

Godliness

(Sermon Notes)

by Warren Zehrung 12/10/2016

Do you live a life of Godliness? We are a very special people – but we are living in a God-less world. In our modern world, even in what most people consider “Christian” countries, the god being worshipped is not the true God at all. Not only is this world without God – but everything we see and know of is quickly coming to the end of its temporary existence.

2Peter 3:1 This second epistle, [We’ll flip over to Peter’s first letter in a moment] beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2Peter 3:2 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 Savior:

We have a goal – and that goal is to be in the Kingdom of God and Family of God. We are Children of God now – like the Prince and the pauper – Jesus humbles Himself to our realm – so that we may reach to His.

Peter tells us to expect to be **ridiculed** – not only by the world – but by those who infiltrate our midst and **make fun** of us.

2Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in **the last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

They say, “Nothing has changed – you are foolish to think that.”

2Peter 3:4 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.

Peter says that this world does not want to remember that God once sent a great flood and wiped out civilization all together.

2Peter 3:5 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:

2Peter 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

Peter says that this next time it will be more than the earth that will perish... It will be the earth and the heavens – all totally destroyed! Rhetorically, Peter is asking, “Where will that leave you standing?”

2Peter 3:7 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.

Brethren, by anybody’s count the 6000 years have arrived. Jesus is about to return against all **ungodly** men.

2Peter 3:8 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.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness** and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

God is not **against** man – He is **for** man – that is why He created us.

2Peter 3:9 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.

2Peter 3:10 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.

The Title is from here:

2Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [and conduct]; and **godliness**?

We ask the question, "How can we be more like God?" For us, **Godliness** means being like God – as much as that is humanly possible in the flesh – aided by God's Holy Spirit helping us. Peter put it this way:

1Peter 1:15-16 "As He [God the Father] who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [and conduct]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

In Peter's second letter, instead of quoting Leviticus 19:2, "Be ye holy; for I am holy"—Peter uses the word "Godliness." Peter tells us to put on "Godliness." In other words – be **like God** in all manner of conduct.

There is a strange – spin-off – from the world's influence that causes some in God's Church to seemingly resist desiring Godliness. Somehow they think it is like being a goody-goody two shoes – better than thou – breaking out of the mold attitude of "It's just not my place to be Godly and put on Godliness. Brethren we are to strive to put on Godliness.

We need to know a lot about God to begin being like He is. That means that we are to be as **different** from the people of this world as east is from west.

We are privileged to know the things of God – while everyone in the world remains in the dark about the mystery of God's Plan. Paul tells young Timothy, "There is no doubt about it!"

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the **mystery of godliness**: [what follows in this verse is a broad definition of the message that constitutes godliness:] God was manifest in flesh, justified by Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

That is the entire life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Godliness has to do with living the principles of Jesus Christ as revealed in the entire Gospel account.

Godliness is the act of separating ourselves from the ways of this wicked world, and conforming to the perfect Will of God. Godliness is the opposite of the way of worldly passions. God is good. Please understand that is an understatement. Three little words - God is good.

Lucifer did not believe that **God is good**. Lucifer came to the point where he distrusted the goodness of God. He did not believe that God had his best interests in mind – that God would give him – and make him so much more than he could ever imagine. Lucifer began to bless himself – rather than to depend on our benevolent God. Lucifer did not have faith that God was goodness and righteousness personified. In his mind, Lucifer began to limit the limitless God until **iniquity** was found in him.

God's "goodness" exceeds everything we can imagine. Paul could not even find the words to describe **just how holy** or how set apart God is:

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways **past finding out!**

Romans 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?

Romans 11:35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Romans 11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

In today's sermon we will examine the concept of "Godliness," and how we can go about knowing God better than we do. We would be foolish to compare ourselves to this present evil world and conclude that we are doing so much better than they are and that we've got it made. God is holier than we can possibly imagine—He is by far and above, the **holiest**.

The very first thing that Jesus taught His disciples was that **God is holy** – and that His holiness was in a class all its own. God, Himself, is the definition of holy.

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed** be thy name.

That means that nothing compares – or even comes close to the **holiness** of God. Holiest (Greek 'hagiazō')—means that God is in a consecrated class, set apart, and set far above everything else. God is holy or holiness personified. Paul told Timothy that we cannot even begin to approach the holiness of God.

1Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting.

I've come to the conclusion that it takes a lifetime – at least for me – to **begin** to realize the goodness of God. He made this universe – just for us!

Romans 8:28 And we know that **all things** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into different trials;

As King David wrote it:

Psalms 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: **no good thing will He withhold** from them that walk uprightly.

Because of our doctrine, the practice of our true faith will set us apart from society in general and lead us into **godliness** (Titus 1:1).

Titus 1:1 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**.

The world in which we live does not know God. The great televangelists do not know God. They seem to know God – but they do not. Brethren, are we ready and prepared for what lies ahead for us?

John 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever **kills you** will think that he doeth God service.

John 16:3 And these things will they do unto you, because **they have not known** the Father, nor me.

Why? Why would they want to kill us?

Jesus says it is because they have **not known God the Father**.

And, He says it is because they also **do not know Him**, the true Jesus Christ.

Oh, they know that He was a baby in a manger, that He walked on water, and that He was crucified. They even claim to believe in an Easter resurrection. Yes, they know that there was an historical Jesus. But they know next to nothing about who He was, what He believed and stood for, and that He was obedient to His Father in heaven.

They do not know His principles, His character, His faith, and His love. Those attributes of Jesus are not understood or believed by this present evil world. Being like Jesus Christ—having Him live in us to the extent that we begin to resemble Him in every way—that is Christianity. And being Christians is the way to **put on Godliness**.

Jesus tells His disciples the importance of **knowing** God.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto [doubting Thomas], I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have **known my Father** also: and from henceforth **ye know him**, and have seen him.

John 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, **show us the Father**, and it will be sufficient for us.

Now you **know** the Father, Jesus says, because I've shown Him to you.

John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father**; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Jesus was telling them that everything **He** stood for and taught – was exactly representing Who the Father is. Jesus' principles are the Father's principles, Jesus' character is the exact character of the Father. The things Jesus believed and taught are exactly the Father's.

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

John 14:11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the **Father in me**: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and **not unto the world**?

There it is again – this evil world does not **know** God the Father.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we will come** unto him, and make our abode with him.

The Bible shows that Jesus Christ is the stamped character, the impressed character.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the **express image** of His person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The Bible shows that Jesus Christ is the image of God.

2Corinthians 4:4 ... Christ, who is the **image of God**, should shine unto them.

The Bible shows that Jesus Christ has the mind of God.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Philippians 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

We begin to be **Godly** and **holy** when Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.

Ephesians 4:24 And that ye put on the **new man**, which after God is **created in righteousness** and true holiness.

Godliness is manifest in God **living** in us – as Jesus said, “I am in the Father, and the **Father is in me**” – and now, we are part and parcel in that unique relationship – God in us, and we in God.

Brethren, how well are we able to distinguish between the **true** God we **know**, love and serve – and the “God” that we hear about all the time in public? It is crucial that we understand the difference.

The “God” that this world recognizes is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—he is not our God. The really important thing is that we know whom we serve.

How well do we **know** God the Father and Jesus Christ – as we saw in John 16:3? We certainly commit a grave error if we believe that we know all there is to know about God.

"Holiness, Sacredness" and "Godliness," are almost indistinguishable in the Scriptures. The King James translators sometimes used the two terms almost interchangeably. "Godliness," refers to anything Godly, or having to do with God.

2Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness** [Godliness] in the fear of God.

And:

1Thesalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto **holiness** [Godliness].

We are to put on holiness in our lives by cleaning ourselves up spiritually - that is purifying ourselves as Paul so often points out.

James uses the concept of "Draw near to God," (James 4:8)

Being in God's presence makes us holy. We are close/near to God spiritually when we follow His laws and truth - when our ways please Him. Our Christian duty is to become like God. Godliness is putting on all the spiritual characteristics of God that we know about.

1 Timothy 6:11 Paul wrote, O man of God, ... and follow after righteousness, **godliness**, faith, love, patience, meekness.

We too, brethren, are to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and **holiness**, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Titus 2:11-12 tells us that the grace of God teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly."

1Timothy 6:12 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.

