

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE

"Loving His Appearing"

By Jerry Cummings, Pastor of Living Hope Fellowship, Norton

2 Timothy 4:8 says, "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

This scripture refers to people who "love His appearing." Of course His appearing refers to the return of Jesus to the earth. There was a day in Christian circles when people only focused on the future benefits of our faith while largely ignoring the present day promises of God. This resulted in a swing the other direction where the main focus has been on what God wants to do for us here and now. This includes things like healing, provision, healthy relationships, etc. These are important, and we do need to understand the Kingdom of God as it relates to today, as well as tomorrow.

But as a result in this shift, we as believers are often no longer a people who "love His appearing". Jesus' return is far down on our list of things anticipated. However, on the part of Jesus, the day of His return to earth is looked forward to with great anticipation. It is the day of His wedding, the day of the gladness of His heart, the day when His bride will be with Him beholding His glory. If we love Him, then we too will share this

anticipation. Furthermore, only by looking forward to His return can we have a right view of this life as well as things like sin, righteousness, suffering, our mission, and so on.

So what is there to look forward to and love about His appearing? First of all, there will be the glorious experience of seeing Him in His Glory. No matter

the depth of our experience in Christ here and now, it will be very small compared to the unrestricted vision and encounter we will know then. Secondly, following His return will be the destruction of Satan, death, the curse and so on. Rev. 21:4b says, "There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Thirdly, there is eternal

reward. For those who are in Christ, the scripture describes the following rewards: Joy, Intimacy with Christ, authority, reunion with loved ones, and a great everlasting inheritance as heirs of God.

But there is more. There is the resurrection of our bodies with all the advantages of our current bodies, but none of the limitations. Then there is the making right of everything that has been wrong, otherwise known as the judgment, restoration, and renewal. Beyond this will be the benevolent, righteous rule of Jesus, with injustice ended. There will also be full and final deliverance from evil. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

In conclusion, Let yourself anticipate His appearing. As you think about this life, think about the next. Ponder how He views the day of His appearing. As a parent how do you anticipate the time when children will open gifts you have paid for and prepared? Go ahead and anticipate what is reserved for that day. Let that day flavor your difficult times. Set your heart... no matter what it takes, I will endure to that day... Say, "I love the day of His appearing!"

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Equally important, the Bible gives us our spiritual foundation; though our country grows and changes, God's Word remains the same. "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Cor 3:17). Worship this week and praise God for the foundation of freedom that we have been given.

Weekly Scripture Reading					
Luke	Luke	Luke	Luke	Luke	John
14:25-15:32	15:11-32	17:1-19	18:15-34	18:35-19:10	John 13:1-20
Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society					
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