

4-14-19 Message
PREPARING FOR MEETING THE LORD

TEXT:

Amos 4:11 I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

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

Intro:

Today is what is called Palm Sunday. It is the day that the Lord entered into Jerusalem and they hailed Him as King saying Hosanna Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. They hailed Him as the messiah and King. Yet in less than a week they crucified Him.

The difference between Jesus and us, is that Jesus knew he would be rejected, Jesus knew the day and even hour of his death. He was prepared to suffer he was prepared to do this knowing it was all necessary. Unlike the Lord, we do not know the day or hour when we will meet our God. But this thing we know for certainty! That day will come.

Last week Jack McKeeby was here in the church hobbling along from one pew to the other shaking hands with people, yesterday we had a memorial service for Brother Jack. I was amazed at how many people attributed their salvation to Brother Jack McKeeby. I believe Brother Jack was prepared to meet his God.

God took him suddenly but that event was not a surprise to Brother Jack. In fact at the viewing last Wednesday morning some of the workers from the nursing home came and gave this testimony that when one of the workers said to Jack as he was leaving they said, "See you tomorrow.." He replied, "If the Lord wills." What a testimony he left.

How many times do we have appointments and we never even think to say, "If the Lord Wills.." I believe brother Jack was prepared to meet his God. He did not leave this world fruitless.

Years ago we had another Deacon in our church that I believe was prepared to meet God. His name was Selwyn Schmitt. Before he died he gave me the text he wanted preached at his funeral. It was this text that I am preaching this morning from Amos 4:12 "Prepare to meet thy God" He went to a funeral of a relative and heard a preacher preach on that subject and that week when he came to me and handed me a tape of the funeral message and said, this is what I want you to preach at my funeral, he gave tape with the text and the title of the message he wanted me to preach, Amos 4 :12 "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.."

So this morning I am going to challenge you to consider this statement and ask yourself this question "ARE YOU PREPARED TO MEET YOUR GOD.."

PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD

CONSIDER, HOW DO WE PREPARE TO MEET OUR GOD? The first thing we need to do to prepare to meet God is to consider the certainty of the event.

I. CONSIDER IT IS CERTAIN THAT SOMEDAY YOU WILL MEET GOD IN DEATH.

Now consider there are a lot things that are uncertain in our lives but this one thing is not, SOME DAY YOU WILL DIE AND HAVE TO MEET YOUR GOD.

We do not know what the state of the world will be next week but we do know that someday we will meet God

We do not know whether we will prosper or suffer losses in this life but this one thing we know we will someday have to meet our creator.

We do not know if we will have a job, or will have peace, or war in our life, but this one thing we do know WE WILL SOMEDAY MEET GOD IN DEATH.

Life is filled with uncertainties, except for this one certain thing.

SOMEDAY WE ARE GOING TO DIE AND HAVE TO MEET GOD.

Now with this truth established we should ask ourselves this question, why is it we spend so little time making preparation for this the greatest even that we will ever have to prepare for.

In fact most people are not prepared to meet God because they put off the certainty of this event. They live as if it will never happen. I even see people who are the point of death itself and it seems they still can't believe they are going to die. People give their death very little thought and very little preparation. In fact it seems that most people do not know how to prepare for that day. This morning I want to share a message on how to properly prepare to meet God.

II. CONSIDER HOW YOU PREPARE TO MEET GOD.

My question to you is how do you prepare for anything in your life? Let me suggest to you that it should take thought and planning.

If I am going to prepare for a trip, I pack my bags, buy plane tickets, make reservations, plan ahead.

Why is it that we take such thought and careful planning for things in our life that are uncertain, yet the one thing that is very certain we give very very little thought to. I think that we give this event in our lives very little thought because it is not up to us when it will happen.

The Lord does not tell us when He will take us to meet Him.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Think about this for this one certain event in our life the Lord does not give us the day and the hour and the time that it will happen. This is by design. This event takes a lifetime to prepare

for and you cannot just prepare for it the night before. You cannot cram for this exam. It is a life long preparation.

How do we make proper preparation for this day?

Let me give you some suggestions:

1. COME TO TERMS WITH THE CERTAINLY OF THIS EVENT.

Psalms 49:10 For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

Psalms 49:11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.

Psalms 49:12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.

Most people live their lives like they are going to live forever. How foolish this is. We will come to terms with the certainty of this event. SOMEDAY WE WILL HAVE TO MEET GOD! And the Lord says in no uncertain terms that we should prepare for that day.

You cannot prepare for that day when you are in denial that it will happen. In January my wife and I decided we wanted to make a trip to see my daughter in Missouri and then go on to California and then come back home. So we had to make preparations to go. We had to book a flight, plan our luggage, and make motel reservations get an itinerary. It took thought and planning.

Now you will say, preacher how can I plan for something when I have no control as to when it happens? That is exactly why it takes more planning. The reason it takes more planning is because it can happen at any time.

After you come to grips with the certainty of your mortality and certainty of being called to meet God based on His timetable not your own, then you should make the most important of all preparations in your life.

