



## Preparing For His Coming

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### Introduction: Pony Express

When it comes to being on the alert and ready at any moment to do the job, it's hard to beat the Pony Express. This historically famous mail service between St. Joseph, Missouri, and California depended on constant movement and readiness. Relay stations were established every ten to fifteen miles. A rider would shout aloud as he approached a station, giving the station master very short notice that he needed to be outside waiting with a fresh mount. Even when a rider came to the station where he was to spend the night, another rider was already mounted and waiting, ready to grab the first rider's bundle of packages and continue the trip.

The completion of the transcontinental telegraph system rendered the Pony Express obsolete after just eighteen months. But we have this service's intriguing example of what it means to be ever watchful. [Today in the Word, December 1997, p. 17](#)

Two weeks ago we spoke about the promise of Jesus coming. This morning we are going to look at what we can do to prepare ourselves for his coming.

I am not going to suggest that we all go get white robes and gather at the top of Mountin Drive awaiting Jesus' return. We have all heard and read of stories where ministries told people to sell everything and do strange things like that.

Let's look at what God's word tells us we need to do.

I. Be watchful.

**Luke 12:40**

**"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."**

The word "watchful" means to be adjusted, fit. There are ways we can be adjusted and fit.

Be watchful – fit in your relationship. We know that being a Christian is not just being religious. It is having a relationship. Keep the relationship healthy. Communicate with each other.

- Be watchful for opportunities to share the gospel with others.
- Watch with anticipation.
- Watch so you are not deceived.

The story of Simeon comes to mind when we think of one being watchful. Simeon was an old man when Jesus first came as a baby. God had promised him that he would not die until he saw the Messiah.

How was he to know what the Messiah would be like when he saw him? He just knew. The word that is

used here can mean to look up, to look upon, or to look away. Of all the forms of “look”, the one that best captures what it means to look for the coming is the term used to describe the action of Simeon. TO WAIT FORWARD. The grammar is poor, but the image is great. Simeon was waiting, not demanding, not hurrying; he was waiting. At the same time he was waiting forwardly. He was waiting patiently, vigilant, calmly expectant, eyes open, arms extended, searching the crowd for the right face.

Haven't we been told of Christ's coming? Aren't we heirs of a promise? Are we not prompted by the same Spirit? Are we not longing to see the same face?

In fact in Luke 12:35-37 we see the waiting forward in these verses. The posture of the servants was ready and waiting. The master is so thrilled that his attendants are watching for him that he takes the form of a servant and serves them.

To wait – Paul says we are expecting something that we do not have yet. Simeon is not consumed so much with the “not yet” that he ignores the right now.

II Peter 3:10-11 – Peter asks this question – What kind of people should we be? Live holy lives and serve God, as you wait for and look forward to the coming of the day of God.

For many of us, waiting is not the problem; it is the forward part we have a problem with. We are too content. We seldom search the skies, we rarely run to the temple. We seldom, if ever, allow the Holy Spirit to interrupt our plans and lead us to worship so that we might see Jesus.

It is to those who are strong in waiting and weak in watching that the Lord speaks to and says, “No one knows the day or time when it will be, not the angels of heaven, not even the Son. Only the Father knows, *so always be ready.....the Son will come when you don't expect him.*

II. Occupy till I come

### **Luke 19:13**

“So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’”

There is a story here about a man who was taking a trip and distributed his wealth to the people who served him. He made them responsible as stewards for his possessions. He wanted them to work till he returned. They were to busy themselves until he returned. “Put this money to work until I return.”

It is a good thing that you are busy at you job when the supervisor comes by and sees you doing your work.

I remember one summer where I worked there were several employees who really were not all that ambitious. It seemed like they didn't want me to be all that ambitious either. I have always lived by the fact that one gives an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, so I didn't allow their lack of ambition to diminish mine. I was going to work and be diligent at what I did regardless of whether my supervisor was around or not.

With Christ, He is around us all the time. He knows when we slack off of being good stewards, and when we kick back. He sees when we follow through and when we don't. When He returns He is going to ask for an accounting of how our resources of time, health, energy and money were invested. It is our responsibility to invest the resources we have been given so there is an increase in what He has entrusted to us.

The Lord is looking for people who will take risks for His sake. He is looking for a return on what He has given us. He is looking to see if we will be trustworthy in temporal things, because He wants to make us managers over eternal things.

Here are some other thoughts we can ponder about this parable. The owner did come back and required an accounting of how the resources were used while he was gone.

Every person will be required to account for how resources were used that were trusted to him while Christ the Master is gone. We have this time to prepare for His coming by choosing how we will use those resources.

One final thought about this parable is this. I find it interesting that the people who had used their resources to gain other resources were given more. God multiplies what He has given to us. To whom much is given, much is required.

### III. Be Patient and Stand Firm

#### James 5:8

You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Here we see another way we are to prepare for His coming.

The idea of patience here is to endure – long term. The wait for Christ to come back may take longer than we think, or it may happen sooner than we anticipate. Americans struggle with waiting. We are an instant society. We want things now. That's why we have such a mountain of credit card debt. Our debt occurs because we see something and we want it now. We choose not to wait for it. That's why we have microwave ovens, and fast food chains. That's why we have instant coffee, instant potatoes, TV dinners, etc. We don't like to wait. But part of preparing for His coming is to wait with patience. When someone has to wait for something, you will see how badly he or she wants it.

I remember when I was about 12 I wanted a new bike so badly. My dad told me that I had to earn the money for the bike. He could have gone out and bought it for me and I could have paid him back, but I had to earn the money and wait till I had it to buy the bike. It was a good lesson in discipline for me. I didn't lose sight of my goal, I didn't give up, I didn't get distracted, I saved and worked. The day came, although it seemed I had to wait longer than I cared too, when I was able to buy the bike. I wanted

the bike, I worked for the bike, I saved for the bike, I bought the bike, and when I owned the bike, I took care of it. What a great lesson dad taught me. I've never forgotten that lesson.

There are things that we learn about ourselves and about life as we wait. Our heavenly Father knows the day and the hour when Jesus will come back. At times we wonder when it will happen, but in the meantime, the passion of our hearts should be growing stronger. The resolve of our mind and will should be growing. We are in the process of waiting with patience.

I'm certain that for Simeon the wait was for most of his life. For many of you, the wait for Christ's return has been most of your life. I came to Christ when I was five years old. I've heard about His return for 90% of my life. I've been waiting for the past 45 years. I'm not about to give up now. Wait.

The idea of standing firm here means that we strengthen our resolve, our grip on Christ's word and don't let anything deter our determination. As we get closer to Christ's coming, there will be many things that could distract us and that could cause us to lose hope, to give up or loosen our grip on the Lord.

Prepare for His coming patiently. Because of our instant society, many of us find it difficult to be patient. Patience is a virtue. We are told in James that our patience is perfected by the trials that come our direction. We need to allow those trials to perfect our faith and patience.

#### CONCLUSION:

Jesus is coming back. We prepare by being watchful, occupying or being busy and using the resources He has trusted us with in a responsible way, and being patient and standing firm.