

Matthew 24:36 - 25:13

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[0 : 00] to the book of Matthew. Go with me to the book of Matthew. Matthew 24, I will pick up where we left off last week, which puts us in verse 36. So Matthew 24, verse 36, and we'll be going over into the 25th chapter.

We'll go to the 13th verse of the 25th chapter. Don't let the rollover into another chapter upset you. Sometimes, you know, we can kind of get bent out of shape because we have these breaks and divisions in our Bible, in our scripture, and we seem to think that they should be there.

You know, kind of on a humorous note, I realized several years ago that I had picked up this real bad habit. Maybe some of you, my family knows it. It's really bad. Not many other people notice it because it doesn't seem to show itself so much in this setting when I'm preaching.

I'm kind of a cliffhanger speaker now. I kind of just leave things off the end. I don't always finish my sentences and kind of drives my kids crazy, especially if they're trying to help me out. And I was like, all I do is I just need you to, and I'll just, you know, keep on working.

I need somebody to know what I'm talking about. But then I realized several years ago, the reason I do that is the Bible I was using at that time had every verse as a standalone verse, and most verses never completed the sentence.

[1 : 12] So I was speaking quite often in my public reading in half sentences. And I still use that Bible. Actually, it's right here in front of me. But I realized that that was kind of bleeding over, and that's kind of our mindset.

We think that we need to stop where the verse stops or we need to stop where the chapter stops. But I caution you in remembering that Matthew 24 and 25 is one great long discourse, right?

Christ is teaching here. So as we roll over into the 25th chapter, let's not let that big number scare us or kind of distract us from the kind of the weight of what's going on.

So that will be our text this morning, 24 verse 36 over into 25 verse 13. If you remember, and we'll just say this very quickly, the public ministry of Christ is finished.

We're still in Passion Week. We're in that last week of Christ. The public ministry has finished. He has told them that the glory has departed from the temple, and he has walked away from the temple for the last time.

[2 : 11] Next time he goes in there, he will not actually be in Temple Mount, but he will be around the temple, he will be in Jerusalem, he'll be on trial. So he has departed from the temple. He is now making his way.

He's went across the Kidron Valley. He's halfway up Mount Olivet. Mount Olivet, he's stopped about, probably about halfway up. He's on his way to Bethany because that's where he's staying because he's got some friends there, Mary, Martha, and they had this brother, you might know him. His name is Lazarus. So he hangs out with them a little bit. He's kind of, they live close, and that's where he's going back and forth. Mount Olivet is pretty important to us later because that's where the Garden of Gethsemane is as well.

So these places are important, right? So as he's making his way, he stops and he is talking to his disciples. Public ministry is done. Now we have this private teaching, and that's really where we get it, right?

We like to draw close. And if you remember, our kind of precept in all of this is the reality that it does matter where you stand with Christ. If you stand with him in public only, you get rebuked.

[3 : 09] If you're hanging out with him in private, then you get taught. So we see this last public ministry is one of rebuke and correction and even chastisement and discipline. Here's this private speech, this private teaching here on what they call the Mount Olivet Discourse is one of things to come.

This is what a lot of people enter into, and they try to predict. Unfortunately, they try to predict end time events or eschatology as it's called in biblical studies.

They try to determine when these things will be. And I've cautioned you and said, don't enter into that passage this way because we are very clearly taught the very first verse we will read this morning is we don't know when these things will be.

But we have broken this up into three sections, and I'll go ahead and tell you the three sections so that you'll understand why we've broken it up this way, even though it is in one great discourse.

Verses one through 35 tell us what we can expect for the days ahead.

If you remember that, that was last week's message. If you don't remember it, you can go back and listen to it because I know there's a lot of things that have happened. But what we can expect for the days ahead. There are certain things that were applicable to the people he was talking to then, and they are equally applicable to us now, right?

[4 : 22] So there's this expectation of days ahead. Now we are looking at, our title this morning is, how do we live in light of his return? So if that is what we expect, how then shall we live, right?

So then we have the application of living with that expectation. And then the third portion of the Olivet Discourse, which picks up in Matthew 25, 14, and goes to the end, is what we can personally, what are we looking forward to after these things come about?

That's the judgment time, right? So that's kind of the judgment passages you have here. So we have what awaits us in the days ahead, how we should live in light of what awaits us, and where do we stand at the end of these events?

Not that we know when they're going to be, but hopefully it's this grand picture that has application to our life. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you would join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in Matthew 24, starting in verse 36. And I've already kind of told you the title, but our title this morning will be Living in Light of His Return. Living in Light of His Return. Because He's told us what to expect for the days ahead, then how then shall we live, right?

[5 : 34] Living in Light of His Return. Verse 36. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the sun, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark. And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away.

So will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field. One will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready.

For the Son of Man is coming in an hour when you do not think He will. Who then is a faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time.

[6 : 34] Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that evil slave says in his heart, my master is not coming for a long time and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards, then the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and an hour when he does not know.

And he will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. For in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the kingdom of heaven will be compared to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

Five of them were foolish and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them. But the prudent took oil and flask along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

But at midnight there was a shout, Behold the bridegroom, come out to meet him. Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out.

But the prudent answered, No, there will not be enough for us and you too. Go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves. And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came.

[7 : 42] And those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast and the door was shut. And later the other virgins also came saying, Lord, Lord, open up for us. But he answered, Truly I say to you, I do not know you.

Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for this day. Thank you for this opportunity, Lord, of gathering together as your people.

And Lord, we thank you for the great privilege of reading your word. We pray, O Lord, that you give us understanding, Lord. Pray that you give us a heart and a mind to comprehend what it is you're saying to us.

And Lord, that because of that comprehension, Lord, because of that understanding, our lives would look different as we leave this place. And that you would be glorified in how we live our lives for your honor. We ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. Now again, I have to tell you, I want to caution you against reading into this passage simply things that are not there.

[8 : 39] And I understand that there are many of us, we come with an understanding of what the end time will look like. And we're not here really to talk about eschatology. We're not here to discuss things that will transpire when or how or any of those things because we want to stay kind of confined to the text, if you will.

We could use this text as a springboard to go into any number of other texts and we could use it as an opportunity to try to prove or disprove any other theories about things will happen. We have said over and over again that when it comes to salvific faith, there are big rocks and little rocks, right?

There are things that really matter and then there are things that we kind of fill in the gaps with.

There are things that are make or break as far as our communion and fellowship with other believers. And then there are things which we can kind of live with one another on and that the church has lived with one another over the years.

Those big rock issues are the reality of who Jesus Christ is, that he was born of a virgin, that he lived a perfect and sinless life, that he died a substitutionary death, that he literally died on the cross, that he was laid in a tomb, a dead individual, and three days later actually physically came back to life, that he is a resurrected Savior, that he was called up to heaven and he lives forever to intercede for us.

Big rock issues, right? Things that we put in first. Little rock issues are interpretations of the last times, interpretation of other things, of what we can do and how we apply these great truths to our lives.

[10 : 02] eschatology or the study of end times events are one of the little rock issues, which means you don't have to believe exactly the same way I believe in order for us to fellowship or in order to be saved.

You have to believe the big rock matters for salvific reasons to be saved. The little rock matters are things that really, to be honest, we're just making our best understanding and interpretation of Scripture with one another.

Okay? So we have to be careful how we read into this. I'll give you an example from this passage really before we get into it. Immediately when I read that there will be two men in the field, one will be taken and the other will be left, and there will be two women at a meal and one will be taken and the other will be left, many of us all of a sudden thought, oh, that's the rapture.

He's speaking of the rapture here. And just to be honest with you, the reason so many of us think that way is because of a pastor named Tim LaHaye, who pastors at Shadow Mountain Community Church, which is now David Jeremiah, where he pastors at in California.

Great pastors, great teachers, and they're great teachers of end time events. But he wrote this small study, maybe you've heard of it. It's a small study called the Left Behind series. And in that Left Behind series, these things are clearly depicted.

[11 : 05] It's put into a movie. It's put into books. And you've read them. Maybe you haven't read them. And they put them out in teen edition, kid editions, and all these different things. And this is what is visibly represented as the rapture of the church.

But if we're going to confine ourselves to this passage, I'm saying this, I'll give you the scholarly stuff first, okay? While you're most awake, I'll give you the scholarly stuff, and then we'll get into the application. Because, you know, we're wide awake now.

Jesus never here makes the application that they're being taken away to rapture. He is just making the application that people are going to be separated by the events. For all we know from the text, the one that is taken is taken to judgment, and the other is left for glory.

We never really have the direct application that he's taken up to glory, and the other is left behind for judgment. And the reason we have to be careful with reading that end of this passage is because of this repeated phrase that no one knows the hour, no one knows the day.

And the reason we have to be careful with this, because if we're not, we will remove ourselves from the application of this passage. And I will show you how. If we say that that is the rapture, and we believe in a pre-tribulation rapture, if we say that, that's our eschatology, right?