2. THE MOST IMPORTANT PREPARATION IS TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE SPIRIT OF God in your life.

Yesterday I preached a message concerning Jack McKeeby. I said in that message the outstanding thing about Jack McKeeby to me was his spirit. He had a good and godly spirit about him. I think this is what prepared him to be able to meet his God.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Our Lord gave the parable of the 10 sleepy virgins to show the importance of having the spirit of God in your life. Five were wise and five were foolish and unprepared to meet their God. The wise made the most important preparation of all. They had oil in their lamp. That oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

We often say, you need to be saved to go to heaven, well anyone can say they are saved, but having the spirit of God cannot be counterfeited. Either you have it like oil in your lamp or you don't. Anyone who does not have the spirit of God is not prepared to meet God.

There are many parables that Jesus shared to illustrate this truth. He even used the idea of having a wedding garment.

Matthew 22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

Matthew 22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

Matthew 22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The spirit of God is what gives you biblical enlightenment and understanding, the Holy Spirit is what helps you live the Christian life, the Holy Spirit is what empowers you, leads you, gives you communication with God.

When we say, invite Jesus into your heart we are really saying invite the Holy Spirit into your life,

When we say, you need to be born again we are saying you need to be born of spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

Yesterday we preached about brother Jack, and one thing was obviously missing, brother Jack's body. But one thing was obviously present his spirit lives on in his works.

3. THE NEXT WAY YOU MAKE PREPARATION TO MEET GOD IS TO HAVE A LIFE FILLED WITH GOOD WORKS.

Jesus said this:

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Words are cheap, action is what speaks louder!

James 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

James 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

James 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

James 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

You make preparation to meet God by living a life filled with good works.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

At brother Jack's funeral people got up and gave testimony of his life and how his life affected them. There were people that got up and said they were saved through his ministry and life. He affected people. These were his works. What was amazing was the testimony of his children and step children and grandchildren. These are the people that know you the best.

Jesus gave another parable to motivate us to strive for good works to make preparation for that day.

This is called the parable of the unjust steward:

In Luke 16:1-8 we read about a unjust steward who was going to be called into question about how he squandered his Lord's goods. When he realized judgment day was coming he quickly figured out a way to make up for lost time and do something to prepare for his earthly judgment day. Then Jesus says,

Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Why is it we know there will be a reckoning and a judgement day and yet we do nothing to make preparation for that day. How stupid we are.

What are the kind of works that will be rewarded in heaven some day:

Greatest work is the love that you show for the brethren:

I Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

I Corinthians 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

I Corinthians 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

I Corinthians 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

I Corinthians 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

There is no doubt that Jack McKeeby emanated the love of Christ.

We told the story how he used to bring kids in on the church van, some of these kids were rough around the edges. Jack used to say, well they are just growing in the Lord.

I know Jack McKeeby loved people, one **of the last phone messages he left on my phone was to visit someone in the hospital.** Good works. Most people live for themselves, never give, never help, never sacrifice, never visit the sick, never pray for anyone, never give, never sacrifice.. on and on we can go.

Jack came to church to give and be an encouragement to others. So many people come to get and leave with nothing because they have not the right spirit.

The most important way you prepare to meet God is to have a life filled with good works.

Solomon put it this way:

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

We are so afraid of confusing good works with works salvation that we fail to see the forest for the trees. By faith you get the spirit by works you evident that the spirit of God is in you.

Jesus said this:

Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Matthew 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Matthew 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Good Fruit and Good works are synonymous.

Titus 3:14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

4. YOU PREPARE TO MEET GOD BY BEING FAITHFUL TO HIS CHURCH.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

God has ordained His church as the way that He wants to transact spiritual business in the day that we live.

When Elijah was taken to be with God, Elisha cried out.

II Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

He called him the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

Back then the covenant people of God was Israel, today the covenant people of God is His church. You cannot, you will not, be prepared to meet God if you abandoned His program the church.

Jesus loved His church.

Jesus died for His church.

Jesus said the church is His body.

Matthew 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

When Paul persecuted the church Jesus said he persecuted Him.

Can you be prepared to meet God and abandon his covenant people?

One thing we can say about Brother Jack McKeeby he was faithful to this church. Many have come and gone but he stayed and did what was right.

III. CONSIDER THAT TO PREPARE TO MEET GOD YOU HAVE TO BE CONSISTENT IN THIS PURSUIT.

Galatians 5:7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

You know there are a lot of people that run a race but very few win and endure. The Christian life is not a sprint race but a marathon of endurance. Very few people run with consistency and run well.

Very few people endure in this pursuit. It is not how you start but is how you end. You may get tripped up, but do you get back on your feet and run the race? How many people are so easily offended. How many people turn their back on this endeavor and become cast aways!

There were about 200 people at brother Jack's funeral. These were all people that were affected by his life. What was amazing was the event was not even advertised. If you read his obituary you will see that it says there will be a private memorial service for family and close friends at an unannounced time at his church! Imagine if the event was advertised how many more people would have been here. Of the 200 people that were here there were many many people who told me that they were saved in this church. However, there are very few still here. What happened? Brother Jack stayed, brother Jack was consistent, brother Jack endured. This was his final testimony that came out at his funeral service.

My question to you is, are you making preparation to meet your God? You are not if you are not living a consistent Christian life!

My challenge to you this morning is:

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD.