

Watch and Be Prepared!
SERMON – November 22, 2020

Scripture reading: Matthew 25:1-13 & 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Golden verse: *“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”* Matthew 25:13

“Ready or Not, Here I Come.” I am sure you all remember our childhood game, which included these words. Hide and Seek was one of my favourite games as well. When we played the seeker, we turned towards a wall or a tree, covering our eyes, and we were counting out loud up to the agreed on number. Sometimes, we were counting slowly, other times really fast. When we reached the magic number, we screamed: “Ready or not, here I come.” When WE were hiding, we knew that we had to be fast, because the seeker was coming, whether we were ready or not. If we were not ready, then we paid the consequences. At the end, it was always fun to gather around the seeker.

Today, we focus on three special parallels between this fun game and the second coming of Jesus:

1. Jesus Christ will come back
2. He will take us with Him into His glory.
3. We have to be prepared.

1. Jesus Christ will come back

Today, our Lord Jesus Christ is telling us that surely He will come back, because this world is His world. You and I are God’s creation, and we belong to Him. When Jesus comes back, all our earthly belongings will lose their value.

Let’s see what is going on today around us.

Today we hear a lot about “peace and safety”. We talk about developments and plans, and about our unlimited opportunities and possibilities. However, this year by a small, invisible virus, everything turned upside down, as we were forced to realize that we are ONLY vulnerable human beings. We realized that a little, invisible virus can take us out from our safety balance, or could even destroy OUR

whole creation: not God's creation, but our creation; not God's plans, but our plans; not God's power, but our strength.

One of God's lessons with this virus is to wake us up and force us to see that we humans tempt to focus too much on this world, and on our goals and plans we developed and created **WITHOUT GOD**.

These days, more and more people are excluding God from their lives, just because they are busy with their own plans. People have no time to come to worship, even though they don't have to leave their homes. People don't read the Bible, God's Love Letter, because they are busy or have no interest. Most people ignore their spiritual needs. Many are so wrapped up in their jobs and work that they don't realize they have become intoxicated by temporary values, and they are losing eternal values. People don't want to consider that **ONE DAY** Jesus will return, and His coming will change everything. Everything that we did, without Him, will lose their values. Most people are not ready, and they are not watching for Jesus.

Jesus Christ will come back. His return is imminent.

Our Lord Jesus Christ will come back for sure. The question is not **IF** Jesus will return but **WHEN** will He return.

It would be helpful if the Bible would tell us exactly when Jesus will come.

Once the disciples asked Jesus: When will You return? The day is God's secret. Jesus said: *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."* (Matthew 24:36) No one can find out, but there will be signs which will tell us about His coming.

Based on this, Paul said that "No one knows". It will come without warning, like a thief in the night or labour pains on a pregnant woman.

Jesus also said: *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* (Matthew 24:44)

Paul had a vision about our society, saying that, unfortunately, not everybody will be prepared. Some people will continue to live "in darkness" which means without considering His return. **BUT** if we are not in darkness, this day should surprise you like a thief. If we are sons of the light and sons of the day, we do not belong to the night or to the darkness, then we are like others, who are asleep, but we are self-controlled. (1 Thessalonians 5:4-7)

2. He will take us with Him into His glory.

The Lord Jesus will return in His right time.

In John 14:3, Jesus said: *“After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

We, as His children we have to be alert and prepared. If we are not in darkness, but if we live in faith, in His light, we wait for Jesus, and we prepare ourselves accordingly.

Dear beloved, the Lord Jesus will come whether you were ready or not.

His return will bring us joy and salvation

Many blessings are waiting for those who are watching and will be ready for His return. Jesus said: *“You know the way to the place where I am going.”* (John 14:4) So, you have nothing to fear.

In Revelations we read: *“God will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”* (Revelation 21:3-4)

Dear sisters and brothers, we should encourage each other of these truths as often as we can. As Paul says: *“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11)

For the children of God, for you and for me there is peace in knowing that Jesus will return, and we can look forward for that day with excitement and expectancy. Instead of fear, we should be anxious to see Jesus. There is great comfort in knowing that we will be taken into a perfect world, which is glorious and eternal.

Jesus will come back for sure to take His children into His everlasting glory. That day will be such an amazing day for us, since we are His children. But Jesus is telling us that we have to be prepared for His coming in a very special way.

3. We have to be prepared.

Remember: “Ready or not, here I come.” If we won’t be ready, then we have to pay the consequences.

In a parable, the Lord Jesus talks about two groups: One group is waiting for the groom. They are watching and waiting, and fill up their lamps with oil. The other group is falling asleep, and they don’t have enough oil, faith, in their lamp.

Because they were not ready to welcome the groom, they are not be allowed to join the wedding, and will remain in the darkness. One group is prepared, the other one is not. To which group do you belong?

Dear beloved, YOU and I are commissioned by God, to do the duty of watchmen. We, as faithful believers we have to be ready and alert to sound the alarm in this world, where sour beloved sleep, so they should wake up in time to prepare themselves. We are called to share what we observe, what we know, to warn people and to point on returning Christ.

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (Matthew 25:13)

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:40-41)

As a watchman, you are a frontline soldier, uniquely equipped by God, to see and to blow the trumpet that the people can be warned. You and I are responsible for others. As watchmen, we cannot sleep on our jobs. We have to be alert, sensitive to protect the lives of all those people who are around us. If we don’t love our people enough to wake them up, they will continue to sleep and they will remain in everlasting darkness. We have to be available for the Lord, as watchmen, because we are entrusted to care for our family members and our church family.

Will you be a more faithful watchman? Will you be ready, available, and on guard when He comes? Are you ready to share with others that the Second Coming of Christ will happen, and He will come whether people are ready or not?

There is a great day coming. Are you ready? Amen