

# Building a Godly Timeline

by Steve Gallagher

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*The sermon teaches that we are living in a specific age or aeon, and that we need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind to follow God's plan for our lives.*

**Duration:** 41:32

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 2:10

**Topics:** "Eternity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the transformative power of God's mercy and love. He highlights how, despite being spiritually dead in disobedience, God brings believers to life through Christ by His grace. The sermon also emphasizes that God has a wonderful plan for each person's life, centered around a life of good deeds rather than material prosperity. The speaker encourages believers to persevere in doing what is right, as every effort is recorded in heaven and will be rewarded in the future.

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## Transcript

It's nice to be in the presence of God, isn't it? I'm going to be sharing out of Ephesians 2. We'll get to it for a couple of minutes. Every year, Mike comes up with these themes for the conference. This year, Prepared for the Master's Use.

It's actually a very fitting theme to look at in today's world, isn't it? And what I want to do is I want to approach it differently. I want to try to give kind of a different take on it. And that is of time.

There is a process of time. You know, if Job's nightmare would have just lasted one day, he probably would have been okay. But it seemingly went on for months, didn't it? I mean, that's kind of the way that the book is written.

It feels like it takes months to read the book of Job anyway. But, you know, you can tell there's a process. He's sitting out on that mound and scraping and, you know, just all that stuff.

And it takes time, doesn't it? There's an element of time involved with not just with trials but just the broader perspective, really. And so what I want to do is take a bird's eye view, if I could say it that way. You know, you've got this trial or your life or whatever.

I want to pull back and take more of an eternal view of it actually even, you know, just to get the wide-angle lens look. And any time you're talking about time, there is a Greek term that you have to

consider. And that Greek term is aeon, a-e-o-n.

Aeon is one of the important terms that biblical writers employed to describe this element of time. Now, you know, it has two basic usages. First of all, just, you know, what we expect it to mean, which is the way it's usually translated as age.

You know, you've heard of the antediluvian age, that period of time before the flood, and the patriarchal age. And, of course, we're living at the tail end of the church age. This age is 2,000 years.

So ages have something to do in the whole biblical concept when you're looking at life and so on. And, of course, Jesus talked about this present age. He talked about the end of the age, which we seemingly are in right now.

And he talked about the coming age. So this whole concept of ages isn't confined just to earth life. It isn't confined just to mankind's history.

It goes beyond. It extends past our day and age. So, you know, when we're talking about the term aeon, that's how it's usually used.

But there's another usage as well that I want to just touch on real briefly, and that is more of a spiritual implication. The term aeon is also translated sometimes as world. There was this powerful book written about the concept of cosmos.

Some of you may have read it or run into it. Man, only three people read the book in this crowd. That's not good, Jeff.

We need to ramp up the promotion there a little. But anyway, cosmos is talking about the spirit of the world and the mindset of rebellious mankind. And, you know, we understand the worldliness.

We understand what that means, don't we? But what is this word aeon connection with age and cosmos? You know, why world? Why would it be translated as world in some cases? The reason is because there's a mindset. You know, let's say that the history of mankind is here. This is the timeline of the history of mankind, 6,000 years right here.

You know, and, well, 4,000 years into it is the cross, so on. Here's the history of mankind. And wherever your timeline fits into that 6,000 years, it just so happens that we're all in this together right now at apparently the end of the age, right? Your timelines, our timelines are interacting with each other, and we're right there, it seems as though, right at the very end.

You know, so Jesus used the term, this evil generation. And what he's referring to is whatever your spot is on that history of mankind, wherever you got plopped and said, live it out here, there is an evil generation, I guarantee you, going on right then. And that is behind that whole concept of aeon, that it's the temporal mindset of the day.

It's the live-for-now mentality that the spirit of the world is constantly promoting. Paul said about Jesus, he said that Jesus gave himself for our sins, that he might rescue us from this present evil age. And in 2 Corinthians 4, the God of this age, the God of this aeon has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.

