

Living in the Last Days

Dr. Billy Wilson: Welcome to *World Impact*. I'm Billy Wilson. And today we are in Krakow, Poland. Actually, I'm on the grounds of Wawel Castle, overlooking the Vistula River. These are the grounds where the kings of Poland lived for many, many decades and many centuries. In fact, this castle was built in the 13th and 14th century.

It seems like today we ought to be preaching a sermon on *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, but rather, we're gonna talk about life in the last days. Now, the Bible defines the last days as the times in which we live. These are terrible times according to the Bible, but they're also terrific times. Today during my teaching I'm gonna be talking about how you can live successfully in the last days. I'm gonna be simply preaching about living in the last days.

And as I share today, if you have questions, if you have a prayer need, or if you just wanna connect with us, go to **worldimpact.tv**. We'd love to pray for you, we'd love to hear from you, and we'd love your help as we share Jesus literally all around the world. I want you to stay with me now. We're in Krakow, Poland, we're talking about living in these days in which we live, the last days, and how you can be successful in these times. I'll be back in just a minute as we go into God's Word.

Male Announcer: Ever since Jesus said, *"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but the end is still to come,"* Christian believers have lived with a sense of living in the end times. Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and John all wrote about life in the last days, urging each of us to live rightly before God. This feeling has unified Christians for generations.

And while it is true that each mortal person lives in their own last days, the world around has grown measurably more chaotic. On a global scale, more people have been killed in armed conflict in the last 100 years than in the previous 2,000, and a third of those died in just the last 20 years. Also in the last 20 years, depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence increased by more than 50% in the majority of first world nations. Societies are fragmenting around ideologies with riots happening on college campuses, and concentration camps are going up in some countries to silence political and religious dissent.

One place working to train the personal resilience necessary to not only endure but thrive is Oral Roberts University. From Poland to Paraguay, Chad to China, Thailand to Texas, students from more than 150 nations attend **ORU**, making it one of the most diverse colleges in America, with academic excellence earning it a host of other awards. Each student comes with aspirations as

diverse as their background, but they are united by a desire to know God and be empowered by his Spirit.

Chapel services are held twice a week with student-led prayer occurring even more often, sometimes running late into the night. Such is the students' desire for God that it is reflected in the music that ignites their soul.

♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪

Eli Brown: *"Give me Jesus"* is a song that really speaks to me, speaks to my generation, because it's a song that speaks to the distractions of the world. And really, what this song is about is putting Jesus at the center and putting Jesus back in the place that he should be. It's give me Jesus, he's my one thing.

Kimmie Simon: I love the sincerity of the song in *"Give Me Jesus."* The lyrics really cut to the heart of something just so pure, of *I don't want anything else, I don't want anyone else*. And the student body connected with it immediately. And it's like, oh my goodness, like, this is the cry of the student body. And I think that this song really echoes that hunger the best, that, yes, God, you are our one thing, and you're what ORU is after, you're what we're all after. And I think that song really portrays that well.

♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ For you can have ♪
♪ all this world. ♪
♪ And you can have ♪
♪ all this world. ♪

Billy: Today on *World Impact*, we're talking about living in the last days. Now, in this time of teaching, I wanna talk to you about some things you're gonna need for the days in which we live. But let's first of all look at a couple of passages of Scripture, first in **1 John 2:18**. John says, *"Dear children, we are living in the last days. You have heard that the great enemy of Christ is coming. But even now many enemies of Christ have already come. That's how we know that these are the last days."*

And then in **2 Timothy 3:1–5**, the apostle Paul says, *"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people."*

Now, the truth is we have been living in the last days for 2,000 years, and now in the 21st century we find ourselves in the last chapter or chapters of this era in time in God's history that is called the last days. I think as we live in this time, we know these are dramatic, intense, and difficult times, but they're also glorious times, times of God's favor and blessing, and times of great evangelization in the world.

Now, the Scripture teaches us that during this time, the world is on a course. It's on a course toward one world government, one world economy, and even one world religion before it's over. In this environment, how should we live? What is it we need to live successful in this environment of the last days?

Well, I wanna talk about five things I believe you need in your life in order to live successfully in the last days.

Billy (continued):

1. A Counterculture Mindset

We live in a culture filled with dishonor and impurity and pride, a cancel culture, a culture of racial division and sexual confusion. And yet, in the midst of it God calls us to live differently. In fact, he tells us to not be conformed. Don't be put in the mold of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind and prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So, I believe in order to live successful in our day, in the 21st century, in these last days, you need a mindset that is not conformed to the culture. Paul said to Timothy the last days would be marked by narcissism, greed, boasting, pride, abuse, ingratitude, impurity, to people that are unloving, embittered, slanderous, out of control, brutal, dangerous, rash, conceited, and in love with pleasure more than in love with God. I believe we should be living different than that. We should be counterculture in how we approach life in the 21st century.

2. Spiritual Discernment

These are days of great deception. Jesus taught us that the last days would be times when deception would be rampant. Now, deception surrounds us today. We are consistently hearing untruths every minute, it seems, of every day. And in the middle of that, there are demonic illusions, Satan painting pictures for people that are simply not true and deceiving, many times, whole families, cities, and even generations.

