

How to Prepare the Way for a Christ Awakening

by David Bryant

David Bryant's sermon emphasizes the importance of preparing for a Christ Awakening through prayer, community, and the teachings of the early church.

Duration: 24:38

Scripture: Matthew 22:16, Colossians 1:28, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages listeners to develop a daily habit of focusing on Jesus and sharing about Him with others. He suggests keeping a diary to record any insights or experiences related to Jesus throughout the day. The speaker emphasizes the importance of intentionally seeking opportunities to speak about Jesus and making it a habit. He also shares a personal example of his son getting married and the significance of writing down answered prayers. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need to prioritize Jesus in our daily lives and actively share about Him with others.

Transcript

This is David Bryant again. You've just heard the second of a series of three messages on the theme of a National Christ Awakening. The third message is entitled, How to Prepare for a Christ Awakening.

And the passage upon which it was based is that wonderful story of Antioch in Acts, which you might want to read before you listen. Now as I come to you tonight, I think a little bit of the story of Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln-Douglas debates. They were debating over a particular issue and at one point, Douglas said that Lincoln was being two-faced on the issue.

So when Lincoln got up to give the rebuttal, he said, my worthy opponent here has criticized me for being two-faced. But I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, and then he pointed to his countenance, if I was two-faced, would I be showing you the face you're looking at right now? And I sort of feel the same way. If I had more than one message to give you, I'd be glad to give it to you.

But we're into the third session and my topic is still on the supremacy of Christ because it's the only face I have to show you. Which is why I had us read that passage in Acts chapter 11. Now think with me a minute about the story in Antioch.

Because what we heard read tonight is that there were individuals who were coming out of the persecution in Jerusalem. So they had every reason to keep their mouths shut. But some of those individuals, they not only all went around spreading the word of the Lord, some of those individuals had missionary vision and they began to share with Greeks.

They began to do what we call cross-cultural evangelism. And then we read about a most extraordinary work of what it says in the text is God's grace. That a great number of people, almost overnight, turned to the Lord.

And in fact it tells us in the passage that was read tonight that the movement of God was so strong and so powerful and so extraordinary that the apostles in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check it out. Now they'd been through Pentecost. But what they heard about going on in Antioch, they weren't quite sure.

Is this really a work of God? We'd better check it out because we've not seen anything like this before. And so they sent Barnabas, a man who was full of the Holy Spirit. He was a wise person.

He would know if this was a work of God. And of course we read how he was absolutely certain it was. And he urged them to continue on in this direction.

And then it tells us even more people were being added to the church in Antioch. And then we read these words that Barnabas, looking at the situation, realized he could not handle what was happening all by himself. And he thought about Saul, who was about to be renamed Paul.

He thought about Saul, whom he had been with a few years earlier but who's sort of been lost now for almost 10 years. We haven't heard a word about him. He's up there in Tarsus.

We assume he's making tents to support himself. He must be studying the Scriptures, trying to understand more fully who this one is that he had met on the Damascus Road because he sure quotes a lot from the Old Testament once he gets to preaching. And Barnabas looks at what's happening there in Antioch and he says, You know, this reminds me of what I saw happen to Paul, to Saul.

So he goes up to Tarsus, gets him, brings him back. And then it says for a whole year they together team taught the church in Antioch. And then we read these words.

And it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christian. I was in a hotel in another country a while back. And in the hotel, as there are in the hotels here, there were, you know, bottles of shampoo and bottles of body soap that you can use in the shower.

But this was in a country where English was not the first language. Now, the label was in English, but it was obvious when I read it that it was English that had been written by somebody who was working in English as a second language. Because the shampoo bottle said, This soap will make your hair soft and shiny and manageable.

And then the soap for the shower said, This soap will make your body soft and shiny and manageable. So they assumed you just, you know, change one word and it's okay. But that one word made all the difference in the world.

I mean, if they made a soap that could help my body be soft and shiny and manageable, I'd be out to buy it tonight. One word can make all the difference. When I read that this is the first time that the word Christian

was used, we need to stop and look at that for a moment.

Now, I want you to notice something else. It doesn't say in Antioch it's where the disciples first called themselves Christians. No, it says in Antioch it's where they were first called Christians.

