

Place: Lurgan Baptist

9:7:2006

BACK TO BASICS

Reading: 1 John 2:18-29

8. HOW DO YOU WANT TO MEET HIM?

When Dr. Stephen Olford was pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, he had the opportunity of leading his brother to the Lord. His brother, had been an agnostic most of his life, but as he lay desperately ill in hospital, his thoughts turned to the Lord, and he came to Christ. Sometime later Dr. Olford was called to come to the hospital quickly and visit his brother who was deeply disturbed. So he went into the room and said, “ *Richard, I want you to know you are saved, and even though you have a terminal illness, and though you are going to die, you’re saved, and you’re going to heaven, when you die, and you don’t have to be afraid to die.*” Richard said, “ *Stephen you don’t understand. I know I’m saved, and I know I’m going to heaven when I die. Its not that I am afraid to die, I am ashamed to die.*”

Can I ask you, how do you want to meet the Lord ? Now these two last verses of (1 John Ch 2) serve as a bridge between the two main themes of the book. In the first two chapters John deals with Fellowship or how to walk daily with the Lord. In (Ch’s 3-5) John deals with Sonship, or being born of God. He has pointed out the contrasts between *light and darkness* (1:1-2:6) *love and hatred* (2:7-17) and *truth and error* (2:18-27) John has explained that a real Christian lives a life of obedience, love, and truth. Its impossible to live in fellowship with God, if you are disobedient, or hateful, or untruthful. Any of these sins will lead you out of reality and into pretence. Now it seems like John is tying up the loose ends of his teaching on fellowship in this section of his letter, it is as if he is attempting to draw his argument to a close when he says “ *and now.*” It’s a summary verse and together with (2:29) it serves as a bridge between the two main themes of the book. Now I want to talk to you this on the subject, “ **How do you want to meet Him ?** For there is a time in the future when every believer will face God. The Scriptures teach that everyone will be judged, but not all at the same time, or in the same way, or for the same reason, nor with the same results.

When we think a about the Coming of the Lord we are mindful that there is a need for sinners to be ready. If you are unsaved, you run the risk of being left behind when Jesus Christ returns. My each day you live without Christ, you’re taking a tremendous risk with your eternal soul ! But when we think about the Coming of the Lord we are mindful that there is a need for saints to be ready. The need is not salvation, for that has already been settled. The need is to live in such a way that when the Lord appears we might not be ashamed before Him at His coming ! So what is it that lies ahead for every believer ? How do you want to meet Him ? Look at these two verses and notice that John speaks here of,

(1) THE ACTUAL REALITY OF HIS COMING

Do you see what John says ? (2:28) This is the first mention in this letter of the promised return of Christ. The Book of Revelation deals in detail with future events. Now keep in mind that the Second Coming of the Lord will take place in two stages. In essence the Rapture of the Church will introduce the Tribulation period, the Second Advent will conclude the Tribulation period. At the Rapture Christ comes to the air, (1 Thes 4:16-17) At the Second Advent Christ comes to the earth (Zech 14:4) At the Rapture He comes for His saints, at the Second Coming He comes with His saints (3:13 Jude 14). The Rapture is presented as a time of blessing (1 Thes 4:18). The Second Coming is presented as a time of judgement (2 Thes 2:8) The Rapture seems to involve the church primarily (1 Cor 15:51) The Second Coming seems to involve Israel, then the Gentile nations (Matt 24:1 25:46).

The Rapture we call *the Appearing*, the second coming we call *the Advent*. Now John is speaking here of our meeting with the Lord in the air followed by our appearance at the Judgement Seat of Christ (1 Cor 3:11-15 2 Cor 4:10). John says “ *He shall appear,*” and he speaks of “ *His coming.*” He talks here about,

(a) *THE NATURE OF HIS COMING:*

The word “ *appear,*” means to “ *manifest, be revealed, to render apparent,*” at the hour of His coming, the Lord Jesus will make Himself known to every believer. “ *He,*” will be seen by those who are saved. The word “ *coming,*” here is *parousia*, which is the Greek word most frequently used in the Bible to describe the return of Christ. It means “ *presence,*” (2 Cor 10:10) It stresses the coming bodily presence of Christ for His people. John says, “ *He shall appear,*”

1. “ *HE,*” suggests PERSONALITY:

Do you recall that the Book of Hebrews refers to the three appearings of Christ ? It says “ *for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*” (9:26) This is the first appearing of the Lord Jesus, He came into this world two thousand years ago to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Now another appearing of the Lord Jesus is taking place at this very moment. For the writer to the Hebrews says, “ *for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*” (9:24) That is the *present* appearing of our Lord Jesus ! Right now Christ is in heaven and He appears in heaven for you. Did you know that Jesus Christ is praying for you ? Is that not an encouragement to live for Him in your daily walk ? But another appearing is mentioned in that passage, “ *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*” (9:28) My this is the *future* appearing of Jesus Christ ! Are you not glad that He is coming personally ? 1.

