

Sermon 05: When the Cities Fall: A Call to Flee

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Opening Hymn: Hymn #604: We Know Not the Hour

Scripture Reading:

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.” (Luke 21:20-21)

Closing Hymn: Hymn #590: Trust and Obey

Introduction: A Compelling Story of Escape

Matthew 24:15-21

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.”

“The warning given to Jerusalem applies also to the final warning before the close of probation: let those who heed the call to flee from spiritual confusion (Babylon) and align themselves with God’s truth.” (The Great Controversy, p. 26)

“As God’s commandment-keeping people, we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them.” (Evangelism, p. 77)

PRAY

In 1940, as Nazi forces advanced on the city of Dunkirk, over 400,000 Allied soldiers were trapped on the beaches, surrounded on all sides. Bombs fell relentlessly, and the soldiers had no clear path of escape. But then came the call to flee. The British military launched Operation Dynamo, an extraordinary evacuation plan using hundreds of military and civilian vessels to rescue the stranded troops.

The soldiers didn't hesitate—they obeyed the call, boarding anything that could float to flee the danger. Over 338,000 men were evacuated, narrowly escaping certain death. Dunkirk became a story of deliverance, not because the danger wasn't real, but because they acted when the warning came.

Today, we face a spiritual Dunkirk. The Bible warns of the fall of cities in the last days, a time of great calamity and judgment. Jesus' words in Luke 21:20-22 were a warning to the early Christians during the fall of Jerusalem, but they also echo to us today. When God calls us to flee—physically, spiritually, or both—will we obey, or will we hesitate?

Why the Fall of Cities Matters Today

The cities of the world are centers of commerce, culture, and convenience, but they are also hubs of corruption, sin, and spiritual decay. The Bible and prophecy warn of a time when cities will become unsafe places, both spiritually and physically. As we look at the rise in violence, moral collapse, weather changes, and natural disasters, it's clear that God's warnings to flee are more urgent, and becoming more relevant than ever.

Three Lessons to Help You Prepare Your Mind for the Call to Flee

To help us understand and prepare our minds and hearts for the urgency of the call, I will use the acronym **FLEE**:

1. F - Follow God's Instructions Immediately

"Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." (Luke 21:21)

- **Biblical Example:** When Jesus warned His followers about the fall of Jerusalem, He told them to leave the city immediately when they saw the signs. History shows that those who obeyed His warning were saved, while those who delayed were caught in the siege and perished.
- **Modern Relevance:** Today, God's instructions come through His Word, prophecy, and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The warning is clear: cities are becoming increasingly dangerous. From moral corruption to natural disasters, the signs are all around us.
- **Application:** Are you listening for God's voice? When He calls you to make a change—whether it's fleeing a physical location, leaving a destructive habit, or walking away from spiritual danger—will you obey immediately?

2. L - Leave Behind the Things of This World

“Remember Lot’s wife.” (Luke 17:32)

- **Biblical Example:** Lot and his family were called to flee Sodom, a city consumed by sin. But Lot’s wife looked back, longing for the life she was leaving behind, and she was turned into a pillar of salt. Her hesitation cost her everything.
- **Modern Relevance:** The cities of today mirror Sodom in many ways. They are places of materialism, sin, and distractions that pull us away from God. The call to flee is also a call to let go of the things that tie us to this world.
- **Application:** What are you holding onto that might keep you from obeying God’s call? Is it a love of comfort, possessions, or worldly success? God calls us to prioritize His kingdom over everything else.
- **Emergency Prep:** Go Bags

3. E - Escape to God’s Refuge

“The Lord is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” (Psalm 91:2)

- **Biblical Example:** Throughout Scripture, God calls His people to find refuge in Him. Whether it was Noah entering the ark, the Israelites fleeing Egypt, or Christians escaping Jerusalem, God always provides a way out for those who trust Him.
- **Modern Relevance:** The ultimate refuge is not a physical location—it’s a relationship with God. While He may call us to leave certain places or situations, He also calls us to abide in Him, where we find true safety and peace.
- **Application:** Are you seeking God as your refuge daily? Spend time in prayer and study, trusting Him to guide you through life’s challenges and protect you in times of crisis.
- **Land Prepared:** Top 5: Water, Food, Security, Communications, First Aid

E - Expect Redemption Soon

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28)

- The call to flee is also a reminder that God’s rescue is near. Fleeing the cities and the dangers of the world means looking forward with hope to Christ’s return and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

Conclusion: A Story of Faithful Obedience

In 2018, during the Camp Fire in Paradise, California, a pastor named Joe heard the evacuation orders and didn’t hesitate. He loaded his family into their car and began driving out of the burning town. Along the way, he stopped to help neighbors and even led a prayer circle on the side of the road as flames approached. Joe and his family made

it to safety because they listened to the warnings and acted in faith. Many others who delayed or underestimated the danger were tragically caught in the fire.

Joe later reflected, “When God gives you a warning, it’s not to scare you—it’s to save you. Obeying that call can mean the difference between life and death.”

A Strong Appeal: Will You Flee When God Calls?

The fall of cities isn’t just a prophecy—it’s a reality unfolding before our eyes. Jesus’ warnings in Luke 21 and the stories of Scripture are there to prepare us, not just physically but spiritually. God’s call to flee is an act of love, designed to save us from destruction and lead us to His refuge.

The question is: will you listen? Will you follow God’s instructions immediately, leave behind the things of this world, and escape to His refuge? Or will you hesitate, risking everything for the comforts of a crumbling world?

The choice is yours. The time to act is now. The midnight cry is sounding, and the Bridegroom is coming. Will you be ready?

Let us pray together:

“Lord, help us to hear and obey Your warnings. Give us the courage to flee from danger and the faith to trust You as our refuge. Prepare our hearts for the times ahead, and keep us anchored in Your love. Amen.”