



**The Secret of His Coming  
(Sermon)**

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On August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit the city of New Orleans in the southern United States. It destroyed lives, demolished homes, and left thousands of people trapped. With astonishment and sadness, people watched the news broadcasts, one of which featured the story of a desperate man who in between tears was saying, “I spoke to my mother over the phone, I told her not to worry, that the rescue team would arrive to rescue her. However, the rescue workers never arrived to where she was at, and I fear that my mother drowned. No one went to rescue her.”

How sad it is to wait for someone to come and rescue us in a moment of life or death and no one ever arrives! It will not be this way with Christ. “He who is coming will come and will not delay” (see Hebrews 10:37). Two thousand years ago, Jesus promised to return and rescue us to take us to our heavenly home (John 14:1-3). We can be completely sure of His promise, because Jesus always keeps His promises. In reality the only reason why Jesus has not yet come is because He does not want anyone to die without hope (2 Peter 3:9). That is why He is giving us time, so that we may prepare for His coming.

The blessed assurance of the Christian man or woman is what gives us comfort and peace in the midst of the storms of life, knowing that very soon this too shall pass. It is that desire to soon see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven that fills us with hope. Hope in the future, hope in the midst of suffering, hope in pain, hope in loneliness, hope

in desperation, hope in death. The events that occurred on September 11, 2001, in the United States forever changed peoples' feelings of security and certainty in the future.

It is obvious that things have changed quite a bit in the last several years. But in the midst of the chaos in which we live, in the midst of the anguish that thousands of families are facing, in the midst of fear, depression and desperation, the Word of God continues to resonate with the last message of hope for the future. The Lord is near.

It does not matter what happens in North America, Europe, Asia, or Africa, Jesus will return soon. He will return to a people that are prepared for His coming. It is essential that those that profess to believe in the second coming of Jesus live according to their beliefs, for this is the secret contained in the message of His coming. Peter says: "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:11-13).

Some people worry about knowing the date of Jesus' second coming. They study prophecies with the purpose of knowing the date and time when Jesus will come. But the Bible clearly states that no one knows the day nor the hour (Mathew 24:36), so then they want to know the year. They think that there is a secret key in the Bible and if they can figure out the secret of His coming, then they can be saved. What is true is that the Bible clearly states that the coming of Jesus will only be a surprise to those that are not prepared (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

The secret contained in the coming of Jesus is that we should be prepared at all times. It means to put our lives in harmony with biblical principles. But how can a person can be prepared for His coming? In other words, how do the ones that wait for

Jesus live? What is the secret to their victorious life? The apostle Paul in his fourth chapter of his letter to Philippians presents us with five admonitions, that we could very well call five life secrets of those that await Jesus.

## **FIRMNESS**

The first secret is that those who are preparing for the second coming of Christ make a vote of firmness for the Lord. “Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!” (Philippians 4:1). Everyone that begins the Christian life begins it with the intention of remaining steadfast until the end. But sadly many waver and fall. That is why the Bible says, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Paul says: “Brothers... stand firm in the Lord.” This is a call to perseverance in the ways of the God: Perseverance in the church, perseverance in love towards Jesus, perseverance in love towards your neighbor, perseverance to do well.

What is the apostle Paul trying to tell these people? And why is he telling them to stand firm? “The Lord is near” (Philippians 4:5). In the same book, chapter 1:27 he gives them the same admonition: stand firm. In other words, “persevere.” The time has come in which what can be shaken will be shaken. The devil is trying to draw them away from the church and alienate them from Jesus. This is what he tried to do with the apostle Paul whom Jesus warned: “Simon, Simon! Indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:31, 32).

How wonderful it is to know that Jesus pleads and prays for us! I have seen many people begin their marvelous journey with Jesus and enjoy the blessings of heaven. But sadly, I have also seen many who have fallen to the wayside.

It never ceases to amaze me how people abandon church for the most trivial things: for lack of a greeting, a smile, of a kind word. There are members of the church that say, “I came to church and no one greeted me. That is why I feel that I am not part of the group,” and they leave. They abandon the church and they abandon Jesus.

There is a declaration that appears in the book of Revelation when the sixth seal is opened: “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17). Some people worry about whether they will be standing or not when Jesus returns. They are worried about their salvation. But when you give your life to Jesus daily, you no longer need to worry about your salvation; your salvation is secure in Him. The only thing you need to do is keep yourself connected to Him; in other words, stand firm in the Lord. Don’t allow anything or anyone to keep you away from Jesus or your church. Stand firm in the Lord.

## **UNITY**

The second secret is that those who prepare to receive the Lord when He comes in His glory will search for peace and the unity of all. “I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche” – the apostle Paul writes to two ladies of the church – “to be of the same mind in the Lord” (Philippians 4:2). The Bible also says, “Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

This is the way that unity between people stands out, particularly between those that believe in the Lord. Paul is in effect saying, “agree to agree.” Lack of unity is incongruent with a Christian life. Christ Jesus taught His disciples about unity. In His pastoral prayer He makes a call to His disciples to be one in Christ. (John 17:1-26).