2. “ *SHALL,*” suggests CERTAINTY:

Do you recall what the Saviour Himself said ? “ *If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again,* ” (14:3) Paul says, “ *the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,* ” (1 Thes 4:16) There are no “ *ifs,* ” or “ *buts,* ” Christ is surely coming ! 1. 2.

3. “ *APPEAR,* ” suggests *VISIBILITY:*

Do you recall that John in the opening verses of this letter spoke of how he had heard, and seen, and touched the Lord ? (1:1-2) We have never had that privilege, but one day we will for “ *He,* ” will be seen by those who are saved. He will come personally, actually, visibly, and we shall see Him.

*“ Some golden day break,
Jesus will come
Some golden day break battles all won
He’ll shout the victory break through the blue
Some golden day break for me, for you.”*

(b) *THE NEARNESS OF HIS COMING:*

The word “ *coming,* ” here literally means “ *a being near.* ” When you think of this nearness, you think of a ***prophetic nearness.*** For a careful and honest study of the N.T. will lead one to believe that prophetically, the coming of the Lord must be near. Then, there is a ***personal nearness.*** For we will be in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ ! You know, as believers we can enjoy a closeness of His presence today, but when He returns we will actually dwell in His presence for all eternity. Do you see how John puts it in (3:2) ? We have walked with Christ by faith on earth, but in the air we shall see Him as He is. This is the church’s hope. This is the believers prospect,

*“ Face to face with Christ my Saviour
Face to face what will it be
When with rapture I behold Him
Jesus Christ who died for me.”*

(2) THE PERSONAL SCRUTINY AT HIS COMING

For at His coming every believer will stand before the Lord where their service and motives will be examined.

(a) *For ALL Christians there will be Examination:*

Do you recall the words of the apostle, “ *For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad.* ” (2 Cor 5:10) The words translated “ *judgment seat,* ” comes from the Greek word, “ *bema.* ” The “

bema,” was the seat of an umpire, it was a familiar term to athletes who competed in the games. For in those large stadiums there was an elevated seat on which the Umpire sat. From this seat he had a clear and unspoiled view of the participants in the arena. After the games were over the successful competitors assembled before the “ *bema*,” where they received their rewards. This was a seat from which the rewards were distributed to those who were victorious. Paul says “ *we must all be manifested without disguise before the bema.*”

1. At this “ Bema,” Judgement our Motives will be Reviewed:

Moffatt translates (1 Cor 4:5) like this, “ *the hour of reckoning is still to come when the Lord will bring dark secrets to the light and reveal life’s inner aims and motives.*” Then the question will be, “ *Why do you do what you do when you do it ?*” Are you ready for such an inspection ? Are you ready to answer the Saviour’s why ?

2. At this “ Bema,” Judgement our Service will be Reviewed:

Paul says, “ *Now if man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. Every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.*”

(1 Cor 3:12-13) Do you realise that God classifies your works into the following six area’s ? Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ! The permanent and the perishable, the indestructible and the destructible. The former stand the fire test, the scrutiny of the Judge, the latter do not. (Rev 1:14) My will your present service, what you’re doing for the Lord, now, will it abide the fire of the Bema ? Will your works endure the test ? The story is told about a conversation between two little boys. One of the boys noticed that the others Grandmother spend a lot of time reading her Bible. “ *Why does she read the Bible so much ?*” the boy asked his friend. The other boy replied, “ *She is cramming, studying hard, for her final exam.*” Tell, are you getting ready for this final examination ? (a)

(b) For SOME Christians there will be Excitement:

For John speaks of meeting the Lord “ *with confidence.*” The word means to be “ *out spoken, freedom of speech, no sense of restraint.*” Its descriptive of one who is not ashamed or embarrassed. To meet the Lord with confidence means that when we stand before Him, we will be able to look Him in the eye. We will not blush, or have to look down, but freely express our praise to Him. To meet the Lord with “ *confidence,*” will be an exciting moment, for we will not be restrained or refrain from lifting up our voices in praise and worship to the Lord. We will cry like those in the Book of Revelation, “ *Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.*” (4:11)
(a) (b)

(c) For OTHER Christians there will be Embarrassment:

For John speaks of the possibility of being “ *ashamed,*” before Him at His coming. The word can

be translated, “ *shall shrink in shame from Him.* ” The word “ *ashamed,* ” means to “ *feel shame, be disgraced.* ” My is it possible that we could be embarrassed when we stand before the Lord ? Is it possible that we will not be able to look Him in the eye, but have to look downward because we are shamed ? Why would a Christian be ashamed ? What will make us ashamed at His Coming ?

1. The PRESENCE of SIN:

For one thing ! Tell me, what makes you ashamed now ?

