

Secure In Our Father's Love We Purify Ourselves

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the second coming of Christ, focusing on keeping a clear conscience, purifying oneself, and encouraging one another as the day approaches. It highlights the need to judge oneself, not others, and to live in holiness and humility, free from fear and busybody attitudes.

Scripture: Revelation 20:4, Acts 24:15, 1 Peter 4:17, Hebrews 10:25, Hebrews 3:13

Topics: "Preparation for Christ's Return", "Living in Holiness and Humility"

Description

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Transcript

I want to begin with a verse that we considered some weeks ago that's related to the last days. You know, everything that's happening in the world reminds us of some of the things written in Revelation and some of the things that Jesus spoke about in relation to the last days. So, I believe it's very good for us to think in these days about all that the New Testament speaks about the second coming of Christ and everything that's going to precede it, and how we should be prepared for it, because the Word of God is the only book in the whole world that tells us what will happen and how we can be prepared.

And I mentioned the other day that one of the things that will happen in the last days is a tremendous amount of deception. And I want to warn all of you who go to YouTube and the internet to listen to various preachers who are preaching all types of things nowadays, some boasting that they prophesied this pandemic some years ago and all that. It's all garbage.

I've heard enough in my lifetime of people who talk about something after it has happened saying, yeah, I prophesied this 10 years ago, I'm not fooled by all that and don't be fooled by it all. The Old Testament prophets never said, hey, I prophesied this 10 years ago. No, they prophesied it 10 years in advance and spoke very clearly.

So there are a lot of things going on like this, particularly among charismatic and Pentecostal groups and such preachers who want to get some glory for themselves, claiming that they predicted this or what will happen and some others predicting when it will end and all that. We don't want to waste our time bothering about that, listening to it or certainly not being fooled by all that. So we go by God's word alone.

The future is in God's hands. And the Bible says, you cannot even say what will happen tomorrow. That's how we live.

It says in James, let me begin with that James and chapter two, James chapter two, sorry, James chapter four. Don't say James 4.13, today or tomorrow, we'll go to such and such a city and spend a year there James 4.13 and engage in business and make a profit. Yet you don't know what your life will be like tomorrow.

Can you hear the word of the Lord through the Holy Spirit? You don't know what your life will be like tomorrow. So don't believe all these false prophets. You are just a wafer that appears for a little while and vanishes away.

Instead, you ought to say, now these are believers, don't believers. If the Lord wills, we will live tomorrow and do this or that. That is the testimony of a humble person.

He's not trying to get a reputation for the future or saying that I knew this wouldn't happen long ago or any of that rubbish. And I'm not going to listen to such rubbish from others either. But it says here, as it is, you boast in your arrogance.

It's arrogant people who boast about the future. All such boasting is evil. So if you know the right thing to do, James 4.17, and you don't do it, it's sin.

The right thing to do is, the previous verses, if the Lord wills, we live tomorrow. You ask me what's going to happen next week? I don't know. You ask me when the Lord is coming? I don't know.

Jesus himself said, the Son of Man does not know the hour of his return. You've got to be really arrogant to think that we can predict it exactly when Jesus himself said, when he was on earth, he did not know. He knows it today.

But when he was on earth and he took the limitations of man, he did not know. And I want to say to my brothers and sisters, if you remain in humility, you'll be protected from many, many problems and many, many wrong things that you can say or do at this particular time. Humility is the secret.

Like I often say, the three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility. Never forget that. And we will be preserved in these days because God gives us grace to the humble and we will overcome, even if we don't get a reputation for predicting the future.

We don't want that reputation in NCCF. So turning now to Luke chapter 21 and verse 26, Luke 21, 26, it says here that men's hearts will faint from fear at the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

We haven't come to that point yet where the powers of the heavens are shaken. That'll happen. But right now, the expectation of things coming upon the world and in all of our lifetime, and I think I'm older than almost all of you, you've never seen anything like this in our entire lifetime.

Expectation of things that are coming upon the world, even in a world war time, it wasn't so bad because it didn't cover every country in the world. Certain countries are affected, but not all. But at this time, every country in the world has been affected.

So men's hearts all over the world are fainting from fear, fainting from fear. And that means fear builds up to such a point where they faint. Well, it slowly builds up and we have to be very careful that we don't allow that fear to come into our hearts.

It says in verse 28, when these things begin to take place, and I believe they've already begun to take place, straighten up. See, people looking down are those who are discouraged or grumbling or afraid. Now, lift your head up, God has called us to walk straight.

That's what we read in Leviticus, we saw that once. And lift up your heads. That means, and your redemption is drawing near.

