

How to Get Ready for His Return

Scripture: 1 John 2:28-3:3

Do you recall when we made the transition to the year of 2000, when everything was suppose to go haywire?

I remember when they gave you all these tips on how to get ready for that time when everything was suppose to stop.

There were a lot of people who took it pretty serious, more serious than the promise of the Second Coming of Jesus.

Story:

In looking at being prepared, you know you can find anything on the internet. There is a site of the internet that is called **b-prepared.com** on the internet.

They offer several items to help you be more prepared.

Some of the items seem like they would help and other items I really have a question about.

For your automobile, they have (among other products) a charger that will charge your battery in 5 minutes. That could be very helpful.

They also sell an 'Urban Road Warrior- Roadside Survivor Kit' that is a backpack filled with items for any roadside emergency.

They even have a 6-in-1 shovel! I guess that means you can dig holes in 6 different ways.

They also sell, I promise, a 2 person Economy Emergency Port-a-Potty kit.

Yet, perhaps the best item on sale on the whole b-prepared.com site was a can the size of a soda filled with clean air.

It is a must have for everyone in the family for \$88.95.

You can be prepared for any and all circumstances that life throws at you.

Story:

I heard about an old farmer that had a grandfather clock that went haywire and chimed fourteen times one midnight.

He jumped up and said, "Wake up, Nellie, it's later than it's ever been before."

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I want to tell you folks, it's later than it's ever been before.

I believe that we possibly could be living in the very last times just before God says to His Son Jesus, "Son, it's time to Return to Earth, Go get my children and bring them home."

1. In 1989, a terrible earthquake in Armenia killed 30,000 people.
2. Among those uninjured were a man and his wife.
3. Their son, Armon was in an elementary school that collapsed.
4. The father had always told his boy that he would come to him if there was trouble.
5. At the school he worked tirelessly removing debris.
6. After 38 hours he heard Armon's voice and with the help of other rescue workers freed his son and several other children.
7. Armon said, "**I told my friends you would come because you had promised. I told them you would always be there for me. I knew you would return**" (*Great Stories*, v.7, i.25, p.11).

The consistent theme of the NT that Jesus told would happen would be that He is returning for all the Christian believers.

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He said in Jn.14:3, "**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**"

Until then, like Armon, we are to **watch, wait and tell** others about to be ready for Jesus' coming.

Armon didn't know when his dad would come, **he simply had complete confidence that he would come.**

You see, none of us know when Jesus will come, but, we must be ready.

In the *Olivet Discourse found* in Mat.24-25, Jesus taught this in *The Parable of the Talents*. He said in Matt. Chapter 25: and verse 13,

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

So - This morning we are going to examine **four challenges to help us get ready for the return of Christ.**

If you are here this morning and you have not yet made a deliberate decision to accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life, then I challenge you to make that decision before this service comes to a conclusion.

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Here's the 1st challenge:

I. Don't Corrupt Your Confidence (2:28).

“And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming.”

A. All Believers are to Abide in Jesus.

1. John begins with the familiar salutation, "**Dear children.**"

This is not the same Greek term he used in v.18 referring to **immature, baby Christians**, but a word that means all God's "**children.**"

What follows is not merely instruction for spiritual babies but for all God's children regardless of maturity, regardless of their progression in the Christian life.

This is for all of us.

1. Again we see the exhortation to "**abide**" in Jesus, in other words this means to "**stay, remain, or tarry.**"

It means not just a relationship but close intimate fellowship with Jesus.

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Every one of us Christian believers must find out what that means to have close – intimate fellowship with Jesus!

What does that mean? Think this through and find out so that you personally can then take action to actually accomplish this in your spiritual walk with Christ.

This is a constant theme throughout 1 John.

The word "abide" is used some 21 times.

2. To "abide" in Jesus is to stay close to Him.

It requires us to dig into the Word (to study the Word), to believe in the Word of God, obey the Word and trust the Word.

