

ARE YOU READY?

Welcome.....

I want us to look deeply at these verses today....

*1John 2:28-29 - *“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
29If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.”*

Pastor Brent has just finished teaching us through the books of first and second Thessalonians.... and what an awesome inspiring and eye-opening Word from God.....

I don't know if you are like me, but if someone asked me to narrow it down, and what is the one, single, largest inspiration that you have gotten from those two books what would it be?

I would have to say.....

“I want to be ready, because Jesus is coming soon!”.....

Remember, at the end of every single chapter in first Thessalonians, that the writer references the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..... and also our gathering to Him.....

And he tells us to comfort each other with this.....

And then, in second Thessalonians, referring to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him.....

He says, *“Don't worry, the Day of Christ hasn't come yet, and it won't come, until the falling away happens, and He who restrains is taken out of the way”*.....

And we as a church leadership fully believe that he is saying that this day of Christ, and the beginning of the tribulation won't happen until the Holy Spirit within the church, is taken

out of the way..... and that is you and I, meeting the Lord Jesus Christ in the air to be with Him forever.....*caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord*.....

The rapture....

And as Pastor Brent said....many say.....

Ya *but the word rapture isn't in scripture*.....

No you're right, the original Greek Word is Harpazo, but the Latin Vulgate translation, translates the phrase "*caught up*" with the word "*rapturus*", from which we get our English word *rapture*.....

So in essence, it is there in God's Word..... and in my estimation the argument against it...is kind of silly.....

So, if you are like me you want to be ready, because the Lord is coming quickly.....

We want to be the "faithful church" from the book of Revelation.....Named as The Church of Philadelphia.....

And listen to what Jesus is saying here, and I believe also referencing our removal from this earth before, the tribulation....

Speaking to the Church of Philadelphia He says.....

*Rev 3:10-11 - "*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

11"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

See there it is..... Jesus says, "*I AM COMING QUICKLY!*"

And He says that He will spare His "Faithful Church", from the hour of trial, that will test everyone who dwells on earth.....He'll gather them to Himself.....

And He says, "*I am coming quickly!*"

Do you know that Jesus says that, three more times in the book of Revelation.....?

Three more times He says, "*I am coming quickly!*"

And he says it those three more times...RIGHT AT THE END OF THE BIBLE...IN THE LAST CHAPTER.....

Like a summary of the WHOLE BOOK.....

In Revelation chapter 22 verse 7...*I AM COMING QUICKLY*...

Verse 12...*I AM COMING QUICKLY*....

And verse 20...*I AM COMING QUICKLY*.....

Do you think He's coming quickly!?!?

Ya.....I think so.....

But the idea is..... are you ready for His coming?

Are you anticipating it? Are you excited for it? And not afraid or worried.....Are you preparing for it? Are you serving the Lord and growing in your relationship with Him?

Are you living a holier and holier life?

And you know many people are afraid of this word, "*HOLY*"...

I can't be holy..... only God is holy.....

And in essence, that is true..... but to BE HOLY....we can, and do, play a part in it....

It's the Greek word....*hagios*.....holy.....

The same as the word for sanctified....*hagiazo*.....

To be sanctified.....

And it simply means...to be *SET APART*.....

If you are here today, and Jesus is your Saviour and your only hope, and you have surrendered your life to Him.... do you know that the moment that you surrendered to Him.....

"Oh Jesus, forgive me of my sin, and give me life!".....

The moment you did that..... you were SET APART, made *hagios*, HOLY...HOLY FOREVER....SANCTIFIED.....

This isn't me saying this..... it's not MY opinion.....

We don't tell you these things at our church just to make you feel good so that maybe you would come back and continue to fellowship with us.....even though we'd love that....

We say these things, because...That's the beauty of just teaching through God's Word, and sticking to God's Word... because everything that you will hear from this pulpit isn't from our own personal thoughts or opinions, or conclusions..... it's what we hear in God's Word.....

And we are just The Messengers.....

*Eph 1:13 - "*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,*"

God said.....YOU ARE NOW MINE.....set apart...until He comes back to get you.....because He purchased you.....

Well.....how do we know that?

Not my own opinion..... I know this just because I read the very next verse... and God told me.....

Remember in Ephesians, chapter 1 verse 13, he has just said that once we believed in the gospel of salvation, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit.....then.....

Eph 1:14 - "...(The Holy Spirit) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*"

Jesus bought you and I, at a great price.....the cost of Himself..... and just like a gift card or a coupon that hasn't been redeemed yet but you have full ownership of the product or service... and no one can take it from you....

God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is coming back to take you to Himself.....because He owns you.....

Brothers and sisters..... we are so secure in Him, I can't even describe it to you because it would be a whole other service.....so we are sanctified and set-apart forever.....