That means await the second coming of Christ. Spiritually, our heads must always be lifted up looking for the coming of Christ. Even if you're very, very old, don't look for the grave, but for the coming of the Lord.

The sky, not the grave is our goal, like we sing in that song. And I certainly say that, the sky, not the grave is my goal, I'm waiting for the coming of Christ. So lift up your heads and be ready for the coming of the Lord.

So then how shall we be ready for the coming of the Lord? You know, when John the Baptist was born, we read his father, Zechariah's mouth was open because it was dumb until that time. And Zechariah gave a prophecy about how it would be in this new covenant. He was filled with the Holy Spirit.

We read in Luke 167, and after he named the son, and it says here in Luke 167, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. And he said these words, blessed be the Lord God. And one of the things he said is, the Lord will help us in verse Luke 174, to serve him without fear.

Luke 174. That's a prophecy of the new covenant. In the old covenant, the Israelites lived in fear.

What would some judgment come upon us? We don't live in that fear. We don't live in the fear that God would punish us. We don't fear that some evil will come to us upon the world.

We don't fear that our enemies will harm us. No, they may harm us. The early Christians were persecuted and many of them killed, but they didn't live in fear.

Not even when they were thrown to the lions, God gave them grace. So it says here, we are to serve him without fear. It's another verse that we must keep in mind.

In the new covenant, my dear brothers and sisters, if you let fear come into your heart, faith will go out. I've repeated that many times. Fear and faith cannot dwell together in the same heart.

When fear comes in, faith goes out. If some of you wonder why you don't have faith, it's possibly because you're getting a little afraid of little things in the home or little things in the relation to the future or things like that. Fear, drive it out in Jesus name.

Drive it out and say, I'm not going to have that. I'm not going to let the spirit of fear ever possess me. And you know, if you allow that to come into your mind during the daytime, it'll give you fearful dreams at night.

And if you have fearful dreams at night, ask yourself whether you're having fearful thoughts during the day. I don't believe we should have fearful dreams at night where we get scared with something attacking us or anything. If we have dreams, we must have dreams of our attacking others and chasing the devil out and standing against them.

Those are the dreams I get. But it was not like that in the early days when I was in the beginning, when I was a Christian. Nobody taught me this, but I thank God I've learned it through the years that I never need to fear, not when I'm awake and not when I'm asleep, because I have a loving Heavenly Father.

Turn with me again now to Romans and Chapter 8. See, I'm talking about in the New Covenant, what all we can be blessed by. It says in Romans 8, verse 14, Romans 8, 14, we are led by the Spirit of God as sons of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

And if we are led by the Spirit, those who are born of the Spirit are the children of God, babies. But those who allow the Spirit to lead them, they are the mature sons of God. There's a difference between children of God who've grown up and become sons of God.

Those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. And such sons, we read a couple of things about them in the next verse, Romans 8, 15, they cry out, Abba, Father, the reason why they have no fear. It says here, they have not received the spirit of slavery, the fear.

God has not made them slaves, that they'd be afraid whether He'll harm me. No, God's made us sons to cry out, Abba, Father, and that is why we don't have fear. We know that our Heavenly Father will not harm us.

It's very, very important to understand that the basis of all our freedom from fear is that I have a loving Father in heaven. Now, think of your children, those of you who are married and you've got children. What would you think if your child is always living in fear of you? Unnecessarily, I mean, if they did something wrong and they were afraid you'd punish them, that's another thing.

But if every day they live in fear of you, they're afraid to come near you, they're afraid to talk to you, well, what would you think? You're a bad father. That's why they're living in fear of you. So, there's something wrong there.

A good father, children will not be afraid of him. Even when they've done something wrong, they'll acknowledge it and come to the father, but they will not live in fear that my father may harm us. No, absolutely not.

And if that is the case with evil fathers like us, why should any of us ever live in fear that my Heavenly Father may harm me someday? It's because I made a mistake or I slipped up. No, we are his children. We were not adopted from some other family.

We were born into his family. You've heard me tell the story of the adopted child who sat up at night in his bed afraid and the father went and asked him, what's wrong, son? He said, well, I broke a plate today and I'm afraid whether you'll thrash me and send me back to the orphanage from which you found me. And he said, son, I'll never do that.

And his own children never sit up with fear. They don't have that fear. This child had that fear because he knew he was not born into that family.

He was adopted from an orphanage and he was wondering just because he brought a cup and a saucer whether his adopted father would send him back to the orphanage. There are lots of Christians like that who feel that God picked them up in some orphanage. They were not born into God's family and they wonder whether God will get fed up with them and check them out one day.

