

Cultivate Personal Holiness



Longing for His Appearing (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. This week I'll be continuing with the theme I commenced last week, "Longing for His Appearing," a theme that can radically affect your whole way of life.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note. Now, back to our theme, "Longing for His Appearing."

In my talks last week I gave four important biblical reasons why all Christians should be longing for Christ's appearing. The first is that the appearing of Christ will bring about the consummation of our personal salvation, which is the resurrection of our body in a glorified form like that of Christ. I pointed out that salvation is not complete until God's work in our body is complete. Salvation is for our total being, spirit, soul and body. It's a glorious fact that we can have eternal life now and go to be with God in another better world when this life ends, but that does not complete our salvation. Our salvation is only completed when Christ returns and we are indued with our resurrection body.

Secondly, the appearing of Christ will bring about the consummation of union: first of all, with Jesus himself as our bridegroom; and second, with one another as brothers and sisters and members of one body. And then Paul says, "we shall ever be with the Lord."

The third reason is that the return of Christ and the establishment of his earthly kingdom is the only practical hope for suffering humanity. It's the only thing that can end the uncountable, unimaginable suffering of the human race in this present time. It alone can end war and sickness and poverty and oppression and crime and hatred and violence and all the evils with which our race is plagued at this time. The church can give a wonderful demonstration of Christian

love, but the church cannot by itself, without the return of Christ, establish the kingdom on earth.

And fourth, the return of Christ will also bring about the redemption of creation, a fact which many Christians have never seriously considered. But in Romans 8 Paul says, "we who have the first fruits of the Spirit are groaning and longing with travail of birth pangs for the redemption of the whole creation." And he identifies that as what will take place with the redemption of our body, that is, at the resurrection.

This week I'm going to follow up by sharing with you five practical ways in which we should express our longing for Christ's return. In other words, it's not enough just to say we're longing or Christ's return, it should be demonstrated by our lives and I'm going to give you five ways in which we should be demonstrating this by our lives.

The first way is that the expectation of Christ's return is the main New Testament motivation for personal holiness. Almost everywhere in the New Testament that we are urged to achieve holiness it is in some way or other connected with our anticipation of Christ's return. Here is what Paul says in Titus 2:11-14:

> "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds." (NASB)

I believe you'll agree with me the main theme of what Paul says there in connection with our anticipation of the return of the Lord is active, practical holiness, that we should live sensibly, righteously and godly because we're looking for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. Notice that Jesus is not only our Savior but our God.

When the church is not consciously motivated by this anticipation of Christ's return, the standard of holiness in the church always falls below that presented in the New Testament. At Christ's return our true condition will be manifested to God and the whole universe. That's a very, very solemn thought. The whole universe, God and the angels, the human race, Satan and his fallen angels and the demons, all will see an open manifestation of our true inner condition. This is what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13:

> "...may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." (NASB)

You see there again the motivation for holiness is the anticipation of the Lord's return and what will take place in connection with His return.

And Paul speaks about our hearts being established unblamable in holiness that we shall be totally holy, that there'll be no area in which we are open to blame for the way we have lived or the things we have said or done. And he speaks about it "before our God and Father." In other words, God Himself will be, as it were, inspecting our condition at that time. It will be a time when the secrets of men's hearts are brought out into the open, when everything that has not been seen in this fleshly life will be revealed in its clarity, in its fullness. And Paul therefore says in view of what's going to happen and what confronts us at the coming of the Lord, we need to cultivate unblamable holiness.

And he also joins the holiness there together with love. John Wesley said, "Holiness is perfect love. Truly the two can never really be separated." So, as we think of and long for the Lord's return, these are the two areas of our lives on which our focus should be first directed: love and holiness.

And what we are now is going to be manifested at that time to the whole universe. Let's put away all secret sins, all hypocrisy, all covered up darkness and let's realize that we're going to be exposed as we really are to the whole universe.

Let's bear in mind also that all the temporal and the material that we see around us, even everything that seems so solid and so permanent: the mountains, the great stone buildings, the cathedrals, the mighty engines, the ships, the airplanes, they're all destined to perish. That's a shaking thought. They're not going to last. We always tend to think of the material and physical as that which is real. The Bible doesn't agree with that. The Bible says all that is merely temporary. The truly real is the invisible the spiritual and the eternal.

And in the light of that we need to make sure that our lifestyle is consistent. This is what Peter says in 2 Peter 3:9-14. He's speaking about the promise of the Lord's return and he says:

> "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any

> to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. [All that we think so permanent is going to be destroyed almost in an instant.] Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless." (NASB)

That's the kind of person we ought to be in the light of the fact that all the material is going to pass away. It's not permanent. Only the spiritual is eternal.

There are three requirements that Peter states that we need to be found: in peace, spotless and blameless. Consider briefly what that means.

In peace means with right relationships. No broken, ruptured relationships, no unforgiveness, no resentment.

Spotless means no sin that we've committed and not confessed which has not been washed away in the blood of Jesus.

And blameless refers to our duties, that we have fulfilled all our duties according to the instruction of the New Testament.

Let me leave you with that challenge direct from the words of Scripture: "Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless." Is that your aim? Is that the way that you are living?

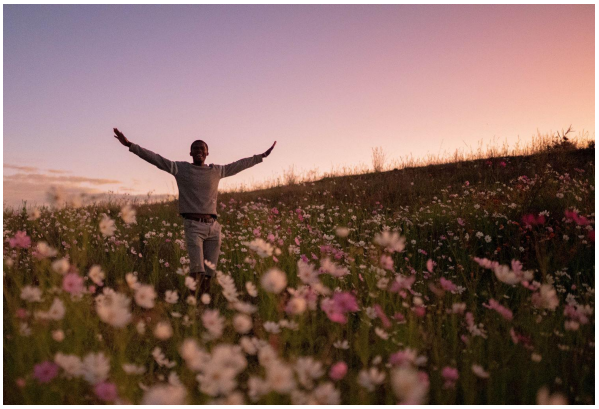
Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. In my talk tomorrow I'll be sharing another practical way in which we should be expressing our longing for Christ's appearing.

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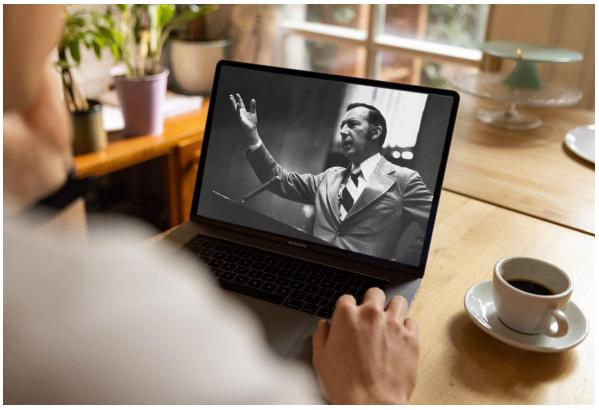
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