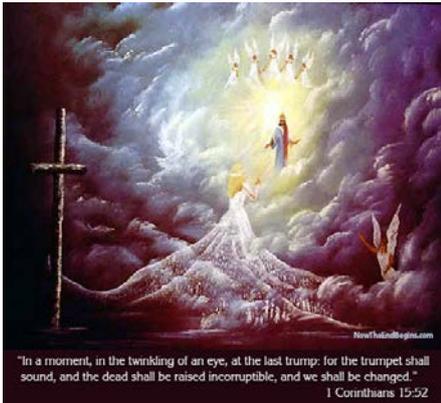


Australind Vineyard Christian Fellowship

from the Pastor's heart  The Sword of the Spirit the Word of God



The Rapture

I have a friend who believes that the rapture is a surety in his lifetime. He is around 67 years of age and is eligible for pension. He has worked all his life while believing for the Rapture and so has never bought a home to settle down in for his retirement.

How sure you of the rapture and what are you doing to prepare yourself to meet the Lord in the air? The first question of course is; do you believe in the Rapture? The second question is; do you believe it will be in your lifetime? If you can answer these two questions then you are obviously doing preparing for it or not.

How does one prepare for the Rapture? Living life in a way that it can happen any moment may be one way of preparing for it. That means you are doing everything within your capacity to prepare yourself in holiness and righteousness so

that you are not left behind. If you are living life with a "not sure not about all this" attitude or I really do not care about this, you will obviously live life without much concern about this event in the Christian calendar. Then we have those who say; "It will all pan out". I hold deep concerns for those who belong to the "pan out" theology. They are neither hot or cold and so they do nothing but live life the way they want to.

My personal opinion is, the Rapture is a significant event in prophetic that will earmark for the world the supernatural methods of God just as the Virgin birth of Jesus. This event which has been widely recognised by many in the Christian and secular world as being a true event is still debated. It continues to defy man's reasoning about virgin birth just as it defies their understanding of being born again. Then there is the day of Pentecost, when God poured out His Spirit on His disciples which was also noised abroad causing many to wonder which many have accepted as a true event and others ridiculed it even till today and surprisingly in the Church as well. Yet, that too was supernatural. Therefore, the Rapture is not a farfetched idea but a truth explained very clearly to us in the word.

1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 1Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1Co 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Th 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Whichever school of thought you belong to, there is enough evidence for the coming of the Lord that requires paying attention to the close proximity of this event among Christians. As one Preacher said, the signs point to the coming of the Lord so they also point to the Rapture, which is another sign of the soon return of the Lord. My hope is, the Church will be ready to exercise its God given authority in establishing righteousness in the Church and preparing itself as a bride for the Rapture.

What makes it such a significant event is, the world will be emptied of believing Christians who are righteous and ready to go with the Lord. The unwise virgins were not ready even though they had the oil (anointing) because they were not filled up to last the wait. Many such Christians are in the Church today. They cannot make the distance because they are tired and have gone to sleep. God's exhortation in the book of Isaiah was to arise and shine because of the gross darkness that is coming upon the earth which we know is now even upon the earth. Hope is a very hard ingredient to find in people these days. What we must realise is, that it is only the anointing oil (the word through the Spirit) in us that is keeping our lights burning. My question is; do you have enough to go the distance while you are waiting? Are you living in despair and hopelessness? Be honest with yourself. When you are honest with yourself, then you will know to seek the Lord and ask Him for the fresh oil on your head each day. Everyone has to seek God daily while He can be found. We are all in the same boat.

With great power comes great responsibility. That power is the knowledge of the word, which is the power of God to salvation. Power is not cheap nor can it be used to gain something in this lifetime. Elisha cursed his servant because he sought after the goods of this world by using his office to gain wealth from Naaman the leper who was healed by Elisha's word. When Elisha did not take the reward of his gift by God to heal, Elisha's servant however saw an opportunity to gain from the anointing and did a devious thing against his master. So Elisha cursed him. *2Ki 5:26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? 2Ki 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.*

It never ceases to amaze me how many Churches today talk more about money and its need than the power of the gospel to do the same. The abuse of money in the Church is out of control. This is why, the curse of the earth is upon them. The sin of this world is rife in Churches through stealing, sexual indiscretions, pornography, false teaching and false pursuits of worldly benefits. Jesus counselled us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This is the true value of what He wants us to have.