There's heretical teaching. There are many preachers in the world that simply are not true to Scripture and teach things that people want to hear more than what God wants them to say and thus err from the truth. Now, the Bible teaches us that discernment, true discernment, is a work of the Spirit based on the authority and veracity of Scripture. We need to know the Scripture, and we need to know the Spirit in order to discern these times and understand what God wants us to do.

Now, discernment, spiritual discernment, is not spiritual suspicion. I meet a lot of people that have that, and they call it discernment, but that's not true. Discernment is not suspicion. In fact, God teaches us to love everyone and believe the best in everyone. But spiritual discernment is understanding God's truth, God's Word, and out of that understanding what is true in our life.

Hebrews 5:14 says, *"But strong meat belongs to them that are full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

We need to exercise ourselves to discern what is evil and what is good in our day so we are not deceived. We need to know the real thing so that we will not be confused with the wrong thing.

Billy (continued):

And finally, in this first part of our teaching, I believe not only do you need a counterculture mindset and spiritual discernment, but you need a capacity for endurance and even pain. God's Word teaches us that as believers we're going to endure affliction, endure tribulation, we're gonna endure persecution, and even chastising from the hand of God.

Mark 13:13 says, *"And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."*

And then there's a passage in the book of **Jeremiah 12:5** that I don't think is surprising for us in the last days. In fact, it's one we should hang onto in the times in which we live. Jeremiah says this: *"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how would you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"*

What is he saying? He's saying if you have struggled up till now, the days in which we live are going to cause you to really struggle. Now, let me say, if you're going to be successful in these days and live for Jesus in the midst of the last days, sometimes you have to endure pain, and sometimes you have to just simply endure.

These are times when God calls us to continue, to go through things, to take it over the mountain and through the valleys and hang onto God in the midst of it all. *"They that endure until the end, the same shall be saved."*

Perfect! Here's the continuation of your **fully formatted, 1:1 transcript**:

Billy (continued):

So, today we're teaching on living in the last days. I'm talking about a counterculture mindset, spiritual discernment, and a new capacity in our lives for endurance and even pain. I want you to

stay with me. We're in Krakow, Poland. I'll be back in just a moment to continue this teaching on living in the last days.

Candera Lomax: So, when we talk about living in the last days and really walking out your call, what does that look like, practically? As an assistant professor here at **ORU**, I have the opportunity to train teachers through professional development, but I also have the opportunity to train future school counselors. And it was in a professional development session that a gentleman asked me, "*What do you do when a child's trauma triggers the trauma in your heart?*"

And I looked at him very lovingly, and I said, "*How you treat the child within you is how you will treat the child in front of you.*" For more than 50 years, **ORU** has brought healing to generations of students. And I had the amazing opportunity to be a student here at **ORU** in 2015. I pursued my masters in professional counseling. In 2017, however, there was a preach-a-thon here at **ORU** when you gather together either faculty members or students to kind of speak in chapel for a few minutes.

Billy: Father, over these next few minutes, I pray that your Holy Spirit would flow through these students to deliver the Word you have put in their heart. And, Lord, speak to us today. In Jesus's name, amen. Welcome, Candera.

Candera: And I thought that I was gonna talk about vision and purpose. Well, the Holy Spirit got ahold of my heart, and he took me to a Scripture in the book of **Mark** when Jesus told a father that had a little boy that had, let's call it, mental health challenges, "*Hey, bring that boy to me.*"

Tell the person next to you, *bring the child to Jesus*.

And I felt in the moment that that's what the Holy Spirit not just wanted to say to me, but that's what he wanted to say to the student body. Bring the child to me.

And so, if you surrender, you don't have to go through this alone. Let Jesus heal you.

Now I have a unique perspective.

Billy: Everybody stand all over this room.

Candera: I get to sit in the balcony with faculty members and watch students pour out their hearts to God in worship. They don't just hear the Word to learn how to walk in spiritual integrity, but they learn how to continuously bring their inner child to Jesus. I found healing right

here at **ORU** as a student. And I wanna encourage teachers and school counselors to go to who we know provides the healing before we can provide that healing for other people.

So, what does it mean or what does it look like to be a transformed educator in today's world? It looks like self-awareness. Remember taking that inner child in your heart to Jesus? It looks like being mindful and being present in the moment. The students in the classroom, they need their teacher to be truly present, and the Holy Spirit can help do this. It looks like self-management, like the fruit of the Spirit, self-control, because self-control is a prerequisite for the power of God to flow. So, those three things are just practical ways that you can live out the call of God for your life in the last days.

Billy: Today on *World Impact* we're in Krakow, Poland. I'm in a beautiful castle overlooking the river of the city. It's a gorgeous place, and we're here today to talk about the last days, how we live in these times that are terrible and terrific at the same moment. Today I've been talking about the fact that we need a counterculture mindset, that we need our mind renewed and not be conformed to the world, that we need spiritual discernment, and that we need a capacity for endurance and pain.

