

“Ready or not...here He Comes!”
1 Peter 1:3

Big Idea - Jesus is coming back so I better be getting ready!

1 John 2:28: “And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming.”

There are four commands in this verse.

1. An urgent appeal to be alert.

be alert for antichrists during the end times – vs. 18 – 23 warns about anti-christs

That’s why John starts this section or paragraph of letter, “And now ...” “and” connects us to what came before, “now” emphatically calls us to the present, to the here and now.

Or in other words, “here’s what you need to do right now.”

We always want to know the answers to the **When and What** questions, in Luke 18:8 Jesus doesn’t give us that but He focuses on **who** we need to be and **“how”** we should live in light of His return:

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”

Prophecy is not designed to satisfy our curiosity but to sanctify our character.

1 Peter 4:7 “...the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.”

The question is not when Jesus will return, but what will we do before He gets here?

A focus on the future must fortify our faith today.

In other words, focus on being faithful and let God handle the end of the world.

ILLUS. a Meme from The (old) Andy Griffith Show shows Opie talking to Andy while they're both sitting on a log. Opie has a serious look on his face and asks, "Pa, when is Jesus coming back?"

Sheriff Andy thinks for a moment and answers, "I don't rightly know, Opie. Ya see, we're not on the planning committee. We're on the welcoming committee."

Are you ready to welcome Jesus?

The closeness of Christ's coming should cause us to walk closely with Him today. Are you ready ... or not?

2. An affectionate call to abide.

John tenderly addresses his readers by calling them, "little children," which is a term of pastoral and parental affection, addressing believers of every stage and age. Some translations use, "My dear children."

With earnest tenderness, we're urged to "abide in Him."

This is one of the Apostle John's favorite terms, used some twenty-four times in his first letter. "Abide" is an old English word that means, "to remain" or "stay."

A few translations use the word "continue." not meant to be passive, but to be an active purifying of our lives as we pursue holiness. It's the idea of constantly remaining in a deep and intimate relationship with God, or as one commentator says, "to be permanently at home with the Lord and for the Lord to be at home with you."

1 John teaches we abide by obeying. We do that 3 ways:

1. By believing the truth,
2. Living like Jesus
3. Loving like Jesus

One who abides is comfortable with Christ while maintaining a clear conscience by quickly confessing and turning from sin.

The closeness of Christ's coming should cause us to walk closely with Him today.

Are you ready ... or not?

3. An intense readiness for His appearing.

1 John 2:28 says we're to abide "so that when He appears ..." The phrase "so that" means for the purpose of or to the end that.

The reason we abide is so we're ready for His appearing! In addition, our abiding results from our readiness for His return.

Notice the word "when." It's not a matter of might, maybe, or if, but "when" Jesus appears. The idea behind "appears" is that He will show Himself openly and in great glory for all to see,

Revelation 4 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so. Amen."

Did you know that for every one verse in the Bible that speaks about Jesus' first coming, there are eight more verses describing His second coming?

The Bible teaches the coming of Christ is imminent, which is a word from Latin, meaning, "to hang over us." Imminent refers to something always hanging overhead, a certainty that something is going to happen very soon, at any moment.

In Matthew 25:13, Jesus tells us we must be constantly ready: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

In Luke 12:43, we're told to work while we wait: "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes."

1 Thessalonians 5:2 says, "For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

In 1 John 2:18, this sense of urgency is underlined: "Children, it is the last hour ..."

The Bible closes with a reminder in Revelation 22:20 that Christ is coming quickly: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

The late J. Vernon McGee, the preacher for Thru the Bible, once asked this question, Why has He not revealed to us the time of His coming?

A Christian ought to live in the light of the imminent coming of Christ. If you tell me today that He is not coming for another ten years, then I do not need to worry about today, and I can be a little careless in my living ... but there are times when I get behind a driver who won't let me around to pass him, and I tell him what I think of him. If the Lord were to come at that moment, I might be ashamed at His appearing. So, you and I need to be living all the time in the light of His imminent return.

The closeness of Christ's coming should cause us to walk closely with Him today.

Are you ready ... or not?

4. An invitation of assurance.

The last part of 1 John 2:28 says one who abides "... may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

Notice how John includes himself by using the pronoun "we." He's not above anyone but because he is also abiding, He has confidence that he will be ready for Christ's return. Abiding brings with it the wonderful companion of assurance.

The word "confidence" refers to cheerful courage and boldness of speech, especially in the presence of persons of high rank, like when a child speaks to a parent boldly without any filter or fear.

the idea of "not shrinking from Him in shame" speaks of disfigurement, disgrace, and humiliation. To be "unashamed" means to have nothing to hide and nothing to shrink away from. The word "coming" was used to announce the visit of a king or an emperor. It literally means, to be beside a dignitary.

This passage lays out only two possible reactions for a Christian when Jesus returns: you will either be confident ... or ashamed. You will run to Him with rejoicing ... or recoil from Him with regret. Boldness is the by product of abiding.

The commentator William Barclay adds: By far the best way to be ready for the coming of Christ is to live with Him every day. If we do that, His coming will be no shock to us but simply the entry into the nearer presence of One with whom we have lived for that long.

A pastor asked a group of women from his church if they were ready for the return of Christ.

One immediately smiled and said, "Absolutely, I'm ready."

Another quickly said, "I can't wait!"

One responded on Facebook with: "I'm confident in Him because His power is perfected in my weakness. I'm unashamed and bold because He tells me not to be ashamed of the gospel."

Can you respond with that same kind of confidence, or will you shrink away in shame at His appearing?

In Genesis 3:8, after Adam and Eve sinned, the first couple shrank away in shame when God pursued them in the Garden: "And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

Revelation 6:16-17 describes unbelievers who will shrink away in shame when the Lamb appears: "Calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'"

for a believer, any shame will be brief because we will be quickly transformed- 1 John 3:2 "Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him..."

Someone has summarized the story of God's glory in our lives like this:
I'm not what I should be. I'm not what I'm going to be. But thank God I'm not what I used to be. Any brief regret for the believer will be something like, "If only I had not been so self-centered and served Him more fully! I wish my motives had been better!

1 Corinthians 3:15 says, "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

Will your deeds be acceptable, or will you be ashamed? All believers will be accepted, but not all our deeds will be acceptable.

Read 1 John 2:28 again: "And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming."

Ask yourself this question when you're doing something you shouldn't: Do I want to be found doing this when Christ returns? Am I ready...or not?