

You Also Must Be Ready - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince emphasizes the importance of being spiritually ready for the unexpected return of Christ through vigilance, prayer, and understanding the signs of the times.

Duration: 28:29

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:29, Matthew 24:43-44, Luke 21:28-31, Luke 21:34-36

Topics: "End Time Prophecy", "Spiritual Readiness"

Description

This sermon by Derek Prince Ministries delves into the themes of light and darkness, the two harvests of salvation and judgment, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the increase in satanic activity. It emphasizes the importance of being ready for the return of Jesus, highlighting the unpredictability of His coming and the need for continuous preparedness. The sermon also stresses the significance of recognizing the signs of the times, staying alert, and being in a constant state of prayer to escape the trials that will come and stand before the Son of Man.

Transcript

Derek Prince Ministries, proclaiming the inspired Word of God around the world. Derek Prince is an internationally recognized Bible teacher and author. Through books, audios, videos, and radio broadcasts, Derek seeks to reach the unreached and teach the untaught.

In over 50 years of ministry, Derek has reached over 100 nations in more than 50 languages. And now, Derek Prince. In the previous session, as I've already mentioned, my theme was light and darkness side by side.

Wheat and tares ripening together until the harvest. The two harvests of salvation and judgment. And then the two Pentecosts, the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.

And at the same time, a tremendous increase in the activity of satanic forces and spirits. And the end product of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the bride of Christ. The end product of the satanic activity is a harlot church.

Now, my question is, how shall we respond to these truths? What is God asking of us? What is the practical application? And I want to give you a number of simple, really, commandments from the Word of God. God seldom gives us recommendations. When He put the tablets of stone in the hands of Moses, it

wasn't ten recommendations.

Not even ten principles. It was ten commandments. Let's turn first of all to Matthew 24, which is this great spine chapter.

And just read, well we could read verses 43 and 44. We'll focus on verse 44. Jesus says, But know this, if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

When it refers to the thief there, to whom is it referring? It's referring to Jesus. If the master of the house had known when Jesus would come back. Now, Jesus is not a thief.

But He says several times, I'm coming like a thief. A thief doesn't announce when he's coming. He doesn't tell you by what entrance he's coming.

He's always designed to take you by surprise. And so Jesus is coming that way. But there's one thing we need to bear in mind.

He's not going to be a thief. When He comes, He's only going to take what belongs to Him. And if we don't belong to Him, He won't take us.

And in the light of that, Jesus then gives this application, beginning with the word therefore. Many of you have heard me say, if you've found a therefore in the Bible, you need to ask what it's there for. Therefore, you also be ready.

Ready for what? For the coming of the Lord. For the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him. So, if you think you know when He's coming, you don't.

One thing you can be sure, He's coming at an hour when you don't expect Him. So all the people who think they've worked it all out are wrong. I mean, they should have seen it.

Because Jesus says, if you think you know, you don't know. Nobody knows. God has designed it that way.

You remember that earlier on I spoke briefly about Deuteronomy 29.29? The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children that we may do them. God has some secret things. The exact time of the coming of Jesus is a secret thing.

And I think it's very foolish to try and pry into God's secrets, because we won't succeed. If God's going to keep something secret, none of us are going to find it out. The problem with the people that pry into God's secrets in many cases is they're not doing the things which God has revealed.

They get so absorbed in the secret things that they don't apply the revealed things. Moses said the secret things belong to God. Let Him have them.

But the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children that we may do them. See, the devil can get us very interested in prophecy theoretically and get us spinning all sorts of fanciful theories and interpretations, but very often if you observe the people that are doing that they're not doing what the Bible says they ought to be doing. They've been sidetracked.

They've been diverted from the revealed to the secret. So Jesus says one thing is important. Be ready and you don't know when it's going to happen.

So what? You have to be ready all the time. There never should be a time when you're not ready. Now I do believe certain things have to happen in the world before Jesus will come.

I believe this gospel of the kingdom has to be proclaimed to all nations. I believe there has to be the apostasy of which I spoke, of which Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2, the Lord will not come until the apostasy. But I don't believe any of us will ever know exactly when those things have taken place.

