



A V o i c e F r o m T h e W i l d e r n e s s

Get Ready, Get Ready, Get Ready

There is an urgency that now is the time, today is the day of salvation. For so long we have been confessing with our mouths the present judgment, the nearness of the end of time and the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we continue to live our lives just as if these events were far off into the future. The pleading of the angel sent of God is, "Get ready, get ready, get ready." In order to be ready to receive Christ at His second coming we must understand that He is coming to us by His Holy Spirit today. We must recognize Him now; then we shall recognize Him when he comes in the clouds of heaven.

There are many aspects to our preparation but I would like to discuss two which I consider foundational. The first is where we live - the physical preparation, the second is how we live or who we serve - the spiritual preparation. This does not mean the physical is first in priority ahead of the spiritual. The preparation should be going on simultaneously. Each enhancing the other. While we were in our suburban setting prior to our move to the country, we were preparing physically, simplifying our lives and beginning to redeem our time, and spiritually -beginning to see our true condition and our need of a Saviour to change us. Our country location provided the opportunity for the on going preparation and strengthened our faith and dependence upon God.

God has chosen for His people the environment where we are to

live in the process of getting ready. When He created our first parents He placed them in a garden setting among the holy ministries of nature. But with everything that God has done, Satan has created a counterfeit. Satan did not want man to be in a quiet place, sensitive to the will of God, so he set up a false and artificial environment. It is called a city. You can read about it in Genesis the fourth chapter. When Cain was sent away from his family he started the first city. God is calling His people to leave the cities for a quiet country (rural) setting. He wants to prepare us not only for the physical crisis that is ahead, but also prepare us in **heart** (our attitudes & affections), **mind** (our reason & will) and in **character** (revealing Christ in our daily interactions) to give the "loud cry" and to be ready to meet Christ. He says, "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. **Then** will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." Ezek. 36:24-28. God has a work to do in each of our hearts to pre-

pare us for His soon return. He is pleading with us to get ready, and He is calling us to an environment where this work is to be done. Yet how many argue (say), "You mean that if I live in the city or suburbia, I can't be saved?"

No, but it is ten times harder, a hundred times harder. "There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally or spiritually, by residing in the city." CL 13. This preparation in the best environment is challenging, why make it ten times, a hundred times more difficult?

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things; and I will receive you." II Cor. 6:17.

And again, the call is made, "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. 18:4.

Friends, we don't realize the impact the city and suburbia have on our lives physically, mentally and spiritually. We may say, "I don't participate in the world's sins and pleasures, I don't touch the unclean things, I just live there for my work and as a witness." But what we behold we become. Whether we want to or not we are being fed the world's way. We are constantly stimulated by the world. Every sense is being bombarded with the subtle lies of Satan, and we have become deceived into thinking that they have no effect. Every time we drive our eyes are constantly beholding messages from signs and billboards. They communicate messages to us on how to indulge the flesh, the passions and the appetite. They tell us what to eat, how to spend our money, what will make us happy, where we need to spend our vacations to really enjoy life and if someone has wronged us, how to go about getting even with them. Everything we see feeds the fleshly nature.

Our ears are constantly bombarded with noise of all kinds, from all directions. Whether we are sitting at a stop light and our body is vibrating from the music in the car beside us, or we are asleep at night and are awakened by loud voices, tires squealing and sirens, we are impacted. Recently we were in a large city holding meetings. The people we were staying with live in a fairly nice and quiet housing development. The first night there I was awakened 3-4 times before midnight by the loud traffic - hotrods, music, squealing etc. Then at 2 a.m. I was awakened again, this time by loud, boisterous, foolish voices from a group of youth walking down the sidewalk. In the morning the father in the home said, "How did you sleep?" They had become so accustomed to the constant confusion that they were not even aware of it. But friends, it does have its subtle effects. We wake up in the morning tired, yet our bodies are racing. We feel the push, rush and hurry before we ever walk out the door.

Our sense of smell is affected as are our lungs. After we re-

turned home, we were walking down our mountain road and someone passed us in a pickup. Immediately we all noticed the fumes in the air that were very strong and very repulsive. For 40 or 50 feet the fumes permeated the fresh air. We recognized that the air we had breathed in the city was so filled with the exhaust and pollutants that we weren't even aware of it because it is a gradual change, imperceptible.

Our tastes become affected as we are in the fast pace. We have so little time to spend in preparing simple, wholesome food. Our meals are fast foods, prepared foods and processed foods all of which directly impact our taste buds and our health. Look at the

number of restaurants, cafes, and fast food stops. The streets are lined with them. Then, as you go to the grocery store almost everything there is a "quick," "instant" and "easy" answer to feeding our family. So also our spiritual appetites and tastes are affected. We have a quick prayer, read a daily devotional page and perhaps even have family worship then we are off into our day often not even remembering what the devotional was about.

