

Spiritual Readiness for Blessing

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual readiness, humility, and simplicity in evangelism, and encourages listeners to follow the Lord's example and to share the gospel with others.

Duration: 44:03

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:2

Topics: "Spiritual Readiness", "Evangelism"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the necessity of spiritual readiness for the coming of the Lord, drawing from the teachings in Thessalonians and the Gospel of Matthew. He discusses the importance of repentance and the call to evangelism, highlighting the examples of Peter and Andrew as diligent workers in their fields before being called by Jesus. Brandon encourages believers to be prepared for a movement of the Holy Spirit and to actively engage in evangelism, likening the work of mending nets to restoring unity within the church. He stresses that God seeks those who are already committed in their secular work to be used for His glory in spiritual endeavors.

Transcript

First of all I want to take you through the book of the Thessalonians or the epistles and speak on the subject spiritual readiness for His coming. Then we go right into the fourth chapter and speak of the unique glory of His coming. And then we shall answer a very difficult question.

Can we expect local revivals when the Lord is going to come very shortly? But in the meanwhile we must be ready for an impact on ourselves. Now why? In Britain we have seen the same slump that you are having and the approach is much more progressive and thousands of people are unemployed and already self-sufficiency has gone up 9%. That means God takes away the toys and people begin to really think.

Now obviously in the next few months if we are spiritually ready we can see an end gathering of souls. But we must be ready and that's what I want to speak on just for a spiritual readiness for a movement of the Holy Spirit. And I'm going to turn you to Matthew chapter 4. Now in this chapter we have the Lord being tested.

He comes away from the wilderness where he was tested in absolute distress. Satan could find nothing to rebound from the mountain. Probably there in that wilderness Satan gathered all his hope.

That's why we find in the gospel so much demon possession and the enemy is with completely frustration. I think in our hearts we are all saying praise God for us. Then he begins to one word repentance that we are going to deal with tonight.

What does repentance really mean in the 20th century? And then he goes from there and he seeks his disciples or perhaps even more his apostles. And we are going to look first of all at the casting of the net. Then we are going to look at the mending of the net.

And if there's time we are going to look at the great subject the letting down of the net. And the next thing scripture has profound teachings concerning spiritual readiness. So shall we read from verse 18.

And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee saw two brethren Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for they were fishers. And he said unto them follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed him.

And going on from there he saw two other brethren James the son of Zebedee and John his brother in a boat with Zebedee their father mending their nets. And he called them and they immediately left the boat and their father and followed him. Now God will add this lesson to the reading of this verse.

It was vital for our Lord after teaching the great word of repentance carrying on a cross from the teaching of John the Baptist that no longer a shadow but the substance of all that John was teaching that he should find a group of people that he could use mightily for his glory for the extension of the kingdom. He came into the world to deal with the great subject of redemption. I shan't speak on that tonight but probably the following Sunday.

Having accomplished that work he wanted an army of men and women who would fearlessly preach the great story of redemption. And that has been going on for well over two thousand years. And the message hasn't changed in it there is that power to transform the lives of people.

Now here we find the Lord walking down the street of Galilee and please note the place. Then you will notice the time of the fall when they were actually tied deep in the sea casting in their nets but they were fishing. We must look at that very carefully.

Then you will notice the personality whom he called one was Simon the other is Andrew. Now whatever happens we mustn't miss these two brethren because in those two brethren we see the analysis of all evangelism both personal and public preaching. Then lastly we see the principle of the cause and I want you to see the weight of this.

Follow me to work. Now if we want to see the perfect evangelist don't look at the book of the Acts. The perfect evangelist was the Lord himself and we must learn to follow him faithfully in every form of evangelism.

And then he makes this wonderful promise I will make you fishers of men. Now that's interesting. And the verb I will is in Catholic the same in the Greek they discovered in former and therefore it's a promise when you follow me I will make you fishers of men.

