

Part 1

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[0:00] Well, good morning everyone. If you are a veteran, would you just raise your hand please? If you're a veteran, National Guardsman, thank you so much for your service.

We're so grateful for you. One thing that we can all agree on is that you guys, you people put yourselves in the line of fire and difficulty for the good of others and that is highly commendable. This is not a joke. Do you know what firemen, parents and National Guardsmen have in common? They all must be ready for the unexpected. Firemen, they've got to be ready for the unexpected car crash or the unexpected house fire or the unexpected medical emergency.

And I've heard stories from firemen, friends of mine and unexpected, hilarious stuff too. If you're a parent, you must be ready for unexpected nightmares, unexpected stomach flus, unexpected science projects due Friday.

[1:23] And you, you're not expecting it until Thursday. You got to be ready for the unexpected. And for those who are our National Guardsmen or our veterans, you got to be ready for the unexpected natural disaster where you're called into armed conflicts, social unrest.

If you're a fireman, parent or National Guardsman, you've got to be ready for the unexpected. As followers of Jesus, we must be ready for the unexpected return of Jesus Christ.

Last week, we looked at Matthew 24 and what we learned is this fact. It's promised. Jesus said, you can bank on it. Heaven and earth will pass away.

My words will never pass away. I'm coming back. So we know he's coming back. What we're going to learn this morning is we don't know when he's coming back.

So that puts us in a state of readiness. We know he's coming back, but we don't know when that puts us in a state of readiness. We got to be ready.

[2:44] Tomorrow, if Jesus came, would he find you ready? We must be ready. Would you open up your Bibles if you haven't already to Matthew chapter 24?

I'm going to be looking at verses 36 through 42 this morning. I'm going to read through that now and I'll then explain how we're going to proceed. But concerning that day and hour, this is Jesus speaking.

It might be red ink in your Bible. It is in mine. Jesus speaking. No, but concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but the Father only.

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away.

So will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field. One will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and one left.

[3:52] One will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake. For you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

This morning, I want these words of Jesus to convince you of something. Not only is he coming back, but he's coming back at an unexpected time.

You must be convinced of that. It's what he's saying. You must be ready. You must be ready for the return, the unexpected return of Jesus.

This morning, I'm going to tackle why you must be ready. And Jesus tells us why in this section. Next week, if the Lord should tarry, next Sunday, I'm going to show you how we must be ready.

Jesus gives us four parables of how we must be ready. We're going to look at that next week. This week, why we must be ready. And so to do that, I'm going to walk you through this passage.

[5:04] I want you to see in verse 36 a heavenly insight that Jesus gives us. Very interesting. The second thing I want you to see is a comparison. Listen, Jesus makes a comparison between those days of Noah and that day of the coming of the Son of Man.

We see that in verses 37 through, I think, 41. And then finally, in verse 42, we're going to land this plane in Jesus saying to you, because you don't know, this is how you live.

And he uses an exhortation. He says, stay awake. So, a heavenly insight, a very interesting comparison, and then the present call to stay awake.

Let's look at this heavenly insight. In verse 36. But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

What is the day that he's talking about? He's talking about that day of the coming of Jesus Christ.

That day. The day he returns. He's answering the question his disciples asked way back in 24, verse 3.

[6:15] And they're like, hey, when are you coming back? And now he's coming back and answering that and saying, hey, I don't know when I'm coming back. It's not that. The angels don't know when I'm coming back. I don't know. There's only one who knows.

And that is the Father. No one knows. It's quite an interesting statement. When Jesus said this, of course he was on earth. Now he's at the right hand of the Father.

He himself is in heaven with the angelic host, right? What this means is nobody in heaven knows when Jesus is coming back except the Father. That's a really interesting dynamic.

They don't know. There's only one who knows. The Father. Think about it this way. Think about God the Father carries a personal calendar.

And he opens that calendar. And if he flipped forward, how many pages? We don't know. He has got in permanent sharpie black ink circled that day.

[7:16] And not only is it circled, it's like highlighted with arrows pointing at it. That day is set. The Father knows it. It's on his calendar.

And what we walk away from that is this. Our Father in heaven has got everything planned down to the day.

He's sovereign over it all. All the birth pains we experience, it's all part of his plan that he's providentially carrying out.

And we're moving towards that day on his calendar. We're all moving in that direction. He's moving us all in that direction.