In other words, it was those on the outside, it was the pagans in Antioch, looking at what God was doing among the believers in Antioch, who finally, as they were talking about it in the marketplace or wherever they would meet, finally decided we need to coin a word to describe what we're seeing because there's no word in our Greek language that even begins to match what's going on in our city right now. Now, Antioch was the third largest city in the world. It was a huge metropolitan city.

It had probably seen just about everything there was to see. But this was so different, so strange, so unusual. They had to come up with another word to describe what they were seeing, and the word they came up with was Christian.

Why did they choose that as their new word? Well, in English, as in the Greek, it really breaks down into two parts, Christ and then the suffix, which in the English is I-A-N. So let's start with Christ for a moment. We use that term so often that most of us rarely ever think what the word actually means.

But when that word was taken up by the New Testament Christians, when it was taken up by Peter in his great confession in Caesarea Philippi, that word had phenomenal, dramatic meaning. Anything I have been able to say here about the supremacy of Christ just begins to touch the hem of the garment of what that word Christ meant to the original users of it. This is the one whom God has anointed to be the consummation of all of history.

This is the one God has anointed in which all of His prophecies, all of His promises, all of His purposes will be summed up and fulfilled forever. This is the one God has anointed to have all authority in heaven and earth and to reign forever and ever. Now what's interesting is that the pagans understood that this bunch of people, that the main thing they were all about was somebody that they said was anointed to fulfill the purposes of God for the universe.

And it must be that those disciples talked so much not just about Jesus as the person Jesus, but about the one anointed, the supremacy of this person. They must have talked so much about it, lived so much. They must have been such fanatics, not changing their mind, not changing the subject, that everybody knew this is what they're all about and nothing else.

Now the I-A-N ending of the suffix in the Greek was often used for political parties. We read, for example, in the Gospels about the Herodians. They belonged to the political party of Herod.

In other words, Herod was the main guy and Herod's agenda was their agenda and his platform was their platform, his policies were their policies. The success of his reign was their success. And so they became Herodians.

They were a part of the royal court. They lived and breathed for the success of Herod's rule. And they called them Christians because these are people, they said, who are on a campaign to make Christ the issue in everything.

These are a people who aren't even living for themselves anymore. They're living for the agenda, the platform, the purposes, the successes, and the reign of somebody else. This is all they could talk about

and live for, this one who's anointed to be supreme in everything.

But I want you to notice one other thing about this story because it relates to the applications I'm going to give you. They became known as Christians after Barnabas got Paul and Paul had a year to teach them. And what do you think now after all those years of readiness and preparation in Tarsus, what do you think Paul taught them in the course of that year that finally set that little brush fire into a forest fire and forced the pagans at Antioch to come up with a new term? Well, just think about the things Paul wrote, even in some of the early epistles that come just a few years after this event.

For example, in Galatians, I think he probably taught the people in Antioch that you're crucified with Christ. Yes, you live, but it's not you. Christ lives in you, and the life you now live, you live by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave His life for you.

I think he taught them like he says in Galatians chapter 3 when he says, all of you who've been baptized into Christ, you have put on Christ. You've clothed yourself with Christ. I think he taught them like he says in Galatians chapter 6 when he says, do not boast in anything except the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and here comes supremacy by which the world has been crucified unto us, and we have been crucified unto the world.

I think he taught them things like he writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 when he says, one died, therefore we reckon that every one of us were dead, and he died for us so that those of us who live might no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died and rose again on our behalf. Therefore, if anyone is in this Christ, this anointed one, this supreme one, then you have become a new creation. The old has passed away, and behold, everything has become new.

I think he might have taught them like he says to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 when he says, this is my job to wage a spiritual warfare inside the church to use spiritual weapons to bring down every stronghold that has been built up in the lives of God's people that is preventing them from seeing what the full glory of God is all about, and I'm going to do it by taking every single one of their thoughts captive to obedience to Christ, the anointed one, the supreme one. I think that's why when Paul finished a year of teaching like that, where every time one of those Antioch believers left Paul's presence, they left with a greater vision of Christ and greater hope in him than they had before they came and sat at his feet. That's why that great revival in Antioch exploded into a forest fire.