Now they were catching live fish for the purpose of killing. The Lord said you'll catch dead fish for the purpose of living and that's better occupation you will do. First of all walking by the sea of Galilee.

Now I know there's a little problem whether this was Cana of Galilee or just the sea of Galilee and quite frankly it doesn't matter. But the great fact which is that the Lord went there. Now why? Every time when he gives us that wonderful account of the sea of Galilee gives us a very poor description.

He says it's marked by simplicity, it's marked by humility. In fact the people who lived there had a very jattled feet. You'll remember it was said of Peter his feet bereft him or as it's put in the authorised it betrays him or as it should be said.

In other words you could tell a Galilean a mile off. In fact he uses an expression that causes my eyebrows to be raised. He said they were the cockney of the east and come from the east end of London I was none too pleased with him.

But you can tell a cockney a mile off. Now here were these people by the sea of Galilee. And quite frankly you are amazed I'm sure that ever the Lord would go to the sea of Galilee to teach his disciples.

But there's two things God looks for in a man that's going to be used at him. One is sense satisfaction. We must learn to preach the gospel that's found in the first century to a 21st century world not in a 19th century way but in 20th century language and that's not easy.

The average man today in Australia and in Britain doesn't understand who God is. He doesn't understand the practical basis of things. He knows nothing at all about the law of God.

He doesn't even know what it means when we talk about the deity of Christ and the terms that we use for redemption like propitiation, eternal forgiveness and even the word redemption is all foreign to him. He doesn't understand what we mean by the resurrection. He has no concept of the ascension and therefore we must learn to preach the gospel to people who are patient.

In fact unfortunately many people that come into our halls to hear the gospel must learn lovingly to unlearn before they can learn. Now that's why the Lord goes to this simple place. If he can find people who have a simplicity of trust in Christ and in the work that he has accomplished he can use it.

Secondly Galilee was a place where very poor people live. Again I repeat what Evershine says it is the slum of the east. Now if we were going to call people in order to preach the gospel we would go to Jerusalem.

We would go to places like Judea where all the theological colleges were. The last place on earth we would go to would be the sea of Galilee where humble people live. But one thing we must remember the Lord Jesus on one occasion while speaking to his own disciples said this, I have hidden these things from the wise and freedom and revealed them unto thee.

Think of that. Again you remember when the disciples were quarrelling about who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven he took a little child and put him in the midst. Now this is interesting.

That is the only time in scripture you do not find a divine person in the midst. When our Lord was actually dying on the cross it was the centre cross. But now he steps out of the centre in order to allow a little child to take his place.

And then he taught them this profound question. Except you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Now as you know every year for a month I spend at Cambridge

speaking to the people there and I've done that for 55 years.

But I must tell you this. Lots of students have been saved and are being saved. But I only know two of them that were mightily used of God.

Nearly all the people that were saved were ordinary people and they gave themselves to the study of scripture and a number of them are being powerfully used of the Lord. We must be very careful not to despise education. But we must not really depend on it.

God can take up the weak things of the earth in order to confound the mighty. And so I thank the Lord for going to the sea of Galilee and he found two brothers that were willing to follow him. Then I want you to note the sign.

They were not sitting down washing their necks. Now that's right but they weren't doing that. They were actually tied deep in the sea and they were casting in their necks.

Now I'm quoting again from Ebersheim who was an authority on the background of the life and times of the Messiah. And he tells us it was a large conical shaped neck weighted at the bottom and the fisherman had to wade into the sea until he was diving. There would be a sweat band around his head and when they saw the first movement in the sea like a flash they would throw in the neck and quickly pull it in.

And only a very few fishermen in Galilee could use this casting neck and these men were actually specialising in their tasks when the Lord called. Now here's an interesting lesson. There may be some young men here that God is about to call into the Lord's service.

But he will never never call a lazy man. All the people that the Lord calls are those who are diligent in their business. Here was two men tied deep in water.