So it's no good saying, well I don't need to get ready until. The only recommendation that Jesus has is be ready. I remember we had a sister in a little congregation I pastored in London many years ago in the early 1950's.

She was a Jamaican sister. Every time she prayed, she prayed a lot of things. But one thing she always said was, Lord, help us to remember it'll be too late to be getting ready.

I don't know whether it impacted anybody else but it stayed with me nearly forty years. It will be too late to be getting ready. It says in the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins, those who were ready went in.

And those who were getting ready never got in. So we need to live, I believe, in a state of continued preparedness. And that's not an awful burden, it's a delightful state to be in.

It's a state of victory. It's a state when we're alert, we're prayerful, and we see what God is doing and we can flow with His purposes. So, what is entailed by being ready? What will be required of us? I want to suggest four things.

The first three are taken from Luke 21. You see, there's a very close correspondence between Matthew 24 and Luke 21. There's also Mark 13 but I haven't felt free to get involved in that.

I'd like to read first of all Luke 21, verse 29 through 31. Which is called the parable of the fig tree. That comes at the end of this discourse.

It's a kind of application of it. Jesus said, Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

So you likewise, when you see these things happening, the things that he's been describing in the previous verses, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Now we are in a country which has winter, spring, summer and autumn. Have it in the wrong times, but nevertheless you've still got the principle.

So you can understand this. I've been in countries where they never had spring or autumn. It's difficult to explain to them.

But you know, when winter is nearly over and spring is coming, you walk out and you see the trees and they've got these little green buds on them. And you know something. What do you know? Summer is coming.

That's right. You don't have to go to the university or the public library. You don't have to even go and ask the pastor or the rabbi.

That's sufficient evidence that summer is coming. Jesus said when you see these things, in the same way you know the end of the age is near. The harvest is right at hand.

You might go and ask a rabbi and he might misinform you. You might ask some pastors and they wouldn't give you the right answer. But if you use your own eyes and your common sense and look at the Scriptures and then look at what's happening in the earth, Jesus says you'll know for sure on that basis that summer is near.

Now some people interpret the fig tree as Israel. Which I think has got a lot to be said for it. I don't think you could prove it out of Scripture.

So Jesus says when you see the fig tree putting on its leaves, that's an indication that summer is near. Now if you take this to apply to Israel, let me point out to you, it doesn't speak about fruit. It doesn't say when the fig tree brings fruit.

It says when the fig tree puts on its leaves. Now one thing that's convenient about that is, if you apply it to Israel it has a specific date. There was a specific date on which Israel put on leaves.

And it was the 14th of May 1948. Israel became a nation. Now if you accept that, and I mean we don't have to insist on it, but if you accept that, then if Israel is the fig tree, what are all the other trees? All the other nations.

You see, I think one of the most distinctive features of the last, let's say the second half of this century, is the upsurge of nationalism all over the earth. And what is that? It's all the trees putting on their leaves. I explained this to my students in East Africa, in about 1960.

I discovered if I could really show them that the Bible applied to their situation they would listen to it. And when I was there, there were three countries. Tanganyika it was called, Uganda, Kenya.

They were still British East Africa. But they were all eagerly looking forward to what they called in Swahili Uhuru, which means independence. And I said to them, you see what's happening? Your trees are putting on their leaves.

The attitude was we don't want to be a colonial nation. We've got our own customs, our own traditions, our own language, and we want to be ourselves. We don't want anybody else telling us how to live.

And so the British left, and they became three independent nations. Now, in Africa alone, since World War II, at least 50 new nations have emerged. Some of them we don't even know the names of, most of us.

What is that? It's the trees putting on their leaves, all across the earth. Then you go to Asia, and you go to South America, and you go to the islands of the Pacific, and everywhere there's the same intense pressure, we want to be a nation of our own. I would say nationalism, in that sense, is one of the strongest forces at work in our world today.

And it seems even in the dictatorships under communism that it's proving too strong for them. Right at this time the Baltic states are reasserting their nationalism against the Soviet Union. The Armenians are asserting their nationalism.

