

Daily Devotion for Wednesday November 18, 2020

“You must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.” – Matthew 24:44

The daily lectionary for today appoints Matthew 24:24-51 as one of our readings. It's a section of Jesus' teaching about the Day of the Lord, his coming again, judgment, and renewal. This passage is made up of five or six smaller sayings, parables, and metaphors. So the format and the topic of the passage make for difficult reading.

But as difficult as it is to make sense of it all, the Day of the Lord seems to be very important to us. Throughout history, people have suspected that they might be living in the End Times. At one point, I researched and found that in the years since Jesus spoke these words, there have been over 250 specific predictions of when the world would end. So far, none have been correct. (Imagine the worst sports team ever, and even they would probably be upset to have a record of 0-250.)

Jesus even tells us (verses 26, 36, 43, 50) that no one knows the exact time when all this will happen, so we shouldn't bother to try to predict or plan for it. Instead, over and over, he calls us to be ready. Take note (v.25), learn (v.32), keep awake (v.42), just plain be ready (v.44). We could look at this as a fearful thing, like acting busy in case the boss shows up. But since Jesus loves us, and wants us to be aware of God's reign all around us, we're better off not being controlled by fear, but set free by wonder and preemptive gratitude. Just as we watch for glimpses of dawn at the end of a dark night, or hints of spring after a long winter, being ready for Jesus' coming can be something that brings us hope and joy. The Day of the Lord can start making itself known to us on *any* day.

One of my favorite images recently comes from one of our teachers here at Zion who has encouraged kids and families to watch for “God sightings.” She even made binoculars out of toilet paper tubes, to train her eyes, and our eyes, to see the world in new ways. And it works! When we're watching like this, we are taking note, learning, keeping awake, being ready. We can be making our way through terrible times, but we will find God with us, if we're looking. And today may not be that final Day of the Lord, and everything may not be made completely right in an instant. But God is coming, already breaking into the world with the good news of God's reign. And every little sign can give us hope and joy and courage to face the day.



God of love, thank you for loving us and entering into our lives once and again. Steer us away from obsessing and speculating about what might come next. Help us instead to be ready to see you, and serve you. Train our eyes to see your way, our ears to hear your call, and our hands and feet and voices to share your love with all who need it. Amen.

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