

Get Ready for the Crisis

Sermon #0955

Study by W. D. Frazee—August 6, 1965

As dear old Luther Warren used to tell us, "The way to be ready is to get ready and stay ready. Then we will be ready when Jesus comes."

I want to study with you some of the practical problems that are involved in being ready. We naturally want to enter into a deeper Christian experience. We desire the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We understand that we must come very close to the Master.

When Jesus was talking to the people of His time He made an observation that applies with equal force today:

"And He said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"
Luke 12:54-56.

There never was a time when men were so keen and so equipped in this matter of discerning the world about us. But the signs of the times are noticed by but few.

We have heard the reports direct from Burma. Tremendous changes have come in the last few weeks as the communists have taken over our mission hospital. Things like that have happened in other countries previously. And whether it be communists or some other form of government, we know that the great enemy is planning to eventually take over and close up the institutions that has a part in this message. He plans to get them out of business as a part of the third angel's message. He has many ways. He has a bag full of tricks. He has a key ring with many keys on it.

I picked up the last issue of the *Review and Herald* and noticed another earnest appeal from our religious liberty department in Washington D. C. relative to the conscience clause in the right to work appeal. The appeal was made in this article, and many of you have been writing letters.

I was impressed to call our congressman in this area and talk to him. I had met this congressman in Dade county in the past. He used to be the judge of the court. I got him on the telephone and talked about my burden. He gave me the news that the thing had already passed in the house, but he promised to talk to the senators from Georgia seeking to get this in the senate. He told me that there was a

congresswoman from Oregon who was prepared to offer an amendment with a conscience clause. But the proponents of this measure had so maneuvered the thing that the parliament ruled that no amendments were to be allowed. So once again the political power of the labor unions are making itself felt. And it is expected that when the senate goes with the house, and the president signs the bill, the labor unions will have more power than they have ever had in the history of this nation.

In some of our church owned institutions, if a majority of the employees vote to have a certain labor union to represent them in bargaining with the management, every person in the employ of that institution must join that labor union or lose his job. And that will present a dilemma.

God is not taken by surprise. He has told us this and more.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" Revelation 13:16,17.

Financial power, economic power is to play a part in this closing crisis. Everything is getting set for it. In the last issue of *News Week*, August 9, the editorial on the last page observes that no president in our history, and few individuals in the world's history, have possessed the stupendous domination that the president enjoys today. Never in all the history of the world have so many people been dependent upon the decisions of so few as at this hour. Rapidly things are being brought together so that the scene pictured in *Early Writings* can come to pass. The servant of the Lord saw the leading men of the earth consulting together, and as the result a universal decree against Sabbath keepers would be passed.

We are not quite at that point yet, but we are closer than we were a few months ago. But it is not that picture I wish you to be thinking of. That is merely a backdrop. The thing I am thankful for is that God has foreseen all this and has a plan to get His people ready.

I want to give another view of the future. God's people are privileged as in the days of Elijah to have a prophet who knows what the king of Syria is going to do. The testimony I am going to read was given to me by Elder G. B. Starr, one of the pioneer workers who spent many years with Sister White. This is a copy of a testimony written by Sister White, January 20, 1884. It is a letter to Elder Butler and Elder Haskell. Elder Butler was the president of the General Conference, and Elder Haskell is the one this hall is named after.

"Friday night several heard my voice exclaiming, Look, look. The time of trouble was upon us. I saw our people in great distress, weeping and praying, pleading the sure promises of God, while the wicked were all around us mocking us and threatening to destroy us. They ridiculed our feebleness. They mocked at the smallness of our numbers, and taunted with words calculated to cut deep.

They charged us with taking an independent position from all the rest of the world, and they had cut off our resources so that we could not buy nor sell. And they referred to our abject poverty and stricken condition.

"They could not see how we could live without the world. We were dependent upon the world, and we must concede to the customs, practices, and laws of the world or go out of it. If we were the only people in the world whom the Lord favored, the appearances were awfully against us. They declared that they had the truth, that miracles were among them, that angels from heaven talked and walked with them, that great power and signs and wonders were performed among them, and this was the temporal millennium that they had been expecting so long.

"The whole world was converted in harmony with the Sunday law, and this little, feeble people stood out in defiance of the laws of the land and the laws of God, and claimed to be the only right ones on the earth."

Do you think it is going to happen? Oh, yes. We are well on the road to that. Notice that the pressure brought to view is an economical pressure. There are going to be other pressures, but their pressure at this particular point is an economic one. They gather around and say, What are you going to eat. We have cut off everything we can cut off, and now we will just let you stew awhile. We will let you come to your senses. If you get hungry enough you will knuckle under.

I wonder how many have thought about this. We are living in the time when this particular method of bringing people to their knees is more possible and can be more effective than ever in the history of the world. Why? Fewer and fewer people are raising their own food. Never in all past history has such a small proportion of the population been used to feed the rest, and it is getting more that way every year. I wonder what the answer is?