While staying in one home the neighbor a few doors down the street was burglarized. This bold act took place, not in the darkness of the night, but in the morning hours as people were getting up, taking their morning walks, retrieving their newspapers and going off to work. The impact on the

home where we stayed was to shut and lock all the doors and windows. We become prisoners of fear and violence locked within our own homes.

Friends, the counsel to move our families out of the cities and into the country is not just so we can live in a better environment alone. Country living is not meant to be just a change of address but to bring us into an environment which is more conducive to a change in heart, mind and character. A place where we are not continually stimulated and bombarded with the things of this world, but a place of peace and rest where we can slow down enough to see our real self and recognize our need of a personal Saviour who longs to save us from our selfishness and pride - our sin. The call to **get ready, get ready, get ready**, is a call to a place where we can be still and know God. We must be diligent to act on the pleading of God who loves us with an everlasting love, a love that longs to save us from ourselves. Already it is becoming more difficult to leave the cities and move to the country. "We can leave anytime," are the words of many. Friends, we must simply believe what God says, "The more nearly we come into harmony with God's original plan, the more favorable will be our position to secure health of body, and mind, and soul." MH 365.

We have seen a great exodus of people leaving the cities and suburbia for a country home. Many are motivated from an invest-

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ment perspective. They do not see the economy as being stable so they are investing their means in rural properties. Others are moving out from fear of living in the cities, and yes, even from nice communities where crime and violence is rapidly increasing. The real estate market is dropping in many cities, property values are declining and some who wish to leave cannot sell their homes for what they owe. Then, in the reverse, country property prices are increasing 1-4 times their value because of the demand, making it difficult to find affordable homes.

"**Get ready**, is the word sounded in my ears. **Get ready, get ready**. He that is to come, will come and will not tarry. Tell My people that unless they improve the sacred opportunities given them, unless they do the work I have given them, Satan will come upon them with the stealthy tread of a thief, to deceive and allure them. God wants us to be wide awake, that when He shall come, we shall be ready to say, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. He is coming to us by His Holy Spirit today. Let us recognize Him now; then we shall recognize Him when he comes in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. God calls upon you to get ready to meet Him in peace." RH 4-30-1901.

This is the pleading of God to each of us - not just to live in the country, but to prepare our hearts and lives. This is the call to my heart. This is the message that is being impressed upon me with greater force than I have ever recognized it before. This is the Spirit of God pleading with each of us to prepare to meet our God. The call is coming to us individually, it is coming to us as families.

The preparation that we each need is not of outward reform or compliant behavior. You may say, "Well, you just made quite a point about country living. Isn't that an outward reform?" It can be, but the choice is ours. If we move to the country to get away from the wickedness of the world only or just because God said to and are not willing to let Him do the work in our hearts which is the real preparation, it would be just a form. The country is neither our salvation or our Saviour, but it is an environment where it is 10 times easier to hear the Saviour speak to our hearts, to bring us into a deeper relationship with Him. It was when we moved to the country that my Christian experience began to grow, where my love for Christ is deepening and my longing to be fully cleansed of all sin and self has been most recognized and sought after.

The preparation we need is the preparation of our hearts! It is the submission of our will to the will of God. To **know** His will for us and **want** that above our own human desires and to **choose** it against the clamorings of the flesh. The getting ready that the Lord is calling me to (us to) begins and operates in our thoughts. Our words, feelings, expressions, actions and even the aura about us is

generated from our thoughts. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Prov. 23:7. There is nothing that is hid from God. He knows the very secrets of our thoughts. We may live in the right place, eat the right foods, wear the right clothes, profess the right doctrines and do the right things, but if we have lustful thoughts, pride of opinion, if we are holding onto bitterness or any other **secret sin**, we have not Christ. All our external good is as "filthy rags." This type of Christian experience is one that is "weighed in the balances and found wanting." Dan. 5:27.

Some have asked, "How do you know if your heart is right or if you are just works oriented?"

I believe we each can know by what happens in our heart. If we do it because it is right or we are supposed to but in the quietness of our thoughts we wished we could continue doing as we have done in the past, it is self that is making the change. It means self is trying to do what is right, instead of choosing to have self subdued and have the Spirit empower us to do what is right. But if we **see** what God is calling us to and we **want** to do it, then **choose** to allow our self to be subdued which means there is not one thin thread of self holding onto the "I wish I didn't have to" or "I wish I could just..."; **then** we have real peace and we are truly yielded to God. I know the difference in my own life, and my husband and children know the difference in their lives. It is not complicated. It is the simplicity of

the gospel that even a child can understand.