Two other things I wanna share with you that I believe you need to equip you for life in the last days.

4. Watchfulness or Alertness

Jesus said, *"Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come,"* speaking of his Second Coming. Then he says, *"But if he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"*

God's Word teaches us that Jesus Christ will come again like a thief in the night, and we should be awake, we should be watchful and ready for his return.

Now, there are several passages in the New Testament that give us an indication of what it will be like in the last days. I wanna read a couple of them to you right now and just frame this discussion with you about life in the last days around what Jesus would say.

Luke 17:26–27 says, *"Remember how it was in the days of Noah. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. And it was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking. They were buying and selling. They were planting and building. But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven. And all the people were destroyed."*

And then Jesus says, *"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray*

that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Jesus is teaching us that like in Noah's Day, suddenly rain came from the heavens and men were destroyed. And like in Lot's day, as soon as Lot got out of the city, fire and brimstone came raining down from heaven. These are days when Christ's coming will come suddenly. Thus, we need to be watchful and alert in our hearts.

5. Authentic Power

Now, I've talked about some things you need for these last days. You need a counterculture mindset, spiritual discernment, a capacity for pain and endurance, and watchfulness or alertness in your heart. And most importantly, I believe you need authentic power. Jesus tells us that in these days we're going to need strength because we must endure. I believe the Holy Spirit is here to give us that strength and give us power in the days in which we live.

In the last days, God promises in **Acts 2:17**, *"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions. Your old men will have dreams."*

In these days that we live in, the last days, God has poured out his Spirit, and you can experience the power of God.

One of the things that Paul says to Timothy is that in the last days people would have a form of godliness, but they would deny the power. In other words, they would have a shell, so to speak, but it would not be filled with authentic reality from God. There's a lot of this today in our world. People have ritual instead of reality, pomp instead of power, form instead of fire, structure instead of Spirit, and religion instead of relationship. God is made distant and cold by their religious activity so that there is no power in their Christianity.

We were not made to live this way as believers. We were made to realize and experience the authentic energy and power of God in our lives every day by the Holy Spirit, and he's been poured out so we can experience him. I watch in many churches and in many organizations, and the truth is the less fire people have, the more form they have. In other words, they try to make up for their lack of authentic power by more structure and more things in their system. God doesn't want us to live this way. He wants us to live in an authentic way, experiencing the freshness of God every day through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jude 1:18–21 says, *"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life."*

Billy: So, how do we live in the last days successfully? What do we need? We need a counterculture mindset, we need spiritual discernment, we need a capacity for endurance, sometimes even pain, and we need watchfulness and alertness. And most importantly, we need authentic spiritual power, and with that, we can overcome what is happening in the world, we can endure, and we can see Jesus when he returns in these last days. I want you to stay with me. I'll be back in just a moment. We're in Krakow, Poland. We're talking about living in the last days and how you can do it successfully.

♪ I don't want anything but you. ♪
♪ Our love is the secret that I find. ♪
♪ I'll spend forever in the pleasure I've found. ♪
♪ Looking in your eyes. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ For you can have all this world. ♪
♪ And you can have all this world. ♪
♪ More than silver, more than gold. ♪
♪ You are the treasure that I hold. ♪
♪ Now that I've tasted of your goodness, nothing else ♪
♪ will satisfy. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ For you can have all this world. ♪
♪ And you can have all this world. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ For you can have all this world. ♪
♪ You can—oh, I don't want anyone else but you, God. ♪
♪ We sing, I don't want anyone else. ♪

♪ You are, you are my one thing. ♪
♪ I don't want anyone else. ♪
♪ I don't need anything else. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪
♪ You're all that I want, Lord. ♪

♪ So give me Jesus. ♪
♪ Give me Jesus. ♪
♪ You can have all this world. ♪

♪ I don't want anything else. ♪
♪ I don't want anyone else. ♪
♪ I don't need anything else. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪
♪ You are my one thing. ♪

Billy: Today we've been talking about living in the last days, how you can live successful in these amazing, terrible, and terrific times. These are times of great challenge, but they're also times of great conquest for the kingdom of God, and I want you to be successful in Jesus in these last days. We're here in Krakow, Poland, and every time I'm in Europe, I'm reminded of where our world is. We are racing toward one world government, one world religion, and one world economy, and we're living in those days right now in the 21st century.

I've tried to share with you today some key points on how you can live successful. Most importantly, you need the authentic power of the Holy Spirit in your life. If you'd like to know more about how to live in the last days, I want you to write me at **worldimpact.tv**. We'd love to pray for you and what's going on in your life and pray that you wouldn't just have a form of Christianity, you would have authentic, real Christianity and know the power of God in your life in an authentic and significant way.

Well, I'm glad you've joined me today. We've been in Krakow, Poland, we've been talking about living life in the last days and how you can do it successful through Jesus Christ and the power of his Holy Spirit. This is *World Impact*, I'm Billy Wilson, and we're sharing Jesus with the world.

Announcer: This has been *World Impact with Dr. Billy Wilson*, president of **Oral Roberts University**. Watch more episodes of *World Impact* at **worldimpact.tv**.

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