My dear brothers and sisters, get rid of that fear. If you have truly repented, if you have truly turned from your sin, if you truly desire to, I'm not saying whether you're perfect, I'm not asking you whether you overcome sin, but if you really desire to give up sin, that's the new man. The new man is the one who does not want to sin, not the one who will not sin, but the one who does not want to sin.

You're like that and you have trusted that Christ has taken the punishment for all your sins on the cross, that the wrath of God fell upon him on the cross and it cannot fall upon you, that he was forsaken, that you and I might never be forsaken. If you're assured of that and you've turned from your sin and you trust him alone for your salvation and you've opened your heart and say, Lord, I don't want to live for myself. I want to say to you in Jesus' name, you need never live in fear for one second of your life.

No, not at all. Natural caution to be careful. That's one thing.

We have to be careful. I mean, if there are dangers of a virus going around, we must be careful that we don't unnecessarily expose ourselves to that and take all the precautions like washing our hands and being careful what we touch and et cetera, et cetera. That's precaution.

I mean, it's foolish not to take such precautions, but not fear. And the other thing is, no matter how careful we are taking all these precautions, it's impossible in this world to do it perfectly. I don't think any of us can do it perfectly.

I don't think any of us wash our hands as much as we should do, et cetera, et cetera. But am I going to live in fear that I wash my hands only for five seconds today and not 20 seconds like they tell me to do? No. I'm going to do as much, take as much precautions as I can, but I will not live in fear because I have a father, a much better father than any of you fathers are to your children who cares for me and for you much more than any of you care for your children, who will sacrifice a million times more for us than any of you are willing to sacrifice for your children.

That is the basis. Those who are cry out above father, verse Romans 8, 15, we don't have a spirit of slavery to fear. Very, very important.

That's where we begin. And I never get tired of repeating that. It's very, very important for the last days.

And then I want to turn now also to something else in relation to the last days in 1 John chapter 2. In 1 John chapter 2, we read here in verse 28 onwards, again, in relation to the second coming, these verses from 1 John 2, 28, all the way to chapter 3, verse 3, just these five verses are in relation to the second coming of Christ. And it's a good time for us to study things relating to the second coming of Christ. We have a book called The Final Triumph.

Some of you may have a copy of it that I wrote some years ago on the book of Revelation, and it's also on our website. If you go to cfcindia.com, you can read it for free from there. And in that final triumph, take time to read it.

It's about the last days, about the things that we need to do to be prepared for the last days. And the important thing is not to understand the meaning of every symbol in the book of Revelation, but to be prepared through the warnings God gives us to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes. That's the important thing.

That's why the book of Revelation has been given to us, to show us something about heaven, our future home, and to show us something what's going to happen in the world so that we don't have fear. So 1 John chapter 2, verse 28, it says, little children, abide in Christ, that's the word for the last days. Remain there.

Make Christ your permanent home. And so that when He appears, there are two groups of people among believers, there'll be two groups of people when He appears, the wise virgins and the foolish virgins. Here are the wise virgins.

We have confidence when He comes. Yeah, Lord. Thank you.

We're ready for you. Our lamps are burning. You're not dying out.

And then the foolish virgins, the last part of verse 28, 1 John 2, 28, who shrink away from Him. Oh, our lamps are dying out. What shall we do? We're not ready for the bridegrooms coming.

These are both virgins. They're not five virgins and five harlots. No, this is not Babylon and Jerusalem.

He doesn't say that there were five virgins and five harlots. Then we can understand. Ten virgins, but all ten had their lamps burning at the beginning.

Because when the bridegroom came, it says the bridegroom delayed, and we certainly see the bridegroom has delayed all these years. It says when He came, they didn't say, oh, we don't have any oil. They said, our lamps are dying out.

You read that in Matthew 25. That means it was burning up until then. But they didn't have enough to survive until the bridegroom came.

They didn't have that extra flask of oil in their pockets. That's why they were not ready. And like you've often heard me say, the outer lamp is our external testimony before men that your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

And then the inner flask of oil, which is hidden inside their clothes, is our inner life, which nobody can see. The Holy Spirit filling our heart, the flask full of oil, a flask full of love for Jesus and love for others, if that is not kept full all the time, we are not ready for the coming of Christ. That's the meaning of 1 John 2.28, the children abide in Him.

Make sure your heart is always, that flask inside is filled with love for Jesus Christ. The oil is the oil of love, Romans 5.5 says the Holy Spirit fills our heart with the love of God, the assurance of God's love for us, our love for Christ and our love for others. And in this third point of our love for others, one of the very important things we must remember is to forgive.

