

Preparing for the Heavenly Society

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if [there be any] wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

We know that we are living on borrowed time. When you stop to realise the messages that have come under the three angels, you see that we have passed the three angels' message time into the Revelation 18 other angel. We have been living in the time of the end ever since 1798. 1798 was the beginning of the time of the end. And here we are now in the year 2018. Has God delayed His coming? Sister White says He could have come round about the year 1895; but the people were not ready. They had to go back out into the wilderness, like the children of Israel. God delayed; and for what reason?

The Lord's Coming

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Why has the Lord not come yet? Because He *is longsuffering to us-ward*. As we look at the present condition of the world around us, it is obvious that it is nearly all over. But still, while the disasters are taking place, especially ever since the First and Second World Wars, and now with men's hearts failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth, as all these things have accumulated to this time in which we are living, with all the threats of social, natural, and political delay, although the Lord has not come yet, it is all now coming to its climax. Are we ready? With the things that are to happen, the day of the Lord coming as a thief, in which the heaven shall pass away and the earth will be burned, God now says to us:

Amos 4:12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: [and] because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

This serious call of the Lord is now upon us more than at any other time before. It is going to happen; it will come as a thief in the night. It is surrounding us; we are not unaware of it. And the thing that is as a thief is when Jesus finishes His work in the sanctuary above, after what the time of trouble will commence. We know how close that is. Living therefore so imminently close to the Second Advent, what is our priority? What should we be engaging in just now, in the light of this, to prepare to meet our God?

Self-Examination

Psalm 26:1 Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; [therefore] I shall not slide. 2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

The following words of 2 Corinthians are the echo where we are called upon to fulfil that prayer above. These are the very weighty words telling us that we are to examine ourselves because we need to prepare for that heavenly society:

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Psalm 26 says, *Examine me, O Lord*; and here it says, *Examine yourselves*. This is our work – to ask Him to examine us and show us; and we are also to do *our* part in examining ourselves. The only item that we are going to take with us when we are taken from this planet is our character. And it is our character that we are to examine very closely.

The state of the character must be compared with the great moral standard of righteousness. There must be a searching out of the peculiar sins which have been offensive to God, which have dishonored His name and quenched the light of His Spirit and killed the first love from the soul. {TMK 256.4}

We are to examine ourselves; we are to examine our character because that is the only thing we take to heaven. And we read that *the state of the character must be compared with the great moral standard of righteousness, that there must be a searching out of the peculiar sins which have been offensive to God, which have dishonored His name*. What is there in my character that is offensive to God? I am to search it; I am to examine closely. We are dependent on God to help us do this; because on our own we will not discern exactly what is all offensive to God. God has a photograph of our character in heaven, and He reveals to us the things that mar our life. This is the crux of the words in Psalms: *Search me, O God*. Search me,

and show me. This is our priority work as we face the imminent arrival of Jesus, so that we might be prepared to live in the heavenly society.

Days of Subtle Temptations

Victory is assured through faith and obedience. . . . The work of overcoming is not restricted to the age of the martyrs. The conflict is for us, in these days of subtle temptation to worldliness, to self-security, to indulgence of pride, covetousness, false doctrines, and immorality of life. . . . Shall we stand before the proving of God? {TMK 256.5}

We are to search out our peculiar sins and realise that we are living *in these days of subtle temptations to worldliness, to self-security, to indulgence of pride, covetousness, false doctrines, and immorality of life*. We are to search that out, because we are so subtly tempted, more subtly than ever before. Satan knows he can't get us by persecution anymore, because we have been conditioned through the knowledge of the days of the martyrs to know how it is going to come. So he says, I'm going to do it in such a way that you don't even know it.

Lose no time in becoming acquainted with the principles that the children of God must follow. We are here to copy the character of Christ, to become familiar with His gentleness, His lowliness. This will place us where our record will be, "Ye are complete in him." (Colossians 2:10). {UL 248.4}

So what are we to do? Lose no time to become acquainted *with the principles that the children of God must follow*, to learn what are the sins that are offensive to God, and to become familiar with the gentleness and lowliness and Christ.