But NOW.....you are now being

PRACTICALLY....sanctified.....*hagiazo*.....

Because you are still stumbling all over the place sometimes aren't you.....but God is practically moulding you, and changing you, and creating the new man or woman in you, to be in the image of your Saviour Jesus Christ.....

There's a lot going on in you and I, in our minds, and in our hearts, and in the details and in the events of our lives....in our relationships, and God is involved in all of

that.....building us into the image and character of His Son Jesus.....

If you are still struggling and faltering in sin here and there..... but you love Jesus and you are repentant and want forgiveness for those sins..... don't question your salvation..... you are in a process of sanctification.... you still carry this.....what Paul calls..... this body of death... that is still susceptible to sin..... but God is doing a work in you..... and as Philippians, chapter 1 verse six says, "**God will complete the work that He has begun in you**"

Just stop hanging onto those sins and let Him do His work.... It's for you..... because He loves you, and He wants you to have the blessed life.....

Do you know, many times we take this next verse I'm going to share here.....not in its full context.....

***Rom 8:28 - "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*"**

And we love that verse don't we.....

The idea of knowing that if I love God, and I am saved, and I serve the Lord, that everything in my life, works together for my good..... all of the joyous things, and beautiful things in my life, but also all of the difficult things, and the challenging trials that test my faith..... God is asking me to trust Him, that ultimately.....it is all for my good.....

He is doing a work.....

But what....is that work,.....that He is doing in me, that everything is working for my good?

The answer is in the very next verse.....

***Rom 8:29 - "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*"**

That's the work that He is doing in You and I.....

Conforming us to the image of His Son.....

SO THAT WE CAN BE READY FOR HIS COMING.....

Jesus is coming for us..... He knows that...and God knows that... and the Holy Spirit knows that....and they are excited about it, and they are looking forward to it.... but they love us also, and they want US, to be excited about it, and to be looking forward to it... and to be talking with one another about it....and to be comforting one another with it...and NOT... afraid or ashamed at His coming.....

THAT..... is why He is sanctifying us and preparing us for His coming.....again as John said

***1John 2:28 - “*And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*”**

Stop listening to the devil, to the enemy.....

Because with many of us, he is telling us.....*that a holy life, a godly life, a Spirit filled and Spirit lead life.....is either IMPOSSIBLE....IS A BORING LIFE.....*

ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?!?!?!?!?!?

Now, especially you young people who are here today and maybe listening online.....

DON'T LISTEN TO THAT GARBAGE.....

The enemy is a master liar and enticer.....

Because he KNOWS..... there is many sins in this world that you maybe have not tasted yet.....

And you have been told by God and by your parents, and by your church, and by God's Word, and maybe by friends.... that those sins are wrong, and they are against God's Word, and God's will.....

But let's be honest..... some of those sins still hold a kind of mystery to you, and an attraction because they have a luring element to them.....

But know this..... The enemy, the devil, your adversary KNOWS that some of these sins contain an enticing mystery to you..... and he wants to play you..... he wants to fool

you..... he knows you still have this body of flesh that is susceptible to sin.....

But don't let him play you.....

And for the sake of being completely transparent and truthful here.... because I think it's that important, especially for our young people, but for everyone..... I want to tell you why you shouldn't let him play you and why you shouldn't buy into these Temptations of the flesh that he will put before you in your life, especially as a young person, but as I said, for all people....

And as I said to be really transparent, this might sound a little harsh.... but the big reason why you shouldn't listen to that lying enemy..... and do not listen to what is going on, sometimes in your body, the Temptations of the flesh..... to not listen to it.....

Is because he wants to KILL YOU.....

He wants you dead....spiritually AND physically.....

I know that sounds harsh, but that's the truth.....

The writers of the Bible didn't hesitate to speak truth.....

*1Peter 5:8 - "***Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.***"

That's pretty straight talking there from God, from the Holy Spirit.....

And I would encourage any young man or young woman, or for that matter, anyone who struggles with the lust of the flesh or sexual sins.... To read through some of the earlier, proverbs that lay out the insidious methods of the enemy, and the alluring weaknesses of the flesh, sexual sins.....

And where are they ultimately lead?

As a younger, Christian, I didn't know that some of these details were in God's Word....and I didn't know that God knew better than me, about some of the darker inner thoughts and temptations of a human being....

And that is why we need to trust Him, and His Word, over and above our own thoughts and feelings, and tendencies.....
At the end of Proverbs 7, it sums up where all of this sexual immorality leads anyone to.....

***Pro 7:27 - “*Her house is the way to hell,
Descending to the chambers of death.*”**

And the last few verses of Proverbs 5 say this, telling us that God knows the way that we can go, and He is warning us.....

***Proverbs 5:21-23 - “*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD,
And He ponders all his paths.
His own iniquities entrap the wicked man,
And he is caught in the cords of his sin.
He shall die for lack of instruction,
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.*”**

That’s pretty intense, isn’t it?

So, like I said, I really feel it’s that important in today’s day and age, and in these latter days to be very open and honest about these things in the church.....

And I know that there are many other sins that people fall into other than sexual sins, but God in His Word, speaking of the latter days, seems to pinpoint these lusts of the flesh and these sexual sins, as a significant problem or sign of the times.... Peter, in Second Peter and Jude, both use Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of what the world will be like in the latter days..... so let’s take this to heart....

God’s Word, the Bible, is such an infinite resource of truth, and that is one of the challenges when teaching from the pulpit topically..... what do I reference? Where do I go? Which parable do I use? What doctrine do I stand on to make my point..... and it goes on and on.....

So, to sum up this idea of living a life that is ready to meet my Lord, and being confident in His return, instead of

ashamed...for ALL of us..... let me use these verses from first Peter.....

***1Peter 1:13-16 - “*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”*”**

This phrase, “gird up the loins of your mind”, was known to the Israelites, but it is no less a phrase that WE... as followers of Jesus Christ need to understand and heed..... It’s a phrase that God used to tell the Israelites to be ready... to leave at a moments notice during the Passover when God was going to free them from the bondage of Egypt..... They put the blood of the unblemished lamb on the door posts of their houses, so that God’s coming judgement would bypass the people in that home.... It set them apart....made them holy.....set apart for God and protected IN HIM....

Just as faith in the shed blood of the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus... keeps us safe from God’s judgement.....and sanctified US....makes US holy and set apart.....set apart for Jesus and protected IN HIM.....made ALIVE in Him.....

And we are to GIRD OUR LOINS....or be ready to leave at a moments notice.... because the imminent return of Jesus is at hand.....

We are doing exactly what they did.....

***Exodus 12:11 in the KJV says, speaking of the Passover meal.....**

“And thus you shall eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste.....”

They were told to be ready to go, because God was going to pull them out of Egypt.....

Egypt in scripture is a picture of THE WORLD.....and the TRAPPINGS and slavery of the world.....

Didn't Peter said the same thing to us.....

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.....

The revelation of Jesus Christ... when He snatches us up, or raptures us up, in the air, to be with Him forever.....

So, just like the Israelites, we are to be first covered in the blood of Christ.....safe from God's judgement.....and then to have our shoes on and our staff in hand, ready to go.....

Although I know, most of us don't carry a staff.....

Except for me, I carry two.....just to be sure.....

But the point is that we are to be ready, ready for His coming...confident in His coming, and not ashamed.....

And this is simply what holiness is.....to make a determined decision, to set my life apart, for the service of God, of Jesus Christ..... and I can do that, and make that prayerful decision, no matter what my position in life is..... if I'm an electrician, or a student, or a stay at home mom, or an engineer, or a business owner, or a pastor, or a teacher, or anything..... these are all great things, but..... my first priority is faithfulness and service to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.....

So I am.....***not conforming myself to the former lusts, as in my ignorance.....*** I'm not thinking like I used to...acting like I used to...participating in some of the things I used to...

because as Peter says...that was when I was in my

ignorance, but I know now.....WE ALL KNOW NOW.....

Don't we.....JESUS IS COMING.....

***TOPIC SLIDE**

You will say yes, I want to be holy and live a holy life, and be set apart and ready for the coming of Jesus, but I still struggle with falling here and there in sin....

And we don't have time to go through all of the scriptures that describes this Christian struggle and God's plan and path for us..... so I'll just quickly run through some of these truths in God's Word that help us, and hopefully it may help some of you, with this journey and battle, and help us be confident and ready for His return.....

Especially for some of you, that may not yet understand some of the fuller details of God's forgiveness and mercy towards you, and you may still be beating yourself up.... It's really all about trusting in Him and not ourself...and trusting that what He tells us in His Word, is true...no matter how we feel.....

The apostle John told Nicodemus the Pharisee, that a man needs to be born again to see the kingdom of God....

That, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.....

So we can't be born again of the flesh, but he says that our spirit, needs to be born again to see The Kingdom of God.... to be saved..... to go to heaven when we die..... and as we have been looking at, to be confident at His return.....

And in 1Peter, Peter tells us that because we obeyed the truth through the Spirit of God, and believed God's Word, and the gospel of the good news that was preached to us, that we have now been born again.....

YOU HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN.....

Simply because.....YOU BELIEVED in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for your sins, and that He rose again to victory.....

And you repented of your sin, and confessed it to God, and asked for forgiveness.....HAVE YOU DONE THAT?..... So no matter how you feel one way or another, by faith you need to believe that in doing so you were forgiven..... The slate was wiped clean.... not because you deserved it, but because

God is full of mercy and grace, and put the payment or punishment for your sin, ON HIS SON.....

