

Message #63

Luke 12:35-40

When it comes to reading the Bible, one may choose to believe it or disbelieve it. **However, what no one who reads the Bible can deny or disbelieve that the Bible does say that one day Jesus Christ will return.**

In **John 14:3**, Jesus said, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

In **Acts 1:11**, two heavenly angels said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

In **I Thessalonians 4:16**, Paul wrote: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven...”

In **I Timothy 6:13-15**, Paul wrote: “I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”

In **Hebrews 9:28**, the text says, “so Christ also having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time.”

In **Hebrews 10:37**, the text says, “For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay.”

One may not believe the Bible, but you cannot deny that the Bible does clearly say Jesus Christ will come again.

Now it would appear to me that there are things happening that would indicate this moment is near because things are shaping up that are critical to the Tribulation. Clouds are forming:

- 1) The Islamic Babylonian harlot religion is spreading, including in Washington D.C..
- 2) The promotion of same sex relationships is taking us back to the days of Sodom.
- 3) Political alliances are forming such as China and North Korea in the east and Russia and Iran in the north.
- 4) There is an attempt to negotiate peace between Israel and Arabs.
- 5) There is a rise of Anti-Semitism that is being tolerated and promoted in Congress.
- 6) There are strange things happening such as unusual shark attacks, gator attacks, bear attacks.
- 7) There was a grasshopper invasion of Las Vegas, showing God controls the insect world.
- 8) The present condition of most churches is one of irreverence, not reverence. There has been a departure from sound doctrine, people are lovers of pleasure more than God, they are proud, arrogant, disobedient, unthankful, unholy and they despise those good.

All of this is predicted in Scripture and all of this indicates we are moving toward the return of Jesus Christ.

We do not set dates because no one knows the exact moment but God. So as we see these things taking shape, it is imperative that we will finish strong with a proper focus. That is what Jesus Christ wanted His disciples to know here.

Jesus Christ had challenged His disciples to a life of disciplined godliness that even watches out for what one says (12:3). He challenged His disciples to never become Pharisaical hypocrites (12:3). He challenged His disciples to be good witnesses (12:8). He challenged them not to be focused on money (12:15), but on doing the will of God (12:33-34). Jesus was well aware of the temptations that come that can sway a disciple away, so He wanted to motivate them to stay faithful and **the motivation He gives them here is I may come at any moment and no one knows when**. The point is this:

SINCE GOD’S PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW THE PRECISE MOMENT OF CHRIST’S RETURN, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE MAINTAIN A CHRIST-LIKE LIFE AND TESTIMONY AT ALL TIMES.

We need to be faithful in our life, service and witness at all times.

One commentator said there is no “apocalyptic timetable chart” that shows the moment when Christ will return, so we need to be ready at all times (David Garland, *Exegetical Commentary On Luke*, p. 528). It is the mark of wisdom to think that Jesus Christ may return at any moment. That thought should motivate us to live a godly life.

Now this text breaks down nicely into three main points:

MAIN POINT #1 – Jesus Christ presents metaphorical pictures of faithfulness. **12:35-36**

There are three metaphorical pictures that Christ paints of one who is faithful:

Metaphorical Picture #1 - In view of Christ’s return, be properly dressed. **12:35a**

It is interesting that the verb “be dressed” is perfect passive in Greek. What this means is that since you have already been properly dressed at a point of time in the past (the moment you believed on Jesus Christ), you need to continue to maintain this righteous clothing in the present and on into the future. In other words, since you have been clothed with righteousness at the moment of salvation, you need to continue to maintain a righteous readiness.

The typical dress in this Mediterranean world was a long, flowing, loose robe that covered the whole body. Christ is saying you need to always be clothed in readiness. Keep your entire self in a lifestyle of readiness because you don’t know when He will return.

When Christ comes back you do not want Him to find you with dirty spots and wrinkles of sin. Stay on top of your clothing. Keep things clean. If you fail, get it quickly resolved. It would be embarrassing for Christ to return to find us clothed in something improper, immoral or impious.

Both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter use exactly the same metaphor. Paul uses it to refer to the fact that we need to be focused on the truth of God's word (Eph. 6:14). Peter uses it to refer to keeping our minds fixed on the grace of God (I Pet. 1:13).

In view of the fact that Jesus Christ is coming back, we need to have this focus at all times.

Metaphorical Picture #2 - In view of Christ's return, be continually shining. **12:35b**

The idea of keeping a lamp lit at all times is the idea of having a life that shines at all times so people may see it. It is the idea of having a continual testimony that reflects the glory of God. Lamps are used to give light to dark places. Christ is challenging His disciples to have lives that continually shine forth a godly message in this dark and depraved world.

