

Preparation for Blessing

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual readiness for the coming of Christ, and the need for simplicity, discipline, and a passion for souls in evangelism.

Duration: 44:21

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:2

Topics: "Spiritual Readiness", "Evangelism"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the urgent need for spiritual readiness in anticipation of Christ's return, drawing from the teachings in Thessalonians and the calling of the first disciples. He highlights the importance of repentance and the role of evangelism, encouraging believers to be diligent in their faith and outreach efforts. Brandon illustrates how Jesus called ordinary fishermen, demonstrating that God seeks those who are actively engaged in their work and willing to follow Him. He stresses the necessity of mending the nets, symbolizing unity and restoration within the church, as well as the importance of personal evangelism. Ultimately, he calls for a collective effort to prepare for a movement of the Holy Spirit and an ingathering of souls.

Transcript

Quickly, on the horizon of time there are two great clouds appearing. The first is the imminent return of Christ. And on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday I want to speak on that subject.

First of all I want to take you through the book of the Thessalonians or the epistle and speak on the subject spiritual readiness for his coming. Then we go right into the fourth chapter and speak of the unique glory of his coming. And then we shall answer a very difficult question.

Can we expect local revivals when the Lord is going to come very shortly? But in the meanwhile we must be ready for an ingathering of souls. Now why? In Britain we have seen the same slump that you're having, only of course it's much more progressive. And thousands of people are unemployed.

And already church attendance has gone up nine percent. That means God takes away the toys and people begin to really think. Now obviously in the next few months if we are spiritually ready we can see an ingathering of souls.

But we must be ready. And that's what I want to speak on just for a few moments. Spiritual readiness for a movement of the Holy Spirit.

And I'm going to turn you to Matthew chapter four. In this chapter we have the Lord being tested. And he comes away from the wilderness where he was tested in absolute victory.

Satan could find nothing to rebound from the master. Probably there in that wilderness Satan gathered all his hosts. That's why we find in the gospel so much demon possession.

And the enemy was completely frustrated. I think in our hearts we're all saying praise God for that. Then he begins to preach the one word repentance that we're going to deal with tonight.

What does repentance really mean in the 20th century? And then he goes from there and he seeks his disciples or perhaps even more his apostles. And we're going to look first of all at the casting of the net. Then we're going to look at the mending of the net.

And if there's time we're going to look at the great subject the letting down of the net. And the nets in scripture have profound teaching concerning spiritual readiness. So shall we read from verse 18.

Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee saw two brethren Simon Corpita and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for they were fishers. And he saith unto them follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed him.

And going on from there he saw two other brethren James the son of Zebedee and John his brother in a boat with Zebedee their father mending their nets. And he called them and they immediately left the boat and their father and followed him. Now God will add his blessing to the reading of his word.

It was vital for our Lord after preaching the great word of repentance carrying on of course from the preaching of John the Baptist that no longer a shadow but the substance of all that John was preaching. That he should find a group of people that he could use mightily for his glory for the extension of the kingdom. He came into the world to deal with the great subject of redemption.

I shan't speak on that tonight but probably the following Sunday. Having accomplished that work he wanted an army of men and women who would fearlessly preach the great story of redemption. And that has been going on for well over 2000 years.

And the message hasn't changed in it there is that power to transform the lives of people. Now here we find the Lord walking by the sea of Galilee and please note the place. Then you will notice the time of the call when they were actually tied deep in the sea casting in their net for they were fishers.

We must look at that very carefully. Then you will notice the personality whom he called. One was Simon the other is Andrew.

Now whatever happens we mustn't miss these two brethren. Because in those two brethren we see the analysis of all evangelism. Both personal and public preaching.

Then lastly we see the principle of the call. And I want you to see the weight of this. Follow me.

Two words. Now if we want to see the perfect evangelist don't look at the book of the Acts. The perfect evangelist was the Lord himself.

And we must learn to follow him closely in every form of evangelism. And then he makes this wonderful promise. I will make you fishers of men.

Now that's interesting. And the verb I will is emphatic the same in the Greek so the scholars inform me. And therefore it's a promise when you follow me I will make you fishers of men.

