



Sunday December 19, 2021
BE DRESSED IN READINESS

We are just a few days away from celebrating and remembering the birth of Jesus in His first coming. We are living in the time between Jesus' ascension and His second coming. We are in the season of the Last Days where we are looking forward and preparing for His second coming. The Lord's second coming is imminent and preparing for Christmas reminds us of the importance of preparing also for His return. This period of waiting is not passive but is active. We are called every moment of our lives to persevere and overcome tests and struggles; we are called to triumph and make ourselves ready for Him.

This word today is not about how to discern the end times but rather, what our response should be as we await His coming.

The second coming of Jesus is what we hope and wait for because it is an event all will encounter and experience and it is the culmination of His plan for salvation. His return should be something that brings encouragement to our hearts and minds. Christ's return is what we all hope for because it promises the fulfillment of His Kingdom.

Luke 12: 35 -37 (NASB)

Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.

Other Bible translations have this phrase: ***let your waist be girded.***

To gird one's loins means to prepare to tackle a difficult task, to prepare oneself for a difficult situation. If a person had to take part in a difficult physical activity it was necessary to tie up the flowing fabric and tuck it in his girdle.

Girding the loins means we are to be prepared in every way possible – to be active, diligent and have all hinderances be removed out of the way and be ready for His service

A warning:

Luke 21: 34 But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.



We are called to take heed. Take heed means to pay attention or be cautious or to be aware and alert.

To do what? To not be too occupied and lost in self-indulgence of the burdens, cares and busyness of life.

Jesus is talking about alertness, about being ready. As believers we need to live in the light of the fact that the Lord could come at any moment and therefore we need to always be on guard, always be alert because His return is imminent, likely to occur at any moment.

Jesus warns that the return of the Lord will be like the days of Noah with no one paying heed to what was to come. (Matthew 24:36-39). As a true believer, we are to live in this alertness that the coming of Christ is at hand.

1 John 2:28

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Examine what you do with your time and talents

Step back and ask yourself how much of time are you truly giving to the things of God in comparison with all your other things (career, relationships, leisure, entertainment). How much of time are you putting into the kingdom work of God- like discipleship, sharing the good news, missions, doing things to serve God. How would these balance out in your life?

God has given each of us talents and spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12). God's kingdom needs these talents for His use.

This reflection can help root out areas of concern or laziness, and re-energize us to steward our time well.

Examine what our hearts are sowing

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.

When you sow or plant the good seeds of righteousness or things that are in the right standing with God, it will inevitably reap fruit of kindness and mercy.

Break up your fallow ground would mean to not sow among thorns which is to break off all evil habits and clear our hearts of weeds so that it can have room and be prepared for the seed of righteousness.



Some questions to consider

What are you sowing to yourself? If we sow in the right things, only the good things will come out.

Are there unresolved or unconfessed sins?

Are there areas of disobedience?

Are there relationships that need to be reconciled?

How do we, who are looking ahead to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, keep our focus on that future while living in an increasing secular and hostile society towards God and His ways? How do we stay ready when dealing with the daily challenges of family and job and career, finances and stresses of today's world?

BE EXPECTANT

When Jesus was born that first Christmas, he came to a people who were expecting God to send a Savior- the Messiah, because prophets had foretold of His coming. There was a general expectation in Israel that God would one day fulfil his prophecies and send a deliverer. We read of two believers- Simeon and Anna (Luke 2: 25-38) who were eagerly expecting to see the Messiah. They were living in expectation of the salvation of Israel. They watched and waited.

We read of Simeon, when he saw Jesus he knew that God had kept His promise.

Like Simeon & Anna, we also need to cultivate an expectant heart. We do this by believing God for His promises. This expectancy can only be built through your daily prayer and study of the Word.

Your expectancy is sparked by your daily fellowship with God.

We live in the time in between 2 wonderful events – first coming of Jesus as Savior and the second coming to set up God's kingdom on the earth. We look ahead expectantly to the fulfilment of His promises of His return.

BE HOPEFUL

2 Corinthians 4: 17-18

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.



As we journey through life, we all know that we need a lot of hope as we live this side of eternity. This hope is not wishful thinking or even based on wishful plans but it is an eager and a confident expectation. Having hope always helps us live in expectation. This hope is alive and active and thus called a living hope. When faced with the challenges and sufferings of daily life, we should remember that a time is coming when Jesus will come to bring justice and mercy to eradicate all wickedness and unite us with God. We can experience hope by being expectant of His coming.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our citizenship is in heaven and this world is just a passing by. As Peter states we are sojourners and temporary residents in the world (2 Peter 1: 1) and life as we know it will not last forever. So when the heat is on, we need to have a long view of life and not a temporary and momentary one

The living hope we have is because we are believers whose hope is anchored on the person of Jesus - the living hope originates from our living and resurrected Saviour in the person of Jesus. Our hope is based on the resurrection of Jesus and going forward, in His second coming. All our hope is rooted, accomplished and guaranteed in Christ.

BE WATCHFUL

1 Thessalonians 5: 6-8

Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

As the children of the day, we are called to be watchful, alert and cautious and to be sober which means to be calm and collected.

Our *sobriety is spiritual in nature* which means we live by faith and staying in the hope of Jesus' return. Being sober means to be have soundness of thought as against being 'inebriated/ intoxicated' which is to mean to be led away. We are not to be intoxicated by the sin of the world or faithlessness or by hard heartedness. (Just like alcohol clouds your judgment and leads you away from soundness.)

Be careful not to be led away of the things of the world but be watchful putting on faith, love and the hope of salvation

Why are we called to be watchful?

1 Thessalonians 5: 9



For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Because of the atoning work of Jesus and for all those who chose Him as Lord are destined to eternal life with Jesus - not punishment (not appointed to wrath) and we need to keep alert so we don't go astray.

As Jesus' disciples we must be watchful and be on alert so that we are not easily distracted by this world, our fleshly needs and desires, and the schemes of the enemy. When we take our eyes from Jesus and His second coming, our values begin to shift, our attention meanders, and we find we are living like the world and bearing little fruit for God's kingdom.

2 Peter 3: 14

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

What manner of person ought we to be? How should we be living our lives knowing that we need to give account before God. We should be found righteous.

We are watchful when we put on the mind of Christ

In order to have the mind of Christ, we must first have saving faith in Christ. After salvation, the believer lives a life under God's influence. The Holy Spirit indwells in a believer and fills him with wisdom—the mind of Christ. As the believer yields to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) he allows the Spirit to transform and renew his mind.

BE FAITHFUL

God has a call on your life, and he wants you to fulfil that until the day you die or the day Jesus comes again.

Matthew 24:45- 46

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

Follow through on what the Lord has given you to do. Paul emphasises this: to run your race and receive a crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Your life is a unique contribution to preparing the way for the Lord - be it in righteous living, in vocation, in



service, in demonstrating his love and power, in extending God's kingdom in any sphere of life in which He places you.

We are to be found faithful and diligent in our assignments. The Lord has given all of us assignments— gifts, resources, abilities, money, opportunities, relationships, spiritual disciplines. All of those are spheres where we do our job with faithfulness and diligence.

The Parable of the ten virgins is a good example.

Matthew 25: 13

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day or the hour."

To watch means to do your job really well for Christ's sake. The virgins had an assignment which was to keep their lamps and their oil and to be ready when they were called. They were to light the way of the bridegroom. Those who were vigilant did their job as they were expected and were allowed to enter. They were morally, spiritually faithful to do as they were told.

BE VIGILANT

1 Peter 5:8-9

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

We have a spiritual enemy, likened to a raging lion, who continually seeks our destruction. The days we live in are days of warfare. Scripture shows us that he is a liar (John 8:44) and a deceiver (Rev 12:9).

This verse reminds us to be vigilant. To be vigilant means "to keep careful watch for possible danger or difficulties." Vigilance requires action. A vigilant person actively pays attention to what is vying for his attention and what affects his heart and mind.

Although the devil cannot take away our salvation, he attempts to damage our faith and ministry. His schemes seek to shake our trust in God, affect our submission to Him, and destroy our testimony.

The main tactic of the enemy is deception. He blinds the unbelievers by binding their eyes to the truth (2 Cor 4:4) and entices with pleasure, power, security, false hope.



The enemy attempts to deceive even the elect through false christs and false prophets. (Matthew 24:24). We need to be alert to this.

The other things he brings is temptation, tests and pressure with the aim of drawing us away from our hope in Christ. The test lies in how we react to the trial that we are under. We are to respond with faith and hope in God.

Standing against the schemes of the Devil requires God's empowering and the putting on of God's armour

Ephesians 6:13

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand

BE ASSURED

Hebrews 9: 27-28

27 and as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

The word salvation here comes from the word 'Soteira' to mean to deliver, to rescue from destruction. It also includes the meaning to restore to a state of wholeness

There are two great truths.

One is that the first coming of Christ and his sacrifice was completely sufficient to bear our sins. He does not have to do anymore to pay the price for sin or to remove the guilt of sin. All our guilt is removed. Once for all this great salvation happened. It cannot be improved on.

The second truth is that: we have to face the issue of death and so Christ faced death and bore the guilt and punishment of it for us. Following this comes our judgment, and for this Christ comes a second time for us, this time not to deal with sin, but to save us from judgment. This is not an addition to the salvation that the death of Christ purchased; it is an application of the salvation that Christ purchased. This is what Christ bought in his death.

Be assured what when you trust Christ in a way that makes you eager for him to come, He will save you.



In conclusion, Peter emphasizes

1Peter 1:13

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Our hope and expectancy in the coming of Jesus ought to have an impact on how we live right now (leading a life of holiness that sets us apart from the world by being sober minded and spiritually prepared). The return of Jesus is soon and by our hope in His grace are dressed in readiness awaiting His coming.

May we this Christmas pray for its completion: 'Come Lord Jesus' (Revelation 22:20).

SUMMARY

We stay dressed in readiness by being

- **Expectant-** *Cultivate an expectant heart by standing on the promise of His coming.*
- **Hopeful-** *Keep your hope in times of afflictions, rooted and anchored on the living hope of Jesus Christ.*
- **Watchful-** *Be alert to not be led astray by the things of the world. Put on the mind of Christ.*
- **Faithful-** *Serve God faithfully in your assignment and calling.*
- **Vigilant-** *Stay alert against the schemes of the enemy by putting on the armor of God.*
- **Assured-** *Trust in Jesus and His work on the cross seals our salvation from sin and judgment.*

SALVATION CALL

If you ask, does God love me? We can tell you what the Bible says: John 3:16, Romans 5:8

If you ask, how can I have my sins forgiven? We can tell you what the Bible says: Acts 10:43; 1 John 2:2,12

If you ask, what is the way to God? We can tell you what the Bible says: John 14:6

If you ask, how can I become a child of God? We can tell you what the Bible says: John 1:12

If you ask, where can I find salvation? We can tell you what the Bible says: Acts 4:12


If you ask, what must I do to experience salvation? We can tell you what the Bible says: Acts 16:30-31

As an act of your own free choice, we invite you to make this decision to follow Jesus.

SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY TIME

Minister as the Spirit leads




LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE


Sunday December 19, 2021
Be Dressed in Readiness

The is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full-length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at our [sermons page](#) . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship, and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Take turns to read the following Scripture references (each person can read a reference)

Luke 12: 35-37

Luke 21:34

I John 2: 28

Hosea 10:12

2 Corinthians 4: 17-18

Philippians 3:20

I Thessalonians 5: 6-9

2 Peter 3:14

Matthew 24: 45-46

Matthew 25: 13

1 Peter 5:8-9

Hebrews 9: 27-28

1Peter 1:13



INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, How can you as a believer prepare yourself for the coming of the Lord Jesus while living in an increasing hostile society towards God and His ways?

2, Review the six aspects on how we can stay ready and share how this can be practically carried out in your daily life.

- a. Be Expectant*
- b. Be Hopeful*
- c. Be Watchful*
- d. Be Faithful*
- e. Be Vigilant*
- f. Be assured*

3, Share with the group on how the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus has helped you tide through difficult moments of your life. Encourage and pray with one another with the hope of the Lord's coming.

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened



2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

KEYWORDS

Second Coming, Preparation, Be dressed in readiness, Christ's return, Expectant, Watchful, Vigilant, Faithful, Hopeful, Assured

REFERENCES/CITATIONS

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