"The time is fast coming when the controlling power of the labor unions will be very oppressive. Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. "The Lord desires His people to move into the country where they can settle on the land, and raise their own fruit and vegetables, and where their children can be brought in direct contact with the works of God in nature. Take your families away from the cities is my message" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, pages 141,357,358.

Lest we should get the wrong idea that we are to be hermits and get so far away for safety that we can't do any work for God, the same message says:

"The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, 'Shall not the cities be warned? Yes; not by God's people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth'"
Ibid.

Sixty-one years ago this summer on the banks of the Cumberland River in Tennessee the servant of the Lord pointed out an old farm and said, This is the place to establish a school for the training of self-supporting, agricultural, missionary teachers. And in a little four page tract Sister White wrote just four years later, May 25, 1908, occurs this significant statement:

"The class of education given at the Madison school is such as will be accounted a treasure of great value by those who take up work in foreign fields. If many more in other schools were receiving a similar training, we as a people would be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The message would be quickly carried to every country, and souls now in darkness would rejoice in the light. The time is coming when because of persecution God's people will be scattered in many countries."

Then attention is called to practical things so that as that crisis comes our people will be able to keep spreading the message and supporting themselves while they do it.

Years ago the fishermen were having trouble with the starfish. As the starfish got in their nets along with the other fish they would break them into pieces and throw them back into the water. Then they discovered something. Each piece became a new starfish.

God wants Seventh-day Adventist institutions to be like the starfish. When they are broken to pieces, He wants every piece to go right on living and multiplying. God wants you and me to be getting a training in practical lines united with soul winning evangelism so we can keep right on working for God until Jesus comes.

I was in an institution that talked about training young people in practical lines. They were given jobs to work their way through school. I held a week of prayer in that college. During the week of prayer I went down where the young men were employed, and I saw a young man who was picking up an article of furniture and putting it in a vat of varnish, and lifting it out so it could drain. That is what he did for eight hours. What was he doing? He was earning money to get an education.

I will not criticize that at all. But I wonder what he can do when the institution breaks up? I am trying to point out how simple and practical our training needs to be if we are getting ready for tomorrow.

What about agriculture? If all we know is to run big combines to handle thousands of acres, what will we do when we can't buy or sell? Is the picture I have read you that of individual families settling on the land so they can produce thousands of bales of cotton, or thousands of bags of wheat? Don't misunderstand me. There is nothing wicked about that. But will that kind of agriculture prepare Seventh-day Adventist families to go through this pressure when our resources are cut off?

Every Seventh-day Adventist family should be thinking about what we read here from *Selected Messages*. Now if we think that the Savior is not coming for another hundred years we can pass this instruction on to our grandchildren. But if He is coming soon, let's be busy in getting ready in a practical way. What do you say?

It is interesting that some people get the idea that He is coming so soon that it is too late to do anything about this. Isn't that a strange thing to think? All I want to know is, Have we passed through this crisis that this was designed to get us ready for? Has the mark of the beast been enforced? Has our resources been cut off so we can't buy or sell? Well then the nearer we are to that time the more urgent becomes the necessity of doing what we are told to do to get ready.

Many new laws have come in just the last few weeks which will have a tendency more and more to regiment the life of Americans. If you have one eye open you can see that more and more people are being brought under more and more regulations financially and otherwise, but you will still be able to use your own home as a place to do non commercial, missionary-minded ministry to others.

God intends that every Seventh-day Adventist home in the country shall be a place where the neighbors come to get spiritual and physical help to solve their problems. And when every institution is taken over either because of labor union pressure or because of a Sunday law pressure, wherever a true Seventh-day Adventist family is there will be a place of refuge for those who are seeking to find the answer to their problems. Oh, let's cultivate the doing of those things which will be the last things to be stopped before probation closes.

There is another activity which no amount of taking over institutions can stop. You can visit individuals in their homes and help them in the way that they need, physically, mentally, or spiritually.

So let us be sure that even in our medical missionary work we do not become so institutionalized in our thinking that when the starfish is broken to pieces, the individual rays can't go on. In other words, let us be sure that every nurse, every doctor, every cook, every aid, every janitor, everyone in the office knows how to help people personally with the common problems of life. That is God's plan for every Seventh-day Adventist today.

I am so glad that the brethren have republished most of the book, *Ministry of Healing*, in this wonderful little volume, *Life at its Best*. Oh, let's be circulating these by the hundreds. Let's use them freely. Let's get them in the homes of the people, because we are offering to people life at its best.

And remember, we are training for the time when our institutions will be no more as an agency of the third angel's message. The last souls that are gathered in will be gathered by individuals. We are training for that hour. Oh, that God may help us to appreciate the privilege of doing simple, personal, missionary work, learning how to make it interesting and effective to people.

Let's go back two thousand years. When our dear Savior was born into this world in that stable at Bethlehem, and when as a little child He was taken up to Nazareth and began that seeming long process of preparation for His ministry, all the universe looked on with the deepest interest. The book, *The Desire of Ages* was given to us to magnify and bring out details in the Biblical account of that wonderful life. In that book three chapters are devoted to the childhood and youth of Christ. Here we find how Jesus was educated and trained for His mission. We find the example that you are privileged to follow in getting ready for your mission. And it is very interesting to me that during those first thirty years of life that Jesus never worked a miracle. But I want you to notice what was going on.

"Jesus was the healer of the body as well as of the soul. He was interested in every phase of suffering that came under His notice, and to every sufferer He brought relief, His kind words having a soothing balm. None could say that He had worked a miracle; but virtue—the healing power of love—went out from Him to the sick and distressed. Thus in an unobtrusive way He worked for the people from His very childhood" *The Desire of Ages*, page 92.

Jesus was working with the people in an unobtrusive way. He was not paraded before the town of Nazareth as the boy wonder, the child prodigy, the boy preacher. Nothing of the kind. He was working during those thirty years in an unobtrusive way, but He was working. Every hour that He could spare from the carpenter shop, His studies with His mother, and communion with God through nature and prayer, He was here and there in a quiet way in the community.

It was a sacrificial work. Jesus had little money to give, but often He would take His own food and share it with those who were more needy. Isn't that wonderful? I want to learn that spirit of love, don't you?

And notice, this was not through some organized program of youth activity that Jesus got interested in that. God, impressing His heart in love for those around Him, started Him in that.

Don't misunderstand me. I believe in organized activity in stirring young and old to do something for God. My point is that if we love others as Jesus did, we will have a self-starter. We will find some way to find someone who needs our help. What a privilege.

Will that kind of experience get us ready for tomorrow? Oh, yes. Jesus was working in a very simply and practical way. And just as His medical missionary work

during those first thirty years was without miracle, His support was without miracle. No bread was multiplied in His hands. No manna fell from heaven. No money was found in a fish's mouth. He was supported during those years with the labor of His hands. Think of it. The Lord of glory, the Son of God, earning His bread by the sweat of His brow.

I read something interesting I want to share with you. It is from a manuscript, number 8, written in 1897:

"While we are in this world we must secure by the sweat of our brow the bread that we eat. Many are inclined to divorce temporal business from spiritual service. Many think that the time devoted to temporal things is lost. They think that if they could devote their time wholly to religious duties, they would be much more fervent and earnest in religious things. But Christ has left us no such example. It is not God's intention that the business of life shall stand still, that all duties shall be regarded as unimportant but the ministry and the lines of work embraced by the ministry."

Did you ever meet anyone like that? It could be that you looked into a little frame with glass.

Do you see something of the meaning of the providence of God in establishing a program for self-supporting missionaries? Jesus devoted those thirty years to a preparation which included using His hands to earn His bread.

Are there miracles ahead in this movement? Under the glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God we are going to see miracles worked—the sick healed, signs and wonders following the believers.

I submit that to receive the anointing that Jesus received of the unmeasured influence of the Spirit of God we need a preparation such as He received at Nazareth, and Nazareth comes before Jordan.

That apparently slow, practical training that Jesus received in Nazareth is vital for our young boys and girls and young men and women today. And if we have missed it, thank God that with gray or white hairs we can still enter into some of these precious experiences

"He did not attack the precepts or practices of the learned teachers; but when reproved from His own simple habits, He presented the word of God in justification of His conduct" *The Desire of Ages*, page 84,85.

I long to learn all that is wrapped up in that sentence. That is part of the Nazareth program. There came a time when Jesus hurled burning denunciations (Matthew 23), but that wasn't what He did at Nazareth. And until we learn what He

learned at Nazareth, perhaps we ought to be careful about attempting to reproduce what He did in Matthew 23.

"In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact. Because He was so gentle and unobtrusive, the scribes and elders supposed that He would be easily influenced by their teaching" *Ibid*.

Our great danger is erring one way or the other. Either being so anxious to advance certain principles that we attack those who don't follow them, or becoming so anxious to please people that along with gentleness we mingle compromise. Oh, what a danger that is! The life of Jesus at Nazareth was a beautiful example of standing stiffly for the principles of reform, and at the same time being meek and gentle and not attacking those who didn't follow those principles.

Dear Father, write upon our hearts the urgency of the coming crisis. Write upon our souls the assurance that Thou wilt have a people prepared and made ready for the crisis. Write into our hands and feet the practical training, the practical experience that will fit us to run Thy last errands in this world.

Give us a heart experience of deep love. Such love for Thee that we will never surrender one principle. Such love for others that we will study how to win them. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

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