

Rising Before the Dawn- Are you Ready?

Sermon Notes

Sept. 11, 2022

Introduction: Rising before the dawn—anticipating THE DAY

Jesus wants you to live with expectancy of his return. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

- The Day is coming, and it will happen suddenly.
- We are children of the day we rise to it as one leaving the darkness.
- There is an anticipation and expectancy.
- **Illustration:** Preparing for the birth of a baby—car ready, bags packed, room ready?
- It affects how we approach today...

EFCA Statement of Faith- Article 9

We believe in the personal, bodily, and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service, and energetic mission.

We are not answering the question of “when?”—the big arguments within Eschatology.

We are going to answer how do we live considering his imminent return.

Read Matthew 25:1-11

His return requires knowing about and preparing for his arrival.

- A middle eastern first century tradition of wedding was a seven-day event for a virgin and a three-day event for a widow/non-virgin.
 - Ceremony was open air and often by a stream on day 1.
 - After the ceremony there is daily celebrations at the Father of the Bride’s home.
 - On day 7 there is a processional of the bride to the groom’s home where they wait for the groom’s arrival.
 - There are women, most commonly relatives or friends of the groom, who wait for his arrival with torches to create a celebratory arrival of the groom.
 - The groom can arrive at his pleasure from early evening or late at night.
 - If late at night the torches needed trimmed and additional oil to make the light bright as he entered the courts of his home.
- To be present you must have been aware of the announcement and be invited.
- You need to prepare accordingly.
- You cannot presume upon the groom’s schedule.

His return is a celebration to look forward to.

- The ceremony is reflective of salvation.
- The invitation of the Father to come and participate.
- Active anticipation is a must for experiencing the final gathering.

The itinerary of his return is submitted to you without a starting time.

- The foolish virgins presumed a quicker return and were not prepared for living a life of anticipation. They expected instant gratification.
- A selfish presumption upon Jesus is that he is taking too long. Why is he waiting?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

- The longer Jesus waits the more who will be invited into the groom's house.
- For Jesus and the Father, the timing is about reaching more people for him.

What you are doing when he returns matters.

- If Jesus' return is dictated by having more people come to him then the greatest activity we can be doing upon his return is living out and proclaiming the gospel.
- The fruit of our lives reveals the true identity of who we are and if we are not on mission with him and proclaiming you must ask yourself why.
- Living with expectancy gives vitality to life where joy and hope thrive.

Luke 9:35-40 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. ³⁹ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Jesus is coming back!

Benediction:

Revelation 22:20 "He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."