1Timothy 6:13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickens all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

1Timothy 6:14 That thou keep this commandment [to follow after **righteousness**, godliness,] without spot, unrebukeable [blameless], until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Peter said that we must take the entire Bible and be putting it all together. He speaks of the importance of Godliness – and our becoming Godly. He says that God has done absolutely everything to make it possible for us to put on **Godliness**.

2Peter 1:3 According as His divine power has given unto us **all things** that pertain unto life and **godliness**, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

So brethren, let us avail ourselves of these exceeding great and precious promises, and fully become the people of God. What is the difference between the world's Catholic and Protestant Christians, and the true Christians within the Church of God? There is a great difference between those who are converted and those who are not.

The apostle Paul warns Timothy to look out for those who do not have knowledge of the truth.

2Timothy 3:5 Having a form of **godliness**, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

2Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

If we are to understand the will of God, it is imperative that we distinguish the difference between the things of this present evil world and the things of God. That is spiritual discernment. Those who are in the world, without spiritual discernment, deny that it even exists. We are to have spiritual discernment – but those of the world cannot see it.

Christians are to grow from their initial unconverted carnal state to the point of having greater spiritual discernment as their conversion increases. We are to grow in grace and knowledge. At the time that Godliness should be abounding in God's Church, Godliness and morality are at an all time low.

It is not surprising with so many church leaders liberalizing and watering down doctrine that our true first century Christianity is in decline. We must beware of substitutes for Godliness: Since the beginning of time, there have been many man-made idols. The concepts that man has labeled "God" fall far short of the God of the Bible! In the entire world and universe, there is only one true God and He is living, and bringing His incredible Plan to fruition.

Our Creator God has distinct characteristics and a faultless, limitless intellect, more wonderful than we can imagine. From the beginning of time man has turned away from his Creator and established counterfeit gods to take His place.

Even ancient Israel – the people God chose to work with: God delivered them from Egyptian bondage with a great many wonderful signs and miracles. Beyond a doubt, those ancient Israelites knew who had saved them – and yet they fell in the wilderness. This is a warning to us.

1Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

1Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Immediately, Israel began to forget God and wanted to revert back to the gods of Egypt that had become so familiar to them.

Exodus 32:1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, **make us gods**, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Exodus 32:2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

They failed to perceive the glory of the true God,

Exodus 34:6 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth...'

They settled for a vastly inferior product. Brethren, you know the story. Our Idols today are much more subtle. That golden calf was not the real God!

Psalms 106:19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

Psalms 106:20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass.

Psalms 106:21 They **forgot** God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt;

Israel called the golden calf "God" — but it was still a golden calf!

Modern Israel – the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia are no different from the ancient Israelites. We have built our own gods, and called them “God.” God alone tells us how to worship Him;

Micah 6:8 And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Think about this: We live our **Godliness** and **Christianity** when we are **standing** and when we are **laying** down. Godliness means living our Christianity – whether it be in persecutions (we counted the cost Luke 14:28 before our baptism, because Christianity is very difficult), taking a **stand** for God, or **laying** our lives down for Him.

Scripture shows that it is not right to worship any concept of “God.” It is necessary to worship the true God. Notice Moses’ example.

Exodus 3:13 Then Moses said to God, ‘When I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say unto me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?’

Moses knew it was insufficient to say, “God is His name.” “God” had to be defined for Israel. The children of Israel had come out of Egypt with many pagan gods representing many wrong lifestyles and wrong concepts.

Men like to worship their own creations – it is the same today – whether it is Trump Towers or memorials with their names inscribed upon them.

Isaiah 46:5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

Isaiah 46:6 They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.

Isaiah 46:7 They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and it stands; from its place **shall it not remove**: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

“Shall it not remove” – that rings a bell doesn’t it. These are parallel scriptures to Jeremiah 10:2.

Jeremiah 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

Jeremiah 10:3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

Jeremiah 10:4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that **it move not**.

Jeremiah 10:5 They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Jeremiah 10:6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and **thy name is great** in might.

The Scriptures describe the process of man creating his own gods - but man today does exactly the same thing. As young people, our first concepts of God grew directly out of interactions with our father and mother. We formed our idea of “God” by the things we perceived to be “right or wrong,” “good” or “bad.” And the world rubbed of onto us. At church and at school, the definitions of sin, God, Mary, grace, heaven, hell, the devil, and **God Himself** were taught to us according to what other people had come to believe.

