

Be Prepared (Go To Meeting)

Roy Assanti—November 6, 2021

In our ‘neck of the woods,’ where we live, at the moment we have to wear a mask. It’s becoming difficult for the buying and selling; people won’t let you in the stores unless you have had the ‘jab,’ and it’s time that dictates that we need to be awake spiritually, to not let down! To not slacken up!

It’s pretty hard to keep your eyes opened through the night, staying awake! I did that quite often, stay awake right through the night when I was in my teens. Actually, I had to because I worked a night shift; my late father had a bakery business and we baked at night so that we could sell fresh bread in the morning.

We would work right through the night. We made continental bread the old way, and it was kind of fun. The worst night was Sunday night. Actually, it was only a five-day a week job, but Sunday night was the worst one. It’s hard to keep your eyes opened through the night.

Luke 12:36: “And you yourselves be like men who are waiting for their lord, whenever he shall return from the wedding feast; **so that when he comes and knocks, they may immediately open to him.**”

Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. **If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.**”

Notice that this is given current/present tense. You and I are in waiting.

Luke 12:37: “Blessed *are* those servants whom the lord, when he comes, shall find watching.... [working, producing, being spiritually awake with lamps burning] ...Truly I say to you, he will gird himself, and will make them sit down, and will come *and* serve them.”

The message is to take it personally, and you will be rewarded ***IF*** you stay awake through the spiritual night.

Verse 38: “And if he comes in the second watch, or comes in the third watch... [after midnight or 3 a.m.] ...and finds *them watching*, blessed are those servants.”

The message is to stay awake! Keep alert! The temptation is to sleep—look at the comparisons—it’s hard to stay awake. I tell you what, on Sunday nights when we started work, it was hard to keep your eyes open!

Verse 39: “But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.” *It’s not nice to have your house broken into!*

Lenora and I ran a sandwich canteen in the early days of our marriage. We were broken into in the night; we only went there during the day. The door had been forced, and there was food thrown around. When people go in and steal, they’re looking for money. They don’t care; they just throw things all over the place. It was a mess! It’s a great loss!

Verse 40: “Now you, therefore, **be ready...**”—***a warning!*** The aim of the thief is to catch you off guard.

Is this our state of mind? Verse 35—*this is how you prepare*: “Let your loins be girded about... [no loose clothing; ready to move] ...and *your lamps burning.*”

Burning within, with God’s Holy Spirit within, close to God! That is the continual state that we’re told to be in so we aren’t taken by surprise. We have to be ready to travel.

As a type, ancient Israel coming out of Egypt had to have their loins girded and ready to go; staff in hand and ready to exit Egypt.

Christ in look for His own at night sees the light, the spiritual light. If He doesn’t see the light, he doesn’t see you and me. This is going to happen in a time of spiritual darkness! We’ve been told ahead of time.

- Why?
- Is it because of the conditions coming upon us at the end?
- Is only the end of the age or perhaps the end of our life that can come upon us by surprise?

The overwhelming compulsion is spiritual sleep! You and I have a reward, a real tangible reward. But it is in spiritual jeopardy.

Revelation 3:11: “Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast...”

It’s a warning! Do we stop and look at it, internalize it and take in the warning? Take in the admonition to:

“...hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown” (v 11).

In other words, your position can be given to someone else; it's that serious! We could lose our reward.

Let's have a glimpse at *loins gird* and *lamps burning* state of mind could be. What's the calling of God like? **Let's have an inside look!**

Luke 10:38: "Now, it came to pass as they were going that He came into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat down at Jesus' feet and was listening to His message" (vs 38-39).

Think about it! Isn't it like that time of your first love; you sat down and you could actually understand. You received this joy, the words leapt out at you. You could understand. It's incredible! Where does it come from? It was a love, and you couldn't get enough of it.

Sidebar: I remember the Sydney Church and there were about 450 brethren there. If we got their late—we had to drive about an hour and ten minutes—we would be sitting right at the back. They would be putting out chairs where the bathrooms were. Everyone was everywhere! It's incredible!