The sweat bands around their head. They were casting in their necks pulling out the fish and then the Lord called. Now if you go through the scriptures you will see that repeated over and over again.

When did God call Moses? When he was minding his father-in-law's sheep. He saw the burning bush that never consumed and the Lord called him. When did the Lord call David? When he was minding his father's sheep.

Already in secret he had killed a bear and a lamb and said nothing about it. And the Lord called that man the youngest of the family. When did the Lord actually call such a man like Elisha? Notice this.

When he was ploughing with 12 yoke of oxen and only a few farmers could do that. Can you see what the scripture is saying? He wants a man that can specialise in his natural employment before he will take him into his employment. Now wow.

In the Lord's work it's so easy to get lazy if you're not disciplined. And the man of God must be disciplined. First of all he must have regular signs with the word of God.

Secondly he must have a real passion for souls. You see some people have a passion for sermons but that's not an evangelist. An evangelist is a man that has a consuming passion for souls.

And then he must be a man that's prepared to be alone with God. Not only with the unsaved but alone with his God. So that he can come from the presence of God and stand before the people in a language in

which they can understand and say thus sayeth the Lord in the mighty power of the Spirit.

Now unfortunately in England and I say this with deep sorrow and the Lord knows my heart. There's only a few young men being called to evangelism. We have scores of preachers.

A very very few preachers. And in the land of Australia do pray that God will raise up labourers for his harvest. And we need men that can first of all specialise in their natural work before they go into the work of the Lord.

Then I want you to notice the personalities. First of all there's Peter and Angel. Now Peter was the public man.

Let's follow that carefully through scripture. You'll remember although he had many falls and though he had to learn the spirit of humility. God mightily took him up and filled him with the Spirit.

And on the day of Pentecost and used with power from on high he was able to preach that remarkable sermon. Now here's something that will surprise you. If you go through the book of the Acts and you were told to pick out a passage what would you do? You would immediately go to Acts 17 when Paul preached at Mars Hill that you would be wrong.

That is not a fact. The great classic in preaching is Acts chapter 30. 52% is the pure quotation of scripture and 48% is the exposition.

It begins with a mighty introduction using Joel chapter 3. Its centrality is the cross of Christ and the resurrection. It concludes with the great challenge. This same Jesus whom you have crucified.

God the praise makes laws and trusts. And yet the man who preached it was a pitiment. It said of him, he speaks with reason, that he was a man at that moment who was filled with the Spirit.

Again another classic is Acts 3. After the healing of the lame hand Peter stands up and preaches and not 3,000 were saved but 5,000. Then he goes reluctantly to the house of Cornelius and he preaches the gospel and whilst he's preaching the Holy Ghost and all them that heard the word of God and the Gentiles were brought in. And then gradually he says and then we're introduced to the Apostle Paul who takes the gospel to the Gentile world.

But can you see he needs the public men. Now would you do this please? Pray that from among us God will raise up in Australia one or two brethren that have the ability to reach the masses with the gospel. That's desperately needed if we're going to see God's work.

But I like Andrew. Although Andrew uses the net he's always a single line fisherman. And as far as we know he taught his brother Peter.

And I think that's wonderful. And as you go through the scripture you will see all the way through as far as Andrew is concerned although an apostle is always touched by the person. Now if we need public men we need a host of Bible teachers.

Now I was greatly cheered after the meeting. And I'm going to share it with you. A sister came to me and said we're going to bring some unsaved tonight.

And I said hallelujah. That's Andrew. That's Andrew.

Both our sisters and brothers can bring people. Even on the second coming I'm sure we're going to see one or two saved. Whenever I preach the second coming of Christ God blesses it with this confirmation and someone is saved.

So bring the unsaved that they may hear the program of God. So let's all do the Andrew work in order to bring someone to the saviour. And then I want you to notice.