When you have time, take a piece of paper and put at the top of it, “ ***Things which make me Ashamed.*** ” What would you put down ? What about *Indecent Actions* ? Someone has said, “ *Everyone knows that of himself, which he would not dare tell his dearest friend.* ” Indecent things, shameful things, hidden things, cruel deeds, vengeful, spiteful actions. What about *Hurtful Attitudes* ? Attitudes that do not reflect the Christ whose name you bear ! My are you ashamed of your pride, your bitter spirit, your unforgiving spirit, your hateful thoughts, your callous unconcern for a Christian who was in need of your help ? Are you ashamed of the presence of sin in your life now, well, what will you be like the moment Christ appears ? What will make us ashamed at His Coming ? 1.

2. The ABSENCE of SERVICE:

You see, the purpose of this examination is to review our work for the Saviour and the motives behind that work ! But how embarrassing it will be to stand before the Lord, not having served Him or served Him with the wrong motive. Dr. Theodore Epp, the Founder and late President of Back to the Bible Broadcasting Corporation, told the story of a certain professor who in the early years of X-ray technology was asked to demonstrate this new invention as part of an evenings entertainment. The professor asked some of the guests to allow him to place their jewels under the X-ray machine. *When he switched the current on, the rays revealed the true character of the jewels and some of the guests found to their embarrassment that the jewels they had purchased as genuine stones were mere imitations.* Will you think about this ? In one sweeping view our entire life of service will be reviewed and revealed in the Saviour’s presence ! I wonder will we discover that what we thought was gold, will only be wood, hay, and stubble ? How dreadful it will be to pick up the ashes of our worthless service and press them into the nail scarred hands of the Saviour.

***“ Shall I empty handed be
When before the crystal sea
I shall stand before the everlasting throne
Will I hang my head in shame
As I answer to my name
Not a thing that my Redeemer there can own ?”***

(3) THE SPIRITUAL PROPRIETY FOR HIS COMING

“ *He shall appear,* ” so how do you want to meet Him ? You know, John was an old man now. He knew that his remaining days would be few. Soon he would have preached his last sermon and written his last line. The time of his departure was at hand, and like any true under shepherd his heart was greatly concerned for those he would leave behind. What would become of his beloved fellowship ? Antichrists were abundant, wolves were barking at the door, ready to devour the little flock. Christ was coming. How could he protect them from the devil and prepare them for the Lord ? Suddenly a tender thought struck his heart. Why, the best thing for a sheep to do is simply stay near the shepherd. So he says to them,

(a) ABIDE IN HIM:

This is essential if we are going to be prepared to meet the Lord when He comes. The word “ *abide,* ” is the key word in the first two chapters of John. Eleven times in this second chapter John has used this word, which has to do not with salvation, but with fellowship with God, our walking close to the Lord daily. You say, how do you abide in Christ ? By obedience (1:1-2:6) by love

(2:7-17) by truth (2:18-27) ***Obedience, love, truth !***

Tell me, are you abiding in Christ ? Could you be that you are a believer but out of fellowship with God ? Is it because you have disobeyed His Word, is it because you lack love for a brother, is it because you have believed a lie ? Do you need to have fresh dealings with God ? Do you need to confess you sin and claim His forgiveness ?

(b) LIVE LIKE HIM:

Look at (2:29) We know, beyond any shadow of doubt that He is righteous. From the cradle to the grave He was wholly free from sin. In describing the Lord’s priesthood, the writer to the Hebrews declares that He is “ *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* ” (Heb 7:26) We know that He is righteous, and we know also that we are not righteous. God’s verdict on human life is blunt, “ *there is none righteous, no, not one there is none that doeth good, no not one.* ” (Rom 3:10) So when we meet someone that “ *doeth righteousness,* ” we automatically know that he is “ *born of Him.* ” You see, if I am in Christ, as a branch is in the stem of the vine, then the life of Christ must be flowing through me, producing its own fruit of Christ-likeness ! ***To be righteous is to be like Jesus !*** Now tell me, “ **How do you want to be meet Him ?** ” Is Christ going to catch you red-handed with things in your life you do not want to be there when He comes ? Wouldn’t it be awful for Christ to come and find you displaying your old nature ? Wouldn’t it be terrible for the Lord to come and find some believers who are not speaking to other believers ? Isn’t it tragic for Christians who allow bitterness, and malice to infect their hearts ? Would it not be wonderful if when He came he found you abiding in Him and living like Him ?

When Dwight Eisenhower was president of the U.S.A. he took his holidays in Denver, Colorado. There was in Denver a six year old boy who had incurable cancer. The boy expressed the wish that he might see President Eisenhower. One morning the President arrived in his great limousine.

He walked up to the front door and knocked. The father opened the door in his blue jeans and old shirt with a days growth of beard. When he saw the President he was speechless. The President took the six year old boy out to see the limousine and talked with him for a while. Then he shook his hand and left. For many days after that father would recount the story to his family and friends and say, “ *And just to think, there I stood with my dirty old jeans, my old shirt, and a day’s growth of beard. **What a way to meet the President.***”

My **when Christ appears, what way will you meet Him ?**