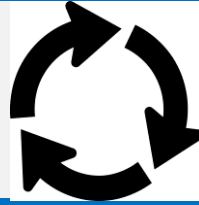


What Is Your Readiness Routine?

Sunday, 12/2 – 8:00 & 10:45

First Sunday in Advent – 2018



During Advent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: *Happy New Year!* Today is the beginning of a brand new Church Year, and why do we follow it? *Because it keeps us focused on Jesus!*

† **Advent** – He came and is coming!

† **Christmas** – He is born to take away our sins!

† **Epiphany** – He is God in flesh, the Promised One!

† **Lent** – He bore our sins and our punishment!

† **Easter** – He is risen, ascended, and reigning!

† **Pentecost** – By the Spirit we live for Jesus!

Today's text has some similarities to last week; therefore, today, we will focus on the differences and on developing a good *readiness routine* to keep us prepared for Jesus' return!

1. **Signs and Distress When Jesus Returns:** ²⁵ “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding [expectation, anticipation] of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

a. Waves: God made them and is in control of them; He said to Job, “...who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb... and prescribed limits for it

and set bars and doors, and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther...?’” (Job 38:8, 10-11 ESV).

- b. **Fear:** Jesus described something much greater than a *category 5 hurricane!* When He comes, the wave limits will be removed and many people will be so fearful that they will be fainting!

2. **How to Respond When We See Jesus:** ²⁷ **And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.** ²⁸ **Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up [*stand upright*] and raise your heads, because your redemption [*deliverance*] is drawing near.” // This life can be wonderful at times, but it can also be *quite difficult* as we boldly live as followers of Jesus (2 Timothy 3:12) – *which is our calling* (Luke 9:23)! Therefore, *when He comes again*, we should stand up, look up, and rejoice – *because our time of difficulty will be over!***
3. **Jesus’ Classic Example – This, So That:** ²⁹ **And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.** ³⁰ **As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near.** ³¹ **So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. //** What things? The signs *pointing ahead to Jesus’ coming* include false Christs, wars, earthquakes, plagues, famines, and betrayals; then, *when Jesus is coming*, there will be signs in the heavens, and many will be in much distress over the great waves! Even though the ignorant and unbelieving will be terrified, *let us understand the signs and always be ready and at peace in our Lord Jesus Christ!*
4. **Jesus’ Fantastic Statements – Longevity, Failure, Longevity:** ³² **Truly, I say to you, this generation will not**

pass away until all has taken place. ³³ **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.** // We had those same statements last week; here is a summary of what I said then:

- a. Generation: “**this generation**” refers to “**the type of Jews that Jesus contended with**” (Lenski, 588). Today, only **2.4%** of all Jews believe in Jesus as the Messiah.¹
- b. Will, Will Not: Though apparently indestructible, heaven and earth WILL pass; but Jesus’ words WILL NOT pass!

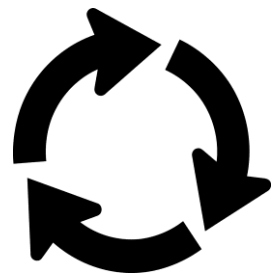
5. **Watch Out:**

- a. Don’t be trapped: ³⁴ **“But watch [give attention to] yourselves lest [possibly] your hearts be weighed down [burdened] with dissipation [drinking alcohol – to try to relieve your burden] and drunkenness and cares [anxieties, worries] of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.** // In this world of sin and death, *it’s easy to become burdened with many things.* For some – *they turn to the Bible and prayer;* for many – *they turn to alcohol and other mind-numbing remedies.* Such people may seem to function okay in life, but they will be caught – *like an animal in a trap* – when Jesus’ returns!
- b. Don’t be surprised: ³⁵ **For it will come upon all ~~who dwell~~ [the ones sitting] on the face of the whole earth.** // Try to imagine the picture when Jesus’ comes: those who believe in Him will be ♦standing, ♦heads uplifted, and ♦smiling☺; but all who rejected Jesus will be ☹on the ground – *sitting or passed out,* and ☹overcome with fear and regret for having rejected

¹ Jews: 14,500,000 worldwide; Jews who believe Jesus as the Messiah: 350,000

Him as their Savior from sin, death, and hell 😊! Think about this picture of Jesus' coming in Revelation chapter 6: "...there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black... ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth... ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us... from the wrath of the Lamb... (12-16 ESV).

6. **Stay Awake, Pray:** ³⁶ **But stay awake** [*be alert, keep watch*] **at all times, praying** [*begging, pleading*] **that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand** [*not sit, not fear, not faint*] **before the Son of Man."** // So Jesus is calling His followers to ✦ stay in the Bible, ✦ keep comparing the Bible with the world, and ✦ keep begging God for strength to gladly receive Jesus when He comes again!
7. **Readiness Routine: The read > pray > share circle!** Let us read the Bible every day > pray for ourselves and others > and share God's Word with others. ***As we share, we will then have reasons to continue to read and pray!*** Let us live the read > pray > share circle!



Let Us Pray: Dear HS, make us hungry to read; then enable us to understand, apply, pray, and share over and over again!

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