So the Father alone knows. The angels don't know. Even the Son doesn't know. Now you may be like, whoa, the Son doesn't know something.

[8:15] Whoa, is that a divine deficiency in the Son of God? What's going on there? Well, let me assure you, it's not a problem with his divinity. What we see working out here is this.

Did you notice the language between Son and Father? It is the Son submitting himself to the Father. And he's submitting himself in such a way that he himself is saying, I can live with not knowing.

I will live with not knowing because that's your will. And so what that does is, our king, risen king, doesn't know something and we share in his not knowing something.

It unites us with him. As well as all the angels. Let me try to illustrate this.

What I'm about to share is pretend. Imagine with me. Archangel Michael is in heaven. He's been talking with the other angels.

[9:17] And those are the angels that he's talking to are the ones in 2431 who have been given the task of being sent out when Jesus comes back to gather all the elect to Jesus.

Okay? So the angels who are going to do the gathering go to Archangel Michael. And they're like, Archangel Michael, is this day that day? Are we going back today?

And Archangel Michael says, you know what? That's a really good question. I don't know. Let me go to the Son. And so Archangel Michael walks up to the divine Son, risen Christ, at the right hand of Father.

Archangel Michael says, excuse me, Jesus. Excuse me, I know you're interceding for all the saints right there. Jesus says, oh yeah, what do you want? What do you want to know? Archangel Michael says to the risen Christ, Jesus, is today the day?

Is today that day that we're going back? The angels that are going to do the gathering, they want to know. And now that they've said that, I kind of want to know too. Do you know? To which Jesus says to the Archangel Michael, you know what?

[10:18] I don't know. Let me ask my Father. And so he goes to the Father. Says, Father, yes, my beloved Son, Father, is today the day? Today that we go back.

And the Father says to the Son, oh my beloved Son, you know how I delight in you. I'll let you know. Period. The Son says to the Father, your will be done.

That's all I needed to know. I just want you to know, Father, I'm ready. So Jesus goes back then to Archangel Michael. Hey, he said he'll let us know.

But I'm ready. Are you ready? Archangel Michael says, I'm ready. Let me go tell the other guys. He goes back to those angels. Said, hey, big boss said, hey, you'll let us know. We live there.

I'm ready. Jesus is ready. Are you ready? We're ready. So when you read about the angels and the Son not knowing, it doesn't mean they're not ready.

[11:23] It doesn't mean they're poised like a coiled spring to come back to earth. Don't make this mistake. Don't make the mistake that the angelic host in heaven right now are on lounges around this really crystal blue pool in heaven.

And they're like just waiting. Michael sees the Archangel Gabriel heading to the tiki lounge. Gabe, will you get me another one of those drinks with the pineapple?

Don't think about it that way. They're not killing time. Here's how you need to think about the angelic host posture. You know what a C-130 is? A C-130 is a four-engine military plane.

It's a transport plane. Special ops happen out of the back of a C-130. The thing, the back folds down. And what happens is paratroopers go back there and they line up facing backwards and they're all hooked in with their parachutes into a line.

And there is this red jump light that's on red. And they're just poised, ready, aimed out the back, ready to jump. And they're waiting for that light to go from red to green.

[12:35] And when it goes to green, they're out. That's the angelic host. They're poised. They're ready. And you know who is in the lead? Jesus.

So one of the things you need to realize is when they, when we read Jesus here saying, no one knows the day or the hour. Not the angels.

Not me, the son. Only the father. All of heaven right now is poised. Could this be the day? Is today that day? The day that the Lord Jesus comes back.

Will it happen? What does that do for your soul? If in fact this make-believe situation is somewhat true.

That all of heaven is poised to come. I mean, Jesus said he could call the legions to be at his side in a moment. If they're all waiting to come back and consummate the kingdom here on earth.

[13:42] Does your heart rise to that? How about this? Your Savior who's waiting in heaven to come back.

He's coming back for you. He's coming back for you. The very one he shed his blood for. He's coming back for you on that day.

To bring you to himself. It's quite a little. It's a heavenly insight. Nobody knows in heaven. But they're all ready.

They're all waiting. Could this be the day? It compels us to be ready. If they're ready, we must be ready.

If they're anticipating that day, could this be that day? How about us? The second thing I want you to notice is a comparison in verses 37 through 41.

[14:40] Jesus is making a comparison about those days of Noah and saying, hey, they're like that day of the coming of the Son of Man.

