

Working, Watching and Waiting

Sermon August 28, 2022

Golden Verse: “*Prepare to meet your God.*” (Amos 4:12)

Scriptures: Matthew 3:1-12 & Luke 12:32–40

Dear Beloved,

In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, the apostle Paul presents to us his teaching about the Lord’s Supper. This is absolutely astonishing since he was not there with the 12 disciples on that evening when the Lord Jesus Christ shared with His disciples the elements of the bread and the wine. However, Paul said that he received this teaching in person from the Lord Jesus. At the end of his teaching on the Lord’s Supper, Paul writes: *Proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.*

This means that we Christians constantly look in two directions: we look back into history, on that time when our Lord died for us on the cross and saved us when He was fighting His glorious fight on the cross on Golgotha; and we are looking forward, expecting Him to return in His full glory surrounded by heavenly hosts. The Lord’s death and His coming are the two major points of our Christian life.

So, the foundation of the Christian identity is the Lord’s death, and our salvation is what He accomplished through His death. He came onto this earth surrounded by angels, He left this earth in a glorious way accompanied by two angels, and He will come back being surrounded by His whole heavenly glory. His return will show to the earth His full glory.

We, as Christians, every day start our lives kneeling at the cross. Then, we face a new day with new challenges, doing our tasks, knowing that all our blessings are coming from above, from Jesus Christ, who one day will return, and will start a new chapter in our lives.

We know that we have to work, as if we would live forever on this earth, but we have to pray as if Jesus would return in a few seconds. This is the correct behaviour of a faithful Christian, who knows he/she is saved and lives with responsibility and joy.

There is a famous Latin saying, which is written on the Theological University’s main entrance in Debrecen, Hungary: *Ora et Labora*, which means Pray and Work.

This is the correct behaviour of Christian lives: working and being prepared. Working to invest all our knowledge and energy in that field where we are called as Christ’s co-workers. And also constantly being prepared to leave everything

behind and to stand in front of our returned Lord, who charged us with different tasks on this earth.

Therefore, our position is Working, Watching, and Waiting. Unfortunately, most people in our society don't know this or they don't take seriously that we should be Working, Watching and Waiting. What most people do is work and work and work.

Many times, our dear Lord Jesus Christ reminded us about His return and asked us to await His return and to be well prepared.

A few minutes after His ascension, two angels reminded the disciples that Jesus would come again in the same way as they had seen Him ascending to heaven. When He returns, His followers will receive their reward and our eternal life will continue in a totally different world.

We, who love Jesus Christ, are waiting for Him to return, and for the new heaven and new earth in which He will move us. In that kingdom, there will be no sin and death, no tears, suffering, or pain, just blessed joy, peace, and happiness.

That is why you and I should continue to follow Jesus, fully trusting in His promises.

Our faith and our hope are based on His promises, and this gives us strength in walking faithfully on the narrow road. His words are illuminating our ways even when we have to go through the valley of the shadow of challenges.

We should continue to work here on this earth as if we would live here forever, but we should not forget that at any time Jesus could return, and we would hear the heavenly host inviting us to leave everything behind and to come to meet Him.

The main reasons people don't live according to God's rules is that they either forget or neglect the message that Jesus can come back any time. The reason our Christian faith is getting weaker is that we don't take seriously that one day He will come back and we have to report to Him about our whole lives.

Are you waiting seriously for Christ's return? Are you preparing yourself to be ready when He shows up?

There are two types of waiting states. One of them is really extremely boring, like the bear waits for spring, or the lazy person for good luck. Doing nothing while just waiting for something is wasted time. Our time could have been used for something smarter.

There is another kind of waiting, one that is filled with urgent, exciting activity. An example of this is when a young mother is waiting for the birth of her little child. The mother has to prepare many things with a lot of care and love until the person she is waiting for comes. Such active waiting is also when an engaged couple is waiting for the wedding. How much happy excitement, preparation, arrangement, planning, discussion, fills this anticipation. Everything must be ready before the long-awaited day finally arrives.

Well, such a happily hopeful and urgently active expectation is also the expectation of Christ's return.

In our Scripture reading, we are not talking about a quiet wait, but a wait spent in very exciting activity: *"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 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"* Luke 12:35-36.

Jesus is talking about servants who are waiting for their lord and are waiting in full readiness. When our Lord left this earth, He said He would come back, surprisingly. The Lord has made it so that when He comes, everyone and everything will be ready!

Let us ask ourselves: What would happen to us if the heavenly alarm suddenly sounded: *"Here comes the bridegroom! Come before him!"* Matthew 25:6.

In what condition would Jesus find you? Wouldn't you be fatally embarrassed? Wouldn't that make you very uncomfortable? Would your wedding clothes be ready so that you could go to the wedding with them right away? Would He find that you have done all that He had instructed you to do up to this day? For example, have you reconciled not only with God, but also with your neighbour and your enemy? Have you thought that the Groom cannot celebrate with guests who are quarreling and angry with each other?

Then, for example, did you pass on the invitation to His wedding everywhere you went among the people? Have you called them with enough warmth and urgency? Have you dealt with the issues of your life?

Do you feel how should we activate ourselves while waiting for Christ?

If we know He is coming, then we have to be prepared: we have to pray more often and in a deep way; we have to study the Bible and understand His will; we have to witness about Him to all those people who are around us.

I heard people saying: I don't have time for the church. That means to me that they don't have time to prepare themselves for Christ and for eternity.

Others said: I don't have money for the Church. That means they cannot be thankful for all they get from God day by day.

Don't wait to prepare yourself. After your heart will stop, you won't have another chance to prepare yourself. Do it today. Do it now.

"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. 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." Luke 12:37-38 Amen