

Are You Ready?

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

Matthew 24: 42, 44

On August 1, 2009, my beautiful, 90 year old grandmother departed this life and stepped into the presence of God. Not long before, she had told my Dad, her first born, “I’m going to be with the One who made me.” As the Lord so graciously answered our prayers, and granted many of us; her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, the opportunity to see and visit with her in her final days here, we had the privilege of witnessing the apparent, overwhelming peace that she had concerning what was about to happen. It was unusual and peculiar as we kissed, sang to, and watched my Grandmother lie in the hospital bed; not only because this was the first time in all of our lives, including my 70 year old Dad, visiting her in a hospital. See, since giving birth to her 5 children over 60 years ago, by the grace of God, she had never been admitted to a hospital. But it was also “peculiar” because of my Grandmother’s contentment with her pending transition. She had a peace that literally surpassed our hurt, grief and understanding. We all could see that she was clearly looking forward to her departure from this life. In my little lifetime, I can truly say that I have never seen, with my own eyes, physical and spiritual, anything like it.

While on the road returning home, after she had passed on, in my grief I still wept in amazement at the poise and dignity of my Grandmother in her final hours here. As I talked to the Father about it, the words “confidence,” “assurance,” and “prepared” entered my heart. Her poise and dignity came as a result of being “ready.” She had absolutely no fear, or hesitation about leaving this life. The look on her face said “finally.” How sorrowful, yet beautiful, it was. Now, I’ve heard many say that we must *all* leave through death; and some of us will. But according to Jesus, in Matthew 24; then reiterated by Paul in I Thessalonians 4 & 5, some of us won’t. However, whether we leave by death until the Day of Our Lord, or whether we’re “caught up” in the air, the question is still the same: **“Are You Ready?”**

In Matthew 24:36-44, Jesus uses the days of Noah to illustrate ill preparedness. We can imagine that Noah, while building the Ark, told the “naysayer” and the “mockers” of the coming catastrophic event, but to no avail, because Jesus said ***“they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the Ark.”*** In other words...it was life as usual. Life... as usual. Sadly, it appears that with many, the scenario is the same today.

Do We Have Time? My Grandmother had 90 years but how many of us will? Moreover, when considering eternity, even 90 years is just as the Bible says: “but a vapor.” James 4:14 says

“You do not know what will happen tomorrow. For, what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.” Psalm 103:15-16 says ***“As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourishes, then the wind passes over it and it’s gone; and the place of it is no more.”***

Some of us think we have time. But, in death and/or the return of Messiah, no man knows the day nor the hour. Jesus said ***“Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect Him.”***

Matthew 24:44

So I ask again, **Are You Ready?**

Are we preparing our children? Do we spend **more** time helping them plan for their earthly success or are we earnestly, relentlessly helping them plan for their eternity? Are we, as Noah did, preparing for what is to come; or are our affections set on things of the earth? Colossians 3:2-4 says:

“Set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things of the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Messiah in God. When Messiah, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.”

Are we so intertwined, engaged and engulfed with this world’s issues and pleasures that we’ve forgotten who we are: sojourners, just passing through; in the world but through Jesus Messiah, our Savior, not of this world?

Philippians 3:20 says: ***“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Messiah...”*** Are we walking in the fear of the LORD (Acts 9:31), going about doing good (John 5:28-29); loving Him with all of our hearts? (Matthew 22:37-38) ...loving our Neighbor as ourselves? (Matthew 22:39-40) Are we doers of the Word or hearers only? (James 1:22) Are we following man and the doctrine of men rather than following Messiah? Are we walking in the Spirit or after the flesh? (Galatians 5:16) Are we detesting, abhorring, or hating what is evil and clinging to what is good? (Romans 12:9) Or are we partakers of the works of darkness, evil and blatant ungodliness? (Romans 13:12) Are we keeping ourselves unspotted from the world or are we conformed to the world? Ultimately, what about our hearts? Are they pure? Are we holding grudges, or holding on to hurts of the past? Are we living with a heart of gratitude, mercy, and forgiveness? Jesus taught that it is the pure in heart that will see God. Paul admonished the Corinthian church to examine themselves which is fitting for us today.

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Messiah is in you?- unless indeed you are disqualified.” II Corinthians 13:5

As Jesus prophesies to **His disciples** of what was to come, in the 21st chapter of Luke, he tells them

“But keep watch on yourselves, or your hearts will become dulled by carousing and drunkenness and the worries of everyday living, and that Day will be sprung upon you suddenly like a trap! For it will close in on everyone, no matter where they live, throughout the whole world. Stay alert, always praying that you will have the strength to escape all the things that will happen and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man.”

Luke 21:34-37

We have not been told by our Savior to **“Get”** ready. We have been instructed to **“Be” Ready!**

Again, I quote:

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

Matthew 25:44

Are You Ready?

“Then the Kingdom of Heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the Bridegroom was delayed they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.**” Matthew 25:1-13