

TEXT: 2 Tim 4:6-8; Heb 9:27

- (6) For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
- (7) I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
- (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Subject: Are You Prepared to Die

What is the most significant thing that happens to the human body after it is born? Sickness? Trauma? etc. No, none of these things; but death. Simeon was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. The Holy Ghost being upon him revealed to him that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. This man Simeon was looking forward to two of the most important events that man is faced with--meeting Christ and death. During his dispensation it was not a prerequisite to have a favorable meeting with Christ before his preparation for death was complete; however, in our dispensation a favorable meeting with Christ is a prerequisite for proper preparation of death. It is an absolute must.

Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Christ and buried it in the tomb that he had prepared for his own death. Joseph of Arimathea being a rich man from a material stand point as far as security for his family went, was prepared to die. Being one of Christ's disciples he was also spiritually prepared to die. In his day, people who had the means, had their tombs prepared ahead of time for their death. There were professional mourners available to mourn the dead. There was a certain time frame they planned to have the body buried after death. All of this was done in preparation for death. My friends, if a person is not preparing for his or her death, you can rest assured that someone else is preparing for it. In our day, we may not have our funerals, graves, or other body disposal means prepared before we die, but funeral homes exist to take care of funeral arrangements from start to finish. Burial insurance policies can be obtained to ensure all of your funeral arrangements are professionally handled and paid for. Life insurance companies will sell you policies so you can ensure that upon your death your family will not be left with an insufficient amount of money.

God also has an insurance policy. It is not a policy to pay for the undertaker, it is not a policy to pay for the casket, it is not a policy to pay for the grave plot, it is not a policy to ensure that our families are left with adequate money. But it is a policy that insures our eternal peace. It is a policy that ensures our rest, sweet rest. It is a policy that insures our eternal life. It is a policy that insures our souls against the damnation of hell fire and brimstone.

Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, gave his life so that when we die we can have peace with God. The Holy Ghost is speaking right now. Preachers are speaking right now. Our conscience is speaking right now—all saying we are going to die. Some people are given additional warning before they die and some are not. Hezekiah was given additional warning. These warnings are given by God and man in preparation for our death. Some people completely prepare and some do not. Whether you are prepared or not, you are going to die should God call your number before the rapture (for the saved). When God calls your number for death, judgment follows.

Reading the words of the Apostle Paul, one may think he was obsessed with death. It was not an obsession but rather a reality that he prepared for. You and I must also prepare for death, for death is the partition between this physical life and judgment. Death ushers us to the judgment side of the partition where there's no going back to the life side of it, no second chances to go back and do something different, better, or over. What must be done for preparation must be done now.

You can prepare for death. How can YOU prepare for death? The Bible teaches us several things about preparing for death. What does the Bible teach us about preparing for death?

First and most importantly, it teaches us to avoid dying in our sin. Jesus speaking to the unbelieving Jews of his day said in John 8:21, 24:

(21) Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

(24) I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

If we are not to die in our sin, we must be saved from our sin, and that salvation must take place prior to our death. Contrary to popular belief in some circles that

judgment does not come after death, it does. Some believe there will be a phase of cleansing after death to prepare one for judgment, but that's not scripture.

The Hindus believe that after death there will be a rebirth of the eternal soul, but that's not scripture. The Buddhist believes that he will escape the cycle of rebirth and go into Nirvana, that state of being and non-being (peace, joy, and bliss). But that's not scripture. The Taoist believe that everything has its own destiny: Your soul has one destiny and my soul have another; but that is not scripture.

What then is salvation? Salvation is being born again. Salvation is having your sin forgiven. Salvation is having peace with God (Rom 5:1 KJV): Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is an account about Daniel Webster on a dark night in Marshfield, MA October 24, 1852 when he was dying. He was ready. His physician, a very sensitive man named Dr. Jeffries had ministered as much medicine as he could and as was practically possible. He realized that death was near and he chose to be a friend rather than a physician at that moment and he picked up an old, worn hymn book that Daniel had often sung from. His physician friend read the words of one of Daniel's favorite hymns:

There is a fountain filled with blood
drawn from Immanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains.

He read every stanza and when he got to the last stanza Daniel's lips were moving, though no sound came from his mouth:

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
lies silent in the grave,
then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save.
I'll sing thy power to save,
I'll sing thy power to save.

And when he looked at Daniel and their eyes met again, Daniel spoke 3 final words: Amen, Amen, Amen!

What does the Bible teach us about preparing for death? The Bible teaches us to put away whatever hinders us in this most important preparation. Hebrews 12:1 says: Let us lay aside every weight and sin that so easily beset us.