Our problem is that we have so long tried to justify our position, excuse our actions and rationalize our motives that we have complicated the work of the Spirit in our lives. The complication comes in our unwillingness to believe that His will is really better, when myself is clamoring to rule. The complication is our fear of what God may ask us to give up. The fear that we might not really be happy if we always did God's will instead of what self wanted. Be honest friends, isn't this how we complicate His gospel?

The getting ready that our Saviour is pleading for us to do is on an every day, moment by moment basis beginning in our thoughts. In between speaking appointments our family was planning to take a special day outing with a picnic lunch. In preparation to leave by 8 a.m. I laid a couple of water jugs and a small package on the bed to take along with us so that on the way home we could return the item and fill our water jugs with better tasting water than what we had where we were staying. I had told my husband that I wanted to take these along with us. A few minutes before 8 o'clock my husband said, "It's time to go." He walked right past the things on the bed and out to the car. The children went right to the car. When I came out of the bathroom walking through the bedroom I saw the two jugs and package on the bed and picked them up. When I

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went to the kitchen I saw the two sacks with the picnic lunch and added them to what I was already carrying. My husband and children were all waiting for me with the car running. I was prepared physically for the trip wasn't I? But what about the Spiritual preparation? These are the thoughts that immediately ran through my mind. "Why couldn't he get the stuff on the bed? He knew we were supposed to take it with us? Why didn't someone get the lunch? Why didn't anyone ask if there was anything they could do to help?" Do you see where the focus naturally goes? The big I becomes touched! It immediately looks at others as a cause or reason to become wounded, fretful, agitated, or irritated. But as fast as those thoughts came to mind came the call to my heart to surrender them to the will of God. I knew what He was calling me to, no chafing spirit, no faultfinding words to frustration or irritation, no self pity that I always have to be the one to do things, and no pouting or selfish silence. I know the difference from just doing what is right and holding onto all the thoughts and feelings inside and to really let go of all of the sin and self. I have never found peace or satisfaction in this response. I silently prayed, "Lord, I don't want to feel this way or even think these thoughts, please take them from me." And **He did!** I saw things from their perspective. My husband's focus was to leave by eight. The children were excited about doing something different and having some much needed family time. The thoughts in their minds were simply different than the thoughts in mine. The Lord helped me to understand their perspective, rather than become irritated because they weren't seeing mine.

But friends, what would have happened or could have happened if I chose to hold onto those thoughts? They would have found expression - it is inevitable! What we think we become, whether we speak them or act them out, we carry an atmosphere about us that directly relates to our thoughts and feelings. It is in the little things of every day, the small occurrences of life where we are to get ready. We are told, **"get ready for the great day of God by carrying out in the daily life the perfect principles presented to us in the life of Christ."** We are called by Him to be His representatives...We are to live in conformity to His will, representing Him in life and character." TDG 372. And we know the difference in our inner most heart whether we are His representatives or trying to act out His will without His power.

As we learn to truly surrender our thoughts, opinions and perspectives to God as He calls to us in these small annoyances of the flesh, it becomes easier to take hold by faith and with each yielding of the heart it leads to greater faith and victory to victory through Christ. Our characters begin to change. I am recognizing that in many situations where self would typically be quick to respond, there has not been the clamoring for expression. When the situation arises my first reaction in my thoughts has been to do or say what my Lord is quietly prompting would please Him. This has been an encouragement to me that God can create a new heart in

me and I long for more. I long for the full experience that when I am doing my will, I will be but carrying out the will of God for me - the two becoming one **and the one being His!** This is the place of true peace and rest for our souls.

Are we preparing? Are we using each moment of our precious probationary time to allow God to work in our hearts, cleansing us from all self and sin? Are we earnestly seeking to live in the environment God has chosen for us to come to know Him more fully and to be better able to distinguish His voice? The pleading of God for us to get ready is a call to bring all our thoughts into His captivity. This means where we live and how we live. There is not time for us to be acting like Christians on the outside and holding onto our selfish ways, opinions or habits -excusing them, justifying them or rationalizing them. Even if we do not let others know, the secrets of our own thoughts are clear as the light of noonday to God. We are told, "Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in hearts, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life." GC 486. This is the area that we are called to in the preparation to meet our God. We are now in the judgment, we have only this day to prepare - to get ready; how shall we use this moment, this day? Will we be willing to have our hearts searched, to have every secret sin cherished in our thoughts revealed, confessed, repented of, and **turned** away from and a new heart created in its place? This decision is ours individually. **Get ready, get ready, get ready is the message for each of us!**

A Voice From The Wilderness

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Restoration International

(928) 821-6315

Email: office@rionline.org

Web: www.rionline.org

Office: Mon-Thur. 9-5