

# Be Ready for the Coming of the Lord

by Stephen Kaung

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the imminent return of the Lord, urging believers to be faithful and vigilant in their walk with God. It highlights the examples of Timothy and Apollo, who remained faithful despite challenges, and warns against complacency and worldly distractions that may lead to regret. The speaker stresses the need to be ready for the Lord's return, as illustrated through biblical references and exhortations to take up the cross and follow Jesus.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 13:23, Romans 8:30, Matthew 24:42, Luke 17:34, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Timothy 4:6, Titus 1:5, Acts 20:28, Revelation 22:20

**Topics:** "Preparation for Christ's Return", "Faithfulness in Adversity"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Hebrews, the last chapter of Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 23. Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 23. Know that our brother Timotheus is set at liberty with whom, if he shall come soon, I will see you.

May we have a short word of prayer. Dear Lord, we want to thank you for gathering us together this morning. We know thy presence is here.

Thou art in charge of this time. We commit ourselves to thee and pray that thy spirit will move among us. Open thy words.

Touch our hearts. Bring us into thy very purpose, that our lives on earth may accomplish thy purpose and glorify your name. We commit this time into your hand.

Trust thy Holy Spirit to do his work to the glory of God. We ask in thy name. Amen.

Yesterday morning, we saw that the apostle Paul was in prison in Rome. Willing to be judged, but at that time, he was given much liberty. He was able to live in his hired apartment.

Though he was changed to an imprisoned imperial guard day and night, and yet he was free to receive all who visit him. He was free to preach the gospel. And thank God, a number of the prison guards got saved.

Paul was waiting to be judged by Nero. Even though he had to defend himself all by himself, and the law was with him, he was proclaimed free. So Paul was free from prison.

And after he was free from prison, he continued to visit the places that he visited before, and even in some new places. While he was traveling, he came to Crete. He discovered in that place, even though there were believers, and yet their spiritual condition was such that they needed to be built up.

The Cretans were naturally like wild beasts, lazy, liars, like evil wild beasts. And Paul was just in a hurry. He couldn't stay there long.

So he left Titus there to correct their situation, to raise up elders who would be used to build up the church in Crete. Then Paul moved on, and he left Timothy in Ephesus. You remember that the former elders had all died.

So Ephesus was not in a good spiritual condition. So Paul left Timothy there, and he continued to visit other places. Now we know that after Paul was released, Nero, the king, the emperor, had the idea of rebuilding Rome.

And with that idea, he started to burn Rome. And we were told that he was building Rome, burning Rome. He was playing his instrument and celebrated it.

Half of Rome was burned. He was thinking of rebuilding Rome, but the people suffered so much that there was almost rebellion among the people. So when Nero saw the situation, how could he rescue that situation? He had to put the blame on someone.

So naturally, the Christians became the target. So Nero blamed the Christians as burning Rome. He began to persecute the Christians.

And of course, Paul was recaptured. He was taken back to Rome. But his second imprisonment was completely different.

He was not able to have his own hired apartment, but he was put into the dungeon, dark, dirty, waiting to be sentenced to death. And it was during that period he wrote the second letter to Timothy. He knew Timothy longed for him, and he longed also for Timothy.

He asked Timothy to bring that coat. He left because the dungeon was dark and cold. But we find the apostle Paul, even at that time, he also reminded Timothy to bring the parchments.

That is to say, the Bible. He could continue to search the scripture in spite of his desperate situation. We do not have any historical record whether Timothy was able to bring these things to Paul and saw Paul for the last time.

We presume that it was so. Now, because Paul was a Roman, so he was not to be crucified. Because a Roman could not be crucified.

A Roman was to be killed by chopping off his head. So we know from history the apostle Paul was not crucified. He was beheaded.

So at that time Christians were greatly persecuted. But brothers and sisters, in spite of what had happened, what happened to the young man Timothy? As we have said, he was an introvert. Facing with such reverse situations, thank God, instead of withdrawing himself, we found this young man, Timothy.

He braved the dangers. He continued to preach the gospels. How do we know? Because when we read the letter to the Hebrews, it was in the last chapter, his name was mentioned.

Now, the Bible does not tell us who the writer was of the letter to the Hebrews. So there are many guesses. Now personally, I prefer Apollos.

Because Apollos was well-versed in the Old Testament. And as you read the letter to the Hebrews, you find the writer was one who knew the Old Testament so well. And he could see the connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

So the only mentioning of Timothy after Paul's death was found in this letter of Hebrews. Evidently, Timothy was faithful, in spite of the fact that he saw the martyrdom of Paul. In spite of the fact that he was an introvert, but he learned to look off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.

So he maintained his faith. And he was faithful in preaching the gospel to the extent that he was in prison. But thank God, as you read the letter to the Hebrews, you find the writer said he got news that Timothy was released from prison.

So brothers and sisters, we thank God for Timothy. In spite of the fact that he was an introvert, naturally, we'll be looking to himself. Naturally, he will withdraw.

But by the grace of God, we find he was able to continue the ministry of Paul. He was able to continue to be faithful to the Lord until he was in prison. But thank God he was released.

So the writer said, after Timothy came, I will come to visit you all. I personally believe the writer is Apollo. So thank God for the life of Timothy.

Brothers and sisters, the first generation of witnesses such as Paul, such as Peter, they had all passed. They are now spectators surrounding us, urging us to press on towards the goal. But thank God, God still leaves behind his witnesses.

So we are really, from the scripture, in the second century, beginning of the second century, the testimony of Jesus went on through people such as Apollo, such as Timothy. Brothers and sisters, before our Lord left the world, he talked to his disciples. He said, I'm leaving, but I'm coming back.

I go to prepare a place for you. And after that, I will come back and receive you to me. The Lord has promised that to his disciples before his crucifixion.

So century after century, those who loved the Lord, those who passed through great troubles, they were all looking forward to the coming of the Lord. We were told that in those days, when believers met one another, how did they greet one another? They greeted one another by saying, the Lord is coming. That is their blessed hope.

Brothers and sisters, 20 centuries had come and passed. We are now in the beginning of the 21st century. If the believers, during the past centuries, they were waiting for the coming of the Lord, how much nearer, how much more, we who live in the beginning of the 21st century, should be expecting the coming of the

Lord.

I had a secret desire. If the Lord wills, that I will be able to see him return alive. And this is our blessed hope.

Brothers and sisters, if you read the scriptures, all the scriptures that preceded the coming of the Lord had been fulfilled. The next scripture to be fulfilled is the coming of the Lord. So we are now living at the verge of the coming of the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, are you waiting for his return? Are you like that wicked servant, thinking that the Lord will be delayed? So begin to eat and drink, and have a good time in this world. But suddenly, the Lord shall come back and cut him into two. Oh, brothers and sisters, when I think of the coming of the Lord, my heart just leap.

Do you know that our Lord Jesus is coming? Do you know that any moment, suddenly, all over this world, a number of people who trust the Lord will disappear? As you read in Matthew chapter 24, you find the Bible says, As the days of Noah, so are the days of the coming of the Lord. Two are grinding. That is to say, two women were grinding the flour this morning.

Two women working in the field. That's daytime. And in another place, Luke said, two were sleeping.

That's at night. Now, this does not mean there are six. There are only two.

These two represent the Christians who are living at the coming of the Lord. To put it another way, these two represent us. We are the two at the coming of the Lord.

You do not have six here. You have two. Why? Because the earth is round.

In some place, it's morning. In other place, it's daytime. In still another place, it's night.

So the two represents the Christians living at the coming of the Lord. But what happened to these two? You find one is taken. One is left.

Outwardly, you do not see any difference. They are doing the same thing. You know, I know of Christians, because they thought the Lord is coming.

So they left their homes, went to a wilderness, and there they wanted to wait for the coming of the Lord. I know some of them. Eventually, one couple had to come back.

Why? Because they need money. They had to come back and work in order to provide for those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord. But the Lord hasn't come yet.

But that doesn't mean that the Lord is not coming. Brothers and sisters, it is very true. We are sitting here as if safely.

But who knows? If the Lord shall come now, what will happen? Will this auditorium be emptied? Or will there be some left behind? Woe to you if you are left behind. Oh, dear brothers and sisters, how can we be complacent? We are living at the verse of the coming of the Lord. It is a glorious time, but it is also a dangerous time.

What if he shall come and you are left behind? Outwardly, these two look the same. In the morning, they were working. In the daytime, they work in the field.

In the night, they go to sleep. I sometimes joke and I say, do not dare to go to sleep. Even if you are fast asleep, the Lord who is ready for him, you will be taken in spite of your sleeping.

Do not be afraid to work. You need to continue to work. But suddenly, you will be taken.

That's what will happen in our time. We are all safely sitting here this morning. I wonder, brothers and sisters, if the Lord should come today, whether this auditorium will be emptied.

What if some will be left behind? And as the Bible says, they will be cut into two. There will be gnashing of teeth and weeping. Why? Because they regret it.

That in their lifetime, they do not know how to take up the cross and follow the Lord Jesus. They want to have a good time on this earth. And now, they had to suffer.

But thank God, even though, during the millennium, those who are not ready will be cast into outer darkness. By the way, I often be asked by young people, what is outer darkness? Where is outer darkness? Of all the books that I have read, I have read only one book that told me what the outer darkness is. But I will not tell you what the book, who the writer is, whether his interpretation is correct or not.

But anyway, brothers and sisters, the Bible does tell us those who are not ready will be cast into outer darkness. And what will be the result? There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In other words, regretting.

Brothers and sisters, do we want to regret when the Lord shall come? Do we want to be cast into outer darkness when the Lord shall come? Thank God, even in outer darkness, that doesn't mean the end. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus, if you are a child of God, he who has laid his hand upon you, he will never let you go. The Bible tells us whom he has foreknown, he will call.

Whom he has called, he will justify. Whom he has justified, he will sanctify. In other words, brothers and sisters, we may be lazy, lay back, love the world, but the Lord, who loves us so much, once he laid his hand upon you, once you are saved, he will never let you go.

So Romans 8 tells us whom he has foreknown, he has called. Whom he has called, he has justified. Whom he has justified, he has glorified.

Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus will eventually be glorified. That is to say, he will reign with Christ not only during the millennium kingdom, but even to eternity to pass. What a glorious future that is reserved for all of us.

So dear brothers and sisters, we thank God. Even though the first generation, like Paul, like Peter, like John, they had borne the testimony of Jesus in their lifetime. They have passed on.

Generation after generation came and went. We are now in the beginning of the 21st century. I firmly believe that the day will not be long.

Our Lord is coming soon. Are you ready? Do you for the sake of a short time of satisfying yourself to forsake the glorious future that is waiting for you? But let me add a word on. No matter how we react, the Lord is faithful.

He will not go back on his word. He will save you to the uttermost. But what a loss it will be if you miss the glory of the millennium kingdom.

So brothers and sisters, from what we have been sharing on Timothy, we find the first generation passed. Thank God for the second generation to come up. And now 20 centuries have passed.

We are now in the beginning of the 21st century. I believe, brothers and sisters, the Lord's return is very close. But the question is, are you ready? Are you faithful to him? In whatever he has revealed to you.

I know that to be a Christian, a real Christian, to follow the Lord today is not easy. The enemy is trying very hard to get us away from following the Lord. If you want to follow the Lord, you have to pay a price.

You have to give up your own self. Those who love their own selves so much that they will miss the glory of millennium. For the sake of a few years, how long can we live? A hundred years? More than a hundred years? But to compare with millennium, a thousand years, that's almost nothing.

Dear brothers and sisters, again I will urge you, the Lord is coming. Are you ready? Will you be among the ranks such as Paul and Peter, such as Apollo and Timothy in their generations? And will we be in our generation be as faithful that the Lord shall return and we will see him face to face? So it is really not fiction. It is fact.

One day, suddenly, all over this world, some people disappeared. They are the man child. As you read Revelation chapter 12, Revelation chapter 12 tells of the time of the coming of the Lord.

The woman there represented the church. She was the glorious church. But at that time, Satan did not pay attention to her.

Why? Because she has fallen into Satan's hand. But Satan knew that that woman was in travail. The church is in travail to bring forth a man child.

Brothers and sisters, the church everywhere is in travail. Satan is waiting for the birth of the man child. For he knew that man child will be the beginning of his end.

How strange to me that Satan is aware of what is going to happen. And we as God's people do not seem to care what is going to happen. He cares so much to swallow the man child because he knew the man child will be his end.

But we, as the man child, seem to be asleep. Will you brothers and sisters wake up suddenly? This room will be emptied. If that's the case, thank God for it.

But if some will still remain, even though their salvation will not be lost, but they will go through great tribulation, they will go through utter darkness until by the grace of God all will be sanctified. Whom God has foreknown, he has called. Whom he has called, he has saved.

Whom he has saved, he will sanctify. So dear brothers and sisters, my exhortation to myself and to all of you is, on the one hand, we are living at a very thrilling moment because the Lord is coming soon. And on

the other hand, we are living at a very dangerous moment because if we are not careful, if we are not pressing on towards the goal, we may miss that great glory of being raptured.

So this is about all that is upon my heart. I plead with you, brothers and sisters, this is not a time for us to sit back and enjoy ourselves, enjoy the world. No.

This is the time that we take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus because at any moment he can return. So may the Lord use these few words to encourage every one of us here. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, we want to thank you knowing that your return is imminent.

Lord, thy church has waited for 20 centuries already. Is it the time that you shall come and receive those who are yours to yourself as you have promised? Enable every one of us to be those who give themselves so totally over to you. Allow you to work in our lives even though it may be a cross.

Enable us to bear the cross and follow thee. Oh, dear Lord, we pray that none of us here will be left behind. We commit ourselves to thee this day.

In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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