This weight is as a bending or bulging by its load, a burden. It is like a competitor thwarting a racer in every direction. There is a scriptural assumption that we will be involved in some kind of weights or sins. If there was no such assumption, the scripture will not tell us to lay aside such.

The Bible tells us about a rich man who allowed his desire for material goods to hinder his preparation for death:

Luke 12:18-21: (18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. (20) But God said unto him, **Thou fool**, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (21) **So is he** that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Making ourselves rich toward God is part of our preparation for death. For we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things done in our bodies, whether good or bad.

Our material needs are valid. But the pursuit of anything beyond what we need, which causes us to cut God short is a hinderance to the preparation we need to face God in the judgment. Our need for pleasure is valid, but even in our pleasure, we are to seek out the Glory of God. The Bible tells us in 1 Cor 10:31: Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

As human beings, we often exercise poor time perception. As the rich man when he said “And I will say to my soul, Soul, **thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease,** eat, drink, and be merry”, we seem to think we control the eternal time clock and have an abundance of time.

But the Bible tells us in Romans 13:11-12: (11) And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Suppose some morning we go to a race. Runners are lined up, stripped to the bare essentials. All is ready for the race when suddenly we see another fellow coming to the starting line. But strange as it seems he is fully dressed. He has on a full suit, heavy overcoat, hip boots and a heavy woolen cap. In his hands he carries his lunch bucket and an umbrella. His pockets are filled with medicines. Everyone is surprised that such a person would try to win the race. Finally, we approach him and ask him about it. "Of course, he says, I'm running the race. What is wrong with what I wear? Is anything wrong with a coat or cap or medicines? After all, the race is long, the terrain is treacherous, and I may become ill. I'm going prepared for whatever may lie ahead." We cannot tell him that what he carries is a burden, maybe even a sin. But we know he'll never win the race. Why? Because he is loaded with weights.

The writer of Hebrews told Christians to lay aside every weight. Self-control requires us not only to avoid sin but also demands the discipline to give up good things that will keep us from being and doing our best for God. See Hebrews 12:1.

What does the Bible teach us about preparing for death? The Bible teaches us that in this preparation, we must apply what the Grace of God Teaches. It teaches in Titus 2:12-13 to deny ungodliness (*lusts or desires after evil things*), (*to act in contravention with God's demands*) and worldly lusts (*a strong desire of any kind*).....)

As a stand-alone, the word lust is not necessarily bad, but becomes bad when inconsistent with God's will, and when it becomes worldly. The world is controlled by lust, but the Christian by the Spirit of God.

But instead, live soberly (*the exercise of that self-restraint that governs all passions and desires, enabling the Christian to be conformed to the mind of Christ*), righteously and Godly in this present world; and to look for that blessed hope of the appearing of Christ.

A traveler crossed the frontier, and had to pass the customs-house. The officers said to him, "Have you any contraband goods?" He replied, "I do not think I have." "That may be all true," said the officers; "but we cannot permit you to pass without examination. Permit us to search." "If you please," said the traveler. The examination over, the traveler addressed the officers, saying, "gentlemen, will you allow me to tell you what thoughts this examination has awakened in my mind? We are all travelers to an eternal kingdom, into which we cannot take any contraband goods. By contraband goods I mean deceitfulness, anger, pride, lying,

covetousness, and similar offenses; which are hateful in the sight of God. For all these, every man who passes the boundary of the grave is searched far more strictly than you have searched me. God is the Great Searcher of hearts: from him nothing is hid; and in that kingdom, as in this, every forbidden article subjects a man to punishment."

The Bible tells us about a husband and wife named Ananias & Saphira, who were not prepared for death. They did a good thing in selling a possession for the common good of all, but in conjunction with the good they were also untruthful about the amount the possession sold for versus the amount they donated to the common good. Because of that they both immediately died upon telling the untruth. They died unprepared.

The Bible also tells us about a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31)

- The beggar Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.
- The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes,
- The rich man said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
- Abraham said there is a great gulf fixed between you and us and there is no crossing over from either side.
- The rich man asked Abraham, then send him (Lazarus) to my father's house to warn my five (5) brothers of this torment
- Abraham sad they have Moses and the prophets and the rich man but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
- Abraham said if they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (In other words, if it is to heard and heeded it must be done so while one is still alive as it is told by those who are still alive).

The Rich man in his abundance—thought he had many days left to enjoy life, but that very night his soul was required of him—he had to die and was unprepared.

You can be prepared through Jesus Christ. You simply need to repent of your sin and accept him as your Savior.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to be prepared to die. I repent of my sin and accept you as Lord and Savior of my life. Amen.

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