Everywhere the trees are putting on their leaves. You see, in wintertime, at least if you're like me, one tree looks like another tree. You know, I can't tell from the bark what tree it is.

But when they put on their leaves, every tree becomes distinctive. That's what's happening. So Jesus says when you see the fig tree and all the trees putting on their leaves, that tells you summer is right here.

It's rather interesting the way I can say this being British. But you see, in a certain sense, Israel was the pattern nation. Because they had to get rid of the British to become a nation.

I was living there all through that period, so it's very vivid to me. And after that, nation after nation said, Well if they can do it, we can do it. So, here is a very up-to-date, relevant application of biblical truth.

What impresses me about the Bible is it sees the significance of things much more clearly than we do. See, I would say there is no more powerful force at work politically on earth today than nationalism. It's like the sap rising up in all the trees and just causing them to put out their leaves and become distinctive trees.

Each one with its own culture, its own customs, its own language, and so on. All right, so Jesus says when you see these things, learn the lesson. I would put it in one word, recognize.

Recognize what's going on. I fear there are multitudes of Christians who are not recognizing the times we're living in. Because they're not familiar with Scripture and they don't know how to take the truths of Scripture and apply them to the situation in the world today.

So the first requirement for being ready is to recognize the time in which we live. The second requirement is stated actually just one verse earlier in Luke 21, verse 28. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your hands because your redemption draws near.

Again, it's these things, the things that are listed in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. And it says when these things begin to happen. It doesn't say wait till they've all happened.

It says when these things begin to happen, and some of them are very hard things. Persecution, wars, famines, pestilences. And yet Jesus says look up and lift up your hands.

Don't get depressed. Don't begin to mourn and grieve. Get excited because your redemption is coming near.

You remember when we were talking about Matthew 24 I said these things are the labor pains, the birth pangs of the kingdom of God. So, in a way, you can examine your own attitude by your reaction to the world situation. Suppose for a moment that a young couple get married.

They're Christians and they pray and want a baby. Then they discover that the wife is pregnant and they go through all the standard procedures. Nine months have elapsed and she begins to experience these terrible pains.

They're coming quicker and quicker. How does the husband react? Does he phone the doctor and say, Something awful is happening to my wife. Please come and stop these pains immediately.

Does he do that? No. Why? Because he wants the baby. He knows that babies come that way.

If you want babies you've got to be prepared for some labor pains. Is that right ladies? Am I talking the truth? All right. And it's the same with the coming of the kingdom of God.

If you really want the kingdom of God established on earth, when you see these labor pains you won't get all frightened and say, God, what's happening? Stop it. You'll say, Praise God the baby's almost here. Is that right? Understand? So, you can check your own heart attitude by your reaction to the very terrible things which are happening on earth and I believe will continue to happen.

If you're not really committed to the kingdom of God you're going to get frightened. You're going to get depressed. But if you're really longing for the birth of God's kingdom on earth, no matter how hard and unpleasant the labor pains may be, you'll say, Praise the Lord the kingdom is almost here.

The baby is coming. Do you see that? So you have to check on your own attitude. If you're not really excited about the kingdom of God you're probably going to get depressed.

But if the kingdom of God is what really matters to you you're going to get excited. So pause for a moment. Say to yourself right now, Am I excited? Or am I depressed? Am I sitting here wishing he wouldn't tell us these terrible things? Am I thinking how much longer is he going on and on talking about all the problems? Or am I saying, Praise God the baby's coming.

You have to decide. Then the next requirement is also in Luke 21 verses 34 through 36. Now I'm going to read from the New King James but I'm going to slightly change it because I believe that the NASB and the NIB translate a more accurate, reliable text.

And there's rather an important difference. You'll all have to decide from whatever version you're following in. Now Jesus says, But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and cares of this life.

So, this is the next warning. At this stage we had better check on ourselves. Are we too much immersed in the things of time? Are we too much occupied with the world and its pleasures and its problems? You remember the same phrase in the parable of the sower where the cares of this life choked the seed and made it unfruitful.

I remember most of the translations said the worries of this life. I remember Corrie Ten Boom while she was still with us saying she realized with a shock one day that worry was such a sin that it could keep her from being ready for the Lord. So we need to be really sure we're not burdened down with worries that come from the things of time.

We have in a certain sense to be detached from the things of time. Some of you remember that earlier when I spoke about what the cross is intended to do in our life from Galatians. In Galatians 1 verse 4 it says, Through the cross we've been delivered from this present evil age.

So if we've accepted that deliverance then the things of this present evil age aren't going to get us down. We're not going to be worrying about them. We'll not be worrying about our job, our income, our car.

We'll be in a certain sense involved but in another sense detached. So Jesus says, Take heed to yourselves. Lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing drunkenness and worries of this life and that they come on you unexpectedly as a snare.

That's where I've changed the translation. Then He goes on to say, For it will come on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. So, you've got to determine where you're dwelling.

If you are at home in this earth it's going to come on you. It will come on all those who dwell on the earth. But if you've been delivered from this present evil age and if you've been able to say as Paul said, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world.

Then it won't come on you as a snare. The people of this world cannot escape. It will come on all those whose home is on the earth.

But the people of God can escape provided they watch and pray. You see? The people of this world have no option. It is coming on them.

But the people of God, if we'll meet the conditions, it should not come on us as a snare. I'd say to every one of you who's here right now, from now on, in the light of what I've been telling you, it should not come on you as a snare. It should not take you by surprise.

You have sufficient information to know basically what to expect. And then Jesus tells us how to be sure we'll escape. The next verse is extremely important.

Verse 36. Watch therefore. Now that's old English.

Stay awake. I think the modern translations probably say be alert. Don't get lulled into indifference or carelessness.

Watch therefore and pray always. How long? How often? Always. I don't think that means you've got to pray 24 hours a day.

But it means you never come to the end of praying. Do you see what I'm saying? It says pray without ceasing in 1 Thessalonians 5. That means to say that there's never a time when you say I'm finished praying for today. I'm not going to do any more praying.

I'll have my prayer time tomorrow. I don't think we can afford to be like that, you see. We never know when the Holy Spirit will suddenly thrust in the gear stick and say pray now.

You need to pray. Most of you have heard of Smith Wigglesworth who incidentally impacted this nation in 1925 when he was here. But his principle was this, he never prayed more than half an hour but he never went more than half an hour without praying.

Now I don't mean to say we've all got to follow the same thing but that's an example of never coming to the end of praying. I thank God that in His grace and mercy He gave me two wonderful wives. Not at the same time, of course.

My first wife is with the Lord, my second wife is here this evening. But I have had in each of them a praying wife. Both of them were women who never really stopped praying.

My first wife, you know, had a children's home, Lydia. She was busy washing diapers, sterilizing bottles, doing all sorts of things. But she would pray while she was stirring the soup.

Or she'd get down and pray and one of the little girls would jump on her back and play horses while she was praying. She just didn't know how to stop praying. And Ruth, in a slightly different sense, is just the same.

She is a person who's always praying. We don't have to be like one another. Each of us is an individual.

But we have to be continually ready to pray. I have a kind of principle now. I never, God helping me, I never take a journey without praying.

If I'm going to get in a car to go a drive of five minutes, I commit that journey to the Lord. I say, Lord, I'm trusting You for Your guidance and Your protection. Not only do Ruth and I pray over meals and say grace, but we pray for revival at every meal.

A revival in the United States and Great Britain. At least three times a day normally we pray that prayer. We've prayed it for nearly ten years.

There are many other ways in which we can be in an atmosphere of prayer and an atmosphere of worship. You see that Scripture that Ruth and I quoted? Worship the Lord your God, and His blessing will be on your food and water. So basically when we eat, we say our grace, we pray for revival, and then we take a minute or two just to worship the Lord.

Because we want His blessing on our food and our water. So Jesus said, Stay alert and be praying always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man. There's another translation which says that you may have the strength to escape all these things.

If Jesus said that we have to be praying in order to escape, my conclusion is if we're not praying we will not escape. It's an indispensable condition for escaping.

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