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LIKE A GOOD BOY SCOUT - BE PREPARED

The leaves have turned in Wisconsin, and cold weather is descending upon us. I am told that the foliage on the trees turns colors every year, creating a panoply of amazing hues which titillate the human eye with optometric patterns of unrivaled beauty. Say what? All I really know is that the leaves turned loose, and the weather turned cold. Yes, I am aware that the deer have turned out to see this wondrous sight, as well. For those of us on two wheels, this is a time to make sure that we are well prepared, because we've still got a few weeks of great riding to do. I realize that some of you may have already pulled 'Ol Betsy into the kitchen by the stove, but if you are willing to go the extra mile, fall riding can be very rewarding. However, this isn't something you can take lightly - in fact, the heavier the better may be the operative word. What really makes fall riding a challenge is that daytime temps can be very pleasant, while those few miles to the house after dark would freeze the bark off a tree. The temperature variations could have been 50 degrees or more on that day when you took your honey out to see the fall colors. When you left after a bite to eat at the local pub, the air temp was around 80 or so, so your tee shirt and her halter top seemed entirely appropriate as you proceeded up the highway out of town. And, wow, you impressed her with your sensitivity and wisdom concerning the beauty of mother nature. You may have even memorized the second sentence of this article to try to sound knowledgeable. You even picked out one of those cozy little romantic hide-aways for dinner as the sun traversed its course toward the western horizon. As you escorted your giddy date through the door into the moonlight, you might have noticed that the air was rather brisk, but such a beautiful day deserved a "brisk" starlit night. It wasn't until you got back on your bike and started down the highway toward home a hundred miles distant, that you realized that you both had only the clothes on your back - a tee and a halter top. What first seemed brisk now felt cool, and would soon become downright cold. This never happened to you? Me neither.

The other weekend, a buddy and I went out to western Wisconsin to meet up with some other guys. We were leaving at midday, and knew we would be coming back well after dark, so we prepared for riding in fairly warm weather, and anticipated the cold weather after dark. We knew that about half of the four hundred miles we would be riding in a cold wind, so we prepared for it. We drastically overdressed for the warm so we would have adequate coverage for the cold. Or so we thought. Although

it was nearly 80 when we left, it was below freezing by the time we got home at one in the morning, and we were frozen to the bone. I'm glad my buddy was wearing more than a halter top. I can tell you that insulated undies, a long-sleeved shirt, sweat-shirt, jeans and chaps, topped off with a heavy leather jacket will not always keep you cozy on a long cold ride, especially cruising Highway 29 at ninety. We had to give it up for a little bit at Abbotsford to warm up with some coffee and chicken strips. Then we sailed down 13 the last hundred miles or so home. My wife wondered about the abdominal snowman that crawled in bed in the middle of the night. What ever it takes, be ready for the cold, the wind, the rain, or whatever may come when you ride this time of year. It is better to have a little extra than to not have enough. When it comes to spiritual things, it is also important to be prepared. Many of us are cruising through life at ninety miles an hour, thinking that we are OK. We have our religion, which, like that halter top, satisfies us for the moment. But what about down the road when the weather changes? No matter how strong we think we are, none of us is invincible. No matter how much we have, we can't take it with us when our run here is over. No matter how many friends we have to help us on our way, they can't take us to the next level, because they are as mortal as we are. I was talking to a lonely guy the other day whose wife died a couple of years ago. He said that all the friends he had before have walked away since she died. They didn't know how to relate to him in his pain - and theirs - so they drifted away. No matter how prepared we think we are for the future, we may not be ready at all. Unless you have a relationship with God, through Jesus Christ His son, you are not prepared at all. The Bible says that if you trust in Him for your life, He will trade your sins for Eternal Life - home in heaven with Him forever. In Him, everything you need for the ride of your life is provided. You are really prepared for everything! Without Him, you face the longest, coldest ride you've ever seen, wearing nothing more than a halter top. God invites you to come to Him and be prepared.

Thanks for reading.

Pastor Sam

To respond to this in any way, positively or negatively, e-mail:

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