Readiness Through Divine Life

Sunday, October 5, 2025

Summary

Revelation 19:7–9 tells us the bride has "made herself ready" for the marriage of the Lamb. But what does it really mean to be ready for Jesus? Too often, the call to readiness leaves believers anxious, discouraged, or feeling like they'll never measure up. They try harder with prayer, fasting, and Bible study, only to feel it was never enough.

The problem is a wrong mindset. Many approach readiness the old covenant way—through self-effort and striving. But readiness in the new covenant is life-based, not works-based. It flows from divine life, a new nature, and a fruit-bearing union with Christ. Just as a branch naturally produces fruit by abiding in the vine, we grow in righteousness by letting His life flow through us.

This message unpacks what it means to prepare as the bride of Christ—not by trying harder, but by yielding to His indwelling life. True sanctification isn't about doing more, it's about letting Christ live through you.

A Common Response to Readiness

a) Revelation 19:7-9

> 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."
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> 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
>
> 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

b) Dad's Message and the Response

- Almost a year and a half ago, my dad preached on the need to get ready, urging believers to embrace a "bridal identity"—a betrothed bride actively preparing for Christ.
- He stressed that readiness will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ and measured by the formation of Christ's life within, not self-effort.
- He urged intimacy with Jesus, purchasing the oil of the Spirit, embracing the cross, and praying for holy desire.
- Though the message was powerful, the responses afterward showed a common misunderstanding: people felt anxious, overwhelmed, or discouraged by the call to readiness.

c) The WhatsApp Conversation

- After the message, someone posted in the WhatsApp group for our online school.
- One listener admitted that the topic made her anxious. I appreciated her honesty. She said she often looks at all the ways she falls short.
- Another lady chimed in, saying she had recently been with friends who felt the same way—overwhelmed and even discouraged by the call to get ready.
- For her, timidity often gets in the way of fully obeying God.
- Still another admitted that shyness makes the call to readiness feel overwhelming—especially when she focuses on herself.

d) My Own Journey and Common Reactions

- These responses reminded me of my own reaction decades ago when I read the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:10).
- Instead of inspiration, I felt pressure and unworthiness, trying harder with prayer, fasting, and study—yet it was never enough.
- Many Christians respond the same way today. Some grow weary and frustrated, asking, "What else must I do?" Others feel defeated, fearing they'll never measure up.

e) A Wrong Mindset

- The root problem is a misunderstanding of new covenant sanctification.
- Like old covenant Jews, many believe holiness comes by self-effort and striving.
- What if the very way we've been trying to make ourselves ready is actually what's keeping us from God?
- But in reality, readiness is not about striving—it's about transformation through
  - Divine life
  - A new nature
  - A fruit-bearing union with Christ
  - Loving God and others
  - Receiving and responding to the Spirit's enabling grace
  - Living from your new identity

f) The Right Way to Get Ready

- These are the right ways to get ready—not by fleshly works or self-effort, but by Christ's life working in you.
- In this series, we'll explore each of these areas in depth.
- This week, we'll begin with divine life, a new nature, and a fruit-bearing union with Christ.
- We will look at the others in the coming weeks.

Readiness Through Divine Life

a) The Basis of Readiness

- Paul declared in Romans 5:10, "We shall be saved by His life."
- He was speaking not of salvation from hell, but of Christ's ongoing presence bringing deliverance from sin's power, and ultimately, from sin's presence.

- "Saved by His life" refers to *sanctification*—delivered from the power of sin by Christ's indwelling life, and *glorification*—delivered from the presence of sin by Christ's dead-raising life at the resurrection of the dead.
- Under the new covenant, readiness is life-based, not works-based.

b) Christ as the Source of Life

- Since Christ dwells within you, His life dwells within you (John 14:6).
- Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is called "the Life":
  - The bread of life (John 6:35)
  - The resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
  - The Word of life (1 John 1:1)
  - The light of life (John 8:12)
- He is the life-giving Spirit, imparting His life to spirit, heart, soul, and body (1 Cor. 15:45).