All those masses of people out there, their minds have been blinded by this evil being that Paul calls the God of this age, this time period, the God of this temporal realm. Think about Demas, one of Paul's closest

protégés, right there with the apostle Paul. Can you imagine? But the final epitaph on this man's life, this young man's life, was this is what the Word of God, which is going to endure for ages and ages off into the future, this is the final word on this young man's life.

Paul said that he loved his life in this present age. He deserted Paul because he loved what he had in this period right now. Okay, now I'm just sharing all that as a backdrop for my message.

I'm just trying to establish kind of in our minds this concept of time. And what I want to talk about is, it's never this neat, preachers always try to force things, and I'm going to be one of those preachers today, but I'm going to break your life down into three stages. Before Christ, okay, so that's a given.

That works pretty good. But the next two are a little sloppy. The next one is the transformation process, the being prepared for the master's use.

That's the second point, that process of transformation. And the third then is actually being used. Well, the truth is, those two go concurrently for the rest of your life.

You're always being processed. You're always being transformed. You're always being prepared for use later and so on.

So that's why I'm saying it's a little bit forced, but that's all right. You'll forgive me. All right, let's look here at Ephesians 2. Now, I use the NAS, as some of you know anyway.

I generally use it. The NAS is, you know, one of those literal type of translations, which is why I use it. So is the King James, New King James.

But in this case, I'm going to use the Good News Bible because it says it the way I want it to say it. Now, actually, the truth is, I really looked at it as to what the literal translation, and it doesn't veer off. You know, it just expresses, in this particular passage, it expresses things more colorfully, and, you know, just brings out the truth a little bit better.

So I'm going to read, let's start with these first three verses. Now, here we're on the first point, life before Christ. All right, verse 1. In the past, you were spiritually dead.

This was your life at one time, every one of us. And I'm hoping that everyone in here is spiritually living now. But there was a time when you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins.

At that time, here's the time frame, okay, at that time, you followed the world's evil way. You obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. Actually, all of us were like them and lived according to our natural desires, doing whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds.

All right, now, I'm going to go over the second verse, just some phrases from some other translations. The Amplified says it this way. You were following the course and fashion of this world.

You were under the sway of the tendency of this present age. You were obedient to and under the control of the demon spirit that still constantly works in the careless, the rebellious, and the unbelieving who go against the purposes of God. The Phillips says it this way.

You drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living and obeyed its unseen ruler. Wiest put it this way. You were dominated by the spirit of the age in this world's system.

The New English Bible said, When you obeyed the commander of the spiritual powers of the air, the spirit now at work among God's rebel subjects. And finally, the Net Bible, that last phrase, The spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience. And that is the word.

The word energizing is the actual word. You know, there was a time when we were animated by the devil, by evil spirits. See, animated has the sense of a compulsion going through you.

How many of you men know what I'm talking about? Being driven by a spirit. But the truth is all of us lived our lives driven by a demon spirit. And this phrase, according to the course of this world, is how the NAS puts it.

And that word course is this word aeon. So literally what it's saying is according to the aeon of cosmos. And if I could change it up a little bit, I would say it this way.

According to the live for now temporal mindset of the rebel spirit that is animating unredeemed mankind. Now take your typical heathen out there. Let me put it this way.

You know, he's just doing life. He's just trying to get by the best as he can. He's trying to have some pleasures, enjoy himself, raise his family.

You know, I'm not talking about someone in terrible sin or whatever. Just your typical Joe Blow out there. You know, your next door neighbor.

And he's a pretty decent guy, humanly speaking. And he's just going through life. Well, here's the picture that I get.

Is this guy is on the broad way, isn't he? And I have this picture in my mind. All you guys from L.A., Greg and some of you others, is the San Bernardino Freeway. It's like seven lanes wide.

And from San Bernardino all the way to Los Angeles and to Santa Monica. And, you know, it stops. But just imagine for the sake of my illustration here that it went right to the Pacific Ocean.

But here is the mass of mankind trudging along. Just surrounded by people. This mass of people going down seven lanes of freeway.

And no one is thinking in terms of getting outside of this. Everything seems right because everybody's doing this. Everyone's thinking this way.

It's a mindset. It's a mentality. And no one thinks to try to get out of that because everyone's doing it.

This is the way you do life. And they're just marching along and no one's thinking about what's at the end of that road. And the way it is is people are dropping off.

Now, instead of it being this nice little smooth beach out there in Santa Monica where I used to swim, imagine it just a cliff falling into the abyss. And that's the reality spiritually that all these people are just going along and all of a sudden just falling off into this terrible, terrible abyss of darkness. That's what's happening.

That's where you were at. That's where I was at. The problem we have a lot of times is we see Joe Blow who lives next door and everything always seems to go so smoothly with him.

While you are facing trials. You're facing tribulation. You've got a devil trying to kill you and destroy you.

You've got this flesh and you're trying to fight against it. And life is just this big struggle. And the temptation is to envy that guy because he's got what? A carefree life.

You were going down this mass of mankind and all of a sudden you were awakened. What's going on here? Wait a minute. This isn't right.

You turn around and you start going against the flow, against the course of this world. And you start trying to fight your way out of that. And we can relate to what I'm saying.

But the temptation is to envy Joe Blow. But I want to just fast forward to the end of Joe's life. He's had it kush.

He hasn't had to really face any real hardships. You know, because like I say, he hasn't gotten off into any terrible sin. And so life's been pretty good to Joe.

But fast forward to the end, his last hours on earth. Now where's the good times? He can't drink and party. He can't gamble.

He can't take a trip to Vegas now. He is gasping for air. He is at the end.

And all he has to look back upon is 70 years of selfish living. And all he has to look forward to is the terror of what may be awaiting him. Jesus told the story about that rich guy who had the attitude, you know, I've been doing so good.

I'm going to build some extra barns and just store my stuff. Everything's going so great. I'm just going to eat, drink, and be merry.

And that was his mentality, you know. And this is what God said to him. You fool! This very night, they are demanding your soul.

And some people think the they involved there are demon spirits that have been awaiting this moment. They have been sitting there on the other side of that final step when the last gasp goes out of this man's lungs and he steps across into the unknown realm of the eternal. And these devil spirits have been awaiting his arrival.

And there's this terrifying verse in Job. This comes out of the NAS. He is torn from the security of his tent and they march him before the king of terrors.

That is what was awaiting you. That is the life. That is the flow that you were on.

You were living for this temporal world. All the glitter, the glamour, the fun, the sports, the cars, and just living for all the stuff that you can see in this seen realm. But look at verse 4. But God, right? That's the way the NAS says it.

But God! And this translation. But God's mercy is so abundant and His love for us is so great that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience, while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience, He brought

us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved.

And the reality is you were there going down the flow. You were on the Broadway and all of a sudden, the Holy Spirit started dealing with your heart. And He opened the eyes of your heart so that you could see into this other realm that you have been hearing about this morning.

This unseen realm. All of a sudden your eyes are opened and you see for the first time in your life this other realm. Now it's interesting in Hebrews 11, it's kind of the tail end of the definition on faith.

The writer of Hebrews said, by faith, this is NAS, by faith we understand that the worlds, the aeons, it's not cosmos or something else, planets or something, this is aeons. By faith, what is faith? Faith is when your eyes have been opened, spiritually. By faith we understand that the worlds, the aeons, the ages were prepared by the Word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

And I've got to read the Phillips translation. It's just so great. It's just great the way he said it.

And it is after all only by faith that our minds accept as fact the whole scheme of time and space was created by God's command. That's just great. So in other words, all of a sudden your eyes were opened and you became aware of eternity.