Now they were catching live fish for the purpose of killing. The Lord said you'll catch dead fish for the purpose of living. A much better occupation you will agree.

First of all walking by the Sea of Galilee. Now I know there's a little problem whether this was Cana of Galilee or just the Sea of Galilee. And quite frankly it doesn't matter.

But the great fact was this that the Lord went there. Now why? Edersheim when he gives us that wonderful account of the Sea of Galilee gives us a very poor description. He says it's marked by simplicity.

It's marked by humility. See in fact the people who lived there had a very guttural speech. You'll remember it was said of Peter his speech bereath him.

Or as it's put in the authorised it betrays him or as it should be put. In other words you could tell a Galilean a mile off. In fact he uses an expression that causes my eyebrows to be raised.

He said they were the Cockneys of the East. And come from the East End of London I was none too pleased with him. But you can tell a Cockney a mile off.

Now here were these people by the Sea of Galilee. And quite frankly you are amazed I'm sure that ever the Lord would go to the Sea of Galilee to pick his disciple. But there's two things God looks for in a man that's going to be used of him.

One is simplicity. We must learn to preach the gospel that's found in the first century to a 21st century world not in a 19th century way but in 20th century language. And that's not easy.

The average man today in Australia and in Britain doesn't understand who God is. He doesn't understand the practical basis of sin. He knows nothing at all about the law of God.

He doesn't even know what it means when we talk about the deity of Christ. And the terms that we use for redemption like propitiation, eternal forgiveness and even the word redemption is all foreign to him. He doesn't understand what we mean by the resurrection.

He has no concept of the ascension. And therefore we must learn to preach the gospel to people who are pagan. In fact unfortunately many people that come into our halls to hear the gospel must learn lovingly to unlearn before they can learn.

Now that's why the Lord goes to this simple place. If he can find people who have a simplicity to trust in Christ and in the work that he has accomplished he can use them. Secondly, Galilee was a place where very poor people lived.

Again I repeat what Edersheim says, it is the slum of the east. Now if we were going to call people in order to preach the gospel we would go to Jerusalem. We would go to places like Judea where all the theological colleges were.

The last place on earth we would go to would be the sea of Galilee where humble people live. But one thing we must remember, the Lord Jesus on one occasion while speaking to his own disciples said this, I have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. Think of that.

Again you remember when the disciples were quarreling about who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He took a little child and put him in the midst. Now this is interesting.

That is the only time in scripture you do not find a divine person in the midst. When our Lord was actually dying on the cross it was the center cross. But now he steps out of the center in order to allow a little child to take his place.

And then he taught them this profound question. Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Now as you know every year for a month I spend at Cambridge speaking to the people there.

And I've done that for 55 years. But I must tell you this. Lots of students have been saved and are being saved.

But I only know two of them that were mightily used of God. Nearly all the people that were saved were ordinary people. And they gave themselves to the study of scripture.

And a number of them are being powerfully used of the Lord. We must be very careful not to despise education. But we must not really depend on it.

God can take up the weak things of the earth in order to confound the mighty. And so I thank the Lord for going to the sea of Galilee. And he found two brothers that were willing to follow him.

Then I want you to note the time. They were not sitting down washing their nets. Now that's right.

But they weren't doing that. They were actually thigh deep in the sea. And they were casting in their nets.

Now I'm quoting again from Edersheim. Who was an authority on the background of the life and times of the Messiah. And he tells us it was a large conical shaped net.

Weighted at the bottom. And the fisherman had to wade into the sea until he was thigh deep. There would be a sweat band around his head.

And when they saw the first movement in the sea like a flash they would throw in the net. And quickly pull it in. And only a very few fishermen in Galilee could use this casting net.

And these men were actually specializing in their craft when the Lord called. Now here's an interesting lesson. There may be some young men here that God is about to call into the Lord's service.

But he will never never call a lazy man. All the people that the Lord calls are those who are diligent in their business. Here were two men high deep in water.

The sweat bands around their head. They were casting in their net pulling out the fish. And then the Lord called.

Now if you go through the scriptures you will see that repeated over and over again. When did God call Moses? When he was minding his father-in-law's sheep. He saw the burning bush that never consumed.

And the Lord called him. When did the Lord call David? When he was minding his father's sheep. Already in secret he had killed a bear and a lamb and said nothing about it.