[12 : 13] That the church will be raptured before the tribulation period starts, then we know the tribulation to be seven years long. It's very clear, right? And then we know at the end of the seven years, then Christ will come and he'll set up a millennial reign, a thousand years of Christ, which means that it's 1,007 years to the day, by the way, according to interpretation of Scripture.

So if we say that's what he's talking about here, then we cannot agree with Jesus that no man knows the day. Because they could say, well, if they're gone, seven years is about to start, start your clock, and in a thousand years he's coming back.

See how we can remove ourselves from this? All of a sudden we remove ourselves from the weight of the passage. But if we put ourselves here in the middle of it, and we have to assume that Jesus was speaking to disciples and telling them, telling believers that this had application to their lives, then we have to jump in the middle of it and say, well, what does it look like for us to live in light of his return?

What does it look like for us to live in light of his return? Because just to be honest, I mean, I'll just be honest with you, many believers are living for the rapture, not living for his return.

And I'm not saying that it's wrong. I'm not here declaring my eschatological leanings to you. Okay, I'm not. And a lot of pastors say, you get stuff thrown at you this way. I'm not here saying that.

[13 : 34] I have vivid beliefs. When we went to the book of Revelations, I laid those out for you. But I'm just saying, when it concerns this passage, let's stay in this passage. Jesus thought it had application to his followers.

Therefore, it has application to us. One truth that we find that is just permeated through the remainder of the New Testament is that every author of the New Testament expected Christ to come back at any moment.

Every one of them. And we need to be careful that we don't separate ourselves. Oh, okay. Because then we're not living in light of his return. Which gets us to the first thing.

What does it look like to live in light of his return? Number one, it is to live with anticipation. It is to live with an anticipation. Look at what Jesus says.

But of that day and hour, no one knows. Not even the angels of heaven, nor the son, but the father alone. Now, we have to address this because it's in the passage.

[14 : 34] And we would rather not address this because it makes our brains smoke. And we would rather not go there. Just to be honest, we'd rather stay surface level. But here we have to all of a sudden begin to dive and get down into the deep things of faith.

And we have to just kind of make this declaration and say, let the word of God be true and let the thoughts and opinions of man be false. But we have to come here with this reality. Jesus says there are two great truths.

Okay? Two great truths that are pointed out for us here in this one sentence. Number one, the first truth is the day is coming. That is a great truth. It is coming. So to live as if it is not coming, then that is to falsify a declared truth of Christ.

Jesus says, for that day is coming. Right? That is a great truth that we must understand. The coming of Christ, the second coming, because we know that he has come once. And now we need to understand this.

According to the Bible, he came once as a baby, wrapped in a closet, laid in a manger. And we celebrate that at Christmas season. And we should, because it is Emmanuel, God with us. And we stand in wonder.

[15 : 36] We like to gather around the living nativity. And we've seen these little babies. And oh, how glorious that day. God manifested himself in the flesh so that he could be so humble and gentle and lowly.

And man could hold him and care for him. And like a child, like a newborn baby. But now his second coming is nothing like that. The second coming, according to scripture, is he's coming as a king to rule, to declare his rightful position on his throne, on a white horse, not wrapped in white cloths. Right? He is not going to be laid in a manger. He's going to set his foot upon the earth. And he's coming to rule. Because the rest of those Isaiah passages, right, that the rule would never depart from him, that the rod of righteousness will rest upon his shoulders, and the keys to the kingdom of David, will be his eternally.

So we know that he is coming to fulfill the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey would say. So Jesus says the first great truth is that day is coming. The second great truth is that no one, absolutely no one, knows when it's going to come.

Two great truths. Okay? Jesus says not even the angels know. Now that doesn't bother us a whole lot, because we don't expect the angels to know everything, even though you understand that Satan is a fallen angel.

[16:46] And so many people make Satan as if he is omniscient, that is, all-knowing. The reality is Satan only knows as much about you as you allow him to know. He is not omniscient. He is a created being who is limited.

He has limited scope and limited sphere. And he is not omnipresent, which means he's not everywhere at one time. He cannot be all-knowing. He's not omnipotent. He is not all-powerful. Now he is more powerful than us, because he is a created being.

But greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world, right? We understand these things. So we are not really bent out of shape too much that angels do not know, because as created beings, there are things which they do and do not know.

And Jesus says the angels don't even know when it's going to happen. Though they're gathered around the throne of God, though they're declaring his worth and his glory all the time, and they're doing his bidding, they don't even know.

But this is the part that bothers us. Jesus says even the Son doesn't know. And now all of a sudden, we've come upon something that Jesus himself says he doesn't know. And what we need to understand is here in the flesh, he has separated himself.

[17:46] He is separating his deity from his humanity. Okay? He is fully God and fully man. As fully God, he knows all things.

In his full humanity, there are some things he doesn't know. Now that told you, he's going to make your brain smoke. And I told you, don't try to understand it. Just accept it. As God, he knows all things.

In the flesh as man, there are some things he doesn't know that must reside in the presence of the Father alone. So we see this. Jesus makes this declaration. The day is coming.

No one knows. So I've told you this, told you this last week, and I continue to tell you this.

Whenever someone tells you that they have figured it out, flee from them, because the Bible tells us very clearly, no one knows.

No one. And he goes on. He says, For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. Just like the days of Noah. And Noah kept saying, It's coming, it's coming, it's coming.

[18:45] And for 120 years, he's a preacher of righteousness. And he's coming, it's coming, it's coming. And he's doing this. He's building the ark. And he's doing all these things. He says, For as in those days, before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.

And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Here he declares, it's going to be just like the days of Noah. And it is everything that has always been will continue to be.

They will be normal, everyday events. Right? That daily events will still transpire. Daily events will still take place. Noah is saying, It's going to rain. It's going to flood. Until that time, no one had ever seen a flood.

And Noah keeps declaring all these things. And man keeps looking around and says, Well, what has been is still going on. And nothing has really changed. Noah, the world is still going around.

And things still go on. And here we are, some 2,000 plus years later, after Christ declares this.

And we're sitting here going, things are still going along at the same pace. Right? Things are still happening. And men are still eating and drinking and being merry. And people are still being given in marriage and taken in marriage. And things are still going on and transpiring the way we would

expect them to come.

[19 : 48] Jesus says, This is a reality that does not deny the truth that the day is coming. It is just a reality that this is how it's going to be. It says, And then all of a sudden there's going to be this great separation.

Right? There will be two. One will be taken. One will be left. There will be two. One will be taken. One will be left. Therefore, be on alert for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. So, how's our application here?

The reality is, is he's coming. Well, the application is, in order to be prepared we must live with anticipation. And this is something, I mean, just to be honest with you, that each of us struggle with. And if we didn't, then we would live our lives differently, I believe. To live with anticipation is the reality that we wake up each day going, Today could be that day. Today could be the day that I meet my maker.

Not in death, but in his return. And this is the reason why I think the danger of so much in time, prophetic study is to churches. He said, well, no, no, it's not going to be today because this has got to happen.

[20 : 46] This has got to happen. This has got to happen before that comes. Jesus here declares that every believer, every individual needs to live with an anticipation that it could come today. Now I have what I believe.

I have what I believe to be a biblical teaching of the end time events. In my mind, I have that worked out. I know what I believe, but I'm also not so prideful to declare to you that what I believe has to be absolutely right because I can also declare to you that in my humanity, I could be absolutely wrong. But I do know one thing. Jesus says that he can come at any time. That's what he says here. And that I need to be living with an anticipation that today could be the very day. And live with such an anticipation that since I do not know the day, nor the hour, nor the time, to anticipate it is to be ready for it.

To live with anticipation is to be ready. And look at what he says. He says, be on the alert. And he uses the illustration. For, be sure of this, that if the head of the house, knowing at what hour of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

Right? I mean, think about that. When I was much younger, it may get me in trouble, but it's okay.

[22 : 11] Certain times of the year, we had a high school principal that a lot of people liked to kind of, well, we wanted to roll his yard is what it was. So, you know, there's a lot of toilet paper being bought.

And, well, the beauty of it all is the principal knew it was going to happen. And since he knew it was going to happen, it was always kind of this game of cat and mouse. Like, can we get to you before you catch this type of thing? What was really cool about that is it was the older brother.

See, I was the younger brother. It was the older brothers who did all that work. They bought all the toilet paper. They bought all the, all the preparation. And so the principal knew it was going to happen. And one of them lived next door to him.

And, you know, they gave it a name every year. And it was just common knowledge around the school that, hey, on this night, we're going to roll the principal. And it was just, it's kind of cat and mouse. And that was cool because the principal was always ready. Probably the greatest night of it though.

And, and one of my counterparts that did this with me is not here. So I'll take all the blame. Because we were the younger brothers, we knew all the older brothers had all the toilet paper. They had all the toilet paper stored somewhere. So we took all their toilet paper one night.

[23 : 08] And decided we would go roll other people with their toilet paper. You know, the beauty of it is, is our principal is the one who helped us get away with it. He brought us down here to war trace around town and let us, and you said, oh, the shame of that should never happen.

That's against the law. We woke up next morning, cleaned it up, but it was such a fun event because see, what happened is that kept the toilet paper out of his yard. So he helped us out. And it kept us from getting beat up because we weren't home once we took it.

And we had to run away from, but it's this anticipation being on the alert. He knew something was up. And therefore, when he found us, we could get away. And it is this readiness of, he knew what was going on.

And we were on his side, so to say, even though we, we weren't so good to other people. But, um, the, the beauty of it is, is that he always knew. And that was part of it. That's why it was so fun. People live in the reality that, well, yeah, Jesus is coming someday, coming someday, coming someday, but they act as if, in their act, I'm not saying they say, they act as if that day's never coming. Because anticipation is to live with an alertness to that could be today.

[24 : 17] If I anticipate something happening, it means that it is imminent. The word imminent means it could happen at any moment. Something is going to happen, and it could happen at any moment.

If I told you that something was imminent, that it was absolutely going to happen, and it could happen at any moment, and you went and lived as if it was not going to happen, then I am not to blame for when it does happen.

Because you knew. And Jesus says, to live in light of his return is to live with anticipation. The second thing we get from our passage is because it is one thing to anticipate, because in anticipation, we could say, well, we must stop everything and just stare at the sky, right? Well, if he's coming again, and he could come today, and people have done this, by the way, throughout history, since he is coming, and there were people who did this in the early church, right? Since he is coming, even some of our New Testament letters rebuke people from doing this. This is what happened, by the way, at the church at Corinth, when Paul told the believers at Corinth that they needed to work, that each man was to work with his own hands, and if a man did not work, he should not eat. He wasn't just talking about people that were being bums.

[25 : 28] He was talking about people who said, well, since Jesus is coming, I don't have to work anymore, right? I don't have anything to do. Since he's coming, I'm just going to sit here and wait on the Lord to come back. The problem is, is the Lord waited a little too long, and they got hungry, so they went to the church and said, oh, I need some food, because it wasn't that they couldn't work, because they said, well, if he's coming, why do I need to work?

And we, well, we missed the other part of the story, because Jesus says true believers, living in light of his return, don't just live with anticipation, they also live with occupation, that is, they're doing something.

You're not just staring at the sky, saying, well, he's coming again, he's coming again, and I want us to sit here and wait until he comes again, because he said, no, there's something you must do, and this is the truth. If Christ has left us here, and if he has saved us, and called us to him, for his purposes, and for his glory, and if we are still here, we are still here for a reason, right?

And I've said this before, and I know it doesn't settle real good, but if heaven is the only goal of salvation, if heaven is the aim, now, I know it's the end, okay, I'm not talking about the end, but if it is all that there is to salvation, then it is very unfair of the Savior to leave us here, before he takes us there.

If salvation was all about glory, then he should just take us as soon as we're saved, and redeemed. That would be the most gracious thing that he could do, but there's more to salvation than that.

[26 : 49] It is him calling us to himself to be Lord over our lives, and we see this in the next story. Look at what he says. He says in verse 45, who then is the faithful and sensible slave?

Who then is the faithful and sensible slave? The word *doulos* is the word slave, and it is used by Paul to refer to all believers. Some take this passage, and I'll go ahead and tell you, some Bible scholars that I really respect, will take this passage, and make the application in verse 45, down to the end of the chapter, really pertain only to pastors, and I'm going to go ahead and tell you, don't put this on me, and I'm going to show you why.

Now, this is on me, but it's also on you. Don't make this just about the pastor, and I'll show you why. It says, who then is the faithful and sensible slave, whom his master put in charge of his household, to give them their food at their proper time?

And the reason they put it on pastors is because Peter was challenged to feed the flock, right, to shepherd the flock. They were to feed the flock, and it seems as if the household is the church of God, and the feeding is what pastors are to do with the word, and therefore they put this responsibility on pastors, but I believe the application has to all believers, because it is occupation, because Jesus is not speaking here about the church, he's speaking to believers, and what he says is that the true believer is a slave of Christ.

He has been redeemed. He has a master. The word master there means Lord. It says, who is that faithful slave whom his master gave something to do, right? The Lord gave him something to do. He

put him in charge of his household and said, this is what you should do, and he says, you should do all these things, and it says in verse 46, blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

[28 : 27] That is, he is occupied with what he was called to do by the master. The master gave the slave something to do, and when the slave was doing it, the master came back and said, blessed is that one, because when the master returned, the slave was doing absolutely what he was told to do and what he was called to do.