The Lord quietly said to these men who were busy in secular occupations. Follow me. How did he preach? Every time he preached in the synagogues apart from one occasion he was in serious trouble.

But every time we watch him among the people there's tremendous blessing. We see him by the seaside preaching and there's such crowds listening to him. He has to get into a boat and ask them to launch out a little.

And then he sat down and taught them from the boat. That's evangelism. Then we find him by the hillside preaching the gospel to thousands.

And after giving them a wonderful meal gave them that meal from heaven which was far greater than the meals that they had eaten. But he made them sit down in fifties and hundreds. That's significant.

And there he is on the hillside. And would you believe it you find him on the wayside. Sometimes when he was preaching the crowds would be following and he would stop as he did in the face of thousands and thousands.

Preaching by the wayside. Then we see him preaching by the bedside. Take for instance those occasions when he performed wonderful miracles and every miracle that he performed had a deep spiritual lesson.

And so the Lord says follow me and I will make you preachers with me. You know at home great bingo sessions are being opened for the preaching of the gospel. Now I want to say this as clearly as I can.

I do not dandle in the form of preaching. I'm totally against it. But if they give me five minutes I will go in and I take a bingo card and just say three twenty three and they kick it off.

And then I shout out for all that sin then comes short of the glory of God. And then I exclaim that there you are you've got it. Six twenty three the wages of sin is there.

The gift of God is eternal life. No one can deny it ladies and gentlemen. We all have to die.

All of us. It's the result of sin. Now I'm going to say this to you with deep deep deep love.

If you die in your sins without being forgiven you're lost. Now remember that. Five eight.

Got it. God commends his love toward us. In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Now it's lovely to tell almost six or seven hundred people and a few backsliders that the Lord loves us. No one will ever love you like the Lord loves you. No one will ever come into this world to take your place as he did when he died on the cross and volunteered to bring fear to punishment.

And this will surprise you. God raised him from the dead and he's more alive than me and certainly more alive than you. And he loves you still and wants to forgive you.

Now the best number of all. Who's going to get it? Ten thirteen friends whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And what a wonderful joy you've all enjoyed.

Just come along to the gospel hall and what a joy to see them in the gospel hall. It's going among the people. We desperately need it.

You know on Friday night I don't do it in Australia because it's not convenient. People go into the pubs in Australia to drink from it. In England they go into the pubs in order for socialism.

In fact some of the pubs have pubs partially. So if they don't turn up and it's a wonderful joy to stand up and show them how to. Now I'm not advocating for one moment that we should all go into the pubs to drink.

I don't touch alcohol whatever. I'm not saying that we should all have a turn at the bingo. Of course not.

I'm against all that. But we must go among the people. Get among the people.

Let the gospel with the people so that we might bring them to hear the gospel. And then he says follow me and I will make you believers of me. The second great blessing I have today is to sit at the Lord's side.

Well you do that every Sunday brother people of course I do. But a young man came in the last time he was here and the same and he sat by my side. Now he doesn't know.

You see the great joy in soul women is not the day they get paid. You see them going on. When you come back and find them baptized and embellished and enjoying the Lord.

Follow me and I will make you believers of me. Now wouldn't it be lovely if as we were speaking tonight Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on we saw people saved by the Lord. May we see it and then give him all the glory.

Never look to man. Always look to the Lord. But let's go on otherwise I won't finish this.

And Dr Dick says I must finish no matter what happens. And they straightway left and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brethren.

James the son of Jeopardy and John his brother in a boat. With Jeopardy their father named in the image and he called them and they immediately left the boat and their father. They've got two brethren in the sea diving in water.

We've got two brethren in the boat. But good people we need many brethren and sisters in the sea. But we need some of our brothers in the boat.

It's absolutely vital that God raises up these believers. Now if you have the responsibility of being an elder praise God for it. The greatest reward that God will ever give is the gift of an elder.

He gets the crown of glory. Save it by yourself until the Lord calls you home. And God will bless you.

