

## **Sermon 12-2-18 Prepare for the Day! Luke 21:25-36**

Dear Disciples who are prepared:

Consider how much preparation goes into a wedding...

- The place of the wedding
- The guest list of the wedding
- The ceremony and reception

Jesus likens the end of the world to a wedding feast.

- The wedding feast of the Lamb
- Jesus, the Groom, comes down from heaven for His bride, the Church
- John 14:1-4
- Are we preparing for the wedding feast?

We prepare for...

- The winter...winterizing our cars and homes
- Christmas getting ready for family and friends
- The end of the year in a number of ways by closing the books and enjoying time social activities

### **Are we preparing for the end of the world?**

Consider how busy life is...who has time to prepare for the end of the world? The average family will spend...on an average day

- 31 minutes on child care
- 7 minutes on plant and pet care
- 16 minutes on looking for lost objects
- 29 minutes on visiting people
- 4 minutes a day on filling out paperwork
- 75 minutes commuting to and from work

And then if there is time we find ways to unwind with movies, television, newspapers, hobbies...

In the midst of all of our busyness Jesus says:

**“Be always on the watch!”**

As Jesus' disciples were admiring the awesome view of the magnificent Jewish temple, Jesus told them that one day the great temple would be destroyed. Luke 21:5 The disciples ask Jesus: “When will this happen?” In the context of this discussion Jesus speaks about the coming of the end of the world.

It is important to Prepare...

- I. For the Last Day is Coming vv25-33
  - A. It will be preceded by signs of destruction vv25-25
    1. The heavens will shake –  
**“Sun will be darkened, moon will not give its light, stars will fall from the sky.”** Mt 24:29

V25 is speaking about “signs, moon and stars”

- Spectacular signs in the sky
  - Comets and meteor showers
  - Symbols of the coming destruction
2. The earth will be in upheaval - the nations will be in anguish and perplexity...we will see riots and turmoil...famines and earthquakes....one nation will rise up against another. Mt 24:7

There have been more earthquakes in the past 100 years than in the previous 1000 years.

Jesus is painting a picture of a disturbed universe as this old world gives way to the new eternal order.

V25 “roaring and tossing of the sea” means Tsunamis and hurricanes

3. What will be people’s reactions v26
  - People will “faint and expire” these signs will be too much for them to handle
  - People will expect the worse “expectation of evil” nuclear war...financial crisis, climate change...etc
  - People will know that strange things are happening but they will not understand “why” these things are happening. They will “faint from terror”
  - People today have Fear of....overwhelming challenges, violence, “What’s next”, worst-case scenarios, not protecting children, global calamity, etc....

“Many will turn away from faith. Many will betray and hate each other. The love of most will grow cold.” Mt 24:9

People who don’t believe in the Bible will ask: “Where is this coming?” The Apostle Peter says:

**“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.**

The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”

Be prepared for the Last Day - not with fear but with faith...

There are a lot of things that may bring us fear in this world but Jesus calls us time and time again to take courage and not be afraid.

B. It will be identified by the sign of victory vv27-28

1. The cloud – a symbol of power “Coming on clouds with power and glory and the trumpet call of the Lord.” Matthew 24

Zephaniah 1:15ff “That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry...I will bring distress on the people and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord...the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth.”

### **All who live in the earth**

The phrase “all who live in the earth” in verse 35 refers to unbelievers and not you and me. Believers know that their citizenship is in heaven and not on earth. “And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who...will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” Philippians 3:20f

Are there people around us who would fall into the group of “all who live in the earth?” Are there people around us who are unbelievers? What can we do about this?

- Pray for them
- Speak to them
- Love them with the love of God

We don’t have to do big things to be part of Jesus’ mission reaching people...consider just the little things....”things that may not be noticed by thousands of people but will make a difference to one....a little love, a little joy, a little truth, a little patience....” Greg Finke

“We are the presence of Jesus made tangible in our families, neighborhoods, workplaces and schools. The love we show, the patience we have, the notice we take, the attention we give, the truth we speak, the hope we inspire is not us but Christ living in and through us.” Greg Finke

Jesus will come on the Last Day in all his glory and power and we want our friends, family and neighbors to be ready, too.

### **Chariots of God**

Clouds are a symbol of God’s power. Sometimes they are referred in the Bible as “chariots of God.” They show God’s power over those who would reject him.

2. The light Mt 24:27 and 30ff “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible events in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man...At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man

coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he...will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

Everyone will see this coming, every knee will bow, every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord.

Philippians

### **Lift up your heads!**

#### 3. The encouragement v28 “Lift up heads”

We are told to “Look up and hold your head high”

- We will be liberated from a hostile world
- We will begin our life in heaven with glorified bodies’
- We will see our departed loved ones again
- Our full deliverance from sin and suffering is at hand
- Romans 8 “We wait eagerly for adoption...the redemption of our bodies.”

Be Prepared...the Last Day is Coming

#### C. It is made certain by Jesus’ words vv29-31

##### 1. The kingdom of God is near - Look at the fig tree

It is one of the first trees to begin to bud in the spring and it means that warm weather is on the way. The fig tree tells us that summer is on the way.

##### 2. Context of Jesus’ words v32

- Jesus is answering his disciples’ questions about the destruction of the Jewish temple
- The temple was destroyed about 40 years after Jesus spoke these words
- Jesus words “this generation” refers to the people living at Jesus’ time

“these things” of v32 will come to pass within the lifetime of these people “these things” refer to the events leading up to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD

The disciples had a hard time accepting these words about the Jewish temple. The temple in Jesus’ day was a great and wonderful sight. It was adorned with beautiful stones. The people of Jesus’ day...those who would still be around some 40 years later would be eyewitnesses of the temples destruction in 70 AD. The events surrounding the destruction of the temple would be a preview of God’s judgment of the world on the Last Day.

##### 3. The truth in v33 “The Word of God stand forever.” Isaiah 40:8 Jesus words will be fulfilled

Be Prepared...

#### II. By guarding your heart vv34-35

A. That it may not be overburdened v34 “weighed down”

“We all want God, Anne Lamont writes, but left to our own devices, we seek all the worldly things--- possessions, money, looks and power---because we think they will bring us fulfillment.”

Wise people build their lives around what is eternal and squeeze in what is temporary. Not the other way around.

### **Do not be weighed down**

1. By self-indulgence – Our hearts are not to be weighed down by the cares of this life but are to be wide awake in prayer We are not to live merely for ourselves We are to be careful and not indulge ourselves in this life as if this life is all that matters.

Peter says that the unbelievers around us will “..think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead....I Peter 4:4ff

If the devil cannot make you bad, he will make you busy.

- **Dissipation = life of wasteful self-indulgence**

Jesus says: “Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.” Luke 21:34

So many people won’t be ready because they don’t believe that Jesus is coming back!

2. By stress – weighed down by the cares of this life – anxiety – everyday concerns which take our focus off of God and spiritual things...

“A Christian college in California once sent students door to door to talk with people about spiritual issues. Two of them knocked on one door to find a frenzied mother of 3 with a vacuum in one hand and a screaming baby in the other arm, food burning on the stove, and a living room so messy it would have qualified as a federal disaster area. “Are you interested in eternal life?” one of the students asked. “Frankly, I don’t think I could stand it,” said the mom.

B. That it may not be trapped by worldly things Luke 12:15 Our lives don’t consist in what we own

V34 “trap” refers to the lure that catches a bird or animal unawares

“dwellers of earth” those who live for this life ONLY – these people will be caught off guard and fall into the trap of the end times.

May we not be trapped by worldly attitudes II Timothy 3:1ff

**Be Prepared...by keeping the watch!**

III. By keeping the watch v36

- Through regular worship Hebrews 10:25
- Through regular prayer I Peter 5:7

One pastor wrote: "Satan does not stutter or stumble when we walk through church doors but the walls of hell shake when one person with faith says a prayer: "Oh, God, how great thou art."

Did Jesus declare: My house shall be called a house of study? Fellowship? Music? Activities? No, but Jesus did say, "My house will be called a house of prayer."

- Through regular service to one another Galatians 6:1ff "Carry each others burdens"

### **Jesus says: Occupy until I come!**

Live as though Christ were...

- Crucified yesterday
- Risen today
- Coming back tomorrow

"But you brothers are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief." I Thess. 5:4

Stand before Jesus...

- Forgiven
- Strong
- Steadfast

### **Jesus says to us... "See to it that you are not alarmed..."**

- Keep your head and don't panic
- See that you are not troubled
- **Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life**