And what happened was when that happened, you saw a different life. You know, Jesus Christ was put before you to emulate and you saw Him, His goodness, His love, His mercy, His humility. And then you looked at you, right? And this distress overwhelmed you, the reality of how far short you fall.

And you realize, you know, as much as you want to live that way, that you're a mess. And something drastic needs to happen to change your inside world. All right, now I want to just read Romans 12, 2 real quick because this just says it.

And I'm going to read it out of Phillips. You know, these translations are a little different, but they're right. They're saying it right.

Don't let the world around you... There's our term again. Don't let this aeon, this age, this evil generation that you are living within, don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within. Now, why does it have to be remolded? Because our minds are fallen.

Our minds fit perfectly in the broad way going to destruction. That's our natural thinking. Fits right in with the course of this world, doesn't it? Someone say yes.

Act like you're listening. So something has to happen to drastically change it. It has to be remolded, or as NAS says, transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Transformed. There's a process of transformation. That is this whole thing that we're talking about.

Being prepared for the Master's use. There's a transformation that happens. All right, let me get back to this.

But let God remold your minds from within. Listen to this. It's very wonderful the way he expressed it.

So that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands, and moves towards the goal of true maturity. That says it all right there. That just says it all.

It sums up the whole process that we're talking about. It sums up the point of Job's life, of his trials and that whole story. It sums it up.

Now here's the deal. Prepared for the Master's use, that means that God wants to use you, right? He does want to use you. But to use you means... Well, let me put it this way.

If you are going to be in the position of being a spokesman for God and His Kingdom, then you have to be able to think His thoughts, don't you? Your mind has to change. A natural reasoning mind that goes right in line with the broad way headed for destruction, it has to be remolded. There has to be a change.

If you're going to represent God's Kingdom, then you have to have a complete change of thinking. You know, how are you going to speak to people if you're just speaking earth language? Folks, you have been destined for another world. You have been destined to live in another realm.

You have been destined for a whole different kingdom. You've been destined for another age. If we're going to go to this place called Heaven where God resides, where God dwells, then probably what needs to happen is our thinking needs to be changed so that we are thinking in line with that kingdom instead of where that one goes, right? Here's the deal.

If you don't understand this process... In fact, I'll even take it a step further. If you don't embrace it, what you are going to do is you are going to resist everything the Holy Spirit is trying to bring into your life. In fact, you are going to resent God's working in your life.

You're going to resent it. Well, anyway, that whole process, that transformation process is taking us somewhere. It's taking us into a new course.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord that we don't have to live out our lives going this way and talking the Christian talk and all that stuff. We don't have to do that. God has a new course.

And that is the point of all the stuff that we go through that God brings into our lives. Listen, I am in the trial of my life right now. The trial from hell.

I shouldn't say that because it's not where it's from. Moving on. Watch what I say.

Verse 10. God has made us what we are. And in our union with Christ Jesus, He has created us for a life of good deeds, which He has already prepared for us to do.

We touched on Romans 12, 2 a minute ago and talked about this wonderful plan that God has for your life. Jesus loves you and He has a plan for your life. It really is true.

It's not the way they think, but it really is true. He has got a plan for your life, and it's a wonderful plan. It is a plan where the noble live out their lives.

It's a wonderful plan. And this whole plan revolves around a life of good deeds. It revolves around a life of good deeds, not necessarily prosperity.

Let me put it this way. Paul used the term course. And I want to tell you, folks, that God has charted a course for your life.

And that course was charted way back before the foundation of the world. He charted a course for your life, a specific course, not some general vague thing. Oh, yeah, it's God's will, blah, blah, blah.

No, no, a very specific course for your life. Paul said to the Ephesians, he stopped off in Ephesus, he was on his way to Jerusalem, he was going to get arrested and all that stuff. This is what he said, I don't count my life on earth, this temporal life, he said, I don't count my life on earth as dear to myself.

Why? So that I might finish my course, my course. Paul had his own course, that I might finish my course with joy. Right when he was at the end of his course, he told Timothy, the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought the good fight. He could look back over his life and he could see he had fought the good fight. I have finished my course.

I have kept the faith. Man, I want to be able to say that. You know, Jesus said, it's those who endure to the end who will be saved.

You have a destiny, a story, if I could put it that way, has been written already, transcribed in the book of life way back before the foundation of the earth. You have a story that was written and that story has a definite course. You know, when you think of course, you think of like a ship's captain sets a course and he's leaving Boston Harbor and he's going to end up in London three days later or whatever it is.

And there's a definite course that you take. And that's what God has for each of you. The way it works out is your timeline.

Okay, here's the history of man. 6,000 years. Apparently, we're right at the very end, the end of the age of man.

I could put it that way, the end of the age of man or the end of the church age, however you want to say it. And there you are. He chose you from way back when.

I want this one. Bradley, since we've been picking on him today. Bradley Furgus, this is your day.

You know, it's really a bad sign when the preachers start telling you about trials and stuff. You know what's coming, right? Bradley was chosen from before the foundation of the earth to live his life right during this specific time period. This, Brad, listen, this is going to be the hardest time ever in the history of mankind to stand firm for the Gospel, to live for Jesus Christ, to live an unflinching life for God in a passion of holiness.

Brad, this is going to be the hardest time, but I have chosen you because I know you've got it in you. You've got the fight in you. You've got the love for me in you.

You can do this, Brad. And this is where I want you to live out your timeline. Right now, at the end of the age, He has chosen you, and He's got a path set out, a very specific path.

After you get over to glory, okay? You're already over in glory. You get past all that. And you look back on your time frame.

I'm going to tell you how your life is going to be defined by good deeds. That is going to be the defining of your life. Not who you knew, not what churches you were at, or whatever.

None of that. No, it's the little things usually. Paul told Timothy, have a reputation for good works.

Be rich in good works, he told him. And he told Titus, be zealous for good deeds. Be ready for every good deed.

There's a mentality that goes with acts of mercy. You know, it's a ready mentality. When you are in that kind of mindset of not living for self with the masses that are going down the broad way towards destruction, that's not your life.

No, you have a different mindset. You have a mindset that was changed over here at the cross. You have a different mindset.

And your mindset, your radar is constantly up looking for needs to fill. And you see that little old lady down the street out there trying to mow her yard, and you stop what you're doing on a dime, and you go march right down there immediately, and you mow her yard for her. Or you're at Walmart, and you're walking down the parking lot, you're in a hurry, you've got to go get your stuff, and you see some old lady struggling to get some Clorox into her car, and you rush over there, and you say, let me help you, ma'am.

And you just do that little kind thing. In ten minutes you forgot all about it. But see, it's the mindset, it's the heart behind it that's the important thing.

And you forget it, but I want you to know who doesn't forget it. The God, the same God, who cannot remember the sins that you have repented of. Could you imagine the power it takes to not remember something? Now, for me, it's real easy.

It's called midlife crisis. You forget everything. In fact, I may forget what I'm doing here in a minute.

No, but when you've been wronged, especially, can you imagine the power it takes? I can't remember. I know something happened, but man, I just, what was it? Something happened, I can't remember. That's God's memory, you know, about the things you've repented of, but every tiny little act of kindness, a kind word, a smile to someone.

You don't feel like smiling. You had a miserable, lousy day, but they come to you and you just, you smile to them. Why are you doing that? Because you want to be a blessing to them.

And so you just do it and you forgot it. Ten minutes, it's gone. You have forgotten it, but it has been recorded in heaven.

And one day, you're going to stand in the great Assisi. How do you say that, Dave? Is that right? Assisi? Never mind. Judgment.

That was one of those John Wesley terms. I don't know. Never mind.

You had your chance. One day, all you are going to have to present to Jesus, Peggy, God bless you, dear. I just love you too.

Rich in good works. Rich. Your ship is heavy laden and it's heading for the finish line.

Rich. Adam, Shelly, out there by yourselves struggling along in Atlanta. Rich.

And none of it is missed by God. Every time you press in and every time you try to do the right thing, it is duly recorded on the annals of heaven. In 1 Corinthians 15, that wonderful chapter that talks about the

hereafter.

I think it's the last verse. It's right at the end. This is what Paul said, Therefore, my beloved brethren, after 57 verses, I think.

This is verse 58. This whole thing talking about putting off the perishable for the imperishable. And that whole thing.

Death has lost its sting. Praise the Lord. This is how he sums it up.

Therefore, my beloved brethren. Bradley. My beloved, beloved Bradley.

Get up here, man. My beloved Bradley. That will carry you through the trials that are headed your way.

Therefore, my beloved brethren. Gary and Peg and just all of you. My beloved brethren.

Therefore, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing there's one thing that you can count on. Knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. Hallelujah! The message says it this way.

Throw yourselves into the work of the Master confident that nothing you do for Him is a waste of time or effort. Knox translation. Doing your full share continually in the task the Lord has given you since you know that your labor in the Lord's service cannot, cannot be spent in vain.

In the Philips, you can be sure that nothing you do for Him is ever lost or ever wasted. Praise the Lord. Dear ones, you have been created for another day.

This is probation. And it's hard down here, you know? It can be hard down here at times. But you have been created for another day.

I'm going to sum up by reading verse 7. So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. We are at the tail end of one age. 2,000 years.

The church age. Think of it. The early church and all that it went through.

And then the persecution. And then the dark ages. Hundreds of years where the word of the Lord you couldn't even find it.

And then the Reformation. Martin Luther and all the great Reformers. And then the missionary age.

And then we're up to the 20th century. All that's just one age. Okay, that's just one age.

Listen to how we set it. In the ages that will pile themselves one upon another in continuous succession. What does that mean? Hi, Rob.

Hi, Lucy. I'm going to get you, Rob. Big hug for you, buddy.

As soon as I get over there, you had it. Another one of my kids. Where was I? It's like Kathy and I go out and get in the car and start to go.

Where are we going? What are we doing? So then in the ages to come, the ages that will pile themselves one upon another in continuous succession, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace and

kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. How can we complain? How can we complain? We're in this little tiny speck. This little tiny speck of time.

And sometimes we may have to face a few trials. I want to pray. I'm going to close it right now.

Lord, teach us to see ourselves as pilgrims passing through a foreign land. Teach us to number our days so that we might present to You a heart of wisdom. Teach us to redeem our time and to use every opportunity to help others.

Lord, teach us to see the incalculable value You place in people. Teach us to think like You think, to love what You love, to hate what You hate. Help us to break out of the suffocating oppression of the spirit of this age.

Help us to have eyes for the eternal realm in which You dwell. Help us to see ourselves as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God, the holy dwelling place of the living God. Give us eyes to see that realm, Lord.

To keep pressing on, to keep fighting, to keep up the battle, to keep striving, to live a life of holiness, a life pleasing unto You, so that one day we might present to You, oh God, a life rich in good deeds. A life that makes You glow with the parental pride. A life that glorifies You for endless ages, the ages to come, that we would be Your trophies of grace, that You can show forth to the rulers of that incredible eternal realm, the archangels, just all of them, that we would be trophies of Your grace.

That we would have something to show for our lives, that You could point at our lives, our pathetic little lives, the little things that we do, the little efforts that we put forth to do the right thing. Lord, give us eyes to see. Give us eyes to see, so that when those trials do come across our path, that we wouldn't grumble and complain, but that it would be firmly fixed in our hearts.

God is good and His mercies are forever. Though You slay me, yet will I serve You, oh God. Give us a heart for Your realm, Lord, in Jesus' name.

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