

ARE YOU PREPARED TO MEET GOD?

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." Amos 4:12.

Since the fall of man in Eden, God's voice has been calling man to turn from his evil ways and live. God desires the salvation of all men. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezekiel 33:11.

This divine command, "Prepare to meet thy God," was first addressed to the people of Israel. They had received innumerable blessings from God, but had ignored His goodness and counsel. God had done His best to redeem Israel from her sin and shame, but when she failed to respond, He called upon her to prepare for judgment. This command also applies to all those who have not made any preparation to meet God. It is high time for all to heed His warning and prepare to meet Him.

Are you prepared to meet God? This is a simple, striking, serious, solemn and searching question. When asked what was the most important thought that ever occupied his mind, Daniel Webster replied, "The most important thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God." The thought of one's relationship and responsibility to God is the most important thought that can occupy the mind of any person. We are certainly brought face to face with this thought in the familiar words of this text, "Prepare to meet thy God."

There is nothing mysterious about these words. What the text means is as clearly seen as a path of tar across a field of snow. Its meaning is as easily understandable as the moonlight in the sky is seeable on a clear night. Although these words are plain and simple, they are sometimes seemingly misunderstood. People prepare for every thing except death and their inevitable meeting with God. They get ready for athletic contests. They get ready for college. They get ready to marry. They get ready for political elections. They get ready for vacation trips. They get ready to go into business. They get ready to have a "nest egg" for the rainy day of old age. They get ready for everything except the most important thing in life and in death -- meeting God. They make the same mistake that the world's greatest conqueror, Alexander the Great, made and recorded in his last writings, "I have given time and thought to everything but death, and that is the most important thing that I could have considered." In a lecture to the students of his Pastor's College, C. H. Spurgeon gave a bit of timely advice in the exhortation, "Young men, do not let any sentiment prevent you from warning men to prepare for death."

I. Why Should You Prepare to Meet God?

1. Because you are unprepared.

All the scriptures which represent man as destitute of spiritual life, as hostile to God, as dead in sin, as having a heart which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," intimate that man in his natural state is not prepared to meet God. Sin has unfitted man for personal communion with the holy God. A sinner without regeneration could no more relish the enjoyments of the heavenly world than a blind man can enjoy the beauties of a flower garden, or a deaf man enjoy the music of an orchestra or a sick man enjoy a sumptuous banquet.

If you think that you do not need preparation to meet God, you are sadly mistaken. Even though you are moral, honest, refined, cultured and highly respected, you must prepare to meet God. After comparing your life with others, if you think that you do not need preparation for the judgment and eternity, you are wrong. Your record bears the blots, the blemishes and the blightings of sin. "For there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." You know that you have not loved God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and all your strength. You know that you have not lived up to every word of His revealed will. Therefore, you, too, must prepare to meet God.

To neglect preparation and to spend your days in rebellion against God and to die unprepared to meet Him would be the greatest calamity imaginable. It would be far better if you had never been born than to live and die unprepared. It is certainly merciful and gracious of God to give you warning, counsel and opportunity to prepare to meet Him.

2. Because you are commanded to prepare.

With the utmost clearness and solemnity God has commanded you to prepare to meet Him. The statement, "Prepare to meet thy God," proves that fact. Have you obeyed God's command? The highest wisdom under heaven is in being obedient to Him. Whatever God commands us to do is right and safe and best for us. Since He requires preparation, it is necessary that we obey Him. Nothing is clearer than that our first business in life is to prepare to meet God. We must not allow anything to interfere with or prevent that.

Preparation to meet God is not something beyond our ability. God never commands the impossible. He never asks us to make bricks without straw, to carry water without vessels, to dig ditches without shovels or to kindle fire without wood. His willingness and ability to save us and to make us ready to meet Him show that it is possible for us to get prepared.