I'll never get tired of saying this till the day the Lord comes. If there's anybody you have not forgiven, when the Lord comes, I want to say to you in Jesus name, you will shrink away from Him in shame, like it says in 1 John 2.28, because you will not be a forgiven person. It's very clear in Matthew chapter 6, that if we do

not forgive others, we will not be forgiven.

When you read Matthew 6, verse 14, 15 onwards, if you do not forgive others, your heavenly father will not forgive you, will not. Is there a single person you're not forgiven? Then you don't have oil in your vessel inside, your lamp may be burning, your external testimony may be very good. People may think you're a wonderful believer, you may be an elder in a church, it makes no difference.

If there's somebody you haven't forgiven, maybe you haven't forgiven your wife for something she did, for the way she behaves, for what she did some time ago, for the way she let you down. Or maybe you haven't forgiven for one of your grown up children who disappointed you, or maybe you haven't forgiven somebody in the church for some grudge you have against them. Beware, beware, I can only warn you, I cannot prepare you for the second coming of Christ, but I can tell you how you can be ready.

Don't shrink away from Him in shame, make sure that the flask is full of the oil of love And if you think like this, oh, but that fellow did such a terrible evil to me, think of the terrible evil you did to the Lord, where He took the blame Himself. We forgive, our prayer is, our Father who art in heaven, forgive us our sins as we forgive others. That should be our spirit every day, every day, because He taught us to pray for our daily bread in that prayer.

So it's a daily thing, even if we don't repeat those words, that we have to have an attitude of forgiveness towards everyone. That's one very important thing that will help us to be ready for His coming. So in these days when we are alone at home and we have a lot of time to ourselves, examine your hearts and see if there's anybody you have not forgiven, just release that person.

And let me clarify that again for the end time, the umpteenth time, that don't try to get rid of it from your memory. You cannot do that. You have no control of your memory till your dying day.

You will remember every person who did evil to you and you may even remember all the details of the evil they did to you. That's okay. You can't help that.

But in your will, you say to the Lord, Lord, I have forgiven that person. I have nothing against that person. Whatever he did, I forgive him and I forgive him even more because you have made it work for my good.

And even if I haven't seen that good yet, I believe it'll work for my good. So these are some things you have to be very careful about in relation to the Lord's coming that we don't shrink away from Him in shame. One John chapter two, verse 29.

And if you know that Jesus is righteous, God is righteous, then everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. That's the mark. You know, like they say, children look like their father.

And if he is righteous, all those who are born of him are righteous. That means they do what is right according to their understanding. I'm not talking about perfection.

According to the size of our understanding, which is different when you mature, your knowledge of yourself becomes more and more and more. But in the area where we have light on ourselves, we are righteous to the best of our knowledge. And so come chapter three, we come to chapter three in verse one.

See what a great love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God and such we are. This is why the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. So in relation to, again, as we're talking about the second coming of Christ now, and He says, we must meditate on the great love the Father has bestowed upon us.

1 John 3, 1. And that's why it's very important in these days to remember the Lord's prayer. I don't mean repeat it, but to remember how the Lord taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven.

The basis of all prayer, even if you don't repeat those words. Our Father means one who loves me intensely more than anyone in the universe. Whose love is like when you sing that wide, wide as the ocean, deep as the deepest sea, high as the heaven above, so great is my Father's love.

One who loves me, that's why we call Him our Father, one who will never let me down. If I ask Him for bread, He will never give me a stone. If I ask Him for fish, He will not give me a snake.

If I ask Him for an egg, He won't give me a scorpion. If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Give good things to those who ask Him. If you're sure of that, then you know that you're resting in your Father's love.

Resting in the love of God for you. Very, very important. Behold what a great love the Father has bestowed upon us.

Our Father. That's not enough. Our Father who art in heaven, whatever may be happening and whatever prediction there is about when this coronavirus will end or when it will not end, when this lockdown will be over, one thing is clear.

Our Father runs the universe. He runs the affairs of this world. And I want to show you a great verse, which to me, as I've studied the Bible, to the best of my knowledge, as I've studied through the 66 books of the Bible, I find this is the most profound statement of the power and authority of God that is found in the whole Bible.

And it was spoken by a heathen king, amazingly. And this is in Daniel, in chapter 4. There was a king there called Nebuchadnezzar. And I'm sure you've heard of him as you read that book, Daniel 4 and 35.

It says here that he was a very proud man, proud of the fact that Daniel 4, verse 30, that he built such a huge city called Babylon and a great residence by his power and for his glory. This is the principle of Babylon. It originates in my mind.

It's done by my power and for my glory. By man, through man, for man's glory. In Jerusalem, the true church is built by God, through God's power, for God's glory.

Like we read in the last verse of Romans 11. But here's the opposite of that. Babylon, by my own bright ideas, by my power, and for my glory.

A lot of Christian work today is done in that spirit. Human ideas, by human abilities and power and money, and for man's glory. For some preachers or pastors' glory.

That's Babylon anyway. Say that in passing. But when God saw this pride in this man, God humbled him.

And he was driven away from mankind and he began to eat grass, we read in verse 33. Imagine the big king becoming like an animal. And it says in Daniel 4, 33, because of this pride, God humbled him.

And he began to eat grass like the cattle until seven periods of time. I don't know how long that is. And his body was drenched with the dew of heaven because he was living outside in the fields.

And his hair grew like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws. Verse 33. But then he finally realized God came to his senses, finally, in verse 34.

And he realized God had humbled him. That's wonderful. And because of that, it's quite likely that the book of Messiah is in heaven.

I'm going to meet him there. But he had to go through such a humbling process to get there. But see what he says.

He says about the Lord, his dominion is an everlasting dominion. And Daniel 4, 35 is the verse I'm thinking of. The most profound statement of the sovereignty and the power of God that I've seen in the entire scriptures.

And if you can say that, then you know your father in heaven runs the universe. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as zero. It doesn't matter who they are.

Presidents, kings, generals, rulers, whoever they are, whichever country, all, A-L-L, all the inhabitants of the earth are counted as zero before God, as nothing. Not even an ant, not even a crawling worm or snail, nothing. That's number one.

And secondly, he, for him it was God, for us it is our father in heaven, does according to his will. Everything he does is according to his will. He does exactly what he wants to do.

Where does he do it? In heaven and on earth. All in the heavens, first heaven, second heaven, third heaven. The second heaven is where the devil and his demons are.

God does his will everywhere. There's no part of the universe or the heavens where God cannot do his will. He does according to his will in the heavens.

And then also he does according to his will among, in the earth and among all the inhabitants of the earth, verse 35. Not only in the heavens, but in this teeny weeny grain of sand, which is called planet earth, when you see compared to this size of the universe, he does according to his will here, among all the inhabitants of the earth. And he's doing it all with one goal, that he may fulfill his purpose and make everything work for the good of his children, which is a small percentage of people on this earth.

Can you believe that? I believe it with all my heart. I belong to a small percentage of people on this earth who are the genuine children of God, which is the same with you. I don't know whether you believe it.

I believe it. And I believe also that everything that God works is for the small group of people called his children. I don't have the slightest doubt about it.

And it's all working for my good. Every single thing, every single thing big and small. And he does according to his will.

And listen to this. Nobody, no one, no one, no creature, no animal, no virus, no human being, no demon can stop his hand, you know, push his hand away. Impossible.

Or question him saying, what are you doing? I like that. See if you can find a better verse in the sovereignty of God in the entire Bible. I haven't found it yet.

Amazing statement by a man who was humbled by God. Believe it. Believe it.

I thank God that Nebuchadnezzar could make such a statement, which I can make today and confess no one can stop God's hand. He rules in heaven and on the earth. And this is the God we worship.

This is our father. So we say our father who art in heaven. That's how we pray.

Every single prayer of us must begin with that faith, even if we don't express it. When I say our father, I must almost also remember he's in heaven. He runs the universe.

That's how we must pray. So it says here in 1 John chapter 3 in verse 2. Beloved, now are we the children of God, but it has not yet appeared what we will be. What are we going to be? That has not yet happened.

We have not yet become. What am I going to be? I'm going to be like Jesus Christ in my character. And God does not make me a robot that will automatically do his will.

Never. Not now, not in eternity. I have a free will now and I'll have a free will for all eternity.

Yes. And so it says here, it does not yet appear what we will be. But we know one thing.

We are sure that when Jesus comes, when he appears, again, talking about the second coming, the subject that began in chapter 2, verse 28, how we must have boldness when he comes. He's telling us how we can have that boldness. When he appears, we will be like him.

It hasn't yet happened, but we're going to be like him. You know, people ask this question. You mean in eternity also, I'll have a free will? Absolutely.

Then they say, why is it possible for me to do my own will and sin when I go to heaven? Impossible. Why? Because I'll be like Jesus. That's why.

Not because I'm a robot. Jesus was not a robot on earth, yet he never did his own will. Not even for a fraction of a second.

And when I'm like him, I will have a free will. I will not be a robot in eternity in heaven, but I'll never do my own will. I will only do the will of the father because I will be 100% like Christ.

We will be like him because we will see him as he is. We will see him and we will be like him in a fraction of a second. So what should I do? Just sit back and say, oh, well, praise the Lord.

It's wonderful. And I can live as I like. And I'm going to be like Christ when he comes back.

No, you can't. You can't have live as you like because then you'll have this whole view. It's only for those who have this hope.

And you say, yes, I do have this hope that Christ will come and I'll be like him. Hang on. Let me give you a checkup.

It's good to have a spiritual checkup every now and then. I believe God gives us his word to give us a spiritual checkup. I get a spiritual checkup when I read the scriptures.

Every day I get it. Even this morning as I read the scriptures, I got a spiritual checkup. Read the scriptures to get a spiritual checkup.

It's a free scan of your heart that God's offering you every day. And here's the spiritual checkup. You really want to know whether you have the hope of becoming like Christ when he comes? Here's the test.

If you really have this hope, 1 John 3, 3, you will purify yourself until you reach his level of purity. And I haven't got there yet. So that's why I'm purifying myself even today.

Something God shows me, which is slightly un-Christ-like every day, every day. And I can progress a little more and a little more, a little more. It's a long way still to go.

It says, let's run this race looking unto Jesus. That's exactly what I'm doing. I started the race when I was born again.

For many years, I sort of hung around the starting line, going up back and forth, back and forth, making great progress, backsliding. It was like that for about 16 years. And then God filled me with the Holy Spirit and gave me some seriousness in my Christian life.

And from then on, I began to make progress little by little by little by little along with the members of his body. When CFC started, we became a body, and that was a tremendous help to me to be encouraged by others so that I don't have to go myself along this way. And little by little by little, pressing towards perfection, becoming like Christ completely.

And that is how I purified myself. And so if you turn to a couple of verses in 2 Corinthians 7, first of all, 2 Corinthians 7, we read in verse 1, you know, he's talking in the previous verse about God being our father and we becoming his sons and daughters, not just children, but mature sons and daughters. I'll be a father to you, 2 Corinthians 6, 18, and you shall be my mature sons and daughters, not babies.

And if that is the promise we have, what should we do? Let us cleanse ourselves, just like we read in 1 John 3, 3, purifies himself till he reaches his standard of purity. There is a cleansing that only God can do. That is the cleansing of my past sins.

A million good works I do will not cleanse even one of my past sins. Only the blood of Jesus Christ, his death on the cross alone can blot out my past. But there is a cleansing that I can do.

And that is the cleansing from the filthiness of my own flesh and my wrong motives and attitudes in my spirit, in my heart. That we read in 2 Corinthians 7, verse 1, let us cleanse ourselves. So I ask the Lord to cleanse me from my past, but from my own defilement of flesh and spirit which I have inherited from Adam, that I have to cleanse myself.

And that is the way I prove to God that I have the hope that I'll be like Christ when he comes. So I don't live worrying what's happening in the world around. I say, let anything happen in the world around.

I'm free from fear. I've got a father. But that doesn't mean I sit back and relax and say, oh, well, I don't worry about it.

I'll be like him. No, I purify myself every day. God is my witness that for many, many years, I have purified myself every day.

I've judged myself. I've started to come into God's light and say, Lord, help me to see Jesus more clearly. And there I see how unlike him I am.

Like, you know, it says, Isaiah chapter 6, he says, when he saw the glory of the Lord, he saw how unclean he was. Let me tell you something. I never look inside my own heart.

No, because it's discouraging. I look at Jesus like Isaiah. He saw the glory of God.

Then God showed him what was inside him. It's much better that way. When I see the glory of Jesus, then I see something unclean in me, and then I can cleanse it away.

But if I only look inside, I'll get discouraged. We don't live the Christian life looking inside. No, we live the Christian life looking unto Jesus.

And like Isaiah said, I saw the glory of the Lord. Then I said, oh, I'm an unclean man, Isaiah 6. And then the fire of God came and cleansed his heart. And that's what God does to us all the time.

It's a wonderful experience to be able to be cleansed like that. So we find a progress where that habit that we had or that attitude we had is gone. Something we were enslaved to has gone because we were determined to run this race.

Running is not something we just sit back and wait. We're not in a wheelchair with somebody to push us. That's not how we run.

We have to run. We have to exert ourselves. Don't wait for some preacher to push you forward every time you hear a message.

If you get stirred up, anytime when you hear a message in the meeting, I want to say to you, that's okay if you're a baby, but you should be growing up from that. We're not to be having a mother giving us feeding bottles all the time. A lot of Christians are like that.

They come to Sunday. That's about the only time they hear something from the word. And it's like the mother is giving them the feeding bottle.

I see a lot of churches, like a lot of babies lying there with feeding bottles in their mouth. That's not the way we should be. We should be growing up where we can feed ourselves from the word of God.

So he says, let us cleanse ourselves, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, with a reverence for God. Again, like I've often said, there are two types of fear. One is the fear that God may hurt me, which I don't have.

He will never hurt me. The second is the fear that I may hurt God, that I do have. And I always want to have it.

The fear, oh, I may hurt God. Lord, like the last verse of Psalm 139, the living Bible says, Lord, point out anything in me that makes you sad. Not that makes you angry, but that makes you sad.

A loving father is not angry. He's sad when his children don't behave. So that's the prayer.

Lord, point out anything in me that makes you sad. I have a fear that I may hurt God and let me cleanse myself in that fear of God, purifying myself until I reach his standard of purity. Another verse in connection with the last days again and the coming of Christ.

You know, we want to be among those. What did we read? Let me remind you, we read in 1 John 2 28 that there'll be two groups of believers, wise virgins and foolish virgins. Some who have boldness when he comes.

I hope all of you will be there with boldness. And some will shrink back. Oh, we didn't have any oil in our flasks.

We didn't have an inner life. We just lived with a good testimony before others in our church. They thought we were good believers.

They never saw how I lived at home. They never saw how I lived in my office. They never saw the type of language I used when I was by myself.

They never saw how my unrighteousness and money. They never saw all these things. It taught me a very good brother because I used to sing well.

And I used to share the word sometimes. Or I would get up and share something about the memory verse. And people were blessed by it.

In fact, some people came and told me they were blessed by it. You pat yourself on the back with all that. Dear brother, sister, you're in great danger.

Judge yourself. Acts chapter 24, speaking about the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is also called the first resurrection.

There are going to be two resurrections. You read that in Revelation 20. The resurrection of the righteous and later on the resurrection of the unrighteous.

All human beings will not be resurrected together. When Christ comes, there'll be a resurrection of the righteous. And hundreds of years later will be the resurrection of the unrighteous.

According to Revelation 20. We don't want to go into those details now. But here it says about the resurrection of the righteous is called the first resurrection.

Acts 24 and verse 15. Paul is giving a testimony before Felix, a governor, when he was a prisoner before the governor. And he says, I have this hope in God.

Acts 24 verse 15. There will certainly be two resurrections. He's absolutely convinced.

You've got revelation from God. There will be two resurrections. The resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked.

And we all want to be in the resurrection of the righteous. Paul wanted to be in the resurrection of the righteous too. Because I want to be in the resurrection of the righteous.

There's something I do. I do my best not to make money. Not to advance in my profession.

All that is okay. I do my best more than all those things to keep my conscience without blame. At all times in two directions.

Before God, those hidden thoughts, hidden attitudes, hidden motives. And before men, where I've hurt them, or done them some wrong, or got angry with them, or upset with them, or cheated them. I want to keep my conscience absolutely clear before God and before men.

Why Paul? First of all, because I want to please my father. Second Corinthians 5, we want to please him. But also because I want to be in the resurrection of the righteous.

So only those who please him like that will be in the resurrection of the righteous. Let me read it again. I'm absolutely certain, Acts 24-15, that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked.

Let me paraphrase it. And because I want to be in the resurrection of the righteous, I know I have to keep my conscience clear all the time. Because I don't know when he will come.

Always, very important word, 24-7. That's a great expression. 24-7.

I keep my conscience clear 24-7 before God and before men. Let me ask you, each one of you listening to me, are you doing that? If not, don't delude yourself that you'll be in the resurrection of the righteous. I'll tell you in Jesus' name, you will not.

Whichever church you go to, NCCF or any CFC church or anywhere, God's not going to ask you in the final day which church you went to. God's not going to ask you in the final day which doctrine you believe. He's going to check whether you kept your conscience clear before God and before men.

Whether you purified yourself as he is pure. This is how to purify yourself. Very simple, like the illustrations I've used.

If a thorn gets into your foot, pull it out immediately. If dust gets into your eye, wash it off immediately. If a mosquito or an ant bites your hand, brush it off immediately.

We do that in the physical. Do it in the spiritual. As soon as that thorn pricks your conscience, don't try to justify yourself.

Pull it out. Confess it. Go to that person and say, I'm sorry.

That was my mistake. How can I set it right? Do that. Humble yourself.

And if it's before God, say, Lord, I'm sorry. I had that dirty thought. Forgive me.

I want to be free from dirty thoughts. Lord, I had that wrong attitude to that person. Forgive me.

You showed it to me. I don't want to have it. He doesn't know about it, but I have wrong attitude towards that person.

Forgive me. Or, Lord, I did that with a wrong motive. It was a wonderful thing I did, but in town, I was seeking glory for myself.

