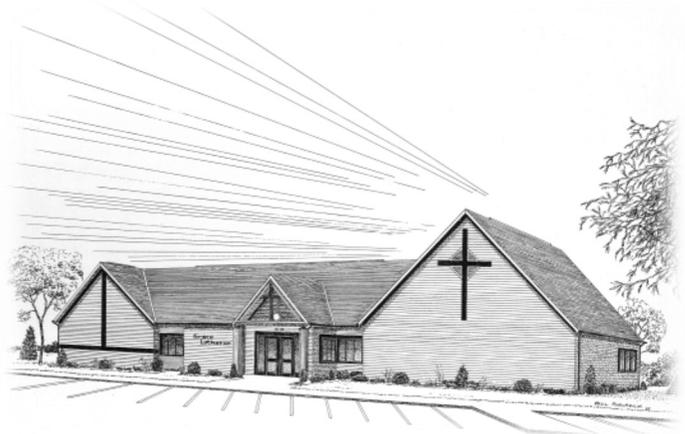




The Third Sunday of End Time—Saints Triumphant  
November 16, 2014  
Pastor Daniel Naumann  
Isaiah 52:1-6  
**WAKE UP, PREPARED!**



What's your morning routine like? What's the first thing you do when you get out of bed? Do you get dressed, take a shower, brush your teeth, eat breakfast? Maybe it's pouring a cup of coffee? We all have our morning down, don't we? We all know how to get our morning going, no matter how hard that is sometimes, so that we can start our day. It's a habit. It's a routine. In fact, our

day seems a little odd without that routine, doesn't it? If you're a coffee person, you just wouldn't dream of a morning without a cup of coffee.

Sometimes our routine doesn't exactly mesh with our end goal, though does it? When my parents used to come into my room as a child to say, "Wake up!", I wasn't in that moment thinking: *Yeah, if I don't wake up I'm going to have to walk into the classroom late, which I hate! All I was thinking was, More sleep! Go away! Let me sleep! My wise parents started to figure out ways to get my early morning actions to mesh with my end morning goals. They set alarm clocks, turned on lights, took away covers, even poured an occasional cup of water on my head to get me out of bed so that I wouldn't be late.*

Sometimes our early morning routines here in this life don't mesh with our late morning spiritual goals at the end of time, do they? Let me give you an example of what I mean. If I asked you what will happen when Jesus comes again, I trust that probably many, if not most of you would give me the right answers. You would talk about Judgment Day, the destruction of the earth, Christ coming on the clouds with his angels, raising the dead, judging believers and unbelievers, and you would say that you are one of those believers whom Jesus will take to be with him forever in heaven. All the right answers. Your end goal is spot on. But let me ask you about your

early morning routine. What do you plan on doing before Jesus comes? Will you be prepared? Are you awake and vigilant, faithfully waiting for Jesus to come? Or are you dosing off, hoping to catch some more shut-eye before he comes?

In Isaiah 52 God was preparing his people in exile in Babylon for a huge event which he describes in Isaiah 53. I'm certain that you know the event in Isaiah 53. That chapter describes the Savior of all the world being led like a lamb to the slaughter as he bears the world's infirmities and transgressions and is punished for our peace and our salvation. Yes, you know the chapter well. Isaiah 53 is the prophet's prophecy of Jesus, the world's Savior. But in Isaiah 52, the prophet is preparing the people who are in exile for these events of the Savior. He's telling these exiled people in Babylon, "Wake up! Your salvation is drawing near! Your Savior is coming to Jerusalem, and that means that you have to get back to the city! Rebuild it! Prepare it! Put on your wedding clothes, because Christ is coming!" The people knew the end goal, they knew that this Savior, this anointed One, the Christ, was coming. But their early morning routine was all off. They were sulking and depressed in exile, forgetting about their responsibility back home, not remembering God's promises to take them out of exile and rebuild the city. There were many of those people in exile who were not ready to return, who wanted to stay and in fact did stay behind in Babylon. They had moved on from the promises their God had made to them. Their routine was tied to Babylon, to the world around them.

How about our routine? Are we constantly remembering the promises our God has made to us? Or are we hoping that Christ won't return yet because we're not quite done sleeping—we still have a little bit of fun or unfinished business left in this life? We might see the end goal that God has for us, but sometimes our lives don't match up with that end goal. You see, if I say in church on Sunday morning, "I'm ready for Christ to come any time," but then go home during the week to take off my garments of splendor and sin during the night, then my

early morning routine does not line up with that late morning goal. My early morning routine is not prepared to wake up for Christ's coming. To use the picture of the parable Jesus told in Matthew 25, we're in danger of Jesus coming in the middle of the night while we are left with no oil in our lamps to see him. That's what happens when my life becomes all about the here and now, what's in front of me, my house, my job, my car, my stuff. If my life is focused on how to keep and prolong what I have now, then the result is a spiritual sleep that doesn't wake up until it's too late! If Jesus comes again to find us unprepared for him, like those 5 foolish virgins, then we are left outside of the wedding feast altogether!

So how do we get prepared? How do we fill our lamps with oil, and keep them trimmed and burning? How do we wake up, as Isaiah says, and clothe ourselves with strength and splendor? How do we remember the name of God now so that we will praise him eternally in heaven? Proper preparation comes from only one place—God's Word! The only way to truly be prepared with our early morning routine is to review again and again exactly what that late morning goal is. No, it's not just getting to work or to school on time. The late morning goal when it comes to Christ's return is heaven! The late morning goal is the New Jerusalem, the holy city, the streets of gold, the pearly gates, the beautiful city filled with God's people. Do you remember?

Let me paint a picture for you again from Revelation 21: *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* (Revelation 21:1-4) *Oh the beautiful picture of heaven! And it is yours, dear saint!*

Let me paint another picture for you from Isaiah 65: *"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come*

*to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be though a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others lives in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," declares the LORD. (Isaiah 65:17-25) Oh the beautiful picture of heaven! Nothing like what we've ever experienced before! It will be more wonderful than we can fully understand in this life! It will be peaceful beyond comprehension!*

Why is this heaven ours? Because of what Isaiah prophesies in chapters 52 and 53: *For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed."* God set up a plan to make us his again, and that plan was Jesus Christ, our Savior from sin. That plan was full and free forgiveness through his sacrifice on the cross where he pays for all our unpreparedness, stubbornness, and selfishness once and for all, and extends to us the salvation of God. This plan happened, and now we wait for the end of this plan to be fulfilled, completely assured that we will be with God forever.

Dear saints, you are prepared for the coming of Christ, for he has named you, he has called you to be his own, and he has prepared you by pointing you to your Savior. May he return, and come quickly, to find us prepared as his holy saints eager to enter his kingdom where we will be with God forever. Amen.