3. Because you will have to meet Him.

When men read our text or hear it preached, their thoughts are generally directed to their meeting with God on the day of judgment. Every person who believes the Word of God knows that the time will come when a meeting with God is inevitable. There are thousands of things you can refrain from doing. You can refuse to respect the preacher, come to church, read the Bible, pray, repent, believe, come out from among the unsaved and make confession of Christ as Saviour, but you cannot refuse to meet God. You can avoid worship services, but you cannot avoid God. You can dodge the preacher, but you cannot dodge God. You can deceive men and yourself, but you cannot deceive God. All -- the rich, the poor, the wise, the ignorant -- all must meet God. In that matter God does not consult your will.

The summons to judgment no man can turn aside. The call of death all must hear and obey. When the summons comes to you, it will not admit any postponement. You may call in the most accomplished physician and the wisest surgeon, but they cannot put off for an hour the execution of God's death-warrant. The time will come when the healthiest of us must be smitten down in death. Whether we will or not we must all die and go to the judgment. There will not be any evasion of that meeting. Prepared or unprepared, you must meet God and be welcomed to heaven or doomed to hell.

It is a solemn thing to die and a more solemn thing to meet God alone. You will have to meet Him who created you by His power, who loved you from the foundation of the world, who gave His Son for you, who throughout your life has tried hard to win and save you, whose love has not let you go in spite of your repeated denials. You must assuredly meet Him whom you have forgotten all these years, your Creator whose rights you have ignored, your preserver to whom you have rendered no kind of recompense.

Remember that the Judge will give full consideration to your case apart from all others. You will meet Him personally and He will judge you individually. Do you realize that what He has done and is still doing for you only serves to make the Judgment Throne more terrible if you fail to make Him your Saviour and Lord? You will have to meet with insulted mercy.

Your conscience will remind you that you were invited to repent, that you were urged to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but you would not be persuaded. Remember this, if you slight the warnings of His grace here, you will feel the terrors of His wrath there. To none shall it be so hard to meet God in justice as to those who would not meet Him in grace. God grant that you may never know what it is to meet insulted love, rejected mercy and tenderness turned to wrath. Ere long you will have to meet Him, so prepare to do so and to dwell with the glorified forever.

4. Because you may have to meet Him soon.

We do not know when we are going to leave this life, but we do know that our time here is short and uncertain, and we may have to meet Him soon. Death will end the time of our probation and the time, the place and the manner of death are all hidden from us. The living know that they must die, but they do not know when. "It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment." You may live many years, but you may be called hence immediately. The call may come today or tonight, so what about the preparation? Have you made any?

5. Because of the joy it will give you.

Prepare in order to be happy here in this world Augustine said, "We are restless, Lord, till we rest in Thee." There can be no real enjoyment of life as long as one is in wrong relationship with God. Satan circulates the falsehood, "You can't have a good time and be a Christian!! Truth is the very opposite. Prepare because of the joy it will give you here. It is a joy to meet Him if you are prepared. There is no better or happier moment or experience. It is good to meet Him if you are prepared.

II. How Shall You Prepare To Meet God?

1. Acknowledge your sins.

Admit that you are wrong in your relationship with God. Realize that you cannot save yourself. Like a man in a deep well if left alone. No hope of getting out without help from the outside.

2. Repent of your sins.

Be sorry for them, give them up, forsake them, turn your back on them.

3. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Put your trust in Him as your Saviour. Acts 16:31.

III. When Should You Prepare To Meet God?

There is but one answer and that is "NOW." "Now is the accepted time." Now! Not tomorrow, but today. Not when you have a more convenient season, but now, Cotton said, "Tomorrow is apperiod nowhere to be found -- unless in the fool's calendar. Wisdom disclaims the word, nor holds society with those who own it." Light rejected may become darkness. I beg you to be done with excuses and alibis.

"Life is the season God has given
To fly from hell and rise to heaven;
That day of grace fleets fast away,
And none its rapid course can stay."

Beyond the deadline there is no rectification of blunders. In the grave there is no place to pray or repent or believe. I do not want you to fear death; I want you to be prepared for it. "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Prepare now because no better time will ever come, you will never have as few sins to account for, there is nothing to be gained by waiting, delay will rob you of many blessings, the Lord will never be more ready to save you and tomorrow may never come. Now is God's time, the right time, the best time and might be the only time.