

July 11th, Be Ready

Part 1 in the series 'The End is Near'

What were some things from last Sunday's message that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

What comes to mind when you hear the words "the end is near"?

Why did Jesus, as well as the writers of the New Testament, tell us that we should keep the thought that this world will come to an end at the forefront of our minds?

A: Not because of the fear and foreboding it produces, but because of the extraordinary joy, and hope, and peace, and courage it would provide us.

Mark 13:32-37

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

What do you think Jesus' followers would have been thinking upon hearing Jesus say these things?

Why do you think Jesus uses the allegory of the man going away from his house for a time?

What else strikes you about this passage?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NLT)

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words."

Jesus followers in the first century seemed to fully expect Jesus to return at any given moment. Do you often think about Jesus' return?

Do you think there seems to be less of an emphasis on Jesus' return among many Christians nowadays? Why/why not? And why do you think that is so?

Read Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Why do you think people, whether they are Christian or not, are so occupied with storing up treasure here on earth?

What does Jesus mean when he says “there your heart will be also.”?

Read 1 John 2:15–17 (NIV)

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires is passing away ...”

How might living like Jesus might return at any moment change the way we live?

How can thinking about Jesus' return produce joy, hope, peace, and courage in the hearts of his followers?