And the Lord called that man the youngest of the family. When did the Lord actually call such a man like Elisha? Notice this. When he was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen.

And only a few farmers could do that. Can you see what the scripture is saying? He wants a man that can specialize in his natural employment. Before he will take him into his employment.

Now why? In the Lord's work it's so easy to get lazy if you're not disciplined. And the man of God must be disciplined. First of all he must have regular times with the word of God.

Secondly he must have a real passion for souls. You see some people have a passion for sermons. But that's not an evangelist.

An evangelism is a man that has a consuming passion for soul. And then he must be a man that's prepared to be alone with God. Not only with the unsaved but alone with his God.

So that he can come from the presence of God and stand before the people in a language in which they can understand and say Thus saith the Lord in the mighty power of the Spirit. Now unfortunately in England and I say this with deep sorrow and the Lord knows my heart. There's only a few young men being called to evangelism.

We have scores of teachers. A very very few preachers. And in the land of Australia do pray that God will raise up labourers for his harvest.

And we need men that can first of all specialize in their natural work. Before they go into the work of the Lord. Then I want you to notice the personalities.

First of all there's Peter and Andrew. Now Peter was the public man. Let's follow that carefully through scripture.

You'll remember although he had many falls. And though he had to learn the spirit of humility. God mightily took him up and filled him with the Spirit.

And on the day of Pentecost. Endued with power from on high. He was able to preach that remarkable sermon.

Now here's something that will surprise you. If you go through the book of the Acts. And you were told to pick out a classic.

What would you do? You would immediately go to Acts 17. When Paul preached at Mars Hill. But you would be wrong.

That is not a classic. The great classic in preaching is Acts chapter 2. 52% is the pure quotation of scripture. And 48% is the exposition.

It begins with a mighty introduction. Using Joel chapter 2. Its centrality is the cross of Christ. And the resurrection.

It concludes with the great challenge. This same Jesus whom you have crucified. God has bathed both Lord and Christ.

Now that's classical. And yet the man who preached it was a fisherman. It said of him his speech bid ray of him.

But he was a man at that moment. Who was filled with the Spirit. Again another classic is Acts 3. After the healing of the lame man.

Peter stands up and preaches. And not 3000 were saved but 5000. Then he goes reluctantly to the house of Cornelius.

And he preaches the gospel. And whilst his preaching the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word of God. And the Gentiles were brought in.

And then gradually he fades. And then we're introduced to the Apostle Paul. Who takes the gospel to the Gentile world.

But can you see he needs the public men. Now would you do this please. Pray that from among us God will raise up in Australia.

One or two brethren that have the ability to reach the masses with the gospel. That's desperately needed if we're going to see God working. But I like Andrew.

Although Andrew uses the net. He's always a single line fisherman. And as far as we know he caught his brother Peter.

And I think that's wonderful. And as you go through the scriptures. You will see all the way through as far as Andrew is concerned.

Although an Apostle is always touched by the personal. Now if we need public men we need a host of private preachers. Now I was greatly cheered after the meeting.

And I'm going to share it with you. A sister came to me and said. We're going to bring some unsaved tonight.

And I said hallelujah. That's Andrew. That's Andrew.

Both our sisters and brothers can bring people. Even on the second coming. I'm sure we're going to see one or two saved.

Whenever I preach the second coming of Christ. God blesses it with his confirmation. And someone is saved.

So bring the unsaved that they may hear the program of God. But let's all do the Andrew work. In order to bring someone to the Savior.

And then I want you to notice. The Lord quietly said to these men. Who were busy in secular occupation.

Follow me. Let's stop there. How did he preach? Every time he preached in the synagogue.

Apart from one occasion. He was in serious trouble. You notice it.

But every time we watch him among the people. There's tremendous blessing. We see him by the seaside preaching.

And there's such crowds listening to him. He has to get into a boat. And ask them to launch out a little.

And then he sat down and taught them from the boat. That's evangelism. Then we find him by the hillside.

Preaching the gospel to thousands. And after giving them a wonderful meal. Gave them that meal from heaven.

Which was far greater than the meal that they had eaten. But he made them sit down in fifties and hundreds. That's significant.

And there he is on the hillside. And would you believe it. You find him on the wayside.

Sometimes when he was preaching. The crowd would be following. And he would stop.

As he did in the case of Bartimaeus. And healed him. Preaching by the wayside.

Then we see him preaching by the bedside. Take for instance those occasions. When he performed wonderful miracles.

And every miracle that he performed. Has a deep spiritual lesson. And so the Lord says.

Follow me. And I will make you vicious of me. You know at home.

Great bingo sessions are being opened. To the preaching of the gospel. Now I want to say this as clearly as I can.

I do not gamble. It's a form of stealing. I'm totally against it.

But if they give me five minutes. I will go in. And I take a bingo card.

And just say three twenty three. And they tick it off. And then I shout out.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And then I explain it. I said there you are.

You've got it. Six twenty three. The wages of sin is death.

The gift of God is eternal life. No one can deny it ladies and gentlemen. We all have to die.

All of us. It's the result of sin. Now I'm going to say this to you.

With deep deep deep love. If you die in your sins. Without being forgiven your loss.

Now remember that. Five eight. Got it.

God commends his love toward us. In that while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us.

Now it's lovely to tell. Almost six or seven hundred people. And a few backsliders.

That the Lord loves them. No one will ever love you like the Lord Jesus. No one will ever come into this world.

To take your place as he did. When he died on the cross. And volunteered to bring bear the punishment.

And this will surprise you. God's raised him from the dead. And he's more alive than me.

And certainly more alive than you. And he loves you still. And wants to forgive you.

Now the best number of all. Who's going to get it? Ten thirteen Romans. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord.

Shall be saved. And what a wonderful joy. It's to tell them how to get saved.

Now I said. You've all enjoyed that. Come along to the gospel hall tonight.

And what a joy to see them in the gospel hall. See going among the people. We desperately need that.

So I on Friday night. I don't do it in Australia. Because it's not convenient.

People go into the pubs in Australia. To drink heavily. In England they go into the pubs.

In order for social living. In fact some of the pubs have pub pastors. So if they don't turn up.

Someone goes to see if they're all right. Just think of that. And it's a wonderful joy.

To stand up and show them. How the Christ can change the whole of their life. Now I'm not advocating for one moment.

That we should all go into the pubs. To drink. I don't touch alcohol.

Whatever. I'm not saying that we should all have a turn at the bingo. Of course not.

I'm against all that. But we must go among the people. Get among the people.

Chat the gospel with the people. So that we might bring them to hear the gospel. And then he said.

Follow me. And I will make you fishers of men. The second great blessing I had today.

Was to sit at the Lord's Supper. Well you do that every Sunday brother Peter. Of course I do.

But a young man came in. The last time I was here. And was saved.

And he sat by my side. Now he doesn't know it. But he was quietly saying.

Amen. Amen. You see the great joy in soul winning.

Is not the day they get saved. Heaven knows the reality of that. When you see them going on.

When you come back and find them baptised and in fellowship. And enjoying the Lord. That's the blessing.

Now listen to this. Follow me. And I will make you fishers of men.

Now wouldn't it be lovely. If as we were speaking tonight. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on the second coming.

We saw people saved by the Lord. In this building. May we see it.

And then give him all the glory. Never look to man. Always look to the Lord.

But let's go on otherwise I won't finish this. And Dr. Vick says I must finish no matter what happens. At five o'clock.

Verse 21. And they straightway left their net. And followed him.

And going on from there. He saw two other brethren. James the son of Zebedee.

And John his brother in a boat. With Zebedee their father. Mending their nets.

And he called them. And they immediately left the boat. And their father.

And followed him. Now you'll notice. We've got two brethren in the sea.

Sidee. In water. We've got two brethren in the boat.

What does this speak of? We need many brethren and sisters in the sea. But we need some of our brothers in the boat. It's absolutely vital that God raises up spiritually.

Now if you have the responsibility of being an elder. Praise God for it. The greatest reward that God will ever give is the gift of an elder.

He gets the crown of glory. Stay by your staff. Until the Lord calls you home.

And God will bless you. An assembly will never rise above the level of its spiritual leaders. Always remember an elder is a man that goes out in the front.

