

## Is It the End Time or Mission Time?

Matthew 24:36-44

November 28, 2004

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner 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. Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

This is the Word of the Lord:  
Praise to you, O Christ

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our Gospel lesson this morning, Jesus is talking about the second coming. He tells us that He doesn't even know when this will take place. That God our Father is the only one that knows when the second coming is. Since Jesus and the angels don't know when the second coming will take place, we are warned not to speculate as to when this will come about. Instead, we should live our life looking for the promises God has put before us. Find the beauty in each day and the love of the people around us. We should also share this love that God has given us with those around us who have not come to know God as our Father, sharing with them His promise for life eternal with Him.

Jesus refers back to Noah and the flood as an example of why we should be prepared. As the people who lived in the time of Noah didn't know about the devastating flood that was coming, those who are living in the last generation will not know when the end will arrive. The people of Noah's time lived their daily lives as usual. They ate, drank, married, and worked just as we are doing. The judgment of Noah's generation could be based on the ungodly line of Cain's descendants. They had an indifferent attitude about who they married and were just looking for what was pleasing to them. Jesus warns us that the last generation will also be a pleasure-oriented society and that the structure of the family will fall apart.

Today the family structure in America doesn't seem as strong to me as when I was a girl. For me Sunday started with church, which included Sunday school, then a family breakfast with my aunt, uncle, and cousins. Then, we'd spend the day at home, or we would go to the family farm or to Grandma and Grandpa's. With stores open on Sunday's now and so many activities available on Sunday, the family tends to go off in their different directions. Sunday tends to be a catch up day for many of us instead of a day of rest and a gathering of family. For my family, when I was serving at Prince of Peace, Saturday became our gathering time. I lead the senior high youth group every Sunday night and we were unable to get together on Sunday as a family.

At the youth group, we began our time together with dinner provided by one of the families. It promoted a feeling of family among the group. We prayed and ate and shared stories of our past week and concerns that were bothering us. With all of our different schedules, it's hard to keep our family time sacred, but it is necessary to keep the lines of communication open and to spend quality time with our families.

I'm not saying that we are in the end times, just that our family time is more fragmented than it used to be. If you look at the stories in Revelation talking about the end, we can draw many examples of things that are to happen in the end that we see today. There have been many times people thought we were in the end times and that we ourselves would witness the end. Things like the death of President Kennedy, wars, immoral behavior, just to name a few. Each generation probably thought at one time or another that the end was near.

Like the seasons of the year, our world will go through the phases that God has predetermined. In the spring the trees and flowers spring forth with buds then gradually open into their beautiful blossoms. Our lives are the same. Our bodies grow and mature as we go through childhood, adolescence and then adulthood. Just as with our bodies, our faith goes through a similar process. We start out with the faith of a child and just trust in God our Father to watch over us. Then as we learn more about God and His promises, through our studies, worship and fellowship, our faith strengthens and we mature in our faith. This maturation process will continue until we go to heaven. It seems that as I take two steps forward there is usually one step backward. God is patient and will guide us each step of the way. We just need to turn back to Him and ask Him for guidance and the strength to turn away from the Devil and whatever it is he is trying to have us do to stay away from the Lord's will.

We hear of the homeowner not being prepared for the thief in the night. None of us knows what will happen in the future, we plan and make preparations for our homes and families, but everything can change in an instant. God doesn't give us the information about tomorrow's weather; we can only guess and try to be prepared. Just don't be too content and lulled into a false sense of security thinking you know how the day will go. Others choices and wrong doings can also affect what happens to you. Accidents can make a major change in your life, but remember to turn all of your life to God and He will give you what you need to get through each of the trials that come into your life.

In the study we just finished, The Purpose Driven Life, I thought of preparing this message while reading the following quote. "When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world. He said in essence, 'The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I've given you. Focus on that.'"

So I challenge you to focus your life on God's mission and sharing your faith with those around you. Share the beauty and wonder of how great God's love is, now with your family, friends, and those you meet on the street. So they too can do God's business of mission and meet you in heaven.

Amen.