



Preacher's Pen *by Gene McCoy*

It happens almost every time the heating and air man comes to my house for the periodic servicing of our HVAC system. When our yappin' dogs announce his arrival I scurry around trying to replace the old filter with a new one before he gets to the door because I know that is going to be one of the first things he checks. But I am woefully unprepared, despite the fact that I had agreed to the appointment. And despite the fact that I know that my heating and cooling system works more efficiently when the air can flow freely through the filter.

Then I go to the dentist at the appointed time to have my teeth cleaned. I brush my teeth multiple times each day. But it is on the day of my dental appointment that I make sure to floss and use a gum stimulator. My dental hygienist gives me a box of those on each visit. I want to confess that I have several of them—unopened—in my bathroom vanity and that I do not deserve another box. But I graciously thank her and take it home, where I throw it in the drawer with all the others. The next time I see it will be the morning of my next dental appointment. It's a good thing I have a semi-annual dental appointment, else my gums would never receive stimulation.

The guilt and shame of my charade was so great on one visit to the dentist that I confessed my negligence to the hygienist, whom I was convinced knew all along. Knowing that she knows I am a preacher, I said, "I stand before people every Sunday and tell them how God wants them to live, naively convinced they will all comply." Then came the confession. "You urge me on every visit to floss and to stimulate my gums every day. But I do not practice what you preach very faithfully." That confession didn't improve my periodontal health, but my transparency provided some relief to my conscience.

This relates to our weekly appointment with the Lord. Its value is expressed well by Jennie E. Hussey, who wrote the lyric, "Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow, lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget Thy love for me, lead me to Calvary."* God knows how easily we forget and neglect, so He established a weekly supper appointment with His family by which His children may regularly remember His Son's sacrifice and renew their vows of devotion.

Unlike the negligence of which I am guilty in relation to my teeth and my HVAC system, we should recognize every day the love that drew salvation's plan and the grace that brought it down to man (lyric by William R. Newell, *At Calvary*).

The next great appointment for which we must prepare is the return of the Lord. He told us that no man—not even the Son of Man—knows precisely when that will be. We must be ready at all times, therefore. His coming will be sudden, so there will be no time to scurry about to prepare when that moment arrives.

Lois Blanchard Eades wrote a verse that has been used for many years to provoke us to self-examination. She provides various aspects of our lives that may gauge our readiness for the Lord's return. The only way to be prepared for **that** day is to be prepared on **every** day. Let this verse convict and motivate you.

If Jesus Came to Your House by Lois Blanchard Eades

If Jesus came to your house to spend some time with you,
If He came unexpected, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored guest
And all the food you'd give to Him would be the very best.
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there—
That serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare.
But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your heavenly visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder – if the Saviour spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing, the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying, the things you always say?
Or would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you go?
Or would you maybe change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your closest friends?
Or would you hope they stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know, the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person, to spend some time with you.

In what specific ways may you improve your state of preparedness? What habits and practices should you adopt or discontinue to increase your readiness?

The Lord has affirmed the value of His Supper appointment with us as an opportunity for self-examination in preparing for His return. Is your faithfulness in keeping that appointment such that communicates agreement with Him?

What may be true of one's preparedness for the Last Day who neglects the preparedness exercise on the Lord's Day? What is likely true about one's preparedness on weekdays who neglects the appointment with the Lord on Sundays?

Now, while I'm thinking about it, I need to change the filter in the cold air return of my HVAC system and floss and brush my teeth. 🌍