

## Living in the Now and Not Yet

Luke 17:20-37; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; May 19, 2019

### Trust and Love: A Vision for LIFE

- Glorify and Enjoy God
- Trust: Rest in Jesus
- Trust: Hope in God
- Love: Submit to God's Word
- Love: Submit to God's Will

One important truth in God's Word that is to inform our trust and feed our love are the truths of the return of the King and the coming kingdom of God.

### The Text

<sup>20</sup> Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." <sup>22</sup> And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. <sup>23</sup> They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after *them*. <sup>24</sup> For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. <sup>25</sup> But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: <sup>27</sup> they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it. <sup>34</sup> I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>35</sup> There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>36</sup> [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.]" <sup>37</sup> And answering they \*said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body *is*, there also the vultures will be gathered." – Luke 17:20-37

*What is the kingdom of God/heaven?*

The kingdom of God is the rule of God over men, in hearts and in history, that exalts God and satisfies men.

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. – Romans 14:17

*There are various positions regarding the return of Jesus and the coming kingdom of God.*

- Jesus' return is a secret return to a godless world. (Premillennial)
- Jesus' return is a public return to a godly world. (Postmillennial)
- Jesus' return is a public return to a tares (godless) and wheat (godly) world. (Amillennial)
  
- The kingdom of God is after Jesus' return. (Premillennial)
- The kingdom of God is before Jesus' return. (Postmillennial)
- The kingdom is now (present) and after (future). (Amillennial)

Whatever view we take, it should move us to action.

After church, where she had been taught about the Second Coming, a little girl was quizzing her mother.

"Mommy, do you believe Jesus will come back?" "Yes."

"Today?" "yes."

"In a few minutes?" "Yes, dear."

"Mommy, would you comb my hair?" - Don Hussong.

Let's look at what this passage has to say.

Three points:

- The kingdom of God is present and future.
- The coming kingdom of God is about rescue and justice.
- The call is to wake up and lose.

### **1. The kingdom of God is present and future.**

- The kingdom has come, although in an unexpected way.

*<sup>20</sup> Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." (20-21)*

The kingdom of God is unlike other kingdoms. The kingdom is both present and future. Here it is present. It is the arrival of the kingdom.

But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. – Luke 11:2

Our expectations for the coming of God's kingdom are naturally wrong. The present kingdom is 'inward' (God's reign in individual's hearts) or 'among you' (in the ministry of Jesus).

- The kingdom also will come in an unquestionable way.

*<sup>22</sup> And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. <sup>23</sup> They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. <sup>24</sup> For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. (22-24)*

Again, the kingdom is both present and future. Here it is future. It is the consummation of the kingdom.

And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. – Luke 11:2

The future kingdom will not come secretly but publicly. The coming of Christ will be obvious to all. Disciples will long for the past days of Messiah or the future days of Messiah.

'During his 1960 presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy often closed his speeches with the story of Colonel Davenport, the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives: On May 19th, 1780 the sky of Hartford darkened ominously, and some of the representatives, glancing out the windows, feared the end was at hand. Quelling a clamor for immediate adjournment, Davenport rose and said, "The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Therefore, I wish that candles be brought." Rather than fearing what is to come, we are to be faithful till Christ returns. Instead of fearing the dark, we're to be lights as we watch and wait. - Harry Heintz.

## **2. The coming kingdom is about rescue and justice.**

- The future kingdom will come after the cross.

*But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. (25)*

The future kingdom will not come until certain things happen. The cross of Christ is in view here. Some also see 'the way of the cross' for Christians, also in view here. The 'cross' comes before the 'crown.'

Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." – Acts 14:22

- The future kingdom will come unexpectedly when the days are filled with evil.

<sup>26</sup> *And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:*  
<sup>27</sup> *they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage,*  
*until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> It was the*  
*same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying,*  
*they were selling, they were planting, they were building; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out from*  
*Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> It will be just the same*  
*on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. (26-30)*

These normal, good activities form the basis for ignoring the coming, just destruction. On the same day that Lot was rescued, judgment fell. Noah and Lot were not ‘paragons of virtue’ but they were men of faith who heeded the warnings. One day Jesus will be revealed for who He is to all the world.

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. – Colossians 3:4

There are ‘comings’ to rescue and judge that foreshadow the ultimate ‘coming’ to rescue and judge.

‘A rural housewife, Fay Inchfawn, who lived a generation ago, wrote these lines on her need and expectancy of God's presence which speak to us of the more sophisticated frustrations of our modern day:

‘Sometimes, when everything goes wrong;  
When days are short and nights are long,  
When wash day brings so dull a sky,  
That not a single thing will dry.  
And when the kitchen chimney smokes,  
And when there's none so "old" as folks;  
When friends deplore my faded youth,  
And when the baby cuts a tooth  
While John, the baby last but one,  
Clings round my skirts till day is done;  
And fat, good-natured Jane is glum  
And butcher's man forgets to come.  
Sometimes I say, on days like these  
I get a sudden gleam of bliss.  
Not on some sunny day of ease  
He'll come...but on a day like this. - Source Unknown.

### **3. The call is to wake up and lose.**

- The news and consummation of the kingdom exposes our values.

<sup>31</sup> *On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember*

*Lot's wife.* <sup>33</sup> *Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. (31-33)*

Lot's wife came close to being delivered from the destruction.

<sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. <sup>37</sup> FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

<sup>38</sup> BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. – Hebrews 10:36-39

- The news and consummation of the kingdom separates sinners.

<sup>34</sup> *I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left.* <sup>35</sup> *There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken (received) and the other will be left (abandoned).* <sup>36</sup> *[Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.]* <sup>37</sup> *And answering they \*said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered."* (34-37)

This is talking about the gathering of 'vultures' to the spiritually dead (on the day of judgment). On the day that Jesus is revealed, so too will the difference between men/women be revealed. On the day that Jesus comes in judgment, He will take His people to Himself.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words. – 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Verse 36 appears to be a scribal insertion that is not attested by the best manuscripts.

'The word "maranatha" is a Syriac expression that means: "our Lord comes." It was used as a greeting in the early church. When believers gathered or parted, they didn't say "hello" or "goodbye" but "Maranatha!" If we had the same upward look today, it would revolutionize the church. O that God's people had a deepening awareness of the imminent return of the Savior! While on a South Pole expedition, British explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton left a few men on Elephant Island, promising that he would return. Later, when he tried to go back, huge icebergs blocked the way. But suddenly, as if by a miracle, an avenue opened in the ice and Shackleton was able to get through. His men, ready and waiting, quickly scrambled aboard. No sooner had the ship cleared the island than the ice crashed together behind them. Contemplating their narrow escape, the explorer said to his men, "It was fortunate you were all packed and ready to go!" They replied, "We never gave up hope. Whenever the sea was clear of ice, we rolled up our sleeping bags and reminded each other, 'The boss may come today.'" The hymn writer

Horatius Bonar exhorted us "to be ready for the last moment by being ready at every moment...so attending to every duty that, let Him come when He may, He finds the house in perfect order, awaiting His return." The trump may sound anytime. How important for us as Christians to be "packed and ready to go!" As you leave home today, don't say goodbye -- say "Maranatha!" - *Our Daily Bread*.

*So what?*

- Jesus reigns now.
- Jesus will return.
- There is a coming kingdom offered to all.
- There is a wrath to come for those who reject the King.
- There is nothing more important than being ready.
- Being ready is a matter of trust and love.