

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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The Gospel of Matthew

Be Watching and be Ready

May 3, 2020

Sermon Text: Matthew 24:29-51

Scripture Reading: Exodus 14

Follow along now as I read the rest of Matthew 24, beginning at verse 29 -

Matthew 24:29-51 ESV “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (30) Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

(31) And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

(32) “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. (33) So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. (34) Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. (35) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

(36) “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. (37) For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (38) For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, (39) and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

(40) Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. (41) Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one

left. (42) Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

(43) But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. (44) **Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**

(45) “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? (46) Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. (47) Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. (48) But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ (49) and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, (50) the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know (51) and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Christ’s return is imminent. We live in the last days and we are without doubt seeing evil increase. It is a great error, and a sin, to be like that wicked servant

who gets up each day with the attitude, “Oh well, my master is delayed. I’ve got plenty of time.” And then to live carelessly and sinfully. We are, each one of us, to be diligently about the work the Lord has called us to.

(42) Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

We must not live as if this present world were going to go on forever. It isn’t.

This morning I want to talk about *being ready*. And specifically, I want to cause all of us to think seriously about people who live as if they are ready to meet the Lord, but aren’t. Here is the verse that is our starting point:

Hebrews 11:29 ESV By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Attempting to Cross Without Christ

Exodus 14:13 ESV And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

Exodus 14:21 ESV Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Moses believed God. By faith he led the people across the Sea. but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. They looked at the walls of water. They looked at the dry ground. They saw the Israelites walk across. And they assumed that they could do the same. They should have been afraid. The same God who had scourged them with plagues was the One now holding back the waters. It was His people the Egyptians were now trying to kill. Crossing the Sea was insanity.

Psalms 106:7-12 ESV Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. (8) Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. (9) He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert. (10) So he saved them from the hand of the foe and redeemed them from the power of the

enemy. (11) And the waters covered their adversaries; not one of them was left. (12) Then they believed his words; they sang his praise.

I want to show you many examples in Scripture of people who were just like these Egyptians. Unbelief is insane. Bold, arrogant presumption that all will be well when we meet the Lord even though we have not believed and obeyed Him is madness. And it is wicked. The Egyptians perished. And so will anyone who is imitating their sin today.

Nadab and Abihu

Leviticus 10:1-3 ESV Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. (2) And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. (3) Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.

These two sons of Aaron are still with us today in the form of people who

insist that they can march into the Lord's presence with their own incense recipe. No need to obey the Lord's Word. I can practice my religion, whatever it be, according to my own formula and when I meet the Lord, all will be well.

It won't. You will go down like the Egyptians.

Listen:

Hebrews 2:1 ESV Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

Ask yourself this:

Are you really paying close attention to what the Lord has said to us in the Bible?

I mean, are you really listening? Do you know what His recipe is that enables us to be right with Him? Because the truth is that most people are like Nadab and Abihu – they are writing their own recipes. And they are going to be toast on that Day when they stand before the Lord. *Doing religion your own way will end badly. Living your life your own way, by your own philosophy, will end badly. You will not make it across the Sea.*

Religion that is all Talk

Matthew 7:21-23 ESV “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ (23) And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

When Christ comes again, many people – in fact most people who we would call “religious” will not make it across the Sea. In spite of all their religious activities, they were fakes. They didn't know Christ and He doesn't know them. Their religion is all show. These kind are doing it their way. But *it is the one who does the will of Christ who is genuine.* And what is His will?

John 6:40 ESV For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Now, in case someone who is listening is feeling quite good about themselves

at this point because they are not one of those “religious types” who are so judgmental – you know, the kind who go to church every Sunday and read their Bible – let me rock your world too.

You also are mixing up your own incense recipe. You also are claiming that you are quite acceptable to the Lord. Or that in fact, there really is no need to concern yourself about any of these things. You’re a good guy. Your friends like you. You love your kids. You help people in need.

I know lots of these kinds of people. I like most of them. In fact, I like more of them than I do the religious hypocrite Pharisee types! But I don’t buy their incense recipe. I know that it is not going to go well with them when they pass out of this life. They are living their lives with those tall walls of water on each side of them, telling themselves they are going to make it safely across.

They aren’t. YOU aren’t if this description fits you.

Sons of Sceva

Acts 19:11-16 ESV And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, (12) so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to

the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

(13) Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.”

(14) Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. (15) But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” (16) And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Now, I don’t fully understand who in the world these Jewish exorcists were – had they set up shop in some way? *Exorcisms - \$50?* I guess in fact they were “itinerant,” so they must have traveled around to drum up business.

But the important point for us here is this: *they undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus.* They saw the miracles being done through the Apostle Paul which the Lord did in order to confirm Paul’s true apostleship and message:

2 Corinthians 12:12 ESV The signs of

a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

And so, these guys figure, “well, that’s pretty neat. This Jesus name is a powerful formula and we are going to use it ourselves.” How did it work out for them? It didn’t.

