

Rising Before the Dawn

Closing Message

Dec. 4, 2022

Review: Early in the most holy of weeks, Jesus was asked two questions. One as to when the temple might be destroyed and the other concerning the timing of his return and of the end of times. Jesus did give them instructions regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, but he did not tell them when. He gave signs to look for and instructions concerning how to wait with the charge to be ready always. However, he did not give them a timeline. The Bible has many details concerning the return of Christ and what the end of times will be like. These details are given to help us know how to live with expectancy but to also live with a prepared heart and mind. Committing to actual timelines seems to be of secondary importance and often becomes a point of division within the church. What is important is how we are living up until he returns. We are called to steward all that he has given us in this life: our resources, our skills, and our relationships. We steward what has been entrusted to us with a realization that each day is a gift and an opportunity to be on mission with God. The signs of the end are to remind us that time is not in our hands and the urgency is to proclaim Jesus. Today and tomorrow, if given to us, is another day to fulfill the vision of Jesus to see the gospel go to all people in all places.

Today as we read Peter's exhortation concerning how to live as we watch and wait, may God bring light to our eyes and fire to our hearts as we embrace His Word for us.

Read 2 Peter 1:16-21

The return of Christ will be a powerful moment as you behold his majesty for the first time. (16)

- Peter draws this from his experience on the Mt. of Transfiguration.
 - God gives Peter, James, John a "sneak peek" at what his glory actually looks like.
 - It was a powerful, humbling, yet exhilarating moment that impacted these three men so much that the story was told by them and accounted by others as being significant for the church to know. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all account of this moment even though they were not there.
 - John and Peter write with strong language the glory of Jesus in their writings with call for readiness and hope for the return of Jesus. He even referred to God as the "*Majestic Glory*" after hearing his voice. (17)

Matthew 17:1-5 *"After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking*

with Jesus. ⁴ Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

- For Peter, beholding the glory and power of Jesus invoked a strong desire for experiencing the moment of Jesus return.

1 Peter 1:13 *“Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”*

1 Peter 4:13 *“But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”*

- There is credibility in these words as Peter is a first-hand witness corroborated by other witnesses. (16, 18)

This message is True! Study it! His Word and Spirit will guide us. (19)

“...until the day dawns...” = the return of Christ

“...until...the morning star rises in your heart.”

- A reference to a bright star that shines just before the dawn.
- It is an analogy that as we study His Word a desire for his return will cause our heart to burn for his return.

The Word is the only reliable source of truth until Jesus returns. (19a)

- We would be wise to lean into it!

The Word of God becomes a light to our heart as we live in a dark world. (19b)

- How else do you explain Stephen’s face as he was being stoned?
- How else do you explain the singing of hymns by Paul and Silas in a prison cell after they had been beaten.
- How else do you explain our peace and joy even in moments of great loss.
- We anticipate glorious return of Jesus and all that happens to us at that moment.

The Word was born of the same Spirit who lives in us. (20-21)

- We too, are carried along by the Spirit as we live on mission with God until Jesus returns.

“Until the day dawns, we must be sure that the love for His Coming is like a shining star in our hearts. Unless we love for His appearing we will not look for His appearing and it is the Word that keeps that expectation bright.” Wiersbe

Benediction:

Mark 13:32-36 *“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!’”*