

THE LORD IS COMING!

Message One

Ready or Not?

Hymns: 987 (Living He loved me), 1312 (It may be at morn),

At end: 1314 (Lord, Thou wilt soon appear)

I. The Lord is coming

A. The Lord's coming is a great reality and fact, promised in His Word—Acts 1:9–11; Matt. 24:30–31; 1 Thes. 4:15–17; Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20

B. The Lord's coming is the blessed hope of the believers—Titus 3:11–14

II. The signs show that His coming is near—Matt. 24:33; Luke 21:28, 31

A. The Lord gave us many signs and prophecies concerning His coming so that we would not be deceived—Matt. 24:3–5, 11, 23–27; Luke 21:8; 17:20–24

B. Three of the signs mentioned in Matthew give a strong indication that the Lord's coming is near

1. An increase in the occurrence of wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and famines, as signified by birth pangs—Matt. 24:3–8; Luke 21:9

2. Increased lawlessness and a cooling of people's love for God—Matt. 24:12, 37–39; Luke 17:26–30; 2 Pet. 3:3

3. The restoration of the nation of Israel, as signified by the fig tree—Matt. 24:32–33; Luke 21:29–31

III. The Lord's coming is like a thief in the night, and no one can know the day or the hour—Rev. 3:3; 16:15; 1 Thes. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10; Acts 1:7

A. These verses refer to the Lord's secret coming for His believers (His *parousia*) before His open coming

B. In His secret coming, the Lord comes as a thief in the middle of the night—Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:35–40; Rev. 3:3

C. The Lord comes "at an hour when you do not expect it"—Matt. 24:36, 42, 44, 50; Luke 12:40

IV. We have to be ready when He comes

A. The examples of the householder and the slave waiting for his Master illustrate the need to be watchful at all times—Matt. 24:43–51; Luke 12:35–48

B. "One is taken and one is left" indicates that we need to prepare ourselves for His coming—Matt. 24:40–42; Luke 17:34–36

C. Not looking back indicates that we need to be ready to go with Him when He comes—Matt. 24:36–39; Luke 17:26–32; cf. Matt. 4:18–22

D. We all can pray, "Lord, make me ready for your coming!"

Further Reading: Acts 1:1–12; Matt. 24:3–8, 11–51; Luke 12:35–48; 17:20–36; 21:7–19, 25–36; Titus 2:11–14; Rev. 3:3

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Message Two

Filled or Empty?

Hymns: 1307, 1308, 1315

- I. **The parable of the ten virgins should cause us to be sober and watchful (Matt 25:1-13)**
 - A. Virgins signify believers viewed from the aspect of life, bearing the Lord's testimony in this dark age. (2 Cor 11:2; Rev 14:4)
 1. That all ten virgins are believers is signified by their having oil in their lamps, their regenerated spirit. (Prov 20:27)
 2. All ten virgins rise to go forth to meet their bridegroom
 - B. The ten virgins represent the majority of the believers who have died at the time of the Lord's coming.
 1. Five prudent and five foolish does not mean that half are prudent and half are foolish, but rather that all believers have the responsibility (and the supply) to buy the extra portion of oil.
 - a. The number five is composed of the number four (the number of man in creation) and the number one (the number of God).
 - b. The number five therefore represents God being added to man to bear responsibility.
 2. Oil in the vessels of the five prudent virgins signifies that they have the Spirit of God filling and saturating their souls.
 3. Being drowsy and slept represents becoming ill and dying before the Lord returns.
 - C. At the call to go forth, they all trimmed their lamps signifying that each virgin needed to deal with the testimony in their living.
 1. The foolish realized that they did not have enough oil in their vessel, so they asked to have some from the prudent, but they needed to go buy the oil for themselves.
 2. No one can buy the oil for us; we have to pay the price for the oil in our vessels ourselves.
 - D. When the Bridegroom came, those who were ready were ushered into the wedding feast, and the door was shut.
 1. This is not the door of salvation, but the door through which one enters into the enjoyment of the Lord's wedding feast.
 2. When the rest came the Lord said He did not know them (*recognize, or approve of them*) for participation in His wedding feast.
 3. They were late in paying the price for the filling of the Holy Spirit so they were not allowed into the wedding feast.

II. Our Lord is coming as the Bridegroom and we should desire to be the prudent virgins to go in with Him to His feast

- A. This requires us not only to have oil in our lamps but also in our vessels
- B. We must pay a price in order to gain the extra portion of oil in our vessels
 - 1. By giving up the world not by our own effort but by the operating, faithful God within us (Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Thes. 5:23-24)
 - 2. By loving the Lord and being drawn to Him as our Bridegroom (Heb 12:2a, S.S. 1:2a)
- C. We must turn to the Lord so that the veil that covers our heart is taken away and we can be transformed, gain the extra portion of oil in our vessels (2 Cor. 3:16, 18)

References:

Life-Study of Matthew, Message Sixty-three

The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move, Chapters Seven and Nine

Scripture Verses taken from *Holy Bible—Recovery Version*
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Message Three

Faithful or Slothful?

Hymns: 987, 895, 909, (*at end*) 463

I. The Lord is coming as our Master

A. In Matthew 24 & 25 the Lord has a dual status in His coming

1. He is coming as our pleasant Bridegroom—
 - a. To bring us into the wedding feast which He has prepared for us
 - b. This is for us to enjoy with Him as our dear Bridegroom
2. He is also coming as our strict Master—
 - a. To bring us into participating with Him in the authority in His Kingdom of 1,000 years (the Millennium)
 - b. This is to enter into the joy of our Master

B. We also have a dual status

1. In life we are virgins—we have been regenerated in our spirit with the pure, undefiled life of God
2. In service we are slaves—we have been redeemed, purchased by the blood of Christ, and we belong to Him as His slaves—1 Cor. 6:19-20
3. To be the Lord's slaves is our eternal destiny—Rev. 22:3b

II. As our Master He has entrusted His possessions to us—this is His commission

A. His possessions include

1. The brothers and sisters
2. The church
3. The unbelievers

B. The commission is for us to care for them by feeding

III. As our Master He has given to each one of us the gifts which are needed to fulfill the commission

- A. The divine life—Eph. 4:7 “To each one of us grace was given,” note 7—“Grace is actually the divine life that produces and supplies the gifts”
- B. The speaking ability—1 Cor. 14:30 “You can all prophesy”
- C. The content of the gospel, the truth, the word of God

IV. As our Master he is coming to settle accounts with His slaves

- A. How did we care for His possessions?
- B. How did we use the gifts and abilities He has given us—did we produce a profit, gain an increase?
- C. The reward is according to faithfulness—Mt. 25:21, 23; 1 Cor. 4:1-2 “A man should account us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, furthermore, it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful.”

V. The way to be faithful in service

- A. On the negative side—(*The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 148–150)
1. Don't speak negatively about your fellow slaves—this is the same as beating them—Mt 24:49
 2. Don't eat and drink with the drunken—Mt 24:49
 3. Don't dig in the earth (the world) to bury the gift the Lord has given to you—Mt 25:18
- B. On the positive side—(*The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 119–123; 154–156)
1. We have the church life with so many dear brothers and sisters we should:
 - a. care for one another by contacting and feeding one another
 - b. meet with one another by twos and threes, and function in the meeting
 - c. serve together in the corporate church service
 2. We have unsaved friends and contacts in school—we should pray for them and bring them to the Lord
 3. We should participate together in spreading the Lord's Word by handing out gospel tracts, BfA door-hangers, etc.

References:

Life-Study of Matthew, Messages Sixty-five and Sixty-six
The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move, Chapters Eight and Ten

Scripture Verses taken from *Holy Bible—Recovery Version*
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Message Four

Clothed or Naked?

(Preparing the Wedding Garment)

Hymns: 1318, 1314, 1310

I. We were given the first garment, our qualification, by the Father to be betrothed to Christ

Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

Isa. 64:6^a For all of us became like him who is unclean, / And all our righteousnesses are like a soiled garment;

Psalms 45:9 The daughters of kings are among Your most prized; / The queen stands at Your right hand in the gold of Ophir.

Hosea 2:19–20 And I will betroth you to Myself forever; / Indeed I will betroth you to Myself / In righteousness and justice / And in lovingkindness and compassions; / Indeed I will betroth you to Myself in faithfulness, / And you will know Jehovah.

2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

II. We must prepare the second garment, our conduct, in order to match the Bridegroom

Psalms 45:14 She will be led to the King in embroidered clothing; / The virgins behind her, her companions, / Will be brought to You.

Rev. 19:8–9 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints. And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Matt. 22:2, 11 The kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. . . . But when the king came in to look at those reclining at table, he saw there a man who was not clothed with a wedding garment,

Phil. 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

III. We will be judged for reward or punishment according to our possessing a wedding garment

Matt. 22:12–13 And he said to him, Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, Bind his feet and hands, and cast him out into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Rom. 14:10, 12 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God, . . . So then each one of us will give an account concerning himself to God.

2 Cor. 5:10 For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.

Matt. 12:36–37 And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

1 Cor. 4:5 So then do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then there will be praise to each from God.

IV. We must pay the price to buy the wedding garment by abiding in Him through His living word

Rev. 3:17–18 Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.

Psalms 45:13 The king's daughter is all glorious within the royal abode; / Her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

1 John 3:24 And he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us.

References:

Life-Study of Matthew, Message Fifty-eight

Life-Study of Psalms, Message Twenty-one, pp. 261–267

Life-Study of Revelation, Message Sixteen, pp. 200, 201–207

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Message Five

Expecting and Hastening!

Hymns: 956 (Soon our Lord will come), 1306 (We love Thy coming, Lord!),

At end: 1314 (Lord, Thou wilt soon appear)

I. The Lord does not delay regarding the promise—2 Pet. 3:9a

- A. The Lord promised repeatedly to come quickly; why has He delayed so long?—Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20
- B. This is not His delay but His mercy—2 Pet. 3:9b, 15
- C. Time is not critical to the Lord; the fact is what is critical—2 Pet. 3:8
- D. To the Lord, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day—2 Pet. 3:8

II. The Lord's heart is not set on the time but on His people

- A. We don't know how soon He will come; we know He is waiting for His people
- B. Hence, we need to expect and hasten His coming—2 Pet. 3:12; 1 Thes. 5:23–24; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7

III. Our holy God expects a holy manner of life—2 Pet. 3:1–15

- A. Our God is so holy as to dissolve all things by fire—2 Pet. 3:10
- B. We ought to be in a holy manner of life to match Him—2 Pet. 3:11–12
- C. The divine power has granted to us everything we need to live such a holy life—2 Pet. 1:3

IV. Paul balances his encouraging word with a warning to watch and be sober—1 Thes. 4:15–18; 5:1–11

- A. This word indicates that we are in a battle—1 Thes. 5:6–8
- B. We should watch and not sleep—1 Thes. 5:2, 6a
- C. We should be sober and not drugged with the worldly pleasures or with a false sense of security—1 Thes. 5:3–8

V. To expect the Lord's coming is to look for it to happen at any time

- A. The chief priests and scribes missed the Lord's coming even though they knew all the facts—Matt. 2:1–6
- B. Simeon and Anna were expecting and watching, so they recognized the Lord's first coming—Luke 2:25–38
- C. Many will miss the Lord's second coming, but we can be the ones who recognize His coming—Mark 13:32–37; Luke 12:35–38
- D. The Lord will be faithful to get us ready for His coming if we cooperate with Him—1 Thes. 5:23–24

References:

Life-study of 2 Peter, Messages Eleven and Twelve

Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, Message Seventeen