c) The Abundant Life of Christ

- The Son has life in Himself and gives life to those who believe (John 1:4; 7:38; 10:10).
- His life is like a well of water springing up and overflowing as rivers of living water (John 4:14; 7:38).
- Jesus doesn't just give life—He is your life (Col. 3:4).
- His indestructible life empowers you to walk in newness of life (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:4).
- His life has the power to fully sanctify your soul (Heb. 7:16).
- John affirmed: "He who has the Son has the life" (1 John 5:12).

d) Zoe Life

- The Greek word for life in these passages is zoe—God's highest, uncreated, indestructible life.
- Since Christ dwells in your spirit through the Spirit, His zoe life is within you.
- Jesus came to give life abundantly, not in small measure (John 10:10).

g) Readiness by Life, Not Works

- Paul emphasized that sanctification comes from living by Christ's life, not human effort (Rom. 5:10, 17–18, 21; 6:4, 22; 8:2, 6, 11).
- Sanctification is living from God, not merely living for God.
- You are called to reign in life, not merely survive.
- Through Christ's life, you exercise kingly authority over the world, flesh, and devil.
- "Sin shall not be master over you" (Rom. 6:14).

Reigning in Life

a) Romans 5:17

- Paul writes, "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."

- Understanding "in life" Is Key

  - The word "life" is *zōē* and refers to *divine life*—the very life of God, not biological life (*bios*). It is the same resurrection life that raised Christ from the dead and now dwells in you (Rom. 8:11).

  - The word "in" means "in" or "within," describing the *sphere or realm* of divine life.

  - We reign in the realm of divine life—the sphere where Christ's life operates, not merely by human effort or circumstance.

b) A Common Misunderstanding of "In Life"

- Many interpret "reign in life" as "reign in my life," such as in my home, family, career, and ministry.

- They believe it means those who are saved should take charge, exercise authority, and succeed in the various spheres of everyday life.

- While there is some truth to this idea, it's not the primary application.

- While God's grace and righteousness do produce victory and fruitfulness in these areas, that's not the main point Paul is making.

- The phrase "in life" doesn't refer to our circumstances; it refers to the realm where Christ's divine life is allowed to operate within us.

c) Reigning in the Sphere of Divine Life

- To "reign in life" means to exercise authority and experience victory within the realm where Christ's divine, resurrection life is allowed to operate.

- Remember: His divine life has conquered sin, death, and the devil.

- This is not about external dominion first—it's about internal union with Christ first, as we yield fully to His indwelling life in our heart and soul.

- The throne from which we reign over our sin, circumstances, thoughts, and emotions is not in the visible world but in the invisible realm, starting with our regenerated spirit and then moving to our heart and soul as we yield to Him.

- Our reigning, therefore, is a participation in His reign—a shared experience of His victory as His life governs ours.

d) Yielding Determines the Measure of Reigning

- Reigning in life is not automatic. It depends on how much we yield to His indwelling life.

- Wherever we allow the Spirit of Christ to rule our motives, thoughts, and responses, we share in His victory.
- Wherever we resist His rule and live from self, fear, or flesh, His reigning life is hindered.
- Paul's principle could be summarized this way: To reign over sin, destructive thoughts, emotions, circumstances, and the schemes of the devil—and to experience victory in our homes, families, work, and ministry—begins by fully yielding to the life of Christ within, allowing His life to reign through us.
- The measure of our reigning—or victory—corresponds to the measure of our yielding to His indwelling life.

e) The Outflow of His Reigning Life

- When we yield to His divine life, His reign in us produces victory in the natural spheres of our lives—our homes, families, careers, and ministries.
- We don't reign over these areas by asserting control; we reign within them by letting Christ's life express His nature through us.
- The proper order is not: "Reign in your life so you can have victory," but "Yield to His life, and you will reign as a king with Him and experience His victory in your life."
- As His life reigns in us, it reigns through us—bringing peace, righteousness, and wisdom into every area we touch.
- External fruit always flows from an internal throne.

The Contrast: Life-Based vs. Works-Based Sanctification

a) Sanctification Begins When Living for God Ends

- Paul's own journey showed that the law exposed his inability to live for God (Rom. 7:14–25).
- His breakthrough: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).
- Sanctification begins when living for God ends.
- Works-based sanctification emphasizes external actions (prayer, fasting, service) as the path to holiness.
- While these practices matter, they are not the means to achieve sanctification.
- Life-based sanctification is rooted in abiding in Christ, like a branch in the vine (John 15:5).
- The fruit of the Spirit flows naturally from union with Christ, not striving (Gal. 5:22–23).

b) True Sanctification

- True sanctification isn't about doing more but yielding more.
- When you surrender to Christ's life within, He transforms you from the inside out.

- Works then flow naturally from His life, not from willpower or selfish motives.
- That is life-based sanctification.

Readiness Through a New Nature

a) The Foundation of Readiness

- Paul laid a firm foundation in Ephesians 4:22–24: "Lay aside the old self… be renewed… put on the new self, created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."
- The old self—unredeemed body and unrenewed soul—is corrupted and decaying under lust and deceit.
- Like a diseased tree, it cannot produce good fruit; only Christ, the true vine, can.

b) Putting Off the Old, Putting On the New

- Paul urges believers to put off the old self and put on the new self—our regenerated spirit recreated in Christ's image and united with the Spirit.
- Sanctification requires a daily choice to live from the new nature, not the old.
- Colossians 3:9–14: "Put on the new self…put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience… above all, put on love."
- This means letting Christ's life fill your heart and direct all you do (Eph. 3:16–17).

c) Overcoming the Flesh by the New Nature

- Romans 13:14: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."
- "Provision" means forethought—sin begins in the mind before it becomes action.
- When clothed in Christ and filled with Him, you cut sin off at its source, stopping sinful thoughts before they take root.

d) The Spirit-Empowered New Self

- Putting on the new self, empowered by the Spirit, leads to natural obedience (Rom. 8:4).
- Living from your transformed nature makes righteousness an organic overflow of Christ's life.
- Reforming the old self is like patching a sinking ship—lasting victory comes only through the new self.
- Drawing on the Spirit's power and Christ's indwelling life enables you to reign over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

e) True Victory in the New Covenant

- True sanctification is not reforming the old but living from the new.
- As you put on the new self, His divine life flows, enabling victory and ending defeat.

- The focus is not on striving but on yielding to Christ's life and nature within.

The Habitat of Divine Life

a) The Key to Reigning in Life

- The key to reigning in life and experiencing victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil is to live from our new nature and allow Christ's indwelling life to flow through us unhindered.
- The life of Christ within us is perfectly sufficient for overcoming sin and walking in righteousness—but it only operates freely in the right habitat.
- Just as every form of life was created to thrive in a particular environment, the divine life of Christ also has a specific environment where it flourishes—the atmosphere of our regenerated spirit.

b) A Helpful Analogy: The Right Habitat for Life

- Every living creature is designed by its Creator to flourish in a specific environment. When removed from that environment, it weakens and eventually dies.
- A fish thrives in water, the environment for which it was made. Remove it from water, and it soon dies.
- A bird was created for the sky. It is free and strong in the air, but submerged underwater, it cannot survive.
- A polar bear is equipped for the icy Arctic, but would perish in the heat of the desert.
- A tropical plant thrives in warm, humid air, but exposure to frost quickly destroys it.
- Each of these illustrates that life only thrives in the environment it was created for.

c) The Proper Habitat for Christ's Indwelling Life

- In the same way, the divine life of Christ within us thrives only in the environment it was designed for—the habitat of our new nature.
- When we live from the new man—walking by the Spirit, depending on grace, and trusting the Father—Christ's life flows freely and bears fruit.
- That environment is marked by humility, faith, obedience, and surrender. In such conditions, His peace, love, and power thrive.
- But when we live from the flesh—driven by pride, fear, or self-effort—we step outside the environment where His life operates.
- The life of Christ within us doesn't cease to exist, but it becomes grieved, quenched, and restrained (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). The flesh suffocates what the Spirit desires to express.

d) Reigning in the Right Environment

- To reign in life is to remain in the proper environment for divine life—living from the new nature, not the old.

- When we abide in Christ and yield to His life, victory is the natural result. The world, the flesh, and the devil lose their power because we are living in the atmosphere where His life rules.

- Christ's indwelling life thrives in the environment of our new nature but suffocates in the atmosphere of our flesh.

- The key to reigning in life is to stay where His life can operate freely—abiding in Him, walking by His Spirit, and letting His life reign within.