I don't mean to say he is out in the front. You know what I mean. But he goes out in front of them.

And he leads the Lord's people. And if God has raised as he has shepherds among you. Pray for them because this is absolutely vital.

Now you will notice James and John are in the boat and they are mending their net. Now I was looking at the connotation of that word in my lexicon. And I noticed that there are four comparable sections in the Bible that deals with net mending.

Now because of my time I can only deal with three. But can we turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 10. Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That you all speak the same thing. And that there be no divisions among you. But that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Now those who have a Newberry Bible will notice that the words perfectly joined together are hyphenated. Joined together. And that shows they all come from one Greek word.

And that Greek word is mend the net. Now what was wrong there at Corinth. Look at verse 11.

For it hath been declared unto me of you my brethren by them who are of the house of Chloe. That there are contentions among you. That there are contentions among you.

Now this I say that every one of you saith I am of Paul or I of Apollos or I of Cephas or I of Christ. Now what was happening. If you were in the assembly at Corinth.

You would break bread Sunday evening. And there would be a vast congregation. And you would meet a group and you would talk to them.

And they would indirectly say of course we are of Paul. Oh of Paul yeah. What does that mean? Oh he believed in the one body.

He had a wide open love for Jew and Gentile. Oh. Then you would find another group of people and you would get chatting with them.

And they would say ah we are of Apollos. What does that mean? Well Apollos is an educated man. He is well versed in Greek philosophy.

In fact it is beautiful to hear him speak. He knows the scriptures. But he knows his Greek background.

Oh and we love to hear this intellectual man. Then you would meet another little group and they would say. How long have you been in fellowship? And they would tell you.

It is lovely to see so many here. But we are of Cephas. What does that mean? Well we believe that we are a special group of people.

And there is something special about the Jews. And Peter you know is a man that stands for the truth. We are more legal.

Have we got those groups today? I am of Paul. Open. I am of Cephas.

I am of Apollos. Oh intellectual. They were all wrong.

You see a netmender is someone that can bind them all together. Not break them up. We must not break up God's people.

That is why I love the gospel. It brings us together. We must learn to bind them together.

So the centrality is Christ. And of course we have a love for all the people of God. Now we need those netmenders don't we? Then I noticed that in Thessalonians chapter 3. There is another expression of netmending.

10. 1 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your faith.

And perfect that which is lacking in your faith. That's tremendous. Now you will notice that the apostle was praying night and day.

Therefore a godly elder is always a man of prayer. You know I remember getting up 2 in the morning on a number of occasions. And hearing Matt McCracken from Bundaberg.

Praying for the flock. And I shall never forget it. One morning I woke up.

I didn't pass the door but I could see what was going on. And here was a man by his bed weeping. For the saints.

Praying for them. Now Paul was praying for these Thessalonians. That he might see their faith.

And my perfect that means to mend the net. Now what does that mean? As he was looking at the fabric of the saints faith. There were holes in it.

And he was praying night and day that God would direct him. So that he may use the word of God. In order to mend those holes.

Beloved can I share something with you. For your prayers. As I have been traveling up and down the country.

From east to west. From north right down here to Sydney. There are many holes in the beloved saints.

There are scores of young people that feel that they're utterly defeated. And they want liberation. There are lots of aged people.

And they have never come into this victorious living. Now a godly elder sees that in the saints. May I do it? He stands on his toes.

He looks over the flock. And he sees that there are holes that need to be made up. And he ministers to that intent.

Oh I thank God for that revelation. And lastly. And I've only got two minutes.

Galatians chapter six. And this one. Brethren if any man be overtaken in a thought.

Ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. The idea of restore there is the same word mend the nets.

Now we are told in scripture that the iniquity will abound. And the love of many shall wax cold. Therefore we must say to our own souls.

Am I going to backslide so that I'm not morally ready for the Lord to come. You may be spiritually ready but you may not be morally ready. Or am I going to be on my tiptoes so that when he comes.

I might be able to say that wonderful word. Maranatha. Even so come.

Lord Jesus. Now already we can see that many are backslide. Therefore we want to knit this in the bow.

And pray that they may be restored to the Lord. That when he comes. He will find not our love waning.

But our love restored. So that we are living in first love.

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