So much so that the pagan unbelievers said, we've got to give this a brand new name because we've never seen anything like this before. And I ask you, is God a respecter of persons? What he's done with others in Antioch and a thousand other stories, do you think he is willing and able and ready to do that with your life and in your congregation? You say, well, David, what can I do to walk out of here and be a part of this campaign of hope, what I call a campaign of hope? I'd like to give you five simple steps. Each one increases in difficulty.

Every one of them is manageable. So here are the five steps of all the applications I could give you. The first step is lift the gates.

That comes from Psalm 24 that says, lift up the gates that the King of glory may come in, the Lord mighty in battle. And the idea here is simply that wherever you go on a day-to-day basis, wherever you are and the people you touch, be in a spirit of prayer that is lifting up the gates and inviting the King of glory to come in as king. In other words, a prayer as you pass a store, a prayer as you're working in the office, a

prayer as you're sitting with your family at the dinner table, a prayer as you're meeting with a Sunday school class on Sunday morning, a prayer when you're on the telephone call with a brother or sister in Christ, that there's a prayer in your heart that's real simple, that essentially just says, Father, I am inviting you to reveal more of the glory and supremacy of your Son in this place, in this situation, to this person, and to do it in such a way that they will know it for sure.

That's the first application, lift the gates. Second application, name the name. I would challenge you as an effective way to start saturating the seed.

You're saturating it with prayer? Now start saturating by just getting Jesus somehow into the conversation. At this point, I'm just asking you to think about naming the name when you're talking with another Christian. Why don't we make a commitment in this room that maybe once a day, if nowhere else, it'll be at the dinner table, or it might be in a letter you write to a missionary friend or to your pastor when you're talking to him on the phone, but make a commitment that at least once a day, consciously, intentionally, I'm going to mention the Lord Jesus Christ as a part of my conversation.

Not just as an add-on, but I'm going to say something special about him that could be a ministry to somebody else. How hard is that? Now, any discipline takes about three weeks. If you do it for three weeks, it becomes a habit, essentially.

So what you might do is get a pebble or a rock, a little one, and put it in your pocket, and at least once a day, you're going to feel it and touch it, and that'll remind you, oh, have I mentioned Jesus today to anybody in any meaningful way? If not, boy, I've got to start watching for a chance to do that. You'll have no trouble doing it for three weeks with that little reminder, and then it'll be your habit, and you'll almost feel like you haven't lived the day fully if you haven't mentioned the name of Jesus meaningfully to somebody. That's the second application.

The third one you see on the screen, I call it Seek and Speak. Now, this gets a little more difficult. This is where you make a commitment and maybe go back and suggest this for all the elders and leaders of your church, all of the serious Christians in your church.

This is something that even a brand-new Christian could do, and if we do it together as a congregation so we're in it together and experiencing it together, then it's a lot easier to do. But the commitment is twofold, to seek and to speak. To seek means that you're committed to spending enough time in Scripture and in prayer each week until you believe God has shown you something fresh, alive, powerful about the supremacy of His Son.

And then on a Sunday morning, you speak it, even for just 30 seconds, to one other person. Now, this is a little bit harder maybe than just working the name of Jesus meaningfully into some conversation. Now, you are intentionally doing what Paul did.

You see, Paul says in Colossians 1 that he is teaching and warning everyone to present them complete in Christ. But as I said last night in Colossians 3, he says to all of the Christians there, let the Word of Christ, of Messiah, of the Anointed One, of the Supreme One dwell in you richly as all of you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. So now, this is something we do just like Paul did.

We can be just like Paul. We can fan the flames of the revival that's already begun in the hearts of so many. We can saturate the seed that is full of life and so ready to spring forth in glorious beauty.

And we can do it by saying, Father, this week I'm on a mission. And it begins by seeking You. It may take 10 minutes one week and it may take 3 hours the next week, but I'm going to spend enough time throughout the week in prayer and in Your Word until You've given me a fresh vision of the glory and greatness of Your Son worth sharing with someone that could build their hope in Him.

And then when you get up on a Sunday morning and you head off to church, you're on a mission. And it is the most strategic thing you could ever do for world evangelization. It's not the only thing.