Where are they now? *They're all scattered, or gone!*

Verse 40: "But Martha was distracted because of much serving..."

Likewise, stuff will happen in our lives! Distractions! Especially if you've been in the Church for a while, you take it for granted.

"...and she came to Jesus and said, 'Lord, is it of no concern to You that my sister has left me to serve alone?... [I'm doing all the work here and serving. She's just sitting there!] ...Now then, speak to her, so that she will help me'" (v 40).

What was the reaction! A bit of correction and instruction for us!

Verse 41: "Then Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha...'"

Look at the kindness, the warmth! God understands us and He talks to us in care and love. Not as an oppressor. Redirection of priority follows. The lesson is that we have to be cautious:

"...you are full of care and troubled about many things; but there is one need *above all else*; and Mary..." (vs 41-42)—*put your name there!*

That's the state we need to be in; raking it in. taking it by spiritual osmosis and having that spiritual water inside of us. Especially if we've been baptized, converted, been there for years. This

picture is the state that we need to be in!

"...you [Martha] are full of care and troubled about many things; but there is one need *above all else*; and **Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her**" (vs 41-42). *It won't be taken away from us!*

We need to remember to maintain a persistent and humble state of mind, as is shown by this widow. She was a 'pain in the neck' and it was obvious to the other around her, especially the disciples that were close to Christ. She would not accept *no* for an answer. What a good character trait that we need to adopt: Accept *no* for an answer when it means drawing close to God.

Matthew 15:21: "Then Jesus left there and withdrew into the area of Tyre and Sidon; And, behold, a Canaanite woman who came from those borders cried to Him..." (vs 21-22).

A comparison to day would be someone who attends a worldly church and goes on Sunday. She was an outsider, not an Israelite, not someone who is a follower of Jesus Christ.

"...saying, 'Have mercy on me, Lord... [really pleaded because there was a need] ...Son of David... [addressing Christ, she knew who He was] ...my daughter is grievously possessed by a demon.' But He did not answer her a word.... [it must have been going on for a while] ...And His disciples came and requested of Him, saying, 'Send her away... [get rid of her; she's foreigner anyway, not an Israelite. She's an interruption] ...for she is crying out behind us'" (vs 22-23).

Jesus was purposely ignoring her. Doesn't it seem like, at times, that our petitions, our prayers, our urgent requests, are not answered? *Ignored!*

Here's an example given to us. What did she do? *She didn't give up!* She must have kept on going on and on. 'As long as I'm here, I'm going on and on,' because of the need. There are times when we have needs and we should be going on and on for a while. Look, even a *seemingly* racist slur did not put her off.

Jesus ends it and says, v 24: "But He answered and said, 'I have not been sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

He didn't say she was an outsider, but this is who He was sent to. What are you going to do with that?

Verse 25: "Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!' But He answered and said... [He's telling her she didn't get it] ...'It is not proper to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs'" (vs 25-26). *The reference here is the*

younger dogs, pups.

Verse 27: “And she said... [she agreed] ...‘Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.’” *Humility!*

- Do we get put off?
- or*
- Do we hang onto the promises, the security?
 - Do we hang onto the promise of God’s Spirit?
 - Do we hang onto the answers and the direction?
 - Do we hang on regardless?

This is an example of someone who hung on regardless of seemingly slurs, put-down, you name it!

Verse 28—the end result: “Then Jesus answered *and* said to her, ‘O woman, **great is your faith!**... [she hadn’t been put-off; she hung on] ...As you have desired, so be it to you.’... [hang on until we re answered; this tells us that we will be answered] ...And her daughter was healed from that hour.” *That’s the message; if you hang on you are invoking a response!*

I love weight-lifting. I recall an example of an American heavyweight--Bob Bednarski—from about 40 years ago. He was the first man to ‘lift clean and jerk’—bring the weight to your chest and then jerk it above your head and lock your elbows and straighten up and hold it there.

At the Olympics when the three judges give the green light, the lift goes into the records and it’s official.

It was photographed, but it was unofficial because it was done in a gym, so it wasn’t accepted. He lost his hunger for weights. He had praise and adulation, but he stopped working out. He stopped doing the things that made him strong. He lost the hunger, the desire to lift more.

We need to love the prize; not just be satisfied, but keep going; ***you’re either growing or you’re not!***

I remember my father had a proverb: ***The one who stops has lost!*** Either you re producing or you’re regressing. Another proverb my dad had was: ***While the music is playing, we’ve got to dance!*** When it stops, you’re looking at trouble, difficulties, tribulations and you have to handle it. You have to dance.

Rev. 2 is different messages to the eras of the Church. We understand that, we’ve been told

that. Does that mean we can’t take these messages personally if they apply to us

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the Ephesian church, write: ‘These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands. ‘I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil; and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars; and *that* you have borne *much* and have endured, and for My name’s sake have labored and have not grown weary; nevertheless, **I have this against you, that you have left your first love**” (vs 1-4)—*admonition!*

Did they become satisfied with the way they were? *I’ve done this and that; I’ve achieved this level of fitness and this weight!*

When Bob Bednarski stopped being hungry for lifting weights, to grow more—he was still young—he began to regress physically. It’s an interesting comparison.

The Ephesian Church became satisfied and said, ‘that’s enough’ and they began to fall and regress. That child-like, simple, believing, innocence; you’ve got to maintain it! The hunger; you’ve got to maintain it! It’s got to be there, even through all levels of maturity.

Satan/Lucifer the adversary had lost it to. Eventually it led to attacking his Maker.

Verse 5: “Therefore, remember from where you have fallen...”

Lucifer was a bright shining star, but he regressed. The Father and Christ observed that. This is the wisdom that God gives us. “Therefore, remember from where you have fallen...” ***You begin to fall when you stop pushing forward and stop striving! Strive to enter...!*** That’s what we’re instructed!

Let’s strive because it’s a narrow gate! It’s not an easy way! We have to always put forth effort without ceasing. Otherwise, why would the instruction to the Church be:

“...and repent, and do the first works... [first love] ...for if you do not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent” (v 5).

There are some that were doing but began to level out. We’re either moving forward or we’re regressing. It’s not all negative. God sees the strength, the positive and there’s a wonderful balance that we need to take to heart.

Verse 6: “But this you have: that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

The name of Christ, and attributing traditions of men and moving away.

Verse 7: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. To the one who overcomes...”

Got to keep going. It’s not who overcame, **it’s who continually overcomes!** That’s the inference there.

“...I will give *the right* to eat of the Tree of Life that is in *the midst* of the paradise of God” (v 7).

Where there is complacency there is diminished efforts. Satisfaction, a little time to stop and rest and just being content; there’s an interesting principle in Prov. 24:30, but first let’s go to:

Matthew 20:1: “The Kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in *the morning* to hire workmen for his **vineyard**”—*an allegory for a place of work!*

Some examples show levels of ; right and wrong attitudes. There are lessons in wisdom and foolishness that are portrayed.

Proverbs 24:30: “I went by the field of the lazy man... [sluggard; we know how fast a slug moves: lazy] ...and by the vineyard of the man without understanding, and, behold, it was all grown over...” (vs 30-31).

- What happens when you let down? *This is a spiritual condition!*
- Is that you and me?
- Is that what we are becoming?

That’s the question that is posed!

“...it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face of it... [a proverbial state of spiritual impoverishment] ...and its stone wall was broken down” (v 31).

- Do I want my patch of God’s vineyard to align with this comparison?
- Is this not a question that is posed to us by the Scripture?
 - ✓ Reflecting?
 - ✓ Thinking?
 - ✓ Where I am?
 - ✓ What’s my state?
 - ✓ Is this happening?

This is the result, the observation:

Verse 32: Then I saw *and* considered *it* well; I looked upon *it* and I received instruction. *Yet, a*

little sleep, a little slumber... [a little inactivity] ...a little folding of the hands to lie down... [a little rest] ...**then your poverty**... [*spiritual poverty*] ...comes stalking...” (vs 32-34).

If someone stalks you in the night, do you think that the stalker has good intentions?

“...and your wants like an armed man” (v 34).

In other words you are eventually led away by slough, by inactivity, by not being diligent! ***Either you grow, or you level out and fade away!***

That’s the message. You will be taken away against your will, regardless, even kicking and screaming. Be diligent or you’ll be taken away and you have to fight to get back! The implication is to spiritual health!

Ecclesiastes 6:9: “Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire. This *is* also vanity and a striving after wind.”

It’s a serious reality; we all would be wise to take heed of the instruction here:

Proverbs 20:13: “Do not love sleep...”

I remember when I first came into the Church we were told there was a one hour minimum of Bible study every day; a half hour modification on that study every day; a half hour of prayer every day. ***That’s what was drummed into us!***

“...lest you come to poverty; open your eyes...” (v 13).

You might not be perfect every day, but make up for it as you walk by the way, as you sit, as you eat, your mind is there! We can’t slacken!

Verse 13: “Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes and you shall be satisfied with bread.”

I remember the movie called *Saving Private Ryan*. It was a very interesting movie. There was a scene where there was a soldier in a dugout and they were shooting at one another and this bullet hit his helmet and bounced off. In a moment of bravado he took it off and looked at it and when he went to put it on he got one right in the temple and just dropped. ***It makes you think: keep your helmet on!***

The day-to-day activities can put us to sleep. The thoughts, the needs, the things we have to do. I repeat it so we will remember and need not take it for granted. Be watchful, warning! What does it mean?

*If Jesus Christ was to come to you in a dream and say: Revelation 3:2: “**Be watchful...**” Warning!*

It's written down; He went to someone else and we're getting it second hand, but it's the same thing!

"...and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die..." (v 2).

Is this the result of forgetting? If we get into a state of forgetting, **be watchful!**

"...For I have not found your works complete before God. Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and hold on *to this*, and repent..." (vs 2-3).

If you had a dream and it was impressed on your mind to repent, what would you do?

"...Now then, **if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief**, and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you" (v 3).

Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God..." (vs 10-11).

We have to defend! We're going to be attacked, and we can see what's happening day-to-day. ***But the attack comes when you least expect it!***

Verse 11: "Put on the whole armor of God **so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**"

1-Peter 5:8: "**Be sober! Be vigilant!**..."

Don't go to sleep, everything is urgent. Why? Be great is the reward, but also great is the temptation!

"...For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. **Whom resist**, steadfast in the faith..." (vs 8-9).

What would you do if you were faced with a lion? A real lion? The analogy is that impacting! It would probably be about 300 lbs., heavier than most people. It could knock you down! How dangerous would a lion be? If you were somewhere out in the bush and suddenly you saw a lion, how would you feel?

- that is the **urgency** of this Scripture
- that is the **urgency** that you and an I face because of the adversary, the mutual adversary that we have

Ephesians 6:12: "Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, **but against principalities and against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual power of wickedness in high places.**"

Revelation 3:1: "...I know your works, *and* that you have a name as if you are alive, but are dead. Be watchful... [instruction to all of us; be watchful, take it in] ...and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die. For I have not found your works complete before God" (vs 1-2). *I better examine myself!*

Verse 3: "Therefore, **remember** what you have received and heard... [the first love; that joy and strength] ...and hold on *to this*, and repent. Now then, **if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief**, and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you."

What is the instruction? Ephesians 6:13: "Therefore... [because of the urgency of the reality of our calling, of the great prize] ...**take up the whole armor of God**..."

Why? *Because you have an enemy and you have to strive!* ***You can't do it easily!***

"...so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand. Stand, therefore... [this is how]: ...having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [where you could be wounded/hit spiritually] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace" (vs 13-15).

Verse 16: "Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith... [your belief, trust in God will be attacked; you've got to keep that strong] ...with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one"—*sniper's bullets!*

How do we stop satanic sniper bullets? "...**take up the shield of the faith**..." *Never stop believing and trusting!*

Verse 17: "And put on **the helmet of salvation**, and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the Word of God."

This is your own ammunition to shoot and fight back! You defend and attack, this is the strategy that makes the enemy retreat!

Verse 18: "Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

In military training, one would need to jog at least ten miles/16km. You need, but it's not an easy-going exercise. But in war, it could save one's life. Another strategy is to 'watch each other's back.' *Supplication for all the saints! **The price of diligence or victory is almost beyond belief!***

John 6:48: "I AM the Bread of Life."

Verse 51: "I AM the living Bread, which

came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this Bread, he shall live forever...”

What a promise! Can we weigh that promise of living forever? We’re getting old and wearing out. Our bodies become stiff and sore, and we see atrophy! Does that ring a bell with us? We stop and look at what’s being said: “...**live forever**...” *The Scriptures give us just a glimpse!*

- Can our imagination actualize the enormity of what is being documented here?
- Can you encapsulate it?

Matthew 13:43: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father...”

- How bright does the sun shine?
- What kind of power does the sun have?

Revelation 1:16: “...His countenance was as the sun shining in its *full* power. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead...” (vs 16-17). *That’s what John wrote!*

Matthew 13:43: “...The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.

John 6:51: “...if anyone eats of this Bread, **he shall live forever**...”

It’s incredible the promises that Christ gives us!

I heard years ago and that a man had felt a heart attack coming on, and he was up high on a platform and he would have been dead. But what he did was, in realizing that, caught his leg in the supports and as he fell he dangled and broke his leg, but they saved him. He was alive!

There is a spiritual equivalent here that we all know. The admonition is to grow, to prepare. Are we taking measures.

Revelation 3:3 “Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and hold on *to this*, and repent...”

Does that mean to repent once, or in continuum, continually grow and continually repent?

“...Now then, if you will not watch, **I will come upon you as a thief**, and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you” (v 3). *Surprise again!*

If you’re always doing the right thing, always diligent, otherwise we’ll be taken by surprise.

Revelation 16:15: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* the one who is watching and is keeping his garments, so that he may not walk naked

and they *may not* see his shame.”

Revelation 19:7: “Let us be glad and shout with joy; and let us give glory to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife... [the Bride, firstfruits] ...has made herself ready. And it was granted to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright... [spiritual clothing] ...for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

Verse 9: “And he said to me, ‘Write: **Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**’ And he said to me, ‘**These are the true words of God.**’”

There’s a lot more to follow and happen after that. We go into the Millennium.

Be ye ready! Let’s keep our loins girded, our lamps burning, and keep going: **Be prepared!** *By the goodness and mercy of Christ and the Father, see you there!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 12:36
- 2) Revelation 3:20
- 3) Luke 12:37-40, 35
- 4) Revelation 3:11
- 5) Luke 10:38-42
- 6) Matthew 15:21-28
- 7) Revelation 2:1-7
- 8) Matthew 20:1
- 9) Proverbs 24:30-34
- 10) Ecclesiastes 6:9
- 11) Proverbs 20:13
- 12) Revelation 3:2-3
- 13) Ephesians 6:10-11
- 14) 1 Peter 5:8-9
- 15) Ephesians 6:12
- 16) Revelation 3:1-3
- 17) Ephesians 6:13-18
- 18) John 6:48, 51
- 19) Matthew 13:43
- 20) Revelation 1:16-17
- 21) Matthew 13:43
- 22) John 6:51
- 23) Revelation 3:3
- 24) Revelation 16:15
- 25) Revelation 19:7, 9

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