

Signs in the Sky

Sermon September 4, 2022

Scriptures: Matthew 24:24-44 & Luke 12:54-56

Golden Verse: “You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?”
(Luke 12:56)

In the last few Sundays, our Lord Jesus Christ told us that He will return and we have to prepare ourselves for His return. When He mentioned to His disciples that He will return on this earth in His heavenly glory, the disciples asked Jesus to tell them if there will be any signs which would tell us about the time of His return, and how they should be prepared for that day. In Matthew 24, we see how our Lord presented the signs, providing exact and clear details about the time of His return, and how we should prepare ourselves.

Today, we live in an amazing and exciting time as Christians. We have been privileged in our lifetimes to witness things that those who lived before us could not even imagine. The world is changing in extraordinary ways. We see changes every day. As you know our world gets closer to accepting a one-world currency. Everything is changing but God, and God’s word is not changing. *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”* Matthew 24:35.

Jesus did not want to scare his disciples, nor does He want to scare us today by sharing with us the signs of time. But He wants us to be aware of all these changes which will signal His return and to be prepared.

Jesus told us that this earth, in which we live, is not everlasting. Everything will come to an end because we will have something much better, which will be everlasting. The Bible tells us explicitly how this world will change, what will happen, and how these changes will affect our human lives when He will come back.

As we read the Bible, it is very important for us to understand the times in which we live and to understand the signs Jesus Christ described to His disciples and to us. This requires not only awareness of our world situation but of an understanding of Scripture and great preparation. How tragic that today men can predict the movement of the stars, and even put men on the moon, but they are blind to what God is doing in the world. They know how to get to the stars but so many do not know how to get to heaven.

Over the last several weeks, we have been looking at a message that Jesus preached about how we should wait and prepare ourselves for His second coming. Now, He continues his teaching by warning his disciples and anyone else who would listen that there is great wisdom in reading the signs of the times and the importance to be well prepared.

Jesus said to the multitudes: *“Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming; and so it is, And when you see the south wind blow, you say, ‘There will be hot weather’”* Luke 12:54-55. Also, He mentioned that if we can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, we should discern the time when He will return.

These days, a modern man can read earthly weather, but it seems we neglected the signs of the moral and spiritual climate all around us. We should know what is happening.

The apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 3:3-7, spoke of this coming judgment when he said, *“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this, they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”*

The signs are there for those who are willing to observe them.

These days, we are getting more and more storm warnings. We do not usually pay attention or prepare for a storm until we realize the severity of the storm and accept the reality that it is going to hit where we live. In the same way, people often ignore the warnings about God’s judgment until they recognize the reality and the severity of it.

We all heard the story of the Roman city of Pompeii, which suffered complete destruction with the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The explosion of Mount Vesuvius was so sudden that the residents were killed in the midst of their daily routine. But it is very interesting to know that the citizens of Pompeii did not have to die. Roman writers of the period recorded that for weeks prior to the eruption, there were sounds of rumbling and shaking of the earth were felt. There was even an ominous plume of smoke clearly visible for days before the eruption. Many

citizens took the warning seriously and they left Pompeii right after the first warning signs, but most of them were tied to their homes and goods, and they were not able to leave everything behind to save their lives. The citizens of Pompeii died because they ignored the warnings and were clinging too much to their material goods. Warnings have to be responded to in an appropriate way.

Jesus says: We have to prepare ourselves because He is coming soon. Jesus gives us advice on how to prepare for His coming, and we had better prepare ourselves before it is too late.

There are two specific aspects of how we should prepare for Jesus' return.

1. We have to be thankful that Jesus Christ died for us and, with His blood, He cleansed us from our sin.

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.
Titus 3:5

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

2. We have to be thankful to God for what we have.

We have to learn to be satisfied with what we have.

Once, I read a story shared by Billy Graham.

He said: "We never seem satisfied with what we have—rich or poor, healthy or sick. But what a difference it makes when we realize that everything we have has been given to us by God!

King David prayed, '*Wealth and honour come from You ... We give You thanks, and praise Your glorious name ... Everything comes from You*' (1 Chronicles 29:12-14, NIV).

Some years ago, I visited a man who was wealthy and successful. He was the envy of all his friends and business associates. But as we talked, he broke

down in tears, confessing that he was miserable inside. Wealth had not been able to fill the empty place in his heart.

A few hours later, I visited another man only a short distance away. His cottage was humble, and he had almost nothing in the way of this world's possessions. And yet, his face was radiant as he told me about the work he was doing for Christ and how Christ had filled his life with meaning and purpose. I am convinced that the second man was really the rich man. Although he didn't have much, he had learned to be thankful for everything that God had given him.

Paul declared, "*I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want*" (Philippians 4:12, NIV). A spirit of thankfulness makes all the difference.

Are you constantly preoccupied with what you do not have? Or have you learned to thank God for what you do have? Are you constantly preoccupied with what you do not have? Or have you learned to thank God for what you do have?" <https://billygraham.org/story/how-to-be-thankful-in-all-things>

We have to be thankful for the people we have in our lives.

We have to be thankful for our salvation.

We have to be thankful for God who is present with His power in our lives.

We have to be thankful for having a living relationship with God.

Next Sunday, we will study closely the signs of His return that Jesus mentioned to us clearly.

Today, let us be thankful that we still have time to prepare ourselves to meet Jesus, either as He will return suddenly, as He promised, or when we will be called home, into His eternity. Amen