

Matthew 24:36-51

Good morning church. So good to be with you all this morning. Victoria, the kids and I were away last Sunday celebrating Victoria's parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Just a big thank you to Matt and Nicole for leading us so well as we were away. We missed being with you, and are glad to be back here with our family today as we worship through the Word of God this morning.

We are 6 weeks into our Bible Reading Plan as a church, as we look through portions of the New Testament together, to get a big picture view of the New Testament.

This week, if you followed along with our reading plan, we saw together:

- Jesus' teaching in his own words about his return. The fact that he will come back.
- We read this incredible prayer that Jesus offers in John 17 – often referred to as the High Priestly Prayer – where he prays for himself, his original apostles, and all Christians for all time.
- Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal, the crucifixion, death and burial

All intended to frame for us the story of the New Testament for us. Real events, that actually happened, that are preserved for us by the power of the Holy Spirit inspiring certain real people to record these events.

To give you a preview of where we're going – next week we'll read about the resurrection of Jesus, the restoration of Peter, and the commissioning of the disciples to go into all the world making disciples, baptizing, and teaching.

But for the purpose of today, I want us to look together at the book of Matthew 24:36-51.

READ Matthew 24:36-51

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³⁶ "Now concerning that day and hour no one knows—neither the angels of heaven nor the Son^[1]—except the Father alone.³⁷ As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. ³⁸ For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. ³⁹ They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. This is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding grain with a hand mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day^[m] your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this: If the homeowner had known what time^[n] the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ This is why you are also to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Faithful Service to Christ

⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom the master finds doing his job when he comes. ⁴⁷ Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delayed,’ ⁴⁹ and starts to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ that servant’s master will come on a day he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew kind of organized his Gospel account around 5 major teaching sections. Jesus’ teaching on certain things – and this last one the topic is preparation. Jesus knows what’s coming. He’s going to be put on trial, found guilty, and be crucified. He knows what’s coming. He’s going to be raised by the power of God on the 3rd day. He’s going to appear publicly, teach, and then go to the Father, but with a promise to come again and make all things new. Judge the world.

And what this final teaching section that Matthew records, this final section is a **call to be ready**.

Not like an off the grid survivalist type of thing – no need for us to build a bomb shelter, or underground bunker, fill it with a bunch of non-perishable food, water and guns. Not like that kind of ready. I mean, if that’s your thing go for it I guess. But that’s not what Jesus is talking about here. There are some key truths in these verses, some principles of being READY that Jesus points us to. And the first thing, the indisputable fact is that Jesus is coming back.

0. Jesus is coming back

In the previous verses, Jesus has told them – LOOK, I’m going to come back. So the first thing we need to agree on is that Jesus will come back. It’s going to happen. Jesus has set this up previously in Matthew 24, some of the scriptures we read previously in our plan.

Jesus is coming back. But not only that he’s coming back, now he says no one knows when he will come back. Only the Father.

1. No one knows when.

Hear me – hear the words of the scripture – no one knows when He will come back.

Re-read V36

Now, if you ever hear someone tell you they know exactly when Jesus is coming back, just know they’re lying to you. Because the Scripture is clear that no one knows. Back in 1988 there was this book, sold 4.5 Million copies, called 88 reasons the rapture will happen in 1988. Well it

didn't happen. Then in 1989, 1993, and 1994 the same dude wrote similar books. I don't think he wrote any more after that. This guy though, failed to take Jesus at his word. No one knows.

2. It Will Be Sudden

Jesus gives us this reminder of the days of Noah. One day, it just starts raining. People were carrying on, and all of a sudden it starts raining. Just as sudden as God's judgment in the days of Noah, Jesus' return will be as well.

Like a Pop Quiz (only way more important). You walk into math class one day, teacher just simply says take out a pencil and a blank piece of paper we got a test today. No time for cramming at this point. No time for doing all the things you should have been doing along the way of the semester.

Jesus is coming back, no one knows when, it will be sudden, and it will be final.

3. It will be final

No makeups, no 2nd chances. It will be final.

Re-read V39-41

4. We (Christians) are called to be alert, or be ready.

Could be today, could be next month, could be 1,000 years from now or more. We're called to be ready.

When I was in business, I always wanted to be a couple steps ahead of management, wanted to try and see where they may be going and be ready. Twice they had discussions about relocating us, and I'll never forget the look on one of my bosses' face when I told her what it would take to get me to relocate. I could tell it caught her by surprise...I was faithfully doing my job, and trying to be ready to whatever our management team would throw at us. The goal was to be ready for any curveball they might throw.

But again, not like go build a bunker underneath your house and load up on distilled water, guns, maybe some whiskey, and pinto beans. That's not the type of ready He's calling us to.

Neither is Jesus calling us to sit around and do nothing, looking up in the skies all day long wondering if today's the day. There was this 1st century church in a town called Thessalonica. A bunch of those guys, apparently quit their jobs and just waited. So Paul writes them this letter. And he tells them – according to the Paul Helton paraphrase – go get a job! If you're not willing to work, you're not going to eat.

Hear me, please – Jesus is coming, it will be sudden, no one knows when, it will be final, so we are to be ready. Be alert. Be ready.

So the Million dollar question we have is, what does readiness look like in 2021 in Bradenton, FL? I think the next few verses help us understand a picture of readiness:

Faithfulness in the task God has given you!

Re-Read 45-51

See, I think in these verses we have a picture of 1 guy that's ready, and another that isn't. 1 guy that's alert, and another that's caught by surprise.

The one guy – he faithfully doing his job. Working hard. Grinding it out, knowing that he's representing the boss, and they boss has entrusted him with a certain task. And he does it!

And I think that's the model for each of us – faithfully working to share the good news of Jesus and show the compassionate love of Jesus WHERE GOD HAS PLACED US! Can I tell you – it can be easy to wish God has placed us in a different neighborhood, job, family, or church at times – instead of faithfully serving the neighborhood, workplace, family and church that God has place us in. **Where I've landed (not perfectly, but I hope faithfully) is a desire to simple, ordinary faithfulness in my neighborhood, work, family and church. Simple, ordinary faithfulness.**

Choice: Trust the witness of the Spirit, Word and Church to lead us to share the good news of Jesus and show the compassionate love of Jesus – OR – be constantly distracted by the world.

So...How do we know if we're ready? If we're faithful?

- Most importantly – the starting point – have you turned from your sin and are you trusting in Jesus alone to save you? Have you turned to Jesus in repentance and faith?
- Is how I'm spending this time bringing glory and honor to God? As I believe the Gospel, and live a Gospel-Centered life? How we work, how we rest, how we serve our families, how we neighbor, sharing and showing Jesus to others. If not, what changes do I need to make?
- Does how I structure my day/week/month/year reflect a commitment to the Gospel and the greatness of King Jesus?
- If Jesus came back right now, would I be embarrassed or ashamed of what I am doing/how I am living?