

Occupy

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[0 : 00] James 1 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

! I want to encourage each one here today, be a doing Christian.! A doing Christian! in your home life, your church life, your social life, in all your life, your work life.

Luke 19, if you'd like to turn to Luke 19, verse 13. Luke 19. Verse 13.

In the context of our Lord's parable, it tells of a certain nobleman going away, promising to return. And verse 13 of Luke 19. This certain nobleman, and he called his ten servants and delivered to them ten pounds and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

[1 : 27] Occupy till I come. The story goes of the faithfulness and lack thereof of those that were given resources to invest and expand and multiply ideally for the Master and of the reckoning that came about.

I'm not going to explore the parable so much as concentrate on the term Occupy. Occupy till I come. In this parable, our Lord spoke of the need for the servants to be occupied, to be about the business that the Master had commissioned them to be about.

And the word occupy, we think today, we use it to mean to take and hold territory. Occupy is a military term of an occupying force where a force holds possession or control of territory, of troops. And we are an occupying force. An occupying force. We're meant to be as the Church of God.

The word we have translated as occupy here means the carrying on of the business of a banker or a trader, an investor. And truly there's a sense for us as God's people that we are investors.

[3 : 00] We've been given the resource of life. We've been given the opportunity to live. We've got breath to breathe.

A stewardship of a life. And there's a sense where we are investors. And like the story told of the Master entrusting resources to his servants, we have been entrusted.

The resources that each one has of life. We are to be wise stewards for the Kingdom of God. Wise stewards of what we've been given.

It says in the word, seeking first the Kingdom of God. We are to do business, is the sense of this.

We are to occupy with the resources that are entrusted to our care.

And so this message is about exhorting to occupy until he come. To occupy until he come. Our Lord is coming.

[4 : 08] And I was just speaking with a friend this afternoon. Someone who's not been in church for a long time now. And yet has a lot of knowledge about the signs of the coming of our Lord.

I think it should prompt all of us to consider where we are at. Sadly, for this one, it doesn't prompt this one to fellowship. But I think in the light of the coming of Christ, we ought to be occupied with the things of God.

We ought to be engaged. As was talked this morning. Involved in the Kingdom of God. This waiting for the return of our Lord, it should not be some passive, inactive thing.

But something that is waiting in a joyful anticipation. That prompts us to passion. That prompts us to serve. It's more than just a waiting for the coming of our Lord.

It's an occupying until he come. It's an engaging in life. How can we live a life well lived? Perhaps some good mottos for life would be, perhaps today.

[5 : 18] I've heard of people having such a plaque or placard on their desk or in their lounge room. Perhaps today.

Just to prompt that mindset of the coming of our Lord. It's coming ever closer day by day. Another one, a familiar one. Only one life.

It will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last. These are the things that should prompt how we can make our life count.

How can we engage? How can we occupy? How can we be occupied, busy for the Lord? So easily we can be preoccupied, can't we?

Let's be honest. I for one can be very preoccupied with less important things. There was an old time preacher, Horatius Boner.

[6 : 15] He retired to rest and at night, each night as he laid down to sleep, he would draw aside the curtain and look up into the starry sky and say, perhaps tonight, Lord.

Perhaps tonight, Lord. And in the morning as he awoke, his first movement was to open the curtains again and look out in the grey dawn and remark, perhaps today, Lord.

The fact that the Lord Jesus is coming back should prompt us to action. It should prompt us in our responsibility.

It should prompt us to consider and seek God's kingdom as a priority. It should prompt us, his promise should prompt us to be faithful, to be occupied, to obey his command and grow in spiritual maturity.

To be about the Father's business. To be Jesus to our world. To faithfully give out the gospel and daily witness for our Lord.

[7 : 19] There's many scriptures we could refer to. I love that one in Titus 2, verse 11. For the grace of God hath appeared to all men. Bringing salvation.

Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The context there, looking for that blessed hope of a people peculiar, of a people zealous of good works, of a people occupying until he come.

Looking for that blessed hope, making a difference in the lives we live. That's the challenge for us. Because our Lord is coming back.

[8 : 22] He is coming back. And we don't know when, but we know it's ever closer. And we see the signs in the news in the current events of today. Many signs of the darkening days in which we live.

As cults abound, as false doctrine seems to sweep across Christendom, as we see the despairing of people, as we see governments indebted and crumbling in great peril, as well as the threat of contrary religions and philosophies that are godless and atheistic.

Christ is coming back. We see the signs all around. There's a story about a man and a girl heading out swimming. The father and his daughter are 10 years old.

They were both good swimmers. They entered into the Atlantic and headed out for a swim and went some distance from shore. They became separated. And the father realised that they were being carried out to sea by the tide.

He called out to his young daughter, Mary, I'm going to shore for help. If you get tired, turn on your back. You can float all day on your back.

[9 : 42] I'll come back for you. And before long, many searchers in boats scurried out over the face of the waters hunting for this one small girl. Hundreds of people had heard the news and waited anxiously on the shore.

It was four hours before they found her. She was far from land, calmly floating on her back.

Hallelujah. And not at all fright and cheers and tears of joy and relief greeted people as the rescuers brought the precious burden back to land.

And the child took it calmly. She said, He said he would come back for me. And that I could float all day. So I swam and floated because I knew he would come.

And we can take that same comfort in our Lord's promise. I shall come back. I shall return. I go and prepare a place for you. I've got to come again.

Our Lord Jesus said so. He's coming back. Do we believe that? Do we believe that? Do we really believe that? It should motivate us to occupy until he come.

[10 : 57] Until he come. That's when we can take a breather. A man, Dr. Massey, told how a young man, he was persuaded to attend a theatre much against his will when he was a young man.

And after being seated, he quickly got up. What are you doing? Asked his friends. I'm getting up, he replied. But where are you going? They urged. I'm going out, said he. But you just came in.

I know it, and I'm going out. See here, the man said, I'm a Christian. I believe the Bible. And my Bible says, Jesus, my Lord, is coming back to this earth and that he may come at any time and I don't want him to catch me here.

Now, the worldly theatre was not a place that this Christian man could have a settled heart about being. And we should consider how we live about the times of our lives.

I don't want him to catch me here. Our Lord is coming back to take his church. Will he find us a ready people, a prepared people? It could be at any time, at any time, and we are called to occupy until he comes.

[12:11] He could find some of us napping, napping. In Matthew 24, we read, I'll call some of the verses from 36, Of that day and hour knoweth not man, no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark and knew not until the flood came and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. You know not what hour your Lord doth come. Be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.

Matthew 25, verse 13, Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. Mark 13, 33, take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.

[13:40] Mark 13, 35, it says, Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh at even or at midnight or at the cock crowing or in the morning.

Lest suddenly coming he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch. And Luke 21, 34, through it says, And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart's be overcharged with surfeiting.

Now this word means weighed down with stupor or nausea, some put it hangovers. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart's be weighed down with nausea, hangovers, if you like, and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

It goes on, Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man. Christians, we ought not take it lightly.

We need to be watching, we need to be avoiding such things as that, of drunkenness, of the cares of this life, of stupefying our minds. Many turn to the bottle in times of worries and concern, yet we have the Lord to turn to as a sure rock.

[15:06] He's coming back, our Lord is coming back, don't let your hearts be weighed down, it's a hope, it's a blessed hope, and it can take, it can grant us courage to know that truth.

There was a man, Lord Shackleton, a great explorer, one day he was searching for the South Pole with group of men, and for some reason he had to leave some men on an island amid the ice and snow.

He promised to come back for them. For some reason they had to stay on this island. He headed off to secure another ship and some supplies, and he went back to the men.

But time after time he couldn't reach the men because of the ice, in that area the ice was so packed together that the ships could not make travel through the thick ice.

Then suddenly one day an opening appeared in the ice, and Shackleton was able to get to the men on the island who boarded the ship really quickly just before the ice crashed back together.

[16:16] It was all done in half an hour. And after the excitement of the men rejoined, the ship and have been rescued, he asked the man, how did it happen that you're all packed and ready to go for my coming?

You were standing on the shore ready to leave at a moment's notice. And the man said, sir, you said you would come back for us and we never gave up hope.

Whenever the sea was partly cleared, we would roll up our sleeping bags and pack our things, saying maybe Shackleton will come today. Wouldn't it be great if we as God's people had that same heart, that same motive, that same zeal, that same trust in his promise that he could come back today and that we would be ready.

We would be ready. We would be doing what he's called us to do. Does our Lord want his church to be inactive and passive? No. He wants his church to be active and occupying, engaged until he comes, showing his love in action.

And so it should affect how we live and our obedience to the word. Every day we must say to God, whatever, Lord, whatever you want, that's what I want.

[17:39] Have that attitude of whatever, whatever he puts on your heart to do. And do it well. Do it for his glory. Do it with all your heart and soul.

1 Thessalonians 5 it says, Of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you, for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them. As travail upon a woman with child and they shall not escape.

Makes me think of Naomi of late. Didn't have much warning but they had to be ready. Brad had to have the things ready. I'm sure he had a backpack ready for Naomi.

Did you? Got ready pretty quickly. When those birth pangs started to happen, when the travailing started to happen, they were ready to go.

[18:38] Ready to go where the birth could happen. And brethren, ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief, as travail upon a woman.

Ye are all the children of light, children of day. Therefore let us not sleep as do others but let us watch and be sober. Someone wake up that lady back there.

No, just kidding. Okay. The Lord is coming back. The Lord is coming back, sister. Wake up, watch, and be ready. It could be today. It could be very soon.

If it were tonight, if it were tonight, is there something that you ought to do today? We're running out of time as far as today goes, but if there's something that you ought to do, do it now.

Do it now. If there's some debt you ought to pay, do it now. If there's some quarrel you ought to make up, then do it now. If there's some sinner you ought to warn, then do it now.

[19:39] He is coming. Perhaps tonight. Be ready. 1 Peter 4, 7 it says, But the end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.

1 John 2, 18. There's so many scriptures, we're just touching a few. Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.

This scripture, 1 John 2, 18, where it says, it is the last time, that word time, it could translate hour. It's as if we write it, you know, in that last hour before midnight, as it were.

Before the clock, you know, 60 minutes, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. You know, we're in the last hour, brothers and sisters, and we ought to be watchful and ready, and be doers of the word, not hearers only.

If we really believe that the Lord Jesus is coming, if we really believe that our Saviour, our Master, our Lord is coming, it should prompt us to live a consistent, active, victorious Christian life.

[20:53] And it can be a battle, it can be a struggle, a striving, it's a military term. Occupy, occupy, occupy, until I come. We're meant to be on active service in this battle that we're waiting.

In 2 Timothy 2, thou therefore enjoy hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth and tangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

You're enlisted in God's great army to be a soldier on active duty. He's given you a mission, he's given you a responsibility to be an active Christian, to do and fulfil his will as an active, committed Christian.

We were encouraged that way in the morning's message. How can I be actively engaged in fulfilling God's will for my life? How can I grow in faith, in zeal, in relationship with God through prayer, in relationship with others, through keeping short accounts, through forgiving people?

How can I be an active Christian in my love, my fellowship, my devotional life, in study, in serving, in giving, in witnessing? The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation.

[22:12] We're meant to be together and encourage one another in fellowship. And I pray that we are such a group. There's only small in number here at present. But if we can encourage one another as we see the day approaching.

Brother, be encouraged. Sister, be encouraged. Encourage one another. There's only so much that I can do as one man. But we can encourage one another as we see the day approaching.

Take every opportunity and more so as we see the day approaching. Redeem the time. Let's be in continual readiness as it were. Not that we're going to take any bags, but with our bags packed in, with our hearts right, with our lives active.

And about the business that we ought to be about. And see how we can think. How can I be challenged? Could it be in my relationship to worldly things?

Could it be there's challenges there? I could challenge myself in seeking out godly friendships, in seeking how I can be more wholehearted for the kingdom of God.

[23 : 22] How can I develop a greater tenderness towards the things of God? God? How can I stand up for the Lord Jesus in the circle of influence that I have? How can I show and live out the fear of the Lord in my life?

How can I watch the words that I speak? Are they words that build up or pull down? How can I pray more fervently? How can I be more enriched with God's word as I read it, as I memorize it, as I reach out to others with the gospel, as I do everything, God helping me for the glory of God?

Let your light shine and follow in his steps, being occupied until he comes, not preoccupied, but occupied, occupied and engaged, active, a doing Christian, following in his steps.

1 John 2, 28, to close it says, And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

So, you could interpret from that verse, you could consider from that verse that there's a potential, some when he shall appear, they won't have confidence and they will be ashamed before him at his coming.

[24 : 45] I pray that will not be true of you, that you will have confidence, you'll believe what he says and you'll act upon his word, you'll believe his promise, I shall come again and you will do the word, not be a hearer only.

You will have confidence, not in yourself, but in his promise and in his keeping power, in the Holy Spirit's equipping as you as a channel only, yet fill in his awesome.

miraculous power and you will not be ashamed before him at his coming. Let us pray. Dear Lord, we thank you that you say you will come again and we know, Lord, there's many considered views on such things, yet we know as much as we don't understand all of the intricate detail of it, we know that that simple promise is all we really need to know, that you will come again.

And Lord, we pray that we will be in that number who will have confidence in faith, we will not be ashamed before you at your coming. We won't be those sleeping, but those watching.

We won't be those inactive, but those activated and motivated and engaged and occupied in your kingdom's work until you come. Help us, Lord, to find that we will be found faithful servants when you come again.

[26 : 13] Pray if there's any here who have yet to trust you, that they will realise that awesome privilege of being called out and called unto you, Lord, called unto your salvation, that we'll see people energised and activated.

Help us, Lord, each one, to be challenged about every department of our life, that, Lord, search us, try us, shine the searchlight of your Holy Spirit into every nook and cranny of our hearts.

Help us, Lord, to search out anything that needs dealing with today, that you would be glorified.

Help us to find that which you want us to be about and to not shy away from it, to be faithful in it. For your glory we pray. God bless you.