It means to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit "the anointing" from God, to "walk in the Spirit" and "not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal.5:16).

It means to live in utter dependence upon the Lord for everything.

Jesus said in Jn. Chapter 8:31, "**If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed.**"

3. No matter how long we've known Jesus there is always a deeper, more passionate level of fellowship.

One thing we must realize is that there is no coasting in the Christian life, you're either going forward in Christ or you're going backwards.

And isn't that true in most everything?

Paul cries out in Romans. Chapter 11:33, "**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**"

Folks, this is a life-long journey in understanding and living out this great and wonderful relationship with Him. Amen!

4. **So – Why are we to "abide?"**

**There are many reasons we might give to abide:
to have peace and joy,
to have victory over temptation and sin or
to live in harmony with others.**

The list could go on and on.

However, John gives us a very specific reason:

"that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

B. Abiding in Jesus gives us Confidence.

1. The word "Confidence" translates as "out-spokenness, frankness, bluntness, assurance."

Literally it means "to speak openly."

It is used in John. Chapter 10:24 when the Jews said to Jesus,

"How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us PLAINLY."

And Jesus replied in the next verse and said, ***"I did tell you, but you do not believe."***

Jack was out jogging one day and as he passed a cliff, he got too close and fell.

Grabbing hold of a branch he was stranded. No way up and certainly no way down.

He began to scream, "Hello up there can anyone hear me." He yelled for hours and was about to give up when he heard a voice.

"Jack, Can you hear me?"

"Yes, Yes, I can hear you I'm down here."

"I can see you, Jack, are you alright?"

"Yes, but...who are you and where are you?"

"I am the Lord Jack, I am everywhere."

"The Lord? You mean God?"

"That's me."

"God, help me, I promise that if you get me down from here, I'll stop sinning. I'll be a really good

person and serve you for the rest of my life.”
 “Easy on the promises, Jack. First let’s get you down, then we can discuss those.”
 “I’ll do anything, Lord, just tell me what to do, okay?”
 “Okay, let go of the branch.”
 “What?”
 “I said, let go of the branch. Just trust me, let go.”
 PAUSE
 “Hello, Hello, is there anybody else up there?”

Spiritual Application:

All through the history of mankind, there has been disbelief in God.

Even our first parents, Adam and Eve doubted God when the serpent came to them in the garden.

And this unbelief has been with mankind ever since.

2. Acts 4:13 says, "Now when they saw the BOLDNESS of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."

You see - When we have "**been with Jesus**" when we "**abide in Him**" we gain great "**confidence**" or boldness and can speak of Him and to Him with outspokenness and assurance.

C. Failing to abide in Jesus will cause us Shame.

1. "**Ashamed**" literally means to "**shrink or to hide in shame or disgrace.**"

In the garden paradise of Eden before the Fall, Gen. Chapter 2:25 says of Adam and Even, "**And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**"

However after they sinned, they "hid themselves" when they "heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen.3:8ff.).

And God asked, "**Why did you hide?**"

Adam answered, "**I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.**"

And God said, "***Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?***"

Spiritual Application:

You see – now – understand this with me – when you and I sin against God we immediately feel condemnation and we no longer have that close relationship with God.

We loose our confidence and we are ashamed.

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2. If Jesus were to come right now, would you have "confidence" or be "ashamed."

Could you boldly speak with Him of your faithfulness or would you shrink back in fear and want to hide from God like Adam did?

Folks, don't let this question go by the way! You see – this is the issue with all of us when it comes to the Life of Holiness that Dr. Hermiz preached on last week.

3. Let's turn to **2 Cor. Chapter 5:9-10**. The Bible clearly says that ***"we must all [all believers] appear before the judgment seat of Christ."***

The Bema or the "judgment seat" is **a place of rewards**, some have promoted the idea that there will be no regrets, shame or negativity there.

But to do so, discounts 1 Jn.2:28!