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Here's what you need to know that's implied here that I need to make explicit for you.

Noah did not know when the flood was going to hit. God told him in Genesis 6 that he needed to build this ark because the flood was coming. He did not tell him a day or an hour.

And so Noah responds in faith. And he gets to work. And so what we see here, this illustration Jesus is using and pointing us to Noah.

He's giving us a biblical precedent for something coming, a judgment coming that was unknown that you must be ready for. And so Noah, God said, hey, flood's coming.

[15:45] You've got to be ready for it. And what does Noah do? He starts building a huge ark. He responded in faith. He responded by getting ready.

But something else you notice is that Noah, he's part of a smaller group in the context of a group of people who are living a very different life.

Look at verse 38. For as in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Do you know what their hashtag was? Hashtag eat, drink, and be married. That was their hashtag. That's what they're living by. Hey, hey, hey, hey, let's just have a blast today. Let's make most of today. Let's live for today. What they seemed to be ignoring was this man who was building a giant boat right down the street.

It was a sign of judgment coming. But they were unaware. And so what we see happening, Jesus pointing to, is that there's this unknown judgment coming.

[16:51] His righteous one is preparing for it. And then there's a group of other people who are seemingly unaware until the flood actually hits. And then we see the results.

God told Noah, hey, go up into the ark. Close the door. He was taken up into the ark. And delivered from the flood.

But those who didn't go into the ark, they were left and they were swept away by the flood. Two different destinations.

So there's this unknown. There is this readiness. And there's a very different result. So Jesus is very cleverly pointing back and saying, hey, you've got a biblical precedent about my coming.

It happened with Noah. Remember those days? And so here comes the comparison. In verses 40 and 41. In verse 40, Jesus says, then two men will be in the field.

[17:57] That then, is he saying, he's bringing us into the future. He was just pointing us back to the days of Noah. Then he's saying, then at the coming of the son of man, there will be two guys in the field.

One will be taken. One will be left. Future tense. This is what's going to happen. And then he says, there's going to be two women. Two women grinding at the mill. It was, the mill took two women to grind together and turning this mill to grind down into flour.

One will be taken. One will be left. And what Jesus is doing here is, just like in Noah's day, where Noah was taken into the ark, and then there was a group of everybody else, hashtag eat, drink, and get married.

They were swept away. Today, when the son of man comes, there's going to be a dividing. One will be taken. One will be left.

Now, let's try to modernize that a little bit. Imagine that day of his coming, two men shoveling snow on their sidewalk.

[19:07] They live right next door to each other. That day he comes, one's taken to him, gathered by the angels to the coming Jesus in glory.

The other's left. Two women exercising together in a Zumba class. One will be taken. The other will be left.

But it's a picture of what will happen when Jesus comes back. I don't know about you, but when you see this, when you read this, you're like, what accounts for the difference?

Why is one taken? Why is one left? What accounts for the difference? Well, Jesus doesn't explicitly say it, but the whole passage is about, be ready.

And so, back in Noah's day, you knew the difference. There's a family building a big boat. Today, we live for the kingdom, but we're next door to people, and we're mowing lawns, and we're shoveling snow.

[20:13] Taking Zumba classes. But one will be ready, and one will not be. One will be aware and ready. One will be unaware and unready.

The one that's aware and ready will be delivered. The one who is unaware and unready. They're going to be mourning at the day of his coming.

Jesus knows his own. Jesus knows who he's coming back for. Jesus knows who he shed his blood for. And so, if you're in the room, and you're thinking, oh, I hope he's coming for me.

I hope when he comes, he's taking me up to himself. Have you put your trust in him? Have you bowed your knee to him? Is he your Lord? Are you looking?

Are you ready? He's coming for me. He's coming for me. He's coming for me. So, in these examples of this future parting in verses 40 and 41, outwardly, they look like they're doing the same thing.

[21:20] But inwardly, there's a very different posture of heart. One guy throwing snow is aware of his coming and ready. The other guy throwing snow, unaware, unready.

So, in light of the days of Noah, and in light of that day when Jesus comes back, unexpectedly, it will be sudden.

Will you be ready? Will you be ready? This leads us to verse 42. Our present call.

We've looked at the heavenly insight. We've looked at this comparison between the days of Noah and that day of his coming. It will be sudden. And in verse 42, the first word that we see is a therefore.

And whenever you come across a therefore in the Bible, what must you be asking? What's the therefore therefore? And so, what Jesus is doing, he's making a connection in verse 42.

[22:32] He's saying, hey, this is what's going to happen. Therefore, stay awake. In light of heaven's readiness.

They don't know, but they're ready. In light of Noah's readiness. In light of that day when he comes back. And one will be thrown snow. And one another will be snow.

Won't be taken. One won't be. In light of those things. Be ready. You don't know the day or the hour. Stay awake, he says.

In verse 42. It's an exhortation. It's a very strong command. Stay awake. Don't fall asleep. Keep watch.

The word underneath that in the original language is a watchfulness. It's staying awake on your watch of the night. Being ready.

[23:31] The sense of it is be alert. In verse 42, Jesus says, stay awake. In 24:44, Jesus commands, be ready. In 25:13, he uses the word, watch therefore.

All throughout this passage. In light of the unknown return of Jesus. His call on us today is to stay awake. It's to be ready.

It's to be watchful. The Department of Homeland Security has a terror advisory system.

And it is kind of incremental in terms of color and threat. So it starts with a low threat and then moves to a where we must be guarded and then elevated and then high and then severe.

And so one, two, three, four, five. Five different levels in terms of readiness in case there is a terrorist threat. But Jesus gives us. Jesus gives us no levels.

[24:34] He says there's one posture. Stay awake. Be ready. Be watchful. Because he could come this afternoon.

He could come tomorrow. He could come in four days or in four years. In verse 42, he provides the reason why.

He says, therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Now look at verse 44 of chapter 24. He says, be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Now look at chapter 25, verse 13.

Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day or the hour. Now go back to chapter 24, verse 36. But concerning that day and hour, no one knows.

[25:40] Do you see what's getting repeated? Jesus is calling us to be vigilant, to be alert at his coming because we don't know. It could happen tomorrow.

That's where he's getting us. That's where he wants us. He wants us looking. He wants us looking for him, anticipating him.

Now pastorally, it raises a bit of a concern. And the concern is this. My concern for us all is what distracts us from looking to his coming.

What distracts us from staying awake, from being vigilant, from being ready? Well, I've come up with a few things. There are a bunch of isms. Because materialism can distract us from looking towards the coming of Jesus.

And here's what it is. It's a substitute coming. Instead of looking to the coming of Jesus, I'm looking for the coming of something else that I think will make me happy.

[26:45] And I set my heart and my focus on that thing. It distracts. It'll put you to sleep. It's not just materialism.

It's entertainmentism. Setting your heart on the next show or the next movie. Whatever it may be. It's here and now. Thinking that that's going to make me happy.

Over time, what that can do is just kind of lull you to sleep. Politicsism. I'm just living for the news cycle.

It used to be a 24-hour news cycle. Now it's like a three-hour news cycle. I want to be in the loop. I want to be looking to see what the next big political news is.

Like that's going to deliver you and make your life happy. It can distract you. It can get you into living for here and now. And Jesus wants us looking towards that day.

[27:48] Hedonism. Another coming. This one is of a pleasure. I'm just living for the next pleasure. I've got my heart, eyes of my heart set on the next thing that's going to bring me pleasure.

Experientialism. I don't want Jesus to come back because I haven't had this experience. Or I'm just living for the next spiritual experience.

The next thing that will make me warm and fuzzy inside. I'm setting the eyes of my heart and looking for something coming down the line that's just going to be a quick fix.

Jesus is saying, no, no. I want your gaze coming for when I come back. My coming. Stay awake. Be alert. Watch.

Be ready. For you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. You don't know. Don't be distracted. Don't let these isms get in the way of his return and letting that function in your life as it ought.

[29:04] You must be ready for his coming because you don't know when he is coming. Our present call is to be ready.

Stay awake. To be alert. To watch. Watch for his coming. And the question now becomes, how do we do that? How do we do this ready thing?

How are we to be ready? Well, this morning, my goal was just to show you why you must be ready. You don't know when he's coming. That's why you need to be ready. Next week, if the Lord should tarry, we're going to look at how we are to be ready.

And just a little preview, here's how Jesus does it. He gives us four parables. And each is a parable on readiness. The first is our readiness must be a constant readiness.

That's the parable of the householder and the thief. He's coming like a thief in the night. The second parable is the parable of the two servants. We've got one servant who is, he's faithful and wise.

