5 Keys To Surviving These Perilous Times
II Timothy 3:1-5 (New King James Version)

Read Scripture

Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever get the feeling the world is spinning out of control?

Gas prices are continually skyrocketing.

Foreclosures on homes are at an all-time high.

Once powerful financial institutions are crumbling.

Health care and College tuition are bordering on being unaffordable.

Our government, our judicial system and our education system are broken and in bad need of repair.

The hatred and hostility toward Christians in this country and around the world is increasing with each and every passing day.

All we Americans have to do these days is LOOK IN OUR WALLETS, TURN ON THE NEWS or OPEN THE DAILY NEWSPAPER to get a good strong dose of reality.

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The Apostle Paul said in verse 1, "But know this, that in the last days PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME"

That word perilous means…….

*Hard times
*Risky times
*Dangerous times
*Hazardous times
*Hard to bare times

Boy does that not describe the times in which we live?

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Many of us can remember a time when life didn’t seem nearly as PERILOUS as it does now.

I am a “baby boomer.” As a child of the 50’s and 60’s I grew up in the days of Sky King……Lassie……The Lone Ranger and Roy Rogers. About the most violence we saw on TV in those days was when Matt Dillon would shoot the gun out of an outlaw’s hand on “GUNSMOKE.”

And shows like The Andy Griffith Show, Gomer Pyle, The Red Skelton Show and Green Acres proved that comedy didn’t have to be crude or vulgar to be funny.

When I was growing up the whole family was expected to eat together at the supper table every night unless you were sick or dying.
And I can remember many Friday nights we would gather on a neighbor’s front porch to listen to the old folks tell stories about their younger days, while we churned homemade ice cream or ate ice cold watermelon.

Like a NORMAN ROCKWELL painting, life seemed so peaceful and simple back then.

Now I think you would agree that we all probably glamorize the “good old days” of our youth. The truth is those days probably weren’t nearly as good or perfect as we remember.

But I believe we would also agree that the TIMES in which we now live seem so much more PERILOUS than life seemed just 25-30 years ago.

What is at the ROOT of all of this? I believe the Apostle Paul answers that for us in our scripture text.

What Paul is describing in VERSES 2-5 is a complete moral and social breakdown of humanity as the time of the Lord’s return draws ever nearer.

Basically what Paul is saying is this……

*Mark the Lord’s word on this! In the last days perilous times will come, because people will be SELFISH, SELF-CENTERED and SELF-ABSORBED constantly pursuing SELF-GRATIFICATION.*

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I believe author, Reb Bradley, hit the nail right on the head in an article he wrote for WORLD NET DAILY, and I quote,

_The simple truth is that the individuals who have contributed to America’s moral decadence are lacking one specific virtue. They are deficit a certain character quality necessary to maintain a civilized society. That key ingredient is SELF-CONTROL. We as a nation have moral problems today, because our individual members do not have the ability to adequately restrain themselves._

_In modern America most individuals are ruled by their passions----their lack of self-restraint----they cannot say “NO” to themselves. If they had the virtue of SELF-CONTROL, they and our society would not be so OUT OF CONTROL._ “(end quote)

REB BRADLEY, WORLDNETDAILY.COM

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If you are a student of GOD’S WORD you understand that the moral and social climate of the world is going to continue to deteriorate as the time for Christ’s return draws ever closer.

Yes these are PERILOUS TIMES, but if you’ll pardon my grammar, “We ain’t seen nothing’ yet!”

How should you and I as Christians respond to these PERILOUS TIMES? Should we just give up? Should we wave the white flag of surrender? Should we dig a fox hole and jump in?

**ANSWER: NONE OF THE ABOVE!**

In Hebrews 13:5 the Lord promised _He would never leave or forsake us._ That means no matter how perilous life becomes….no matter how difficult it is to live in this wicked world……the LORD’S presence will always be with us!
So with that comforting promise in mind, let’s consider..........  

**5 Keys To Surviving These Perilous Times**

**KEY #1: WE MUST STAND FIRM ON THE WORD OF GOD**

**Scripture: Matthew 7:24,25**

What Jesus is telling us in these two verses is that if we are going to survive these perilous times........if we are going to survive this awful storm........**WE MUST STAND FIRM ON THE WORD OF GOD!**

You may say, “Well preacher, I believe every word of the Bible. I believe the BIBLE from cover to cover! Well my friend that is wonderful! But STANDING FIRM on the Word of God means more than just believing God’s Word is true ........it means BELIEVING IN IT ENOUGH TO BUILD YOUR WHOLE LIFE ON IT.

Now why is that so critically important? I’ll tell you why........

Jesus warns us in Matthew 24:24 that one of the things that will characterize these PERILOUS LAST DAYS before His coming is that we will see a great increase in the number of FALSE TEACHERS throughout the world.

The fact that there are currently over 4,200 different religions in the world right now testifies that what JESUS said is absolutely true. False teachers are everywhere. They are like a bad infestation of “cock roaches!”

You can find false teachers everywhere from pagan Hindu temples of India to the University and College classrooms of America. You can find false teachers from the Buddhist Shrines of China to some of the most popular televangelist on American TV.