The sons of Sceva are all around us today. How many people are telling themselves that they will surely walk across the Sea on dry land simply because they use the name, “Jesus”? *Many.*

- They keep a Bible in their home – somewhere. Maybe one that their grandmother owned.
- They might have their baby baptized and then go to church on Easter or Christmas
- When pressed, on some kind of application, they will put “Christian” as their religion.
- They wear a cross necklace

These things and more are all around us, throughout our culture. But they will not work any better than the name Jesus worked for these 7 phonies in Paul’s day.

Be sure of this – *you must be born again. You must truly know the Lord and He must know you. Or you will never make it across the Sea.*

The same thing when done by the believer, and when done by the unbeliever, is not the same thing. What was *faith* in Israel, was *presumption* in the Egyptians. (Jamieson, Faucett, Brown commentary)

They Were not of Us

Over the years, we have seen many people come and go here in this church. I tell newcomers this:

If you are one of two kinds of people, you will do well here. If not, you will never last:

- You don’t know Christ but you genuinely want to seek Him and be saved,
- You are a real Christian, you have been born again, you love Christ and His people and you want to follow Him with us.

This is how it is to be in every local church. Those insisting on making their own incense recipes will not be happy for long among Christ’s real people.

And that is exactly what John is telling us about here:

1 John 2:18-20 ESV Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. (19) **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.** (20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

Some group of people had been in the church that John is writing to, but now they had made an exit. John explains to the church why this happened.

[NOTE: We are doing a verse by verse study of this book of First John. You can find the videos of the study on the Christ Reformation Church Facebook page, or at sermonaudio.com/crc, or on our Youtube channel, Unholy Charade. If you are ready to “pay much closer attention” to what the Lord has to say, and about the only Way across the Sea that the Lord has provided in Christ, then here you are. We livestream the new sessions every Monday and

Wednesday at 10AM on the facebook page].

But what had happened in this church John writes to? Well, there were people there who claimed to be Christians. They claimed to know Christ. But they were fakes. Counterfeits. Most probably they were people who denied that Christ was fully God and fully man. They claimed a false christ. So they went out.

And I think it is proper to say, *they had to go out*. They were darkness and could not stand the Light any longer. They were exposed. Their brand of Christianity didn’t hold up. They could not stand the presence of the Lord any longer. So they made an exit, and John says that this reveals who they really were. Because if they had been truly in Christ, if they had been His real people, they would have loved His true people and remained!

If such people do not turn away from their self-made incense recipe that they insist is pleasing to God, then they are going to see the walls of the Sea come crashing down on them when Christ comes again in judgment.

Look carefully again. Think about these words thoroughly –

Hebrews 11:29 ESV By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Ask yourself – *What is my plan for getting across?* There is only one plan! And it better not be one you came up with yourself.

Here is another one:

Simon and Simony

Acts 8:18-20 ESV Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, (19) saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (20) But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

Simony is a word we use today. Here is the dictionary definition:

Simony is the act of selling church offices and roles or sacred things. It is named after Simon Magus, who is described in the Acts of the Apostles as having offered two disciples of Jesus payment in exchange for their empowering him to impart the power of

the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom he would place his hands.

Still another way that people continue to attempt to get across the Sea by their own means, without Christ. In this case, through the use of money. *How much money has been exchanged in the history of the visible church as a way of getting God's favor?* It is the ultimate "quid pro quo" lie. "God, I will do this for you, and you do me this favor in return."

Psalms 52:7 ESV "See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!"

"My refuge for when the Lord comes is....my own destruction." So it is with everyone who refuses the only Refuge the Lord has provided – Christ.

Hebrews 11:29 ESV By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Here then is the question put before us in all of this – *are you like Moses, or are you like the Egyptians? What plan are you trusting in for crossing the Sea.*

When you die and stand before the Lord, what are you trusting in to get you through the waters of His judgment?

Rashness and presumption are mistaken by many for faith; with similar rash presumption many rush into eternity. (Jamieson, Faussett, Brown Commentary)

This past week I saw a news story about a young guy who had made lots of skydiving jumps. He was boasting and bragging and telling his buddy about how he wanted to jump out of a plane without a parachute. The idea was that his buddy would jump too and after some freefall, catch him and buckle up into a double harness and deploy the chute. They did it and were successful.

Now, and I hope you agree, this fellow was not only crazy but very sinful. It is wicked to test the Lord and we are forbidden from doing so. However, let me point out that most people are doing something every bit as serious. They are, we might phrase it, freefalling without a parachute and trusting in some “savior” of their own design to stop the fall. Well, it isn’t going to work.

A Final Word for the Christian

Isaiah 43:1-2 ESV But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. (2) When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

And again:

Psalms 66:10-12 ESV For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. (11) You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; (12) you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.

In Christ, you *will* make it through the Sea and in fact, all who are in Christ are already across.

Quotes: