

(#6) The God who is coming to claim us
By Bob Young

Introduction

What does the next year hold? You work all day, arrive home exhausted, watch TV to unwind, go to bed—only to get up and do it all over again.

We age—lose the wonder, everything continues. Life/death, new cars not as thrilling.

Is life really a circle?

Is everything the same as it has always been? Is there nothing new under the sun?

Is life in reality a circle, never changing, always repeating, circling again and again. Reincarnation?

No, life is a straight line, once intersected, to be intersected again.

There is a remedy for the routine—an antidote to the anxiety.

It is in embracing the nature of God's plan for the world. Acts 13:33, David fulfilled God's purpose for him in his generation. That is what we want to feel/know. How?

Embracing your uniqueness

Using your singular talents to experience the uncommon life God intends for you.

This is life lived with the coming God in view.

The cure for the common life is the coming Lord.

Old Testament Text:

Jeremiah

Text

Heb. 9:27—what does it mean to live expectantly?

The church is in trouble. Many US churches are plateaued or declining. Many are dying.

In times past, decline to 20-30 people, stay there with flat vital signs. Life support system was vital infusion of funds.

Ten years ago: 50-60 congregations dissolve every week—maybe 5-10 (10-15%) are able to redefine their role and survive. 3500-4000 churches die every year. "In next few years, 100,000 churches will close their doors (out of 350,000)."

Now ten years later we are able to see the trend better: nationwide 100 congregations dissolve every week—5000 churches die every year. 50K congregations lost over the last 10 years. Maybe 5-7% are able to redefine themselves and survive.

Christianity Today: Many church observers believe most of the generation of churches planted just after WW2 are in the final stages of institutional life, realistic life expectancy of 50 years.

Different culture, different world

Demands that we consider the gospel

Defining church: What did it mean in the first century for the church to live expectantly?

Church—

Proclamation

Teaching
Worship
Fellowship
Service/ministry

How could the contemporary church return to expectant living?

Keys: (parallel to some ideas presented by John Stott)

*restore a singular vision, evangelism, return to evangelistic purpose—intentional pursuit of unchurched, pre-churched, lost, presence, proclamation, persuasion, biblically relevant, culturally relevant evangelism

*seek transformed lives—honor and share the spiritual journey, firm foundations

*involve/empower pew

*pulpit—firm foundations, clear proclamation and teaching, provide foundation for meaningful worship

*authentic worship

*culturally relevant ministry

*provide structures for meaningful fellowship at all levels of relationship—basic (family), small (families, interest areas, tasks), medium (classes), large (congregation/celebration)

What would we have to do to live expectantly?

A time of Discipleship/Commitment/Involvement among God's people

Personal ministry/commitment to the task

Spiritual renewal/formation, transformation, beyond information/commitment to spirituality

Will lead to renewal in worship, commitment to worship