To keep a light continually shining requires continual care and refueling. In the O.T. Tabernacle, the lamps were made of pure gold and were to burn continually (i.e. Lev. 24:1-4). The Levitical priests were to see to it that these lamps that reflected the purity and holiness of God, never burned out.

So it is with N.T. priests, and every believer is a N.T. priest. We are to continually see to it that we are yielding to the Holy Spirit in view of the Scriptures. We are to continually shine bright for the glory of God.

When Christ returns there will be no time to buy more oil to put more oil in the lamp. There will be no time to shine any brighter. When Christ returns you will be the way you are so keep shining for the glory of God at all times. If you falter, get it quickly resolved with the Lord and keep burning because you don't know when He will return.

At the top of radio and TV towers and at the top of certain mountains is a blinking light. Those lights are so that airplanes do not fly into it. Engineers must continually check to make sure that those lights are not burned out. If an FCC official or an FAA official were to come to the station and discover the tower lights are out, there is a huge fine and penalty.

So it will be when Christ returns. If we are not burning bright for Him, there will be a huge penalty and loss of rewards so we must make certain that our lights shine for Him. **We are to be shining witnesses for Jesus Christ at all times.**

Metaphorical Picture #3 - In view of Christ's return, be expectantly waiting. **12:36**

The word "wait" carries with it the idea of positively waiting for something. This has to do with a favorable expectancy. Christ is saying that He wants His disciples waiting for Him with such an expectancy that the moment He comes there is nothing left to be cleaned up or cleared up.

When a master went to a wedding, his return was a very important event. It was the custom of a Jewish groom to leave his home and go to the place where his bride lived, get her and bring her back to his house in a grand processional.

When he arrived back at his home, he had his bride, her family, her friends, his family and his friends. They would have a great feast and finally the bride and groom would leave to consummate the marriage.

Now the servants of the master knew that when the master left for the bride, they needed to make sure things were ready for his return. It would be shameful for a master to come back to his home and discover nothing was ready or that his house was all locked up. Such servants would be greatly ashamed and severely chastised.

So it will be with Christ's return. I John 2:28 makes it clear that when Christ returns, some will face Him in confidence and some with shame. The ones who face Him in confidence are those who were living for Him and looking for His return.

MAIN POINT #2 – Jesus Christ promises rewards for faithfulness. **12:37-38**

Christ makes a point and that is when He returns, the servant who is “alert” will be rewarded. That word alert means to be awake and alive rather than asleep or dead. Those who are alert when He returns will be highly honored by Him.

In fact, in view of the wedding analogy this is a very humbling contextual point. Typically, when the Master returns, he tells the servants what to do. In this case, when He returns, He serves the servants.

Not only will the servants be honored and allowed to eat at the dinner, but the master will actually serve them and wait on them.

Verse 38 makes it very clear than no one knows the moment or time when Jesus will return.

There were three watches in the Jewish world and four watches in the Roman world:

Watch #1 - from 6PM-9PM - Roman

Watch #2 - from 9PM-12AM - Jewish/Roman

Watch #3 - from 12AM-3AM - Jewish/Roman

Watch #4 - from 3AM-6AM - Jewish/Roman

What Christ is saying is no one knows exactly when I am going to return and when I do return, I will honor the one faithful to Me. In fact, we don't even know which watch period we are in according to the time and plan of God.

Now how in the world can we be looking for this 24/7? We need sleep, so what should we do? We need to make certain we are right with God at all times, whether day or night. Do not go to sleep until things are right with Him because we don't know when He will come.

MAIN POINT #3 – Jesus Christ promises loss for unfaithfulness. **12:39-40**

Just as there will be a reward for faithfulness, there will be loss of reward for unfaithfulness.

The illustration here is of a thief. The point is if one knew when a thief would appear, he would make all necessary preparations to see to it that the thief could not do his destructive work. If the head of the house knew the moment a thief would come, he would carefully guard things so that nothing would be destroyed or stolen.

Actually, many of us have good security systems against a thief. We have good locks on the doors. We have security cameras, security alarms, dogs and guns. So we are as prepared as we can be against a thief.

But how about for the coming of Jesus Christ? Do you have a good lock on your heart so that righteousness is locked in and unrighteousness is locked out? What does your conscience camera tell you? Are the alarms of the Holy Spirit convicting you? Is your flesh barking and shooting at you and getting the better of you?

It is time to get prepared for Christ's return because if Christ returns and one is not guarding himself, he will lose.

We must be ready at all times because we do not know the moment Jesus Christ will return.

There are great benefits for being ready and great risks for not being ready.