Once the Rapture takes place, many who are on earth who belong to the world and those who were left behind because they were not ready or backslidden will not have a clue about what to do. How is the gospel going to be preached? I believe that we need to devise ways to tell our unsaved families and friends what to expect. We have to leave behind a deposit of God's words that are written and spoken to them so that it will come up in their remembrance when this event happens. We can leave behind books, cds and written material discreetly for them to have or find. I believe that the internet at this point will be a great tool for them to come to the realisation of the truth. We also need to speak to them. The Rapture is a good talking point that will get them thinking about Jesus. Many people today are interested in prophetic events and paranormal activity. Irrespective of what they think about it, it is still a good thing to point out the consistency of the word of God and the nature of God's goodness to all who would repent and turn from their wicked ways.

Maybe, you have a question or two about this subject and what it means to you as a Christian and cannot understand how to prepare yourself. I would like to highlight a few points about this to you.

1. You must be born again **John 3.1:5**
2. You must be water baptised **Acts 2.38** and Holy Ghost baptised **Matt 3.11**
3. You must be walking in holiness and righteousness **Heb 12.14**
4. You must be about the Lord's business **Matt 6.33 - Luke 2.49**
5. You must be ready as the Bride of Jesus to receive Him **Eph 5.27**
6. You must be watching and praying **Mark 13.33**, absorbing your Bible **John 5.39** and having fellowship with believers **Heb 10.25** and avoiding worldly pursuits.

I believe that many people who are not ready will be left behind. That means, they will be required to make a decision about the anti-Christ and whether to accept his world system or not. If anyone accept his system, they will lose out on salvation through Jesus. *Rev 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, Rev 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

Our faith should say, no matter what happens, God is with us and so we do not have to follow a world system of the anti-Christ. Our earthly lives hold no significance except in preaching the gospel and walking righteously before God. Many Christians do not understand that the pursuit of God is a wholesome journey. It is about going from glory to glory. This means, we have to allow the Holy Spirit to change us into this image of Jesus and we have to cooperate with Him. The more we resist or give excuses for not wanting to grow; we will find ourselves less able to understand our Christian journey and how to gain access to God in intimacy and love. As a result, we will find ourselves battling life for all that it hands out rather harshly to us.

My friend went on a recent mission trip to India and found that while his journey was a good one, he could not handle the harshness of life that he saw in India. It was not the fact that he had to face it (because in his heart he knew he was coming back to Australia) but it was the fact that he saw what life was really like. Many of us in Australia do not understand what life is really like for most of the world. We see it on TV and are appalled but you can never really know until you have lived it. It is this hellish life that the devil is trying to bring to Australia and make it a third world nation. If you have lived a life in desperation, you will realise that waiting on God takes on a completely new dimension. It is a lot easier to lose sight of God in such circumstances and turn to one's own devices. However, in the western world, the same applies because of abundance and materialism, apathy and sheer ignorance about the lack of a spiritual life by pursuing a worldly life. There is a movie called "The pursuit of Happiness". It is about a black man in America who rises to a reasonable position from the streets after having lost all with a young son in tow. He made it to financial stability and lived happily ever after. However, he did not know God nor did he even depend on God for one moment of his life of difficulty or wealth. He did it his way in a world system and succeeded. Today, many who have seen this movie will say;"wow, what resilience". My friends, if he could do it for worldly gain, how much more should we do it for the gain of the Lord and heaven.

The Rapture assures us that we will be with Jesus forever and ever. What does that mean. It simply means, the sufferings of this life time are removed for an eternity for all who believe and are **patient**. There will be a great joy of a new world. *Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

God Himself will be with us and we will have a whole new world open to us where only the life of God will be seen and experienced in glory. I think, that is something to live for and wait on God for and to follow His commandments. The alternative is also an eternity in hell for all those who do not believe and turn back to beggarly elements of this world.

As we go into this New Year, expect the supernatural to increase and look for it in your own lives. Seek God first and then all other things will be added to you.

With love

Pastor Noble

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