By patience, kindness, forbearance, we are to show that we are not of the world, that day by day we are learning the lessons that will fit us to enter the higher school. {Ibid.}

We are preparing *to enter the higher school*. Did you notice here something interesting? As we are trying to copy the character of Christ, it is *by patience, kindness, forbearance*, that *we are to show that we are not of the world*. And what are the sins we are to seek out in these days of subtle temptations? One of them is *worldliness*. We often associate with many other things but the one implied here: *By patience, kindness, forbearance, we are to show that we are not of the world, that we are learning the lessons that will fit us to enter the higher school*.

Let us spend some time to search out, to become acquainted, with the principles of the children of God, with the principles we are to have in our character. We are

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...you are preparing for the society of the angels. You are learning in this world how to conduct yourselves in the family of Christ in heaven. {UL 248.3}

What I am doing here I will be doing there – my conduct. And if my conduct is not according to the family of heaven, will I be there? or will I be offensive there? This is what we are seeking to do now – to do our part in searching ourselves, and losing no time to become acquainted *with the principles that the children of God must follow.*

As we do this careful search, as we look at this description of the character we are to develop, those principles in character, we want to remember all the way along the following words:

Love for God should lead us to find true enjoyment in learning and doing His will. Thus we become every day better prepared to be overcomers, examples of the power that heavenly grace has to uplift and ennoble human beings. {UL 248.2}

I have character defects for which I am asking God to search me through, and I am to search myself. And as I do, love for God should lead me to find true enjoyment in learning to do His will, and become every day prepared to be an overcomer, an example of the power that heavenly grace has to uplift and ennoble human beings. This must be the backdrop of the rest of the activity which we will continue to enlarge in this message. The love of God is that which will give me joy in acknowledging my defects of character and changing to His will. Otherwise we become embarrassed, shamefaced, and we can't learn. When I am embarrassed because of my character defects and I am not motivated by the love for God, it all obliterates the beautiful progress that God wants us to have.

Our Conduct Towards Others

Again, *By patience, kindness, forbearance, we are to show that we are not of the world.* How do we conduct ourselves towards the people we come in contact with? What is our conduct especially with those who are close to us, the immediate family, our other relatives, and the church members, with whom we associate more closely than with any other and where we can see the shortcomings and differences in each other? Can you see the need for patience, kindness, and forbearance?

Lose no time in becoming acquainted with the principles that the children of God must follow. {UL 248.4}

These are the principles that the children of God must follow in their contact with one another: *patience, kindness, forbearance*. With what? When do you need to have patience with another person? When do we need to have kindness and forbearance towards another person?

Few are without visible faults; in most persons careful scrutiny will reveal some defect of character; and upon these defects in others, some professed Christians delight to dwell. The habit strengthens with indulgence, {RH, August 28, 1883 par. 5}

As you dwell upon the mistakes and defects of others, it strengthens. You can't help yourself; you keep on thinking and talking about it. And as it strengthens and we start to note the visible faults and errors in others, we can't help but ridiculing them. We can't help but say things to them that are offensive to them. This is called *impoliteness*.

Be polite to those with whom you come in contact; {UL 248.3}

You have faulty people around you, you have strange ways about people around you, and what is our natural disposition without our focus on the Lord? What do we do? How do we respond to people with their strange ways around us? I have to be honest with you; I have a struggle with that. To not call anyone stupid; to not call anybody weird; to not even think how weird they are; to think only that they are the children of God.

Be polite to those with whom you come in contact; thus you will be polite to God. {Ibid.}

What does Jesus say? *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.* (Matt. 25:40). The *least* of them. So if I am not polite to the least of Christ's brethren, who am I not polite to? Self-evident. So as we examine ourselves, Jesus is here showing us that our character is offensive to God. I am being impolite to God if I am impolite to my fellow brothers and sisters? Patience, kindness, forbearance, this is what is called for.

Let us let God examine us, and let us examine ourselves. The following words of Jesus are directly in relation to preparing to meet the heavenly society, preparing to enter into heaven:

Matthew 5:3 Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Whose is the kingdom? *The poor in spirit*. Not the proud; not those who are asserting themselves and making jibes at other people.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Meekness is expressed in patience, kindness, forbearance, and *politeness*. The poor in spirit – being polite and meek. These are the people who are the children of God. And as we are living so close now to the very end, how imperative that we lose no time in becoming so acquainted with ourselves in relation to our conduct with others. What a serious subject we have here before us.

The home in which the members are polite, courteous Christians exerts a far-reaching influence for good. Other families will mark the results attained by such a home, and will follow the example set, in their turn guarding the home against satanic influences. The angels of God will often visit the home in which the will of God bears sway. {AH 31.2}

The angels of God will love that society; and these people who are *polite, courteous Christians* will be welcome in the society of the angels.

Under the power of divine grace such a home becomes a place of refreshing to worn, weary pilgrims. {Ibid.}

And how are we going to do this?

By watchful guarding, self is kept from asserting itself. Correct habits are formed. {Ibid.}

And habits form character.

Acknowledging Another's Rights

There is a careful recognition of the rights of others. {Ibid.}

I really had to work on that one. Just because they don't suit my particular take on a matter doesn't mean my will should bear sway; they have a right to think the way they do. And what is it that I had to learn? *By watchful guarding, self must be kept from asserting itself.* Correct habits are to be formed.

There is a careful recognition of the rights of others. The faith that works by love and purifies the soul stands at the helm, presiding over the whole household. Under the hallowed influence of such a home, the principle of brotherhood laid down in the word of God is more widely recognized and obeyed. {Ibid.}

And the Spirit of Prophecy also tells us that the way we are in the home will slip into the church. The principle of brotherhood is established in the home, so that in the church the brotherhood can be sweet. This politeness and courtesy is further enlarged here:

The Lord Jesus demands our acknowledgment of the rights of every man. {RC 28.2}

I need to acknowledge the rights of my marriage partner, of my family, of my church brothers and sisters. I need to acknowledge their rights.

Men's social rights, and their rights as Christians, are to be taken into consideration. All are to be treated with refinement and delicacy, as the sons and daughters of God. {Ibid.}

True Courtesy and Love

Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to His persecutors; and His true followers will manifest the same spirit. {RC 28.3}

Isn't that a wonderful thought?

Look at Paul when brought before rulers. His speech before Agrippa is an illustration of true courtesy as well as persuasive eloquence. The gospel does not encourage the formal politeness current with the world, {Ibid.}

It does not encourage *formal politeness*, just doing it because we are in public eyes.

...but the courtesy that springs from real kindness of heart. {Ibid.}

There we get right into the heart. What is my attitude in my heart?

The most careful attention to the outward proprieties of life is not sufficient to shut out all fretfulness, harsh judgment, and unbecoming speech. {RC 28.4}

Something will blurt out of my speech, and it'll just be so impolite, no matter how careful I am in the public eye, because *careful attention to the outward proprieties of life* doesn't do it.

True refinement will never be revealed so long as self is considered the supreme object. {Ibid.}

This is what we have to overcome, that self-confidence.

Love must dwell in the heart. A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heartlove for the Master. {Ibid.}

This is what we read previously. Love for God will make this work enjoyable. It will be a motive of action that comes from the heartlove for the Master.

Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren. {Ibid.}

What sort of interest? An *unselfish* one.

Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. It illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire being. {Ibid.}

If you are holding a certain judgmental attitude towards another person, can you hide it from your face? It will come out in the facial features and in the choice of words. But *love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. It illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice.* You can't hide what is inside of you. If something irritates you, your voice will tell the persons around you. If I am short with my wife, or with someone else, it is telling you that I am disregarding their rights; and my face will tell you too.

Some with whom you are brought in contact may be rough and uncourteous, but do not, because of this, be less courteous yourself. {RC 28.5}

We sometimes think, Their treatment of me is not nice, so I'll let them have it too; and back comes a response. But no; even though they may be *rough and uncourteous*,

Respect for the Blundering and Dull

He who wishes to preserve his own self-respect must be careful not to wound needlessly the self-respect of others. This rule should be sacredly observed toward the dullest, the most blundering. {Ibid.}

How do you feel towards dull, blundering people? One person many years ago said to me, I can't be part of this church; this church is full of people that are just not my kind of people. Then the individual pointed out one particular person and said, This person is a fruitcake. And I shrivelled underneath and thought to myself, "Where are you, brother??" What a derogatory statement to make upon someone who is dull and blundering. Can I call them a fruitcake? I can't do that.

What God intends to do with these apparently unpromising ones, you do not know. He has in the past accepted persons no more promising or attractive to do a great work for Him. His Spirit, moving upon the heart, has roused every faculty to vigorous action. The Lord saw in these rough, unhewn stones precious material, which would stand the test of storm and heat and pressure.

{Ibid.}

Be polite to those with whom you come in contact; thus you will be polite to God. {RC 28.6}

As Jesus said, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.* As we have been reading this, can the searching of God reveal things about me? Oh yes. And I want to get rid of the very core of these kinds of impolite and uncourteous communications. I want to get rid of them quick smart, because I haven't got much longer time.

To overcome our failures, to overcome the things that the Lord is showing us mar our life, the things that mar our character and that are displeasing to God, this is our work. And as I meet these failures and they trouble me, I pray to God, Lord, I need your help; I don't want to be like this.

Love for God should lead us to find true enjoyment in learning and doing His will. Thus we become every day better prepared to be overcomers, examples of the power that heavenly grace has to uplift and ennoble human beings.

{UL 248.2}

So my love for God is to be the paramount focus. As I meet these unpleasant people around me, these bumbling, confused people, and God wants me to be courteous and kind and polite, and to modulate my voice, and to show a politeness that comes from the heart, it is needed that I will look at the love of God for this to go through the roots of my communication to people.

At the Cusp

Examine God's word with me. What is the message for us in these last days? What is the message for us who are living right at the cusp of Jesus' final concluding work in the sanctuary above? Jesus has been speaking here to the Laodicean people and He has waited for them as a whole, as a church; and after speaking to the angel of the church who has failed and telling him that He will spue him out, He now comes to those living exactly where we are living now, and says:

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and

he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Here Jesus stands before us. Look at Me, He says. We are to be in Christ, Christ is to be in us; we are to know the sinful flesh, to understand all these things that come up inside of us and annoy us; and Jesus says to us, I overcame this in the most terrible circumstances.

[Rev. 3:21 quoted] These are the words of our Substitute and Surety. He who is the divine Head of the church, the mightiest of conquerors, would point His followers to His life, His toils, His self-denials, His struggles and sufferings, through contempt, through rejection, ridicule, scorn, insult, mockery, falsehood, up the path of Calvary to the scene of the crucifixion, that they might be encouraged to press on toward the mark for the prize and reward of the overcomer. {OHC 353.2}

What is the prize and reward of the overcomer? The society of heaven. And as we look to Jesus and the love of God pulsates through the being, we are happy to deal with these entrenched character defects that show themselves up when people around us are dull. We may feel this urge to think, “Why can’t they do this? How can they be like that??” But no; none of that will be cherished. Give them their rights. They have a right to be what they are. The Lord will make some beautiful things out of them. I have watched this. It’s beautiful; it’s wonderful what God can do when we remain under the influence of His pure word. People change. While they may still struggle with certain dullness and confusion in their life, they are making progress; and I look for that progress, and I rejoice to see it.

Are we ready to meet our Lord in regards to these things? Would we be ushered into the society of heaven soon? Let us take ourselves in hand and pursue the message of this hour. What is it we are to do? Search out those sins; ask the Lord to show us. And as He does, don’t despair; rejoice, because our love to Him is helping us. And my love to Him will help my love to other brothers and sisters; and I will definitely conquer worldliness in these subtle times in which we live. I praise God for His precious hope that He imparts into our hearts as He shows us the things that mar our life.

Amen.