

Matthew 24:36-25:13

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[0:00] from the birth pains, from the tribulation, back to the mission of evangelism, to the whole world. And he warns them to flee from persecution.

! Their lives are valuable to him. Your life is valuable to Christ, your King. And in all of this, he's saying, see, I have told you beforehand.

Friends, he was preparing his people. As a shepherd cares for his flock. And all this was to do was to prepare them for what he called the birth pains.

The strife that goes on in this world and will continue to go on in this world until the end. And that's what we're going to be talking about today. The wars and rumors of wars. The false teachers. The natural disasters and the persecutions.

All these, he said, verse 34. That that generation would enter into. And he attested, verse 35, that his words would certainly come to pass.

[1:03] And indeed, they did. Right? That generation entered into those birth pains. And the mission has gone forward just as he promised. And the temple did fall in that generation just as he promised.

And his warnings, verse 25, are a preparation for us. Just as he promised. Which means that his promises in this passage.

And the promises that we're about to embark into. Well, that his promises to sustain us in the last age and to return for us. Will also come to pass just as he promised.

So, friends, as we look at chapters 24 and 25. Right? In all these things, let us hear the words of Jesus, our good shepherd and pastor.

As he shepherds his people. He prepares us for the hardships to come. So that we're not alarmed. Tells us to be wary of false teachers. So that we're not led astray.

[2:08] He tells us to flee from unnecessary harm. He reminds us that he who began a good work in us will bring it to completion. And preserve us.

And he tells us to lean into the Lord. Shows his affection for us. Guarantees the success of our mission. The gospel will be preached to all nations. And he guarantees that the birth pains.

That our uncertainties and trials and difficulties and sorrows will be cut short. Because he's coming. He's guaranteed that he is coming for us. And that's what we're walking into today. Amen and amen. Amen. So let's pray to him.

And ask his blessing. To hear his word. Father I thank you that you have humbled my spirit before this passage.

[3:13] Lord I pray that you would do. The great and excellent work that you intend to do through your word. Lord in your people's heart. Father. By your spirit.

Lord will you show us. Your son. In whose name we pray. Amen. Jesus continues today.

In verse 36. But concerning that day. An hour. No one knows. Not even the angels of heaven or the sun.

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.

[4:10] 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.

Last week when he discussed the birth pains. The wars. The persecutions. The natural disasters. That ebb and flow throughout this last age.

Including that sharp birth pain. Right? The fall of the temple. He said, verse 34. That they would all. That generation would enter into all these things. But as we look here to this next section.

Of his discussion. Verse 36. He begins with a contrast. Right? He says, but. Concerning that day. Right?

Instead of the general birth pains of this last age. He has something very specific in mind. And he even disassociates it even further.

[5:14] From what's come before. Right? No longer is it tied to this generation. Instead. On the timing. He now says. Concerning that day. And hour.

No one knows. And so what is he now talking about? But perhaps without even knowing it. The disciples in verse 3.

Asked two different questions. They first asked. Tell us when these things. Or tell us when will these things be. That is the destruction of the temple.

Which he expanded to say. All of these birth pains. And. What will be the sign of your coming. And of the end of the age.

They might not have recognized. That those are two separate things. Because to them. The fall of the temple must have triggered. Right? The end of all things. But now Christ is shifting his focus.

[6:06] From the general birth pains. When will these things be. Towards that second part. The second question. When will he return and end the age? And what does he say?

He says it will be like the days of Noah. And when we think days of Noah. Probably if you're thinking about that. You're thinking about the wickedness that was upon the earth. But I don't think that Jesus is highlighting the wickedness.

That's upon the earth. In the next generation. But how unexpected it was. Because things seemed to be going normal.

Right? They were eating and drinking. How many of you plan to have a meal today? Just like normal. You do. Good. Good. Marrying and giving in marriage.

Right? That's not a bad thing. That's not wickedness. That's just normal life. Going about family.

Right? Right? This spring. Both Pastor Mike and I are scheduled to officiate weddings. That's the normal rhythm of life.

[7:08] Right? Jesus is saying that as people went about their lives. Just like normal. God suddenly and unexpectedly. Drew everything to a close.

And touched the world and changed everything. So shall it be on the last day. It will be at a time. At a moment that we do not expect.

We will be going about our regular business. And that sign that he says that stretches from end to end of the earth. Like lightning.

Will come suddenly. And unexpectedly. And so we will be going through these birth pains that he talked about last week. Getting used to them.

Right? That's just normal life right now. Eating meals. Forming families. And at an hour that we do not expect. Our Lord will return. Just as surely.

[8:07] As the temple fell. Just as surely as his grave is empty. Right? Verses 40, 41. Scenes of normal life.

People going about their business. And suddenly. He will come. And so he's saying that this will be an unexpected event.

No one knows that time. Verse 42. Therefore. Right? This is the takeaway. This is the what we're supposed to do.

Right? Our lives will change radically at some moment. We are not guaranteed the end of this sermon. Right? So do not take it for granted.

Any moment of our lives. Therefore. He says stay awake. For you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this.

[9:14] That if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming. He would have stayed awake. And would not

have let his house be broken into. Therefore. You also must be ready.

For the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Friends. Because we do not know the day or hour. Right?

Verse 42. Stay awake. Verse 44. Be ready. I suspect that Jesus wants us to take those as synonymous.

They're both about that vigilance. But what does it mean? What does it look like to be ready? For Christ's coming. Right? Do I need to have like a bag packed? So I don't miss like a train or something?

Like if I don't have a bag packed I'm not going? Or do I need to literally be watching the sky like all the time? Or if I don't I'll miss the lightning bolt?

[10:13] Like what? I thought all I had to do was trust in Christ. His cross. His empty tomb. His free offer of grace. What is it to be ready? Here. What is it to be watchful? What does he mean by that?

Stay awake. Be ready. Well Jesus is about to give us three parables. That explain what it looks like to be awake and vigilant. In verses 45 to 51 we see the parable of the faithful and the wicked servants.

In chapter 25 verses 1 through 13 he shows us a parable of the bridesmaids. And then next week Pastor Mike is going to show us 25, 15 through 30.

The parable of the talents. And friends what we're going to see is that there is only one way to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

And that is to be born again. Right. The gospel of Jesus Christ. This book is about God reconciling the world. The world. Right. The gospel will go out to the nations.

[11:16] To himself. We are separated from God by our sin. And Christ bore the wrath due it at his cross.

And to all who have repented and believed the Holy Spirit has joined us to him in his death and in his resurrection. So that we are birthed again into what the scriptures call new life.

Or born again. Or raised with Christ. And so it is not by our own works that we are ready. But by Christ's. So that to enter his kingdom is to be born again by his spirit.

And these three parables show us what that new life looks like. So friends we are ready if we are born again.

And these are three indicators that the new birth has happened in us. Three evidences. Three indicators that we have that new life. All right. And so friends if you.

[12:15] Have never entered into that new life. You are not guaranteed your next breath. Run to Christ. Verse 45.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant. Whom his master has set over his household to give them their food at the proper time. Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

Truly I say to you he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself. My master is delayed and begins to beat his fellow servants. And eats and drinks with drunkards.

The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him. And at an hour he does not know. And will cut him in pieces. And put him with the hypocrites.

In that place there will be weeping. And gnashing of teeth. I think our natural inclination when we read this. Is to think.

[13:22] That what to be. That to be ready here. Is to behave. Right. He's out partying. He's out.

Gallivanting. He's beating some people. The person who misbehaves is the person who is not ready. But if we look a little bit closer at this. I think there's something.

A little deeper. A little more penetrating. At heart. See we could. Mistake passages like this. To mean. That we kind of earn our salvation by good works.

But friends. If we've heard this sermon on the mount. If we've heard Jesus explain the great commandments. We know that we have no hope of earning our salvation.

Right. And if. The same week. The same. That he's actually saying these things. He's about to go to the cross to be crushed. For our iniquities.

[14:22] Right. It's not so that we can then. Behave enough to earn our place with God. The cross of Christ is the sure and certain testimony.

Right. That we can't earn God's favor.

If there was any other way. He would not have crushed his son. So these aren't earn your place passages. And it's not enough I think.

We've already seen in Matthew's gospel. He said you know. That the fruit reveals the tree. It's not enough to say that our. Our outward behavior. Is that which indicates the inward rebirth.

Because that's absolutely true. But let's look a little bit closer at this passage. What distinguishes these servants from each other. It is not simply that one is.

Going out and partying. Right. There's one charge for them. What is it? Verse 45. The master has set them over his household. To give them their food at the proper time.

[15:23] What does that mean? The Lord commissioned his servants. To serve his household. What does that mean when it's applied to us.

His servants. It means friends that faithful servants. Serve his household. That is the church. That's what distinguishes them.

Is their heart. Towards his people. Verse 46. Blessed is that servant. Whom his master will find doing. Just that. Serving the household of God.

When he comes. But verse 48. The wicked servant. The false servant. Isn't interested. Really in the master. Or the master's household. Wicked servant.

Is interested in himself. Right. And so verse 49. He mistreats the Lord's other service. Goes off. To do his own thing. Your master's household.

[16:27] Is his church. And he's charged. Each of his servants. You and me. To serve that household. So how do we know?

If we're ready. If we're born again. Let me ask you. What is your attitude. Towards Christ's church. Has the Holy Spirit. So worked. In your heart. That you love. The people of God. Are you inclined. Towards your brothers and sisters.

In Christ. Has that resulted. Verse 46. In you actually. Serving them. Right. Do you pray. For your brothers and sisters. Do you encourage them.

Do you build one another up. In love. A love. For God's people. In other words. Is one of the marks. Of the new birth.

[17:29] An indication. That you are. Ready. For that day. And that hour. Right. And for some of us. That might be a wake up call. Even in this moment.

The Lord is opening your eyes. To a blind spot. In your life. Right. You realize that you're called. To this great love. And this work. That God is. In this moment. Even drawing your heart.

To his church. And that's a good indication. I'm glad for you. Lord. Will you. Please. Draw our hearts. To your people. The people you bought. With the blood of Christ.

But friends. If your heart. Is cold still. There's the church of God. If your fellow servants. The people of God. Are not. Beautiful.

Beautiful. In your eyes. If they are. Verse 49. A people. You feel okay. Ignoring. Or mistreating. Or abandoning. I want to caution you.

[18:26] It's very likely. That you're not ready. For that day. And that hour. When the Lord returns. And I must warn you. That verses 50. And 51. Are not.

Idle threats. They represent. The true. Punishment. That belongs to all. Who have not been born again. Of the spirit. Into the kingdom of God. Our new birth.

Causes us. To care for others. And it. Frees us. Gives us. The ability. And the opportunity. To do so. Why? I hope that it.

Actually makes sense. Right? If. My. Greatest. Need. Forever. Is already taken care of. My standing with God.

By the cross of Christ. And if I see now. That. Eternity is long. And it is glorious for me. And that this life is short. I'm then freed up.

[19:34] Right? To care for others. And to not be selfish. Because. What the world. Cherishes. Christians know. Is dust.

But if. My eyes. Are focused on. Me. Me. Me. And serving. Myself. And no one else.

Perhaps. I'm proving. That I've not. Been born again. I don't have that hope. Right? So. If.

You find that you're that second servant. Friends. The first thing. To do. Is not to try harder. To be the first servant. The first thing to do.

Is to be born again. To be made. That kind of person. By the spirit. And to have those promises. Opened up to you. So that you are then.

[20:38] Freed to love. Right? Our Lord moves. Then. Into a second parable. The parable.

Of the virgins. Of the. Bridesmaids. He says. Then the kingdom of heaven. Will be like ten virgins. Who took their lamps. And went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish.

And five were wise. For when the foolish. Took their lamps. They took no oil. With them. But the wise. Took flasks of oils. Of oil. With their lamps. As the bridegroom.

Was delayed. They all became drowsy. And slept. But at midnight. It was a cry. Here is the bridegroom. Come out to meet him. Then all those virgins. Rose. And trimmed their lamps. And the foolish. Said to the wise. Give us some of your oil. For our lamps. Are going out. But the wise answered. Saying. Since there will not be enough. For us. And for you. Go rather to the dealers.

[21:34] And buy for yourselves. And while they were going to buy. The bridegroom came. And those who were ready. Went in with him. To the marriage feast. And the door was shut. Afterward.

The other virgins. Came also. Saying. Lord. Lord. Open to us. But he answered. Truly I say to you. I do not know you. Watch therefore. For you know neither.

The day. Nor the hour. In ancient Israel. The marriage ceremony. Looked very different.

Than modern American weddings. The groom would. Take a procession. From his home. To the bride's home. There he would get her. And that's where the ceremony would happen.

And then he would. In another procession. Take her back. To his own home. And that's where the wedding banquet would be. And so.

[22:31] There would be bridesmaids. Waiting. For that first journey. As the bridegroom. Came for his bride. If the first parable here.

Of the two servants. Tells us that new birth. Produces a love for the church. This second parable. Shows us that a mark of the new birth. Is that we are expecting.

Christ. And waiting for him. Right. Being born again of the spirit. Causes us. To look with longing eyes.

That is to watch. Right. For the coming of the son. First Peter chapter one. Says. Blessed be the God. And father of the Lord Jesus Christ. God.

According to his great mercy. He has caused us to be born again. To what? To a living hope. That is an expectation. That is a bridesmaid.

[23:36] Going out and seeking. After. Right. The bridegroom. To the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From the dead. To an inheritance. That is imperishable.

Undeified. And unfading. Kept in heaven for you. Who by God's power. Are being guarded. Through faith. For salvation. Ready to be revealed. In the last time. Before someone.

Is born again. They don't hope. In Christ's coming. That is not a feature. Of anybody's. Life. Outside of Christ. But after.

He is our hope. He is our eager expectation. He is our reward. Our goal. That is how you know. If you are ready. Do you