An assembly will never rise above the level of its spiritual leader. Always remember an elder is a man that goes out in the front. I don't mean to say he is out in the front.

You know what I mean. That he goes out in front and he leads the Lord's people. And if God has raised as he has shepherds to manage, praise for them because this is absolutely vital.

Now you will notice James and John are in the boat and they are mending their nets. Now I was looking at the connotation of that word in my lexicon and I noticed that there are four comparable sections in the Bible that do this. Now because of my time I can only do this for you.

But can we turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 10. Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing and that there be no division among you but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Now those who have a New Testament Bible will notice that the words perfectly joined together are hyphenated.

Joined together. And that shows they all come from one Greek word and that Greek word is MENDING THE NETS. Now what was wrong there at times.

Look at verse 11. For it has been declared unto me of you my brethren by them who are of the house of prayer that there are contentions among you. Now this I say that every one of you says I am of Paul or I am of Apollos or I am of Cephas or I am of Christ.

Now what would happen if you were in the assembly at times you would break bread Sunday evening and there would be a vast congregation and you would meet a group and you would talk to them and they would indirectly say oh God we are of Paul. Oh of Paul yes. What does that mean? Oh he believed in the one body.

He had a wide open love for you and him. Then you would find another group of people and you would get chatting with them and they would say ah we are of Apollos. What does that mean? Well Apollos is an educated man.

He is well versed in Greek philosophy. In fact it is beautiful to hear him speak. He knows the scriptures but he knows his Greek background.

Oh and we love to hear this intellectual man. Then you would meet another little group and they would say how long have you been in fellowship and they would say it is lovely to see so many here. But we are of Cephas.

What does that mean? Well we believe that we are a special group of people and there is something special about the group. And Peter you know is a man that stands for the truth. We are more legal.

That is what those Greeks would say. I am of Paul and Cephas. I am of Cephas.

I am of Apollos. Oh intellectuals. They were all wrong.

You see a net mender is someone that can bind them all together not break them up. We must not break up God's people. That is why I love the gospel.

It brings us together. We must learn to bind them together. So the centrality is Christ and of course we have a love for all the people of God.

Now we need those net menders don't we? Then I notice that in Thessalonians chapter 3 there is another expression of net menders. Verse 10. 1 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 10.

Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face and perfect that which is lacking in your face. That is what I mean. Now you will notice that the apostle was praying night and day.

Therefore a godly elder is always a man of prayer. You know I remember getting up two in the morning on a number of occasions and hearing Matt McCracken from Vanderbilt praying for the flock and I shall never forget it. One morning I woke up I didn't pass the door but I could see what was going on and here was a man by his bed seated for the prayer.

Praying for us. Now Paul was praying for these Thessalonians that he might see their face and might perfect that means to mend the net. Now what does that mean? As he was looking at the fabric of the saints face there were holes in it and he was praying night and day that God would direct him so that he may use the word of God in order to mend those holes.

Beloved can I share something with you for your prayer? As I have been traveling up and down the country from east to west from north right down here to Sydney there are many holes in. There are scores of young people that feel that they are utterly defeated and they want liberation. There are lots of aged people and they have never come into this victorious feeling.

Now a godly elder sees that in the saints. May I do it? He stands on his toes he looks over the flock and he sees that there are holes that need to be and be ministered to that end. Oh I thank God for that and I've only got two minutes Galatians chapter 6 verse 1 Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a thought, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.

Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. The idea of restore there is the same word. Now we are told in scripture that the iniquity will abound and the love of many shall wax cold.

Therefore we must say to our own souls am I going to backslide so that I'm not morally ready for the Lord to come? You may be spiritually ready but you may not be morally ready. Or am I going to be on my tiptoes so that when he comes I might be able to say that wonderful word Maranatha. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Now already we can see that many are backslidden. Therefore we want to knit this in the bud and pray that they may be restored to the Lord.

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