He says that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. Verse 48 says, but if that evil slave says in his heart, my master is not coming for a long time or delaying, and begins to beat his fellow slaves into eat and drink with drunkards, and the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and an hour when he does not know, and it says, and he will cut him in pieces and assign him with a place with hypocrites, and that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Again, some people ascribe here the levels of heaven, not necessarily level, but rewards of heaven, and saying that that slave, since he is a slave, he is therefore a true believer, he will miss out on blessings.

My problem with that is is that everywhere weeping and gnashing of teeth is used. It is spoken of eternal punishment in outer darkness, so therefore it seems to be the separation of the true believer and the non-believer.

Now, I know we're getting a little deep here, but stay with me. The reality is is that we live with anticipation of Christ's coming, and we continue to do what it is he's called us to do until he comes, and I'll give you even a greater application of this.

[29 : 49] In your daily reading, some of you are reading 1 Peter, and you are in 1 Peter chapter 4. 1 Peter chapter 4. If you have not read it yet, I will apologize to you. I don't ask you to turn there much, but I will turn there for you.

1 Peter chapter 4. Now, Peter is writing. Now, Peter would have been here, right? Many people believe Peter might have been the one who asked the question at the Mount of Olives, and he is the one hearing this discourse, so Peter would have heard this literally from the Savior's mouth. In 1 Peter 4 verse 7, Peter says this, the end of all things is near. Wow. You know, Peter's one of the first ones to die. I didn't say he was the first one, I said he's one of the first ones to die. He died very early in the church. Look at what he says. But the end of all things is near. Now, the end of all things is a sign of Christ's coming. It says, therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, and because love covers a multitude of sins, and be hospitable to one another without complaint. Now, look at this. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

[30 : 58] What does it say? Since the end of all things is near, be a good steward of the spiritual gift he has given you, and be sure to employ it until he comes.

See, each one of us have been given a charge by the master. Each one of us have been given a calling by the master. And Peter says, in light of the reality that the end of all things is near, take care to do that which he has called you to do, and employ it to one another.

See, the occupation of true believers is not the staring at the sky in light of the return of Christ. The true occupation, living with an anticipation of his coming, is I want my master to find me doing what he has called and gifted me to do when he comes.

I don't want to look at him and say, well, I was going to get around to it, or I thought about it someday, or I thought it sounded like a good idea, or, you know, I kind of felt like maybe you were calling me to do that.

No, if he has called me and equipped me, and if he has gifted me to do it, then I better be doing it when he comes. Friend, listen to me.

[32 : 17] The reality is that he is gifted. The Bible tells us that every believer has a spiritual giftedness. I know you say, well, pastor, you say this all the time, and you're all the time saying, it's because the Bible says it all the time, over and over and over and over and over and over again.

It says it all the time, and the Bible declares to us this reality that every believer, everyone who is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, every slave of Christ, it's doulos of Christ.

I'm not a slave of anyone. Well, then let me tell you about my master, right? You need to be a slave of my master because unless you're his slave, he cannot be your Lord, and unless he is your Lord, and you cannot be going to glory with him, right?

Because there's this thing called redemption. That is the price of the slave of the auction block. That is the purchase of the Lamb that was the blood of the Lamb that purchased me off the auction block of sin.

See, redemption is a slavery term, and until you have been redeemed, then you are not saved, but to be redeemed makes you a slave, and when you are a slave, you have a master, and the Bible tells me the master purchases people for a reason, and when he purchases them, because you don't go buy slaves just to have slaves.

[33 : 28] You buy slaves because you need someone to serve you, and I know you say, well, this just doesn't even sound right. Well, stay with me. Well, when the master so loved you, he bought you. When the master looked at you with love and he bought you, he didn't love you because you look good.

He didn't love you because you were worthy. He didn't love you because you had it all together. As a matter of fact, in spite of me, he bought me, and when he bought me, he gifted me, he equipped me, and then he called me, and then he appointed me, and he told me to go labor, and he told me to go work, and he told me to be busy about his business until he comes again, and he did it as we continue to read in Matthew 25, according to my abilities, and according to my giftedness.

It says, to each one of them, he entrusted according to their abilities as I could do it, and then he appointed me for that, and woe is it me if he comes, if my master who bought me comes, and I'm not doing what he told me to do because then he's really not master of my life.

He said, well, yeah, brother, you better keep preaching. Well, then yeah, brother and sister, you better keep doing whatever he told you to do too because it says employ it in serving one another, one another.

See, the pastorate is just one service in the body of Christ, and it's not even the greatest because Paul says the greatest of these is love.

[35 : 02] That's what he says. Right? The pastor is just a servant of the church. He is just to wash the feet of the church.

The church gets to serve one another, and we should be occupied in doing what it is he's called us to do until he comes again because, oh, what shame there will be if we think we have time to serve him and all of a sudden he shows up when we don't expect him.

See, if he is really coming, and I believe he is, and if he has really gifted each one of us for his purposes and his calling, and I believe he has, then why does the church have such a hard time finding laborers in the vineyard?

It's because we really don't think he's coming. We think, well, he gave me this gift. I'm going to fold it up, put it right here, and I'm going to use it for my purposes.

Oh, he's coming, and when he comes, may he find us doing what it is he's called us to do. He's coming, and he's given us something to do until he does.

[36 : 23] Number three, there's anticipation, there's occupation, and then there's preparation. That is, we must be living with preparation.

He transitions now into the telling of parables, and the parables will be used by him again as we make our way through the 25th chapter.

You have the parable of the talents, the parable of the sheep and goats, each of those referencing the coming judgment, but before he gets to that, we have the parable of the ten virgins. Now, this parable doesn't make sense to us in light of how we understand weddings, but it makes a lot of sense to the Jewish people and how they understood a wedding.

And he speaks of ten virgins, which would be kind of the bridal party that would attend the bridegroom, and they would have these banquets, and we've talked about how these wedding celebrations would last a week, up to two weeks, and the bridegroom would go back and forth from house to house, and as he is preparing and he is making ways, and he's getting ready, and then there was this one last time when he would leave his house, and he would go to the bride's house, and he would go get the bride.

Now, the bride is not even in the picture here, and the reason many people say the bride's not in the picture, and I agree with them, is because the bride is the church, so we're not speaking of Christ coming and going to his church, the church is supposed to be attending Christ here, we're

supposed to be with him, so this parable is a little bit different than the other ones that reference wedding.

[37 : 55] And in that day, people would come and they would know that there would be a big feast, I mean, you may eat once a day during the time of Christ, and that meal wasn't necessarily a big meal.

Now, on Thanksgiving, I try to eat once a day, but I eat enough that one day that I can make up for everything else I left behind, right? But when someone was having a wedding, there would be a seven-day celebration at least, at minimum, some days, 14-day celebration, and the food would be flowing.

We see the water turn to wine, the wedding feast at Canaan, right? The food and the drink would be flowing, and people were there, and it was an open celebration. If you wanted to attend, you could, but the only problem is you had to come in on the coattails of the bridegroom.

You had to come in on the coattails of the groom, that when the groom made his way, then you had to go in with him, because after the door was shut, that was it. Now, you really never knew, and even in the time of Christ, this is something that was very real to them.

You did not know, so people would line the way, the streets that were between the groom's house and the bride's house. They were right there. I always tell people, they ask me every now and then how I met my wife, and my friend introduced my wife to me, and I found out later it was such a good, the Lord had just appointed such an amazing woman for me, and really had things so, and I'm not saying to puff this up, but you know, I can't hold it against her that she went to town, went to school in Shelbyville Central, and I didn't hold that against her, and even though she was zoned Cascade, she didn't want to hang out with all us country people, but what was so good is that there was a straight shot from my house to her house.

[39 : 30] I mean, it was like three and a half miles down the road. I pulled out of my mom and dad's driveway and I hit a road and I went straight to her subdivision where she lived, and the reason that was so good, and my in-laws are here, her curfew was earlier than mine.

I don't know if they know those words anymore, curfew, you know, she had to be home before I did, and so I would get her home, make sure she got home on time, and by the way, my daddy-in-law worked nights back then, so he was wide awake every time you get home, so I made sure I got her home in time, but I could hang out until about two minutes before my curfew because I knew exactly how long it took me to get home.

You said, Pastor, you said it was three miles, right? Well, two minutes was sufficient time to get you there in those days because I could make my way and hit my back door because it was a straight shot. It was a straight shot, and everybody knew where I could just go down there, so if you ever wanted to see me, if you lined up on that road between my house and her house, then you would know where I was going, and that's what would happen during the time of Christ.

They would know the path that the groom would take to get to the bride's house, and they would wait, and they would wait, and they would wait, and they would wait until a day when they saw him coming, and when they saw him coming, then they would just get in the parade and go with him because there's food in there, right?

There's something to eat in there, and they would go with him, and the parable was the ten virgins were waiting, and it says ten were foolish, or five were foolish, and five were prudent. So what we have here now, we have a story of everybody that's expecting the coming of the groom, right?

[40 : 55] Everybody that appears to be living with an anticipation, everybody that appears to be living with an anticipation and an alertness to the reality that he's coming, at least they are giving word say to it, and they're even doing something, they say, oh, I'm ready for his coming, oh, I'm ready for his coming.

The problem is, is they weren't really ready for his coming because as he delayed, and that was customary, they got a little tired, and they got a little sleepy, and they fell asleep. Now, we don't get on to them for falling asleep.

It's okay to sleep in the middle of the night. There's nothing wrong with that, so don't say, well, the church shouldn't be sleeping. Don't read into this more than it should be, okay? That happened. People would fall asleep, but they were ready.

They said they were ready, and in the middle of the night, at the midnight hour, the call went out, the bridegroom's coming, the bridegroom's coming, so they get up, and everybody lights their lamps, where the five foolish say, we got a problem.

We didn't bring any more oil, because, see, they fell asleep with their lamps burning, and even though they said they were ready, they were ready for him to come when they expected him to come.

[41 : 56] They were ready for their appointed time, but the wise, they said, hey, he made delay, and there's something I can do in case he delays.

I'm going to bring a little bit more oil with me, so they made preparations in advance for the delay that was possible. They didn't know he was going to delay, but if he did delay, they wanted to be prepared beforehand.

Now, it was an inconvenience, because that meant they had to carry something else, right? They had to get their big purse out, because they had to bring a flask of oil with them, too. You couldn't just have your little purse.

They had to bring their big purse, because now you've got a lamp and a flask of oil, and you had to carry it around, and you had to be really ready, but they were able to make the steps. The others said, well, I'm going to go wait, but if he doesn't come, I'll come up with something later.

The problem is, is that when he came, they started trimming their lamps, and they lit them, and the foolish said, we don't have enough oil now, and I'll pay attention to this. They said, give us some of your oil, and the wise said, no, no, because our oil may run out.

[43 : 04] What if his parade's a long parade? What if he wants to stop and talk to some people on the way? Why don't you go buy your own oil? Now listen, the midnight hour is not a good time to go to the store in the time of Christ to buy oil, so they had to go and stand outside and wait on the store to open.

All right? It wasn't Walmart. They didn't have to go. It wasn't 24-7. This is why it says a long time after they finally came. Now the application is pretty simple. Friend, I don't care how much you say you're ready for Jesus to come.

You're not going in on the oil of someone else. You can't use somebody else's preparation. You can't use someone else's life transformation.

You can't use the reality that someone else has given their life to Christ and hang out around them long enough that maybe when the time comes, they'll let you have a little bit of their sanctification. My oil is my oil.

And if you know he's coming and you have not prepared in advance for his coming, then woe be unto you. That's not my responsibility.

[44 : 14] Because my oil is my oil. And there are a lot of people who say they're ready, but they're not making any personal changes.

They're not making any personal preparations. their life doesn't look any different. They say, well, I'll wait to that last minute. Well, you may stand outside a closed store.

He said, well, I'll finish the get oil. You're going to knock on that door and look at what it says. The bridegroom answered, I don't know you. Now, he didn't know the other ones either until they started following him.

But he says, if you didn't follow me on the way, you're not coming in late either. You know, Paul had something to say about that in the book 2 Thessalonians.

I believe it's 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Remember how I told you and I'm closing. Paul, every chapter of the book of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, every chapter has a reference to the coming of Christ.

[45 : 21] Every chapter. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Paul says, those who did not respond to the truth, those who did not make personal preparations, those who did not respond to the truth, that when the time is come will be devoid of the truth and Christ will give them over so as to believe the lie.

That's another way of saying that if you don't accept it now, then we'll be too late. people say, oh, when I see these things coming, I'll respond then. No, then it's too late because the stores are closed and the doors closed.

See, the time to prepare for his coming is in advance. It is to live today as if he's coming. And when we realize he is coming, then we'll bring our own flask of oil because we know he's coming.

If we think he might come, then we may hang out for a little while. But if we are not believers of the truth, then we will be devoid of the truth and be giving over to a debased mind so as to believe the lie.

That is, the time of salvation will have passed. May we live in light of his return until he calls us home through death, calls us home through rapture, or calls us to himself by his presence.
[46 : 56] But may we live in light of his return. Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for this day. Thank you, Lord, for your word. We thank you for the truth of it.

Pray, Lord, that our lives would be radically changed because of it. Lord, help us to live with an anticipation. Lord, not just looking for your coming, but living as if you're coming.
May our lives reflect the reality of that truth. We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.
Amen.