our life. Because, it is very easy for somebody to appear godly and not be godly at all, it’s a concept that Paul wrote to Timothy in multiple instances in his two epistles. We’ll take a look at some of those other instances in Paul’s first letter to Timothy, beginning with what he wrote in first Timothy six verse one, first Timothy six verse one.

1 Timothy 6:1-12

1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

Back when this letter was written, it was legally possible for somebody to be enslaved to another individual. Today we would look at that person as an employee of an employer, that would be the relationship today. If anyone is hearing this and they are caught up as a slave, you are the victim of some criminal activity and you need to immediately connect with law enforcement because you need to have that proper type of help. So, what Paul is writing here, would not

apply to anybody who is enslaved today because slavery in every area that I can think of is illegal, and so we would immediately contact law enforcement. But for people who are employees working for an employer, you would definitely want to give your employer all types of honor, so that the name of God and the teaching of God would never be blasphemed. Verse two.

2. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

If you have the benefit of working for an employer who is called of God, that employer will already be aware of your needs. They're going to be aware that you're not going to be working on the Sabbath, or on the Holy Days. They will be aware of the holidays you do observe, God's Holy Days and not man's holidays. They will be aware of the foods you will eat and the foods you will not eat. And so, there is a definite benefit working for somebody who is called of God. We are not to despise these people who are called of God because they are also our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. Verse three.

3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

Everything that we teach, everything that we believe leads us to godliness. If we do not wish to become godly, if we do not choose to pursue godliness, we are instead in verse four,

4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

When we look at the recent history of the Church of God, when the Worldwide Church of God blew up in the 1990s, heresy was brought into the church and the believers scattered to dozens and dozens and dozens of different congregations. Instead of talking about Christianity, the way we should be talking about it, instead of talking about the Kingdom of God and what we need to be doing now to get to that point, we allowed ourselves to get to a point where we had strivings of words. We railed against each other. We falsely accused other groups of not

being with God. Instead, we need to recognize that God works with people throughout the world, whether they are affiliated with any organization we may be part of, or another organization. God is not reliant on an organization or a man to teach his word. Verse five.

5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth,

These are people who are always learning and never coming to the power of the knowledge of God.

supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

When we look at gain as a form of godliness, they are looking for a sign. "If I become financially rich, it is because God has blessed me." There may be nothing untrue about that statement, but if God is blessing you or me, it does not always mean there will be a financial component in that blessing. Money and godliness are two different things. When we look at the size of organizations and believers, the fact an organization stays the same size, the fact that another organization grows larger, also doesn't have any link to godliness. When you hear people talking about how becoming richer and richer shows that God is backing you up and supporting you, and when you hear preachers talking about how the growth of the size of their congregation is an indication of the blessing of God, verse five says, "*From such withdraw thyself.*" Verse six.

6. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

The best kind of godliness to have is godliness that is also content. If we want to win, that's our combination for winning. Being satisfied with what we have, and living a life that is a life of godliness. Because in verse seven,

7. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Contentment is understanding our needs are being met, and as long as our needs are being met, we should be content. Verse nine.

9. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

If we pursue money, it can become very challenging if not impossible for us to also at the same time pursue faith. And, that can cause us a lot of grief if not immediately, in the future.

11. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

The need for godliness is a recurring theme when Paul wrote to Timothy. Let's see what Paul wrote in the fourth chapter of first Timothy, first Timothy four verse one.

1 Timothy 4:1-10

1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

We live in a time where it is commonly accepted we should go lower on the food chain and not eat animal meat. We should instead eat plants that have been modified to look like animal meats. Verse three is very much alive in 2020.

Forbidding to marry, there are people who believe that it is wrong for people to marry because we would never want one person to become submissive to another person. Marriage is a relationship between two people and though both are equal partners in the relationship, there are times when one partner has to take the lead over the other partner. We look at meats that God has created to be received with Thanksgiving. Not all foods and meats that are out there are foods we should be eating. I believe most of what constitutes what we call global

warming is a direct result of our lack of understanding of the law of clean and unclean animal foods, because the unclean animals were there to take care of the ecology of planet earth.

4. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Verse six.

6. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

Today, we don't have a lot of profane and old wives' fables. We have people who spent a lot of their time who say they are ministers of God who speculate., a very common term within the Churches of God. "Let me give you some speculation," is what they might say. Some people might indicate it in some other way. We don't have these profane and old wives' fables, we have speculation, because we are reaching for something we really don't know and it's a great fun exercise to try and figure out what could possibly happen. Paul suggests that's not a proper use of time. Instead in verse seven he says, "*and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*" So, trying to figure out what could possibly happen in terms of prophecy down the road is a very exciting adventure, but it is not an exercise in godliness. That's the difference. Verse eight.

8. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

There is a benefit to exercise. I take a walk as much as I can on a daily basis, because it helps keep my cholesterol in check. But the best type of exercise to get in is the spiritual exercise, the development of godliness. Verse nine.

9. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

10. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

In the second chapter of first Timothy, Paul gives additional reasons why godliness is important and how we can approach those additional needs. Let's take a look at first Timothy two verse one.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Our ability to practice religion in the countries we live in, whichever country you may live in, is based on the government's willingness to allow us to do that. There are some countries where people are not freely allowed to practice their religious faith, and if they do they could be persecuted, imprisoned, and/or killed.

Thankfully in the United States, we have freedom of religion, and I'm able to live a quiet and peaceable life that will allow me to reach for godliness and honesty.

Verse three.

3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Jesus Christ gave himself as a ransom to be testified in due time, and testimony is something that is given in civil and criminal trials. It's often given by the witness who happened to see what happened, and in the case of a criminal trial, it could also involve testimony from law enforcement officers. Depending upon the complexity of the trial, whether it is a criminal or civil trial, you could also bring in subject matter experts to provide testimony. But this testimony that Jesus Christ gave was on His righteousness and His ability to be resurrected as the Son of God. But the testimony that Jesus Christ can also give will be for us down the road when it comes time to look at our own salvation. Jesus Christ lived as a

person just like you and I live as people. He knows the weaknesses of people and he will provide testimony to that when it is our time to be judged.

In the Old Testament, the Greek word *eusebeia* is not used because the Greek words would only be used in the New Testament. But the concept of godliness is discussed in the Old Testament and is beautifully discussed in some of the Psalms. We'll look at the very first Psalm as an example. Psalm one verse one.

Psalm 1:1-6

1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Godliness and ungodliness are the opposites. We are either a godly person or we are an ungodly person. There is no in between. Verse two.

2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And again who is the he in verse two? The godly man, because the godly person who pursues godliness, does not follow what the ungodly person does. Instead, he meditates on the law of God day and night, and in verse three,

3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

If you took a look at verse three and compared it to passages from a river in New Jerusalem from the Book of Revelation, and the tree of life growing next to that river, you would see alignment between verse three and Psalm one and this future time. We can become an incredible blessing in the life of other people by living a godly life. That's not something that is natural for us to do, it is something we have to pursue earnestly through the Holy Spirit. Verse four.

**4. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**

6. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

In the end, living a godly life, living a life of godliness will lead to our salvation. Returning to the new testament, we'll take a look at the Book of Acts. In the third chapter of Acts, Peter and John went to a temple and came across a person who had a physical disability. Let's take a look at Acts three verse one.

Acts 3:1-14

- 1. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.**
- 2. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;**
- 3. Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.**

Here's a person who had no other ways to support himself back then thousands of years ago. People who had disabilities were ostracized by society and overlooked. Verse four.

- 4. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.**
- 5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.**

He was hoping to get coins, maybe food, whatever Peter and John would give them. Instead, here's what happened in verse six.

- 6. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.**
- 7. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.**
- 8. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.**

Here's somebody who appreciated what had happened for him.

- 9. And all the people saw him walking and praising God:**

10. And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Imagine if you knew a person who had a significant disability and you said, "Arise and walk in the name of Jesus Christ," and that person all of a sudden was able to do that. People would wonder about you and that's exactly what started to happen here in Acts three. Verse eleven.

11. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

The word holiness in verse twelve is again this *eusebeia*, this godliness. There was nothing that Peter or John did that caused this man to walk. It was the power of God and that is what Peter talks about in verse thirteen.

13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

Instead of taking credit for the healing of this individual, Peter correctly gave praise and credit to Jesus Christ who through the Holy Spirit made this happen. Like Peter and John who did not take credit for what they did, we must do the same. We live a life where we have access to God the Father and Jesus Christ. We live a life where we have a better understanding of godliness and the positive influence that godliness can have not only in our own life, but the lives of other people. If we are doing what we need to be doing as a Christian following God the Father and living a life of faith aligned to what Jesus Christ would have us do, we should have several instances in our life when people will be very grateful for what we do. But when those people are showing gratitude for something that is purely the result of God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we never should take credit for that gratitude. We should instead

direct that person to the power of God, the faith of Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It's a great mystery the life that we live, and it's not one that is very easy for other people to comprehend. And, because we live a life that is sometimes isolated, following a life that is very closely aligned to the way the first-century church lived their life in the Bible, we live a life that is sometimes strange. We'll conclude today by considering the mystery of godliness by reading a single verse from the third chapter of first Timothy, first Timothy three verse sixteen.

1 Timothy 3:16

16. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

People do not understand godliness. In the church, we have to understand godliness because our salvation depends on executing godliness.

God was manifest in the flesh,

Through Jesus Christ,

justified in the Spirit,

Jesus Christ lived as a man and was resurrected as a spirit being. And, being justified in the spirit means he was adjudicated as innocent. When we think of the term justice, we see a judge, we think of a legal process. When Jesus Christ was resurrected as a spirit being, he was adjudicated as innocent, being blameless, without sin, Jesus Christ

seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

The godliness that we have is not some optic image that we put on for show for other people to see. It is a fundamental part of our faith and belief system. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.