And Ephesians 1:13, as I have already said, but is important to reiterate.....says that once you believed the gospel and received it.... You were sealed with the Holy Spirit.....

And He is a guarantee in you..... holding you and keeping you until Jesus comes back for you...to redeem His purchased product, which is you... He paid for you.....

We are His.....

So how do I get ready for Your return Lord.....

Well, it's an ON GOING PROCESS, that God has given us to STAY CLOSE TO HIM.....It's all in His Word, because He KNEW you would struggle.....

First recognize your sinfulness.... never let it get ahead of you and have sin, build upon sin, build upon sin, build upon sin..... Sin has a way of callusing your heart and destroying your God given conscience.....

James describes how sin entices you WITH YOUR OWN DESIRES.....DON'T LISTEN.....

And it's not like God doesn't understand this struggle you have in the flesh with your sin.....

Please just read and study Romans chapter 7..... and you will hear from the apostle Paul, who, after 30 years in ministry, still struggled with the sins of the flesh.....GOD KNOWS...

So, as I said, this is an ongoing process.....

When you struggle and falter in sin, after recognizing it, ask God for His grace, mercy, and forgiveness, just like you did when you were first saved and born again.....

We NEVER STOP DOING THIS.....

Both of these points and things that we do, of recognizing our sin, and then asking for God's grace, are encompassed in these beautiful verses that we thank God for as Christians.....

1John 1:8-9 - *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We should do this daily.....as Christians.....

Then after doing this....**WE TRUST, BELIEVE AND GRAB A HOLD OF HIS PROMISES FOR DEAR LIFE.....**

This is SO IMPORTANT to believe by faith.....

NO MATTER HOW YOU FEEL....HOLD DEAR TO HIS PROMISES.....

Who is more faithful.....you or Him?

You need to trust the promises of God because if you don't, overtime you will just beat yourself up for everything you do.....

We can't go through all of them, because there are so many, but here are just a few.....

- First and foremost...

* John 3:16 - ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”***

- **WHAT A PROMISE...because you believed....YOU WERE SAVED..... hang onto that.... it's the helmet of salvation.....**

- And remember that Jesus said, ***“I will never leave you, nor for sake you.”***.....He is always there for you..... because you are now His.....

- And when you feel chaos, or all out of sorts, and you are questioning your salvation..... Thinking, am I just fooling myself? Remember Jesus did all the hard work and all God required of you is faith.....

*Rom 5:1 - ***“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”***
GOD IS AT PEACE WITH YOU.....

- and when time goes by, and you are still struggling in your flesh..... remember.....God knows.... that's why Jesus died for your sins that you committed before you knew

Him.....and all of your sins after knowing Him...until you see Him face-to-face.....

***Rom 8:1 - “*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*”**

These are just some of God’s promises, that we have to grab a hold by faith, to have any success in this journey, this transformation.....

- That’s why the next part of the journey is so important for all of us to be ready and confident at His return and not ashamed.....

***BE IN THE WORD.....**

KNOW GOD’S WORD.....STUDY IT....REST IN IT.....IT WILL TAKE CARE OF ALL YOUR NEEDS UNTIL YOU SEE HIM.....

It will rebuke you when needed....It will comfort you when needed....It will instruct you when needed.....It will give you wisdom and advice when needed.....It will cleanse you and mould you, and most importantly it will teach you how to love..... how God loves agape love, unconditional love..... Getting out of self and focussed on God and others.....and on and on God will use it to get you ready for His return.....

If you want to be holy, and set apart for God, and ready for His coming..... The best thing you can do as a Christian is to grow and be moulded **BY THE SPIRIT**, through the Living Word of God.....

Heb 4:12 says that God’s Word will search **EVERYTHING** that is in your heart.....

And 2Tim 3:16-17 says that God’s Word will give you everything you need.....literally everything you need, for every good work and everything He has for you.....

So if I can leave you today, and you only take one thing with you about getting ready for the return of Jesus, and to be confident in His return, and not ashamed.....

It would be this.....

Read God's Word daily, and meditate on it, and pray about it....

God will answer you, and tell you everything that you need to do, and He will get you ready.....

And the most important thing.....

If you don't know, Jesus..... and you are still carrying around the weight of sin and the weight of your conscience and guilt..... as we said earlier..... go to Him..... ask Him for forgiveness...because He is merciful, and filled with grace..... and He will forgive you..... and you will step from darkness into light, and like I said earlier.... you will be born again.....

And He'll come back for you....

And if this is you today....reach out to us.... reach out to me... or one of those who will be upfront here for prayer, or anyone in the church, because we would love to pray for you and support you in your new life.....

Pray.....