Erasing those wrong concepts from our minds is an extremely difficult – if not impossible process. How can we possibly eradicate from our minds **our own** preconceived religious opinions, attitudes and wrong beliefs? That is who we have become. Who we are is what our belief set tells us we are.

Brethren, we are totally incapable of coming out of this world's ways – and to the True God by our own intellect and strength of mind. God must work a work within us. And that work is ongoing.

Jesus taught His apostles about God's Holy Spirit:

John 16:13 Howbeit when it, the Spirit of truth, is come, it will guide you into all truth: for it shall not speak of itself; but whatsoever it shall hear, that shall it speak: and it will show you things to come.

John 16:14 It [God's Spirit] shall glorify me: for it shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

God's mind and truth come as a gift of God's Holy Spirit! God's Spirit comes through repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

The Scriptures make many statements about God's personal characteristics. We are told that God walks, talks, has eyes, ears, mouth, arms, fingers, etc? He even has deep feelings, He cried, He has genuine emotions, reason, and a will.

God walked in the garden (Genesis 3:8).

He ate with Abraham (Genesis 18:8).

He wrote the Ten Commandments with His own **finger** upon the tables of stone (Exodus 31:18).

God has ears (Isaiah 59:1).

He has a mouth (Isaiah 58:14).

So, let me ask you a question:

Is God in our image? Or, are we in God's image? The answer is neither! But doesn't it say in:

Genesis 1:27 So God created man **in His own image**, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Yes it does, but let's understand that the tense, syntax and grammar are a little difficult to convey in that verse. The meaning of the verse is that we are **being** created into God's image and likeness. We find this clarified for us in 1Corinthians 15 that shows we start out in the flesh – and only **later** will we be in God's image.

1Corinthians 15:49 As we have **borne** (past tense) the image of the earthy, we **shall** (future tense) also bear the image of the heavenly.

Man's destiny is to be born as God — to "be like Him" (1John 3:20).

King David prayed:

Psalms 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, **with thy likeness**.

We are to put on Godliness. But, sometimes I get the distinct feeling that some of our Church brethren believe that "we've arrived – and we can look down on those miserable souls in the world." We are to put on Godliness and we have a long way to go. God says of us:

Isaiah 55:8-9 My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'

That verse precludes any of us thinking that we have already attained to **Godliness** – we all have a long way to go! Because our thoughts are not God's thoughts then our ideas of what God loves or hates, what God will do or won't do, are utterly invalid unless backed by God's Word, the Bible! Otherwise, we are as guilty of **un-godliness** as any pagan idol maker.

The characteristics of God are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). Our God is a God of love, mercy, patience and gentleness. Which of us responds to every situation with the balance of love that God portrays? Our characteristics and traits are of the fleshly carnal mind. (Galatians 5:19-21)

In contrast to us, our true God has said from the beginning, "Love your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:18) When someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1John 4:20.)

The world thinks of God a harsh, vindictive and cruel god just itching to pour out His wrath on unfortunate, hapless souls. They hate the very existence of God and His Ten Commandments. Some have created a "Christ" who is weak and sanctimonious – not recognizing His strength and resolve.

It is our duty to convey to all we interact with, that God is a God of love, mercy and gentleness. That is letting our light shine. In putting on **Godliness** we seek to acquire God's nature and give up our own nature. That is our purpose in being called now!

The Apostle Peter said that we are to be "partakers of the divine nature" (2Peter 1:4).

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

Our God earnestly desires to have a close, loving, family relationship with his children, which includes all mankind. In order to have that loving bond, we must learn to know and understand each other very well. Our God knows each one of us completely, but until we **know** our God, we will miss the magnificent connection with Him that He so desires and offers us. God desires that we live in Godliness.

Pray for our leaders:

1Timothy 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all **godliness** and honesty.

1Timothy 6:3 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**;

1Timothy 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is **godliness**: from such withdraw thyself.

1Timothy 6:6 But **godliness** with contentment is great gain.

1Timothy 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, **godliness**, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Lets distinguish true Godliness from that of the world.

1Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto **godliness**.

1Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little while: but **godliness** is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that **now** is, and of that [future eternal life] which **is to come**.

End: Godliness