

A PURIFYING HOPE

“Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” (1 John 3:3)

The “hope” referred to in this passage is the “appearance” or “second coming” of Christ. This “appearance” as you know, will be unannounced and sudden. His coming will be like “lightening” (Matt. 24:27), and a “thief in the night” (Matt. 24:43). The coming of Christ will happen so quickly that no one will have the opportunity to repent or undo the deed taking place when Christ surprised them. So, if you are engaged in sin when Jesus comes back, you will be caught in the act. That’s why this blessed hope is purifying. If you don’t want to be caught doing it when Jesus comes again, then don’t do it.

An interesting illustration of this principle involves two men surprised by the police in the midst of homosexual activity. It happened Sept. 17, 1998 on the outskirts of Houston, Texas. 55 year old John Lawrence, and 40 year old Robert Eubanks had been “friends” for 20 years. On the night in question, 31 year old Tyron Garner was also present. When Lawrence began flirting with Garner, Eubanks became enraged. At this point Eubanks stepped out of the apartment, called the police, and reported “A black man going crazy with a gun” at Lawrence’s apartment.

Within minutes four Harris County police deputies arrived and Eubanks pointed out the apartment. At 11:00 p.m. the officers, with drawn guns, opened the unlocked door and found Lawrence and Garner involved in the act of sodomy. In 1973, Chapter 21, Sec. 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code made such activity unlawful. While this was only a Class C misdemeanor in Texas, it is probably not something most would want to be doing when Jesus comes again. At any rate, the officer in charge probably would have not filed charges had it not been for the fact that Lawrence did not acquiesce to the police and repeatedly challenged them for entering into his home.

For your information, on June 26, 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Texas anti-sodomy law by a 6 - 3 decision.. Sen. Rick Santorum commented that just because you are behind closed doors does not give you the right for bigamy, polygamy, incest, or prostitution. He further questioned that the “right to privacy” was even in the Constitution. Justice Scalia in his dissent wrote: *“Today’s opinion is the product of a Court, which is the product of a law-profession culture, that has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda, by which I mean the agenda promoted by some homosexual activists directed at eliminating the moral opprobrium that has traditionally attached to homosexual conduct.... [T]he Court has taken sides in the culture war, departing from its role of assuring, as neutral observer, that the democratic rules of engagement are observed.”*

But let us return to the theme of our purifying hope. When Jesus comes again **“He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts.” (1 Cor 4:5).** If everyone knew the day and the hour of His return, they would obviously prepare for His coming. They would discipline themselves to avoid shameful and embarrassing activity . But we don’t know when He is coming back! That’s why this blessed hope helps us to be pure every hour of every day.

Jesus repeatedly said His return would come as a surprise, just as it was in the days of Noah. Up to day that Noah entered into the ark they continued their daily routines oblivious to the reality of divine justice (Matt. 24:36 - 44). If the owner of the house knew when the thief was coming he would have kept watch and not allowed his house to be broken into (Matt. 24:43). If the five foolish virgins had only when exactly when the Bridegroom was coming they would have trimmed their lamps and been ready (Matt. 25:1 - 13). But, as we have already said, we don’t know when Jesus is coming back. That’s why this hope helps us to be pure! **“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”**