Oh dear Christians, if you and I are going to survive these PERILOUS TIMES we must STAND FIRM on the WORD of GOD! Read it! Study it! Meditate on it! Believe it! And live it!
KEY #2: WE MUST STAY PERSISTENT IN OUR PRAYERS

SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:6,7

1. One of the greatest temptations we Christians wrestle with is the temptation to become anxious or worried when we hear about all the awful things that are going on in the world.

2. But here in verse 6 the apostle Paul is giving us the anecdote for anxiety and worry …

   He is telling us……..Don’t be ANXIOUS!
   Don’t WORRY!
   Don’t BE AFRAID!
   Don’t FRET ABOUT IT!

   PRAY ABOUT! PRAY ABOUT IT!

3. Paul goes on to tell us in verse 7 what PRAYER will do for us. He says……..

   And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will GUARD your HEARTS and your MINDS through Christ Jesus.

4. You see, prayer connects us with the PRINCE of PEACE!

5. And let me tell you a valuable lesson I have learned in life. I have learned that when I am anxious about something; when I’m worried sick about something…….that is the first indication to me that I am not praying like I should.

   And once I recognize that and start praying about my situation more than worrying about it something amazing happens. I stop worrying. I stop being so anxious about my circumstance. Because the Lord gives me a sense of inner peace that everything is going to be alright!
6. Oh brothers and sisters, if you and I are going to survive these PERILOUS TIMES, we have got to **STAY PERSISTENT IN OUR PRAYERS.**

**KEY #1:** WE MUST STAND FIRM ON THE WORD OF GOD  
**KEY #2:** WE MUST STAY PERSISTENT IN OUR PRAYERS.

Now here is .......

**KEY #3:** WE MUST STAY IN STEP WITH THE **HOLY SPIRIT**

**Scripture:** Galatians 5:16

1. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit?” Let me use an analogy I think we can all relate to.

   ILLUSTRATION: When you were growing up do you remember those times when you took hold of your dad or mom’s hands and placed your feet on top of their feet and walked around the room? Every time they raised one of their feet, you raised your foot. You see, what you were doing was “WALKING IN STEP” with them.

2. Now we can’t physically walk with the Holy Spirit so how do we walk with Him?

   Actually walking with the Spirit involves two things, one is a negative the other is a positive.

   (a) To walk with the Spirit means we DON’T walk in the ways of the **FLESH.** In other words, we don’t live to PLEASE ourself.

   If you will skip down to verses 19-21 you will see what that means.

   **Galatians 5:19-21**
Think of the word “walk” as “lifestyle.” If you and I are truly walking with the Spirit our lifestyle will not be characterized by sinful, fleshly living.

That brings us to the POSITIVE aspect of walking with the Spirit.

(b) To walk with the SPIRIT means choosing a lifestyle that pleases the Lord rather than pleases self.

Read: verses 22-25

3. Now I know there is a lot about the HOLY SPIRIT that is a mystery to you and me. And there is probably a whole lot more we don’t know about the Holy Spirit than we do know. But the main thing we need to understand about the Holy Spirit is that God has sent Him to dwell in us so that He might LEAD us and GUIDE us and TEACH us and show us THE RIGHT WAY TO LIVE in this world filled with moral landmines.

And the way you and I WALK WITH THE SPIRIT goes right back to studying the WORD of GOD each and every day. It is through God’s Word the Spirit leads us and guides us.

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As Christians you and I can survive these PERILOUS TIMES by........

STANDING FIRM ON THE WORD OF GOD
STAYING PERSISTENT IN OUR PRAYERS
STAYING IN STEP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now let’s look at ........
KEY #4: WE MUST SET ASIDE ANYTHING THAT IS WEIGHING US DOWN

Scripture: HEBREWS 12:1 a, b

ILLUSTRATION: One of the things I love about LINDA is her adventurous spirit. And when she is not in COURT one of Linda’s favorite activities is BACKPACKING.

Any time LINDA packs her GEAR to get ready for one of her BACKPACKING trips, her goal is to pack as LIGHTLY as possible. You see, the name of the game when it comes to BACKPACKING is “survival” not comfort or convenience.

This means Linda has to leave behind a lot of things that might make her backpacking trip more comfortable.

- For example, A NICE, FIRM TWIN-SIZED MATTRESS sure would be comfortable to sleep on after a long day of hiking, but it would be far too cumbersome to carry that mattress all day long up and down rugged terrain, so Linda packs an ultra-thin lightweight bed roll instead.

* A BIG, FLUFFY PILLOW would also be nice, but it would be too bulky, so Linda carries a tiny little pillow that weighs about 4 ounces.

* And it sure would be great to have all kinds of FOOD and SNACKS to eat, but those things add a lot of weight to the backpack, so Linda takes just the bare necessities in the way of food to keep her energy level up.

You see if Linda is going to complete her journey she needs to leave behind anything that might weigh her down.

1. As Christians we are on a rugged journey. As the song says, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.”

And while we are on this journey between here and our eternal home you and I are going to pass through some very PERILOUS TERRAIN.
2. We will walk through the VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH not once, but perhaps a number of times as we bid loved ones and friends goodbye.

We will have to cross over some MOUNTAINS along the way as well. The Mount of Health Problems.....and the Mount of Financial Difficulties.......and perhaps the Mount of Relationship Problems.

And there’s a good likelihood some of us will encounter some unexpected DETOURS along our journey.......a broken marriage.......or an unexpected career change.

3. Because life’s journey is very difficult, we don’t need any extra burdens to weigh us down.

That is why we must lay aside the added burdens of SINFUL or SELF-DESTRUCTIVE HABITS.

We must lay aside any SINFUL ATTITUDES like bitterness or jealousy or resentment or hatred.

4. Brothers and sisters, LIFE IS TOUGH ENOUGH without carrying these added burdens.

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IF YOU AND I ARE GOING TO SURVIVE THESE PERILOUS TIMES ....

WE MUST STAND FIRM ON THE WORD OF GOD
WE MUST STAY PERSISTENT IN OUR PRAYERS
WE MUST STAY IN STEP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
WE MUST SET ASIDE ANYTHING THAT IS WEIGHING US DOWN.
This brings us to our fifth and final key........

KEY #5: WE MUST STAY FOCUSED ON JESUS CHRIST

Scripture: Hebrews 12: 1c, 2

1. The New International Version translates the first part of verse 2 this way........

"Let us FIX our eyes on JESUS."

2. That word “fixed” literally means “glued.” Let us keep our eyes GLUED on JESUS at all times.

3. Remember when PETER got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward JESUS? Peter stood firm as long as he kept his eyes FIXED on Jesus. It was when he took his eyes off JESUS, Peter began to SINK.

4. Think of these PERILOUS TIMES we live in as a raging sea. All around us the WINDS of CHANGE are blowing. Off in the distance we can hear the rumblings of an approaching STORM.

How tempting it is for you and me to take our eyes off JESUS and focus on all the bad things going on around us.

5. But let me remind you of a very important truth: The fact that the whole world seems out of control just means the Lord has everything in CONTROL!

Everything thing that is going on in the world right now is exactly as Jesus said it would be.

All of the CHAOS......all of the DISORDER......all of the VIOLENCE.....all the TERROR......all the NATURAL DISASTERS......all the WARS......all the FALSE TEACHERS ....................all these things means JESUS WAS absolutely RIGHT!
6. If you and I are going to SURVIVE we must keep our eyes FIXED on the SAVIOR BEFORE US and not the STORM around us!
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CONCLUSION

As we close I want to take you back to the morning of SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.

When you and I replay those images of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, it is hard for us to imagine anyone surviving such a PERILOUS attack. But miraculously there were a few survivors.

One of those survivors was a man named PASQUALE BUZZELLI, a brawny 34 year old STRUCTURAL ENGINEER who worked for the PORT AUTHORITY of New York.

Buzzelli’s office was located on the 64TH floor of the North Tower on the opposite side of the building that had been struck by the airplane.

Buzzelli had called home to his wife, who was seven months pregnant at the time, assuring her he was alright. He told his wife that he and about a dozen other employees were about to head down STAIRWELL B and get out of the building.

After hanging up, Buzzelli and his fellow workers soon discovered their ESCAPE ROUTE down STAIRWELL B was backed up because a number of people were using that same stairwell and it was slow going.

When BUZZELLI finally reached the 22nd floor, the building began to shake and the stairs started to heave upwards. He said it sounded like heavy objects were being dropped right above his head.......and the sound kept getting LOUDER and CLOSER. It was then he realized the NORTH TOWER was collapsing.

Realizing he was in GRAVE DANGER, Buzzelli dove into the corner of the stairwell just as the walls around him buckled and collapsed on top of him. Suddenly Buzzelli found himself in a FREE FALL AS HE RODE THE COLLAPSING BUILDING DOWN.
About two hours later, rescuers found PASQUALE BUZZELLI lying unconscious on a slab of concrete that was sitting on a pile of rubble about SIX STORIES above ground level.

MIRACULOUSLY BUZZELLI had survived the collapse of the World Trade Center with only a broken foot.

At times we may wonder, HOW CAN I POSSIBLY SURVIVE THESE PERILOUS TIMES? This morning/evening we have learned that God has provided everything we need to survive this perilous life.

WE MUST STAND FIRM ON THE WORD OF GOD
WE MUST STAY PERSISTENT IN OUR PRAYERS
WE MUST STAY IN STEP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
WE MUST SET ASIDE ANYTHING THAT IS WEIGHT US DOWN.
AND WE MUST STAY FOCUSED ON JESUS CHRIST!

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ the SOLID ROCK I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is SINKING SAND.

My friend if you don’t know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior how do you plan to SURVIVE this perilous life? Will your money save you? Will your material possessions save you? Will your family and friends save you?

NO! There is only one who can SAVE YOU and that is JESUS! Jesus said, “I am the WAY, and the TRUTH and the LIFE. No man comes to the FATHER except by ME.”

Will you give your life to Christ? Will you give your life today to the only one who can SAVE YOUR SOUL?