

Time To Prepare To Meet God

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While opening our family devotion this evening with prayer, it was impressed upon me to talk with my family about being prepared to meet God. The scripture that first came to mind reads as follows:

*Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white, through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? **Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, if ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God.** Behold ye must prepare quickly, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life. (Alma 3:48-51 RLDS, written approximately 83 B.C.)*

Stripped of pride! These are strong words. But, according to this admonition, if we are not *sufficiently humble* by being stripped of pride we are not prepared to meet God.

Being prepared to meet God should be of utmost concern to each of us for a very important reason. This life was designed and appointed by God for this purpose, to prepare ourselves to meet Him (cf. Ephesians 5:15-17 IV & Alma 9:38-56 RLDS with Jeremiah 3:13-19).

*And now, my brethren, I would that after ye have received so many witnesses, seeing that the holy scriptures testify of these things, come forth and bring fruit unto repentance; Yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time, and the day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you. **For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God:** yea, behold, the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. And now as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore I beseech of you, that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after **this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity,** behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness, wherein there can be no labor performed. (Alma 16:226-230)*

After referring my family to these scriptures, I was led to ask them what they are actively doing individually – not what they should be doing, but what they are actually doing – to prepare to meet God, i.e. to grow in humility before Him each day. They offered a number of good examples, including kneeling before the Lord in daily prayer, reading His scriptures to understand His will for their lives, confessing and repenting of their sins, etc.

As they spoke, another scripture was impressed upon my mind in association with preparing ourselves to meet God through being *sufficiently humble* before Him:

...and in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments. (Section 59:5b RLDS)

This scripture clearly identifies two things that offend God: 1) not acknowledging His hand in all things and 2) not obeying His commandments (cf. Romans 1:21). The understanding I received when relaying this verse to my family was that in identifying these two things God had mercifully shared His marvelous wisdom with us concerning how we may prepare ourselves to meet Him.

First, do we confess His hand in all our doings and circumstances? If not, it seems rather obvious that we are not *sufficiently humble* before Him. Otherwise we would gladly acknowledge His preeminence and our total dependence upon Him (cf. Proverbs 3:6,7). Therefore it is written:

Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways, save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. For behold, by the power of his word, man came upon the face of the earth; which earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God, being able to speak, and the world was; and to speak, and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure. Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know, that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works; wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him, through the atonement of Christ, his only begotten Son. That ye may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ, and be presented as the first fruits of Christ, unto God, having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him, before he manifesteth himself in the flesh. (Jacob 3:9-17)

Second, do we keep His commandments? If not, it again seems rather obvious that we are not *sufficiently humble* before Him. Only a truly humble person, one who reverences and loves God, would be concerned with keeping His commandments, i.e. living their lives according to His wisdom and will rather than their own (cf. John 14:15 with Deuteronomy 5:7-10). Therefore, it is also written:

And now my beloved brethren, I have said these things unto you, that I might awaken you to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before him; that ye may walk after the holy order of God, after which ye have been received. And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive, and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; Asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive, And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works; And may the Lord bless you, and keep your garments spotless, that ye may at last be brought to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets who have been ever since the world began, having your garments spotless, even as their garments are spotless in the kingdom of heaven, to go no more out. (Alma 5:38-42)

Briefly understood, humility involves both acknowledging God's hand in all things and keeping His commandments. Specifically, it involves 1) glorifying God by acknowledging, both privately and publicly, His faithfulness and goodness to us moment by moment, and 2) remembering Him in our daily lives such that we keep all His commandments (Moroni 4 & 5). And, as the apostle John assures us, God's commandments are not grievous:

*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begat [God] loveth him also that is begotten of him [the children of God]. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.** (I John 5:2,3)*

Please note that keeping His commandments is all that our God requires of us (cf. Micah 6:8).

*And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God...I say unto you, that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and art preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move, and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another; I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole soul, yet ye would be unprofitable servants. **And behold, all that he requires of you, is to keep his commandments;** and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments, ye should prosper in the land; And he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, if ye do keep his commandments, he doth bless you, and prosper you. And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him. And secondly: he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you, for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore, he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him; and are, and will be, for ever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast? (Mosiah 1:49,53-59)*

What are His commandments? According to Jesus Christ, there are two great commandments upon which *all the law and prophets hang*, namely 1) to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and 2) to love each other as ourselves (cf. Matthew 22:34-39 & Mark 12:33-39 with John 13:34,35). Similarly, the apostle Paul affirms that all of God's commandments are summed up in a word, love:

Therefore owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

To this end, then, may we so humble ourselves before God by serving Him in love, by loving each other as He has loved us, by glorifying His name both in confession and in deed according to His commandments and *the faith which worketh by love* (Galatians 5:6). Only in this way can we hope to be prepared to meet Him at the close of this life.