Let us read it again: ***"And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming."***

4. You see when we stand before Jesus there will be only **two categories of thoughts, words and actions**: "good or bad." "Confident or ashamed"

You might say,

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"Pastor, I hope to have some of both. I know there will be things of which I am ashamed, but I hope I can have confidence in other areas."

5. I see nothing in Scripture about having both "confidence" and being "ashamed."

It is an either/or proposition.

John indicates that if we have "confidence" we will "not be ashamed."

Certainly all of us have some shame. There is none of us who have been perfect. Even in the sanctified life, we've had to ask God for forgiveness.

However, the idea is that overall, characteristically we will be confident before the Lord

We would be like the Apostle Paul who finally came to the conclusion after his thesis in Romans chapter 7 on the Struggle with Sin, he realizes the Life Through the Holy Spirit that gives him the Victory.

Listen to Romans chapter 8 and verse 1

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

We will either be confident before the Lord or we will want to hide from Him like Adam did?

Someone has well said,
"What we weave in time, we shall wear through eternity."

6. In that day every hidden thing will be revealed.

Jesus said in Lk. Chapter 12:2-3, **"For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops."**

On that Day there will be no fooling God - Who you really are is not what you look like or sound like on Sunday morning in Church.

Who you really are is what you think, say or do when no one is else is around.

The Psalmist wrote, "As a man thinks in his heart, so he is!"

In that day all the things you hide so well right now will be brought to light.

That hidden pornography habit will be revealed.

That sinful adulterous relationship that you have hidden so well will be made known.

Story:

I knew a pastor very well in my past years. A leading pastor in the denomination in which I grew up.

He was a model of a man.

Weight lifter – Black belt in Karate.

Prince of Preachers. Had a photographic memory.

People would refer to him as one of the greatest preachers of our time.

But when it came down towards the end of his ministry, they found out that he, although married, had another woman who bore him several children.

No one knew, except for this woman.

And when he was close to dying with leukemia this woman came out of hiding.

The Bible says clearly, *"Be sure your sins will find you out."* *"Be sure your sins will expose you."*

Those under-the-table fraudulent business deals will be on the table.

Those hot checks, tax short cuts and bills you skipped over will come out.

All our lies, deceit, dishonesty and infidelities will be

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laid bare in the blazing light of Christ's holiness.

Our secret prejudices, hatreds, bitterness and unforgiving spirit will be disclosed.

The demeaning and defaming comments we said about other people in a whisper shall be shouted from the rooftops.

The real you and me will be made known.

8. You say, "But Pastor, doesn't the blood of Jesus cleanse us of all sin?"

And let me say that your sins and my sins that are forgiven are under the blood of Jesus Christ and the Bible says that they are to be remembered no more.

Because we are saved, are we forgiven for all those things."

Yes! God's grace is indeed great! Aren't you glad this morning for the Forgiving Grace of God?
Amen!

But my preacher friend, sinned against God and he tried to hide it and all that he had done in his ministry was lost as far as rewards are concerned.

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1 Cor.3:15 speaks of this person saying, "...**he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**"

9. What is the solution? How can I have "confidence?"

How do you know? Look to 3:21, "***Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.***"

I John chapter 3:17 says that if we have been "perfected" or grown up in love we will "***have boldness in the day of judgment.***"

10. Take the mask off. In complete honesty, does your heart condemn you this morning?

It doesn't have to. All you need to do is to Confess your sins.

Begin today to "**abide in Him**" and you will have "**confidence.**"

How can I relate this to you?
Let's look at it this way:

A button missing from your shirt, a stain on your tie, a runner in your hose... it doesn't matter how neat everything else looks, that one blemish draws your attention. You become self conscious of it.

You feel unfit because of that one small item.

If we are going to be "**confident**" we must deal with the thing that makes us feel unconfident right now when the Holy Spirit deals with us and convicts us of it.

II. Don't Limit God's Love (2:29-3:1).

"If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of Him.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him."

A. All Genuine Believers are God's Children (v.29).

1. John writes, "**If you know that He is righteous, you know ... You have that confidence.**

People of the world will not "**know**" or understand us either because they do not know Him.

In our last presidential debate - One presidential candidate spoke at a Christian university and he was roasted by the press.

His opponent met with a group of political activist/homosexuals who constantly pushed their perverted lifestyle and this was hardly mentioned.

3. Why doesn't the world understand?

1 Cor.1:18 says, "**For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**"

If people tell you that you are a right wing fanatic or a religious nut, tell them that's okay it's a family tradition!

4. Someone said, "**We're all nuts, but the difference is, we Christians believers are screwed onto the right bolt.**"

Henry David Thoreau said, "**If I do not seem to be keeping step with those around me, it is because I am listening and marching to another drum beat.**"

Recently I met a mother at our upward basketball game.

We were in a church gym, so I asked her where she attended church.

She told me how they never went to church and didn't really see the need.

And then she felt pretty uncomfortable when she found out that I was the pastor here.

You know it's amazing how many people profess to be Christian and don't see the need to be in church.

When God's children are present, the world should be uncomfortable.

III. Don't Hide Your Hope (3:2).

A. God has not revealed all that We Shall Be.

1. John says, "**Beloved, NOW we are children of God.**" "Now" is emphatic.

In the Greek NT it is at the beginning of the sentence, "Now we are the children of God."

We are already God's children.

We don't wait to become his kids.

2. I have some friends who adopted one child and are now in the process of adopting another one.

This little girl is about five years old. There were many hurdles to be processed before she became their daughter.

But, friends, this is not the case *with God!*

3. John says, "**It has not yet been revealed what we shall be.**" Friends, think about that! You don't want to miss this!

We don't know the precise nature of what our future life will be like.

We do not know because we could not comprehend it.

4. Many people are concerned with what a Christian looks like today.

There is no Christian look. There are no Christian clothes, haircuts or jewelry.

You cannot physiologically appear or necessarily look like a Christian.

Now, I will say there are some who wear their hair and their clothes and they want people to see they are different. I call this legalism.

But the only way others can tell you are a Christian is by how you live.

B. Our Hope is that We will be like Him.

1. Two things will happen at once.

We will see Jesus "**as He is**" and We will be made "**like Him.**"

Jesus said Mt.5:8, "**Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.**"

Jesus prayed in

John. Chapter 17:24, "...that they may behold **My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.**"

Paul said in 1 Cor.13:12, "**For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face...**"

2. On that glorious day, our hope will be reality.

We will know the true meaning of being joint-heirs. Hebrews chapter 2:10 will be fulfilled,

"In bringing many sons and (daughters) to Him, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering."

3. Oh what a day when all our pain and sorrow are removed!

When we don't live for Jesus today we hide our hope.

IV. Don't Pervert Your Purity (3:3).

"Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

A. Christians don't use the word "hope" in a "hope so" way.

We have a certain hope.

It's just a matter of time.

B. In the meantime, John says, "Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as He is pure [without stain]."

The hope of tomorrow drives what we do today.

When Dru and I were dating and then became engaged to be married, I loved her and only her.

Both of us kept ourselves pure for each other because of our hope in a lifelong marriage.

Other women didn't attract me. I was only attracted to her.

E. Hope for tomorrow keeps you clean today. If you are living for today, you don't care about purity.

Do you have "confidence?"

Jerry Vines has often told the story of a Christian children's home in Kentucky.

Mentally handicapped kids are lovingly taught about Jesus' love.

One day the Bible lesson was about Jesus coming back in the clouds.

They say that from that day forward they can't keep the windows clean because each day the children press against the glass to see if Jesus is coming.

Oh for such a child-like faith!

How are you living your life this morning?

Is Jesus speaking to you about some area of your life?

Would you want to make sure you will be ready for His coming?

Would you like to pray about this decision that will change your life forever?