

GET READY!

The Scriptures tell us to “**Prepare ye the way of the Lord.**” (Isaiah 40:3, Matt. 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, KJV)

- But what does this really mean? What do we do today to prepare the way for the Lord’s second coming?
- We can more easily see the answer to these questions when we look at several verses out of the Amplified Bible

Isaiah 40:3 *A voice of one who cries: “**Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord (clear away the obstacles); make straight and smooth in the desert a highway for our God.**”*

- It is our job to “*clear away the obstacles*” out of the way in **this** wilderness, in **this** desert in order to create a clear path for the Lord to come into our midst – i.e. a revival!

Malachi 4:5-6 *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he shall turn and **reconcile the hearts** of the (estranged) fathers to the (ungodly) children and the hearts of the (rebellious) children to (the **piety** of) their fathers (a reconciliation **produced by repentance** of the ungodly,) lest I come and smite the land with a curse and a ban of utter destruction.*

- A few weeks ago we talked about why these are the “**Days of Elijah**” (see separate sermon notes)
- The **prophetic anointing of Elijah** is now being poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28)
- This anointing will bring **reconciliation within families** as well as with **God through repentance**
- But where this **repentance, reconciliation and revival** do not occur, the Lord will “*smite the land with a curse*” and bring “*utter destruction*” when He returns
- It is our job to **lead our community into this repentance and reconciliation**

Luke 1:17 *And he will (Himself) go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn back the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient and incredulous and **unpersuadable to the wisdom** of the upright (which is the knowledge and holy love of the will of God) – in order to **make ready for the Lord a people (perfectly) prepared** (in spirit, adjusted and disposed and placed in the right moral state).*

- We indeed see the “**signs of the times**” in the current generation – “*disobedient and incredulous and unpersuadable*”
- But this not their fault – it is **our fault** because the “*hearts of the fathers*” have not been turned toward the children but rather **toward money, power, materialism and self-gratification**

A People Perfectly Prepared

We will not see hearts of the fathers turned back to the children, nor the **repentance, reconciliation and revival** in our community **until** we – the Church, the Body of Christ – become “*perfectly prepared*”

- But what does that mean? How do we become “*perfectly prepared?*”
- Certainly **not in our own doing** but rather in, of and by the Lord – “*not by might nor by power but by My Spirit saith the Lord of hosts*” (Zechariah 4:6, KJV)

The Amplified Bible spells out what it means to be “*perfectly prepared*”

- It is to be “*in spirit, adjusted and disposed and placed in the right moral state*”
- Let’s look at each of these four characteristics individually to see what these mean for us today, the goals toward which we must strive

In Spirit

What does it mean to be “**in Spirit?**”

- *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* ¹⁷*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are **contrary to one another.*** (Galatians 5:16, NKJV)

- Being “*in the Spirit*” is the **opposite** of being “*in the flesh*”
 - Even as we exist in our **physical bodies** in the **natural world**, we are supposed to be “*in the world*” but not “*of the world*”
- **Do not love the world or the things in the world.** *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶*For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.* ¹⁷*And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.* (1John 2:15-17, NKJV)
- Whenever we are focused on the **things** of the world, the **worries** of the world, the **desires** of the world, then we are **not** in the Spirit
 - Instead, we must focus on the “*things above*”
- *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.* (Colossians 3:2, NKJV)
- *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.* (Philippians 4:8, NKJV)
- Everything starts in the heart and the mind: “*as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*” (Prov. 23:7, KJV)
 - And then proceeds out our mouth: *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* (Matthew 12:34, KJV)
- *You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* (1Peter 2:5, NKJV)
- We must be “*built up*” into a “*spiritual house, a holy priest hood*”
 - Only then can we offer “*spiritual sacrifices*” that are “*acceptable to God*”
- **Be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰*that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;* ¹¹*strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;* ¹²*giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.* (Colossians 1:9-12), NKJV)
- We must have “*spiritual understanding,*” not the understanding of the world, if we are to “*walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work*”
 - If we are “*in the Spirit*” then we will be “*strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power*”
 - And then we will also be able to have “*patience and longsuffering with joy*” – that’s the best way to tell if you are “*in the Spirit*” because no matter what your circumstances you should feel **joyful!**
 - *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,* ³*knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.* ⁴*But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* (James 1:2-4, NKJV)

Adjusted

What does it mean to be “*adjusted*” in the spiritual sense?

- Webster says to be adjusted means: “to change so as to fit, **conform**, make suitable”
- The Bible says: *Be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* (Romans 12:2, NKJV)
 - Again, it all starts **in the mind** wherein we must go through a **spiritual attitude adjustment**

The Scriptures call this a **refining process**

- *But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a **refiner's fire** and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will **purify** the sons of Levi, and **purge them as gold and silver**, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. (Malachi 3:2-3)*
 - Unless we are **refined in the fire** (which is the **crucible of affliction**), we will not be **transformed and adjusted** into a people who are “*perfectly prepared*”
 - *Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have **tested you in the furnace of affliction**. (Isaiah 49:10, NKJV)*
- *And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, **as it seemed good to the potter to make**. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: “O house of Israel, **can I not do with you as this potter?**” says the LORD. “Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! (Jeremiah 18:4-6, NKJV)*
 - But we have to submit ourselves to the potter in order to be molded by His hands
 - If we don't, then we are left to our own devices: *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness (Romans 1:28-29, NKJV)*

We have some obligations of ourselves to do as well:

- ***Put off**, concerning your former conduct, the **old man** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**, ²⁴and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:24-25, NKJV)*
- ***Forgetting** those things which are behind and **reaching forward** to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the **upward call** of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14, NKJV)*
- ***Lay aside every weight**, and the **sin** which so **easily ensnares us**, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)*
- *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for **pulling down strongholds**, ⁵casting down **arguments** and every **high thing** that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every **thought** into captivity to the **obedience of Christ**. (2Corinthians 10:4-6)*

Disposed

According to Webster, to be disposed means: “**inclined**, having a certain **tendency**”

- In Scriptural terms, this means we are supposed to be **inclined toward God** and have a **tendency to do His will** – no matter what the cost!

The Bible calls this our “*reasonable service*” in exchange for salvation, eternal life and even life more abundantly here and now

- *Present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your **reasonable service**. (Romans 12:1, NKJV)*

God **adjusts** us not for our good pleasure but for **His!**

- *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹**make you complete** in every good work to do **His will**, working in you **what is well pleasing in His sight**. (Hebrews 13:20-21, NKJV)*

Even Jesus, in the flesh, did not want to go through the trial set before Him – but, in the Spirit, He acquiesced to the Father's will: *Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless **not My will, but Yours, be done**. (Luke 22:42, NKJV)*

In order to live out our “*reasonable service*” as a “*living sacrifice*” we need to:

1. complete the process of learning how to operate “*in the Spirit*” in the midst of worldly woes
2. finish the process of being “*adjusted*” by the Potter in the “*refiner’s fire*”

Then, we will be able to put our **hands to the plow** and not look back

➤ *Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 9:62, NKJV)

Then, we will be able to witness and speak the gospel with all boldness – and not be ashamed (i.e. embarrassed) to be an out-front, public Christian

- *Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.* (Acts 4:29, NKJV)
- *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.* (2Timothy 1:8, NKJV)

Placed

The final step after getting “*in the Spirit, adjusted and disposed*” is to be “*placed*”

➤ This means that the Lord **places us** into the **locations and situations** that He wants us in – which is not necessarily where we want to be

The prescription, “**bloom where you’re planted**” is true – if **the Lord places us**, that’s where we need to **bloom**

- *And it shall come to pass, that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD.* (Jeremiah 31:28)
- *I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up.* (Amos 9:15, NKJV)

When we stop trying to figure out what we need and where we need to be and just leave it to God, then He can work miracles in our life

- *For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. ²⁸Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.* (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

Blooming means a lot more than just becoming a flower for our own benefit – it is **for others to see and smell**

- *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.* (2Corinthians 2:14-16, NKJV)
- *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5:16)

Right Moral State

All of these four steps – “*in Spirit... adjusted... disposed... placed*” – are designed by the Lord to put us into the “*right moral state*” – only then are we “*perfectly prepared*”

- *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.* (2Timothy 2:20-21, NKJV)