It's the most strategic thing. Because when you go on that mission to church on a Sunday morning to find another believer, to pull them aside for 30 seconds, to plant that Word from the Lord that's in your heart into their hearts so that when Sunday morning is over, God has that fresh vision of Christ to use in you and in them by which He can water the seed. And it really isn't that hard to do.

The fourth application, I call it lock and load. And this is a little more difficult but an awful lot of fun. You could commit, two of you who came here together from the same church, before this week is over, commit yourself to a 30-day experiment.

And the experiment is, number one, you lock in to each other. You make a commitment that for 30 days, you're going to pray for yourself and for the other person. So once a day, for just this one other person that you've locked into in accountability for 30 days, you're going to pray that God will work in their lives in such a way that they'll get a fresh new vision that day of the supremacy and glory of His Son and that they'll know that God has done it and they'll know it for sure.

That's the lock. The load part is, you keep a diary for yourself. And every night before you go to bed, you sit down and you try to put maybe three sentences into that diary of anything that God has shown you about His Son in the course of that day.

And you write it down because it's really easy to forget it after about three or four days. You can't remember what happened four days earlier. So you write it down, two or three sentences.

In other words, you're writing down the answer to your partner's prayers for you that day. It might be one sentence. Maybe you'll find yourself writing a couple paragraphs, but try and limit yourself because at the end of the 30 days, you meet with your prayer partner over coffee for maybe 30 minutes and read to each other your journal and share with each other your journey and how God has been working in your life in answer to the other brother or sister's prayers for you and then let them do the same for you and see what wonders God has been doing in those 30 days and talk with each other about what that means as you follow Christ, the Lamb, who is conquered.

A little bit more of a commitment, but still very manageable. The fifth, and there are many other applications I could give you over all the things we've talked about this week, but the fifth one up on the screen is huddle up. By that, I mean start a small group for a certain limited period of time that meets for maybe an hour or so once a week to talk about the supremacy of Christ.

Now, you could do it by working through a book like Ephesians or Colossians, just taking a few verses each week for maybe 10 weeks till you get through the whole book. Or, and here's a word from your sponsor, you could do it by going through Christ Is All because in Appendix 2, there is actually a small group study guide for a 13-week study through that book. I had a pastor of one of the major churches in this denomination come up to me this afternoon and say, I've already purchased the book and I've got my

elders and we're working through it together already.

That's something you could do with the leadership of your church. As you work through, all that book does is it gives you some new vocabulary to talk about what God's already stirring up deep down in your heart. And most of what's in the book is just what I've heard of what God's teaching his people and then I try to distill it, bring it together and it still took over 400 pages to get it all down.

My son came to me, my 20-year-old son, my youngest son came to me three weeks ago and he said, Dad, I'm getting married and I'd like you to perform the wedding. He's going to be a missionary in South Africa and he's marrying a Canadian girl who's Caucasian. My son, of course, is Indian and they're heading off to work with Africa Enterprise in South Africa.

He said, Dad, and he said it with tears. It was so tender, it was so touching. He said, Dad, I want you to perform the wedding.

It's actually going to take place out of doors in a cornfield up in Manitoba. And as I think about how I lead that wedding, even though it's my own son and there's a whole lot of things I'd love to say in that wedding, I must be sure of two things. That when that wedding is over, everyone will leave with a larger vision of Christ and greater hope in Him than they had before they came.

Would you like to have the key measurement to the success of your ministry? Whether it's preaching on a Sunday morning or performing a wedding or a funeral or doing a hospital call or counseling for someone with a difficult problem. Make it the commitment of your heart, whoever you are, if you're committed to any kind of ministry in your life, make it the commitment in your heart that when I minister to people, even one-on-one, I will be sure to the best of my ability that they will not leave my presence without a larger vision of Christ and greater hope in Him than they had before they came. If you do that, you will be what I call a messenger of hope.

Or as A.B. Simpson might have called it, a revivalist. And you can be a part of a campaign of hope growing across this nation as we saturate the seed with the vision of Christ and God's people might once again become in this land what we say we are, Christians. This is David Bryant asking you to join me every day to pray that God will give to His people in this land a deep and lasting Christ awakening.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9430.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-bryant/how-to-prepare-the-way-for-a-christ-awakening/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net