

Waiting for Christ



Facing the Future (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue to study together our exciting theme, "Facing the Future" or "What Does the Future Hold?"

In my previous talks this week I've laid a basis for our study. There are three main points I'd like to mention briefly. First, the Bible definitely claims to predict the future with accuracy and authority. Second, the Bible has a record of proven correctness in its predictions extending over many hundreds of years. And I gave two examples of a course in history, events which have been correctly predicted in the Bible. The first relates to the life of Jesus; the second to the history of Israel, both of which are clear examples of accurate prediction of the future in the Bible. The third point that I made was that the Bible distinguishes between things which are revealed and things that are secret. This is stated in Deuteronomy 29:29, by Moses, where he says:

> "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may [do them]."

So, there are two kinds of things with regard to the future: there are the secret things which God says we may not know, and there are the revealed things which God not merely wants us to know, but He wants us to act on. And I warned, and I repeat the warning against confusing these two things and against getting so busy trying to find out the secret things that we neglect to obey and follow the revealed things.

I also pointed out the importance of facing the future with the right attitude, a positive attitude, not a negative attitude. And I want to say again, the attitude with which we face the future will have a lot to do with what we personally experience in the future.

So, today and for the rest of this week, I'm going to outline for you just what our attitude in facing the future should be. And I'm going to give you an objective biblical basis for that attitude.

The first thing I want to say, and it's of tremendous importance, it's basic, is this, and it's very simple so you may

not see its importance at once as Christians we are waiting for Jesus Christ; conversely, we are not waiting for the antichrist.

Now, I'm a student of the Bible, I know that the Bible teaches there have been many antichrists and as we draw near to the close of this age, there are going to be more antichrists. I also believe myself that the Bible indicates that there's going to be one particular character in human history who will be the antichrist, and I could believe that the shadow of the antichrist has already fallen across the stage of human history, that his appearing is very near at hand. But, we are not waiting for the antichrist. I've met dear fellow believers who have been so busy with theories about the antichrist, his number, his name, the countries he'll rule, the methods he'll use, how he'll put his stamp on people's foreheads and hands, that they've almost become, I would say, advertising agents for the antichrist. Well, he doesn't need advertising agents from us Christians and our business is not to be witnesses to the antichrist but to the Christ. Jesus said, "You shall be my witnesses."

Let me give you some scriptures that make this so clear. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, Paul says this to his converts and disciples in Thessalonica. He says the people around about you are so impressed by the way you live that:

> "They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true and God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

Notice, that as Christians we are waiting for the Son of God to return from heaven and His name is Jesus. And for those of us who are waiting for Him, we have the guarantee that He rescues us from the coming wrath, from the tribulation that's coming on the earth. How He's going to rescue us, that's another matter but I believe that guarantee is only given to those who are clearly waiting for Jesus.

There's another Scripture in Hebrews 9:27-28, where it says the same thing:

> "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."

So when Jesus comes back He's going to come with salvation only for those who are waiting for Him. For those who are not waiting for Him, He'll be coming with judgment, but for those who are waiting for Him, He'll be coming with salvation.

So you see, it's of the greatest personal importance for each one of us that we cultivate this attitude in our lives of waiting for Jesus and that we do not let our attention get distracted by anything else.

This waiting for Jesus, having our eyes turned toward Him with expectancy, produces in our lives what I would call "radiant confidence." Listen to these two beautiful verses from Psalm 34:4-5. The psalmist, who is David, says this:

> "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame."

That's partly a personal testimony, partly a general statement. David said, "I could be afraid about what the future holds, but I sought the Lord and He delivered me from all my fears." Let me ask you: Have you sought the Lord and been delivered from all fears about the future? If not, you can.

And then David goes on with the general statement about looking to the Lord, having that expectant attitude toward the Lord. He says, "Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame." You see, that's a practical outworking of looking for the Lord, of waiting for the Lord. You see, if I look at your face, I can tell which direction you're looking in. If your face is dark and overshadowed with care and with fear, I know you're not looking at the light because it's the darkness that's reflected on your face. But if your face is radiant and peaceful and full of confidence, I know there's only one explanation: you have your eyes turned toward the source of light, that's Jesus. So bear that in mind, the way we look will affect what we experience.

There's another important practical result in our lives of having that attitude that we're waiting for Christ. That result is that waiting for Christ motivates us to holy living. This is stated many times in the New Testament. In 1 John 3:2-3, John says this:

> "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known [that's one of the secret things]. But we do know [this is one of the revealed things] that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."

You see, when we have that continual expectancy, that joyful hope that we're going to see the Lord and be transformed to be like Him, then the natural, logical application in our lives is that we purify ourselves, we make ourselves ready. And the standard of purity is a high standard: we purify ourselves just as He, Jesus, is pure. This offers motivation both for those who minister in the gospel and for those who are ministered to. Listen to Paul's declaration of his motivation in his ministry to the Christians in Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20:

> "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy."

So, Paul was always thinking about when he would stand before Jesus and answer for his life and ministry. And he said, "The thing I'm going to be proud about, the thing that's going to make me joyful is the people whom I've helped to find their way to Jesus, they're going to be my crown, my glory and my joy." That's motivation!

And then a little later on in the same epistle, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, he speaks to those to whom he has ministered and he says this, and this is one of the most beautiful prayers or wishes found anywhere in the Bible:

> "May he [that is God] strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones."

You see, that's anticipation! Paul not merely anticipated the coming of the Lord for himself and wanted to be sure that he had something to offer the Lord as a tribute from his life's work, but he also wanted those who had come to the Lord through his ministry to have the same attitude of expectancy, waiting for the Lord Jesus when He comes. And he knew that that attitude would enable them to become blameless and holy. Believe me friends, there is nothing that purifies our lives more effectively than the hope of seeing Jesus. If we really live in that hope, it will have a radical, permanent effect on the way we live. But if you're waiting for the antichrist, I believe that may not motivate you to holiness in the least bit. It may prompt fear and uncertainty and lack of confidence.

Listen in closing to this beautiful verse which is one of my favorite verses from Proverbs 4:18:

> "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day."

When you first come to the Lord and step onto that path, it's just the first gleam of dawn. But as you walk forward continually in that path toward the light with that attitude of expectancy, you go on on a path that becomes ever brighter and brighter until you get to the full glory of midday, the full light of day. That's how the Christian life should be when we are directed toward Jesus and waiting for His return.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about another decisive factor in our attitude to the future, the fact that Christ already reigns.

Radio Program

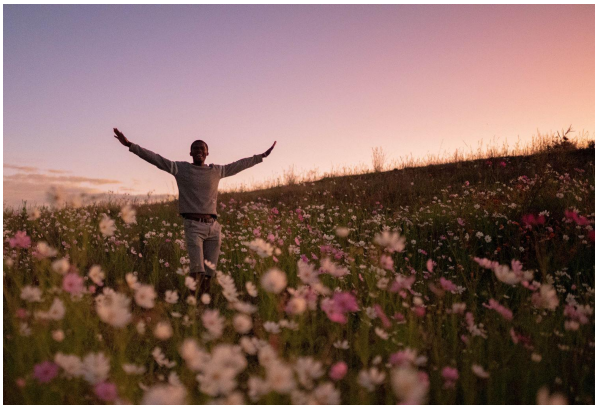
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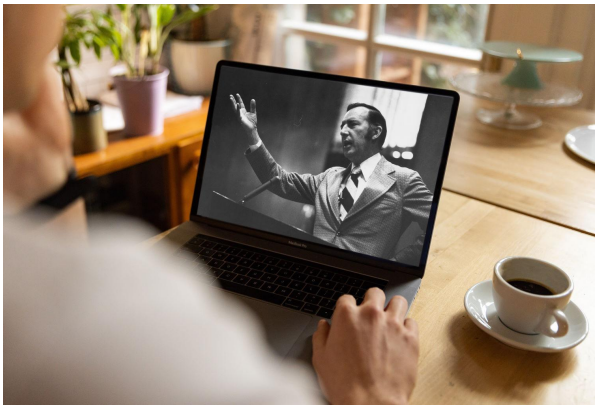
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