When somebody come and praise me, I took that glory to myself. Forgive me, Lord. Instead of giving it up to you, I took it to myself.

Forgive me. That's keeping a good conscience before God and before men. I seek to do that.

I would not be preaching it if I didn't do it. I want to be ready for the resurrection of the righteous. I purify myself.

And when am I going to stop? When I become like Christ. That's the time I'll stop. Not before that.

And I hope each one of us will be gripped by this truth so that we can be ready for Christ's coming. We're going to be free from fear when everything around the world points to the coming of Christ. Okay.

This is what I'm going to do. One more verse in 1 Peter chapter 4. 1 Peter chapter 4. Speaking about the same thing, about keeping our conscience clear. 1 John 4 speaks about the household of God, or the family of God.

1 Peter 4, 17. In the middle of that verse, it speaks about the family of God, the true church, the household of God. And it says here, if you want to be ready for the resurrection of the righteous, before that final judgment, judgment must begin now in the household of God.

Stop judging other people. Forget about the other people. Forget about the world.

Judge yourself. Don't spend your time saying this politician is saying this and that politician is saying that and that politician claims to be a believer and he's doing that. Don't be a busybody in other people's matters.

That's what it says earlier on in 1 John chapter 4 verse 15. Don't be a busybody in other people's matters. That's the translation in King James version.

It says here there are four types of evil people. You want to hear them? In 1 John 4 verse 15. Murderers, thieves, evildoers, and those who are busybodies in other people's matters.

I don't think any of you fall into the first three categories, but category number four, being a busybody in other people's matters. How many believers are doing that? All the time poking their nose into other people's affairs and say, why did he do that? And why did she do that? What is that of your business? You speak like that, then you're in the same category according to 1 John 4 verse 15 as murderers, thieves, and evildoers. Listen to these four evil people.

Murderers, thieves, evildoers, and those who are busybodies in other people's matters. Who meddle in other people's affairs. Just get rid of that habit.

Don't join up with the murderers and thieves and the evildoers and be a busybody in other people's matters. Instead, judge yourself. Don't ask yourself why that person is doing that.

Ask yourself why you're doing certain things wrong. Judgment must begin not with judging them, but with yourself, not with accusing them. That's Satan's business.

Let him do it. He doesn't need your help to accuse those believers. No, no, no.

Dear brother, sister, Satan needs no help from you. He's got millions of demons to accuse them. He doesn't need help from you to accuse them and find fault with them or to find fault with your wife or husband.

Satan is well capable of finding fault with your husband or wife without your help. Why do you want to help him? Don't be a busybody in other people's matters. Judge yourself and let it begin with you first.

1 John 1 Peter 4 17. Let it begin with you first. That's the same as keeping a good conscience.

And that's the same as taking up the cross and dying to myself every time I see that I have lived for myself. Lord, I want to take up the cross and die. When I live for myself, I'm a busybody in other people's matters.

I want to judge myself. And I believe in that way. We shall be ready for Christ's coming.

One last verse in Hebrews and chapter 10. You know, it says here about entering into the most holy place where the Father is through the rent veil, through the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 10 19 and 20. And there we are to, it says here in Hebrews 10 verse 25.

Once we get there, what do you do? There are other people also there who have pressed through the veil into the Father's presence. Encourage one another when Hebrews 10 25. Don't forsake meeting with others even like this over Zoom or whatever way on the phone or something.

Encourage one another all the more as you see the day approaching. You see the day approaching? All the more reason why we need to encourage one another. Don't be a busybody, but encourage one another.

Encourage everyone you meet to press on to holiness. And that encouragement, we are told in Hebrews 3 13, which you do every day, is what will harden, will save us from being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Encourage one another as you see that day approaching, because that is how Hebrews 3 13, we can be protected from our unconscious hardening through the deceitfulness of sin.

Sin is a very deceitful thing. I've discovered that so many times in my heart. Boy, I didn't realize that that was sin.

I thought I was okay. So deceitfully it got into my heart. Thank God for light, that I can get rid of it and cleanse myself in the fear of God from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, purifying myself as He is pure.

My dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in Jesus' name, do it so that you can be ready and have confidence like the wise virgins when Jesus comes and not shrink away in shame. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heavenly Father, the entrance of your word gives light.

Help us to live in the light of your word, to meditate on your word so that it can go well with us. So that like it says in Psalm 1 verse 3, everything we do will prosper. Like it says in Jeremiah 17, that we'll be like the tree that brings forth fruit in season.

Help us, Lord, in these days to be as wise virgins with our lights burning and our flasks full of oil. Be glorified in the lives of each one who is hearing this message. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wl01j5JFQ0s.mp4>

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