Euodia and Syntyche had a problem. We do not know the nature of the problem, but it was serious enough to separate these two dear sisters. They were divided; there

were differences between them. Paul tells them this cannot be, to please reconcile their differences in the Lord.

Some years ago the Special Olympics were held in Seattle, Washington, in the United States of America. Nine competitors, all with some physical or mental impediment, gathered at the starting line to begin the 100 meter relay. As they heard the gun fire, they all began to run, not precisely with speed, but with a great desire to finish and win. One of the competitors, a small child, tripped on the asphalt, fell down a couple of times and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy crying. They slowed down, looked back, and then they all turned back... every one of them! A little girl with Down Syndrome bent down. She gave him a kiss and said, "This will make you feel better." Then the nine children hugged and walked together to the finish line.

Everyone in the stadium stood motionless, but when the applause began, it lasted several minutes. What a tremendous example of unity! In reality what matters is not so much that we reach our goal but that by the grace of God, we can take others along with us. The secret is that while we wait for Jesus, we remain united with God.

## **JOY**

The third secret of those that are preparing for the second coming of Jesus is that they always rejoice in the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). Paul is telling us to enjoy everything that we do in the Lord. The Word of God gives us permission to rejoice in Him. Enjoy yourself in the Lord. Have fun in the Lord. Delight yourself in the Lord.

As Christians we should be the happiest people in the world. We have Jesus and we have a hope that very few people have. The devil will try to wipe away the smile from your face, but don't let him. As we confront the storms of life, let us not stop smiling. Jesus is watching and He is smiling at us.

Some years ago there was a group of friends who were believers enjoying their food at a restaurant. In the midst of the conversation and laughs, some people from other tables were looking at them strangely. The why of the looks was obvious. There was so much joy and laughter around the table that some may have thought they were drunk. However, the only drinks at the table were water.

People cannot understand the joy of the believer because it seems inexplicable. How is it that you can be so happy without drinking alcohol, or using drugs, or not doing anything inappropriate? The secret is in the hope of the return of Jesus which brings joy to the heart. Because of that, if you blessed with the hope of the second coming of Jesus, smile in the midst of your problems. Smile in your suffering. Smile when everything seems to be getting worse instead of better. Simply, smile. Rejoice in the Lord.

## **KINDNESS**

The fourth secret of those that are preparing for the second coming of Jesus is kindness. “Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand” (Philippians 4:5). Jesus was the most kind of all human beings and He expects His followers to be the same. What does it mean to be kind? Kind means to be pleasant. The Greek word used for “kindness” means “to give in, yield, make way.”

What happens when two vehicles approach an intersection and neither one wants to yield? Well, if no one yields, there will be an accident. Isn't that true? What occurs when two stubborn people argue and neither one wants to give in? There is a clash of ideas or personalities. Paul tells us this cannot be. We must learn to yield, to be pleasant with one another.

A person can be very religious, but if he is not kind with others, his religion serves him no purpose. More so, he is a stumbling block for those that observe him.

That is why some pray: “Lord, please help mean people to be kind and kind people to be pleasant.” A well known writer pointed out: “The most powerful argument in favor of the Gospel is a loving and kind Christian”.<sup>1</sup> Only those that consecrate themselves to the Lord daily can be kind like Him. The secret of genuine kindness is to live in close connection with Jesus.

## **PRAYER**

Finally, the fifth secret of those that wait for Jesus is that they turn their worries into prayers. Paul tells us, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). Anxiety and prayer are not compatible. God wants us to present our problems and worries to Him in prayer and with thanksgiving, then we will have peace. “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

In the biblical version of *The Message*, it is expressed this way, “Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.” It is marvelous what happens when Christ removes worry from the center of your life.

Why are we given these admonitions? Why must we persevere, seek unity, rejoice in the Lord, be kind with others, and pray? Why? Because we are waiting for Jesus. And this blessed hope brings comfort to the depressed soul and gives us the certainty of a better future. Like Saint Paul says, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 373.

we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:20, 21).

Thank you, Lord, because the hope of the second coming of Jesus fills our hearts with peace and happiness. Thank you for showing us that everything will soon come to an end and that Christ will come to rescue us from suffering and death.

The Bible ends with a marvelous promise and a prayer: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). Dear Servants of God, would you like to tell the Lord with me, “Lord, help me to live like those that await your coming?”

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### **To Meditate**

**Question:** How should those that await Jesus second coming live?

**Answer:** “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives” (2 Peter 3:11).

**Question:** What admonition does Christ give us so that the second coming will not take us by surprise?

**Answer:** “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36).

**Question:** How did Paul consider the second coming of Jesus?

**Answer:** “While we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

**DECISION:** With the help of God, I will do everything possible to prepare myself and others for the second coming of Jesus.