[30:15] And the other servant, well, he is evil. And when Jesus is saying, hey, our readiness must be a faithful readiness.

We're faithful to him. And then another parable is the parable of the ten virgins. We have five virgins who are ready, five virgins who are not ready for the coming of the bridegroom.

And what it is, it's our readiness is to be a prepared readiness, even if there's a delay. And finally, the parable of the talents is a parable about maximizing what has been entrusted to you in the time we're waiting for him, for his kingdom.

And so Jesus is going to show us next week, unless he comes back, what it means to be ready. So we're going to hit that, Lord willing.

But this morning, I want to give you four applications to start getting you ready for his unexpected return. The first one is this.

[31:27] The way to start getting ready is to take Jesus at his word. To trust in what he's saying. To believe it. Not just hear it.

Not just agree with it. But to take it to heart. To say, yes, you are coming back, and I don't know when, and I've got to be ready.

Not only is he coming back, we don't know when he's coming back. That will start to focus you. It will focus your heart on things that are most important.

Not on the things that are just passing away. Start thinking about his coming. Take it to heart. That's the first application. Second application.

Start praying for his return. Would you turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 16? 1 Corinthians 16.

[32:38] Verse 22. We read, If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. And then he says, Our Lord come.

Do you know who's saying that? The Apostle Paul. Do you know what it is? It's an apostolic prayer. Our Lord come. Our Lord come.

Flip back to Revelation chapter 22. I think we closed with this last week. Chapter 22, verse 20. He who testifies to these things says, This is Jesus speaking.

Surely I'm coming soon. Amen. Come Lord Jesus. Is the Apostle John's response. He's praying. Lord Jesus come.

So here's my recommendation. Life group leaders. This week, next week. When you've got your life group together. You spend a moment where you're like, Okay guys.

[33:38] We're going to apply that sermon. And here's how we're going to apply it. We're going to pray that Jesus comes back. Come Lord Jesus. Anybody a little scared about that? Make you a little bit nervous?

Remember. He's coming back for you. For your good. If he shed his blood for you, He's coming back for your good. Start praying that he comes back.

Third application. Start talking that he's coming back. Put your foot in the door of a conversation. By doing something like this.

Oh yeah man. Yeah. We're going out west this coming summer. We're really looking forward to it. But you know what? That's only if Jesus doesn't come back first. If Jesus comes back first.

It's going to be better than going out west. And seeing the Grand Canyon. Better. I'm going to get married. I'm going to get married in two years. Unless Jesus comes back.

[34:39] And then seeing him. Being with him. Smelling his breath. Way better than getting married. Get your foot in the door of conversations.

By talking about the return of Jesus. He might be coming back. He is coming back. He might be coming back this week. So we plan accordingly.

We're going to do this. Unless Jesus comes back. And that's okay if he comes back. The final thing. Application is this.

Start prioritizing. In light of his coming. And we don't know when he's coming back. Start prioritizing. And here's what I mean by that. Start pursuing greater godliness.

Knowing that he's coming back. Should sober you up. About the way you're living your life right now. You want him coming back. To find you faithful. Walking in holiness.

[35:41] Not only that. But fulfilling the great commission. Prioritize the great commission. Do you remember what Noah was doing. When he got word. He was building the ark.

He was busy. Working on that ark. We're not building an ark. We're fulfilling the great commission. We're making disciples.

Who are making disciples. Christ the King Church. We are followers of Jesus. Making followers of Jesus. Who make followers of Jesus. That's his mission.

And what happens is. When you get his second coming. On the brain. It's like smelling salts. To mission. I got to be about his business.

Attending to what matters most. This morning we've looked at. Why we must be ready.

[36:41] For his coming. We don't know the day or the hour. Firemen must be ready. For the unexpected. Parents must be ready. For the unexpected. National guardsmen.

Soldiers must be ready. For the unexpected. Christian. Christian. Follower of Jesus. You must be ready. For the unexpected return.

Of your Lord Jesus. He's told you to be ready. Let's pray. Lord Jesus.

We're so grateful that. Your posture to come. For us is good. Lord. And Lord. We. Say come.

Come to us. Lord come. Cause your kingdom. To reign on earth.

[37:37] As it does in heaven. Lord Jesus. We look to you today. And we long for your coming. God help us to be ready.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.