

Are You Ready

by Steve Mays

Pastor Steve Mays emphasizes the urgency of being spiritually prepared for the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 26:02

Scripture: Revelation 3:3-22

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a humorous anecdote about a pastor who forgot his sermon notes and repeatedly said, 'I'm coming soon' to fill the time. The preacher then goes on to discuss the importance of being prepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the need for believers to be watchful, disciplined, and to live a life focused on Christ. The preacher also highlights the current state of the world and the hope that comes from the promise of Jesus' return.

Transcript

It's the 2011 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. We don't believe Jesus Christ is coming, but He is coming. He's coming to take the church.

So therefore, I'm going to begin to prepare my life and be right with God. Pastor Steve Mays says it's time to get ready for your life in heaven. Wake my mind up.

Wake my spirit up. Wake me to priorities. Help me to put God first in my life.

This is the moment. So we'll follow the light of the Lord. When going on a Hawaiian vacation, it's good to prepare, isn't it? You want to bring the suntan lotion, the comfortable footwear, the polo shirts, and the shorts.

Now for some, that's all the preparation needed to enjoy this tropical paradise. However, in order to fully enjoy heaven, you might want to start preparing right now. Today on Light of the Word, Pastor Steve shares five things you can be doing immediately to help maximize your joy once you reach this ultimate paradise.

Let's listen to Steve now as he shares the future that awaits us in Jesus Christ. Turn with me to Revelation chapter 22. I want to draw your attention to verse 7, verse 12, and verse 22.

Those are the passages we're going to look at. And the title, Are You Ready? Are You Ready? It's interesting when you look around the world today at all the things taking place. You look at what the courts are doing, how the judges are turning things upside down.

And then you look at some of the problems there are with politicians and what's happening in the White House and in Congress and Senate and who we're going to choose and what we're going to do. And then you look at the food prices and you begin to realize that now you're paying twice as much for everything. In other words, there's not a lot of hope right now.

And things are going to get worse. And the hope that we really do have is in the coming of Jesus Christ. And it's interesting to find that here, John now begins to tell us how the very last chapter of the last book ends.

And it ends with a tremendous warning and a great promise of the coming of Jesus Christ. And I can think of no better time for the Lord to come and get us out of this place. And the problem is Satan wants you to focus on everything bad.

And there are a lot of things bad right now. But once again, when these things begin to happen, know that things are going to move once again. Iran is going to be no doubt attacked.

Israel said it's going to light up Iran. And then once again, Russia is going to have to get involved. Because Iran and Russia have made a covenant.

And that means we're going to get involved. In other words, where do you look when it comes to judges or schools? I had a phone call the other day in Africa. And they said, we just got done passing out 66,000 New Testaments in Africa.

And we were able to pass them out in 27 different schools and 16 different police departments and 13 different hospitals and no one stopped us. You know, I thought, we can't even do that here. And so no wonder God's moving in the third world.

So the only thing I know is either God has to fire us up, bring a revival, or once again He has to come and get us out of here. But until that day, we need to have hope. I read an interesting article in the National Survey of Churches by Moody Institution.

He says that, number one, 10% of Christians cannot be found. I like that one. 20% of Christians never attend a church.

25% of Christians admit they never pray. 35% admit they never read their Bible. 40% of Christians never give anything to the church.

60% of Christians never give to missionary endeavors. 65% never study their lessons for the next Sunday morning. 70% of Christians never take responsibility.

85% never invite anyone to church. 95% never win a person to Jesus Christ in their lifetime. And 100% expect to go to heaven.

That's the statistics. I was shocked. I couldn't believe it.

But those are the moments and the times we're living in right now. And boy, we need the Lord to come. It reminds me of a great little true story about a pastor who just received being able to now be the pastor of a small church, about 100 people.

And it was packed and he was young, just came out, and he wanted to really bring a prophetic message. And the message was, I'm coming. I'm coming.

And so he thought that he would impress his congregation, so he didn't take any notes into the pulpit. And so he started preaching his heart out. But then he forgot exactly what he was going to say.

He looked out and they scared him half to death. Sometimes like you guys do, you shake your head, you do this. Scared him half to death.

And all of a sudden, he lost his train of thought. And all he remembered was, I'm coming soon. So he said it with authority.

I'm coming soon. I'm coming soon. I'm coming soon.

I'm coming soon. Five times he said it. People began to look at him and he began to sweat.

He didn't know what to do. And then he thought, in the middle of that, maybe if I hit the pulpit really hard, it's going to jar my brain and the cells are going to kick in. So he hit the pulpit with everything he had.

And the water and his Bible went flying into the front row. Fell right into the one. He didn't want it to.

A little old lady who has been holding the church together financially. He didn't know what to do. Now he's really scared.

He thought, if I hit it one more time, it might really work. He said, I'm coming soon. He hit that pulpit.

But he hit it so hard, he lost his balance. He fell into the woman's lap. And he looked up and he said, I am so sorry.

And she said, honey, you told me eight times you were coming and I didn't believe it. I believe it now. I believe it now.

We don't believe Jesus Christ is coming, but he is coming. He's coming to take the church. And I want to share with you about the hope that you have that is closer than you think.

So turn with me to Revelation. And I want to start in chapter 2, verse 5. And I want to share with you, this book of Revelation is about the coming of Jesus Christ. He says here in chapter 2, verse 5. Remember therefore, or it points back, remember wherefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, he's speaking to the church of Ephesus, and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of thy place.

And underline the word, I'm going to come quickly. Now jump over to chapter 2, verse 25. 2, verse 25.

But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. Hold fast till I come. In other words, don't let anyone take the hope of the coming of Christ away.

Don't allow yourself to be depressed and discouraged. In other words, Christ is coming. And then, look at chapter 3, verse 3. Revelation chapter 3, verse 3. John goes on to tell us, Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, hold fast and repent.

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief in the night, and thou shalt not know the hour I come. In other words, I'm going to come as a thief. And then in chapter 3, verse 11.

This is kind of cool. Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. So out of the seven churches of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Myrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Philadelphia, and Lacey, and so on, four of the churches were given this incredible hope.

I'm coming quickly. Now look with me to chapter 22, verse 7, where we are this morning. And there are three passages in the very last book of this Bible.

Revelation chapter 22, verse 7. Behold, I come quickly. Underline that, I come quickly. Revelation 3, 11, I come quickly.

Revelation 22, verse 7, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keeps the same of the prophecy of this book. In other words, blessed are they that believe that Christ is going to come.

Then in verse 12, Revelation chapter 22, verse 12, he says, and behold, I come quickly. Underline that, I come quickly. And my reward is with me to give to every man according as he has worked shall be.

So I'm coming quickly and I'm going to reward those who are being faithful to me. And we mentioned that. The crown of righteousness, the crown of things that God gives us for sharing the joy, the crown of glory, the crown of suffering, and so on.

And then in Revelation 22, verse 20, he which testifies these things saith, surely I come quickly. That's Christ. Amen.

In other words, so be it. And then the prayer of John. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Maranatha, come Lord Jesus. So in Revelation 22, verse 7, I come quickly. In Revelation 22, verse 12, I come quickly.

In Revelation chapter 20, verse 20, I come quickly. Now here it is in a very interesting nutshell. I hear people today say in eschatology, you know, this is a brand new doctrine, the coming of Christ.

And it's not. If you go back and you study the whole Bible, you can understand that from the very beginning of the New Testament, Jesus talked about coming. He said, you remember, in John chapter 14, verses 1 through 3, He said, if you believe in God, believe in me.

I am going away. I'm going to prepare a place. I'm going to come back.

I'm going to receive you and take you back where I am at. In other words, this is the promise I'm going to give to you. I'm going to leave you.

I'm going to baptize you. I'm going to seal you. I'm going to go back.

I'm going to build this place. And when I'm ready, I'm going to come back and take you for myself. Paul the Apostle talked about the very same thing.

He said in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 51, He said, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, you're going to be out of here. In other words, that metamorphosis. You're going to be gone.

Two will be walking. One will be taken. Two will be working.

One will be taken. In other words, instantly, you're going to be moved. And then Paul said in the church of Thessalonica, he said, listen, I show you something.

The dead in Christ are going to rise first. And then we which are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and there we shall ever be with the Lord. You remember? He's going to descend.

He's going to blow a trumpet. He's going to shout. And the dead in Christ and we which are alive are going to be caught up.

And it means to be raptured, snatched up, taken up. And Peter talked about it. He said there are scoffers saying in the last days, it's not going to happen.

But once again, God's not going to judge this world by water, but by fire. And once again, God knows how to deliver Lot out of that horrible time and then bring judgment. God's able to deliver us out of that same temptation.

And then what about all the way through the Bible? It talks about the coming of Jesus Christ. So when I look at eschatology, I see it from New Testament all the way through the Bible. And what happens today is we take our eyes off of Jesus Christ.

He's coming back. Well, I want to give you five things to really think about that might really help you during this incredible time. And number one, it's time to wake up.

And I say this with absolute integrity and absolute love. We need to wake up. We need to see what's going on.

We need to get upset with what's happening to the judges. We need to begin to make a stand. That might mean that some of you are going to have to run for office.

Some of you are going to have to make a stand. That means we might have to stand and look at what's happening in the schools with the curriculum. That might mean I might have to go to jail.

And so I'm getting a little bit uptight in a good way. So I want to wake up. I want to look around and say, now wait a second.

We're not going to stop this. And we're not going to change the politics. And we're not going to bring things down.

Things are going to get worse and worse. In fact, the Bible says towards the end, a bucket of money is going to buy a loaf of bread. And that's about it.

Where is that now? Eggs have doubled. Everything's doubled. It's unbelievable.

And people are losing it. And people are getting angry. And we need to understand this is our moment that we have the hope.

And I do believe with all my heart when John was writing from this island, he looked at the church, Asia Minor, the seven churches, and he basically said, you are the hope of the world. You are the ones that are going to bring people to Jesus Christ. And the problem is the church should be shamed.

We need to once again gather together. There are some great churches in the country and there are some horrible churches. We need an absolute revival to teach the Word of God and get fire within our hearts.

So number one, I need to wake up. Look at Titus 2.13. Looking for that blessed hope. As you're pumping gas, you're getting angry, you're looking for that blessed hope.

And that glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ. When bills go up, rent goes up, things happen, everything falls apart, you and your family and your girlfriend and you as a widow, you're going to look to Jesus Christ. This is what's going to happen.

Either you're going to look to God or you're going to cop an attitude. And I think the real issue, as you look to God, you're going to have an answer. Patients are going to come in and you're going to have an answer.

I remember when I first got saved, there was a doctor who was a Christian. I would come in and he would minister to me and he would share and he'd pray over me. I never forgot that.

Because I looked up to him as someone important and I was just nobody. I'm still nobody. He was still somebody.

But all of a sudden, I saw him the other day. He's a pastor now. And his name is Dr. Henry.

And I said, How are you doing? And he goes, Good, let me pray for you. You're still praying for me. That's good.

But once again, he had hope. Yes, he had patients that were dying. Yes, he had patients.

Yes, things were going up. But he had the mindset that at that moment, at that time, Jesus Christ was the answer. So when you look around, it's time for me to wake up to get my family together, to share with my wife how much I love her, to reach out to my children, to call them, to write them, to bring things back together, to get rid of the bitterness why Christ is coming back and I need to get this thing together.

I mean, I believe that time is really personally running out. So number one, I need to wake up. Wake my mind up.

Wake my spirit up. Wake me to priorities. Help me to put God first in my life.

This is the moment. But number two, it's time to clean up. Not only do I need to wake up, but secondly, I need to clean up.

And notice John, in 1 John, he goes on to say, And every man that has this hope purifies himself as he's pure. And what it means is exactly what it says. If I believe that Christ could come today, I'm not going to go out and commit adultery.

If I believe Christ is going to come in my lifetime, I'm not going to have a joint and be smoking it. That would be a bad day, personally. Be smoking a joint and hear beep, beep, beep.

That would not be good. Or be under the sheets with the wrong person and hear beep, beep, beep. That's not good.

Or be, you know, drinking that vodka and popping those pills and all that stuff and be a wino. It's not a good day. Because when the Lord comes, He wants to find you doing.

And there is a sense of the fear of God in our life. And so I need to clean up. So it's time to get off the pornography.

It's time to sit down and talk about relationships. It's time to say no to sin and yes to God. It's time to quit fantasizing over things you cannot have and get realistic in the things that you do have.

It's time to quit lusting after things that you're never going to have unless God gives it to you and start being content with the lifestyle God's given to you. In other words, hold on to your heart. Because when you're out there going for it, you're missing what is in front of you.

And every time you become greedy or I become greedy, I miss what's going on. I don't build relationships. I'm trying to build something, but I'm not building here.

And the problem is, I'm empty. And so now I fill it with other things. I need to understand that God wants me to be holy and begin to look at Him.

He's coming. So therefore, I'm going to begin to prepare my life and be right with God. And then thirdly, kind of interesting, he says it's time to grow up.

It's time to grow up. It's time to once again wake up because Christ is coming. It's time to clean up.

I want to get my life together. It's time once again to grow up. Notice in James 5. James 5. He said, Be patient.

In other words, chill out. Therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husband waited for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it that which he receives the early and the latter rains.

In other words, Christ is waiting for that last person to raise his hand and come to know Christ before he gets us out of here. Verse 8. Be ye also patient. Chill out.

Establish your heart. For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. In other words, he's on his way.

Things are happening. Iran is exploding. Israel is exploding.

The Middle East is exploding. No doubt things are going to happen here with terrorists. And what are they calling Christians right now? They're calling Christians Christian terrorists because we talk about what is right in God's Word.

You are hated for the things of God. Hated. Absolutely want to be silent by things.

But we can't. We have to speak the truth. We have to love.

And here it's time once again to be strong and establish your heart and know what you're talking about and be able to share and go deep into God. So it might mean some of you might need to get back in

church a couple of times a week to get strong because God's doing things in your life. But I need to be strong in a very powerful way.

Strong with my children. I need to say, don't cross that line. They cross it, you discipline them.

It means I don't want you to do this. You do it. And you need to deal with it.

In other words, be strong. Why? Because you love people. You believe Christ is coming.

And then number four, it's time to speak up. I like this one. It's time to speak up.

It says in Philippians 3, verse 20, For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. I like this. When you go home, if we could record your home, what would we hear? Shut up, dummy, stupid.

That's what we would hear, no doubt. Or maybe other things that we shouldn't hear. But what should the conversation be? And in Greek, the word means your manner of life.

Not what you say, the way you live your life. It should be Jesus Christ. It says in Malachi, They that love the Lord spoke often of Him.

So you have every right if someone's cussing behind you and using GD, you can turn around and say, Could you use another word? That really offends me. That'll stop them really quick. Don't be afraid.

I have no problem doing that. And if you're watching television and that's used, get up and turn to television. You can't watch it any longer.

In other words, make a stand. Because your conversation is in heaven. Christ is coming.

And you're different. You're not that type of people. In other words, you're not going to live according to the ways of this world.

Your language is different. Your heart is different. Your mindset is different.

Your values are different. Everything's different about you. And so there's a peace and a joy.

And when that stuff starts coming out, it tells you that your heart is not right. Because your heart is connected with your tongue. And when your heart's connected with your tongue and you begin to talk, your ears are going to tell you what's going on in your heart.

And it gives you the first clue, I need to get back in God's Word. Or get back in fellowship. And lastly, it's time to go up.

It says in 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 16, And the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore, Stephen, comfort the saints at South Bay with these words, Jesus Christ is coming. And so when I look at the book of Revelation and the judgments and all the things happening, God ends this book, and He says, Listen, let me tell you, you need to have tremendous hope. I am coming quickly.

And three times in this one chapter, He says, I'm coming quickly. I'm coming quickly. I'm coming quickly.

And if there's ever a time that I need to believe that and live it and begin to see it and begin to anticipate it and begin to long for it and begin to pray for it, it's right now. Because you feel helpless. You can get mad, but you can't change where this world's going.

And so therefore, I'm going to do what you taught me. I'm going to look up, and I'm going to pray, Jesus, You come today. It's time to wake up, clean up, grow up, speak up, and go up.

Pastor Steve Mays, sharing what we can do to be ready for heaven. Glad to have you with us today on Light of the Word. You know, all too often, people think of salvation in Christ as kind of a retirement plan for the future.

And so it is. But what about our earthly existence? Are there ways we can enjoy these great benefits today? Pastor Steve Mays says, absolutely. Throughout his series on Revelation, he shares the importance of tapping into the power of Christ for today.

It's tremendous encouragement that will help you navigate through the valleys of life. This new look at Revelation is where Pastor Steve reveals not only insight concerning the last days, but practical instruction that we can use as we wait for the Lord to return. By the way, today's message is just part of this extensive set.

Now, we'll be glad to tell you how you can get this collection on Revelation. Just contact us at 800-339-WISE. We'll give you all the details.

That's 800-339-WISE. You can also order it right there at our website, lightoftheword.org. That's lightoftheword.org. When SOS 2011 continues, Steve shares why loving God means loving others. Positive insight next time on Light of the Word.

Light of the Word. Light of the Word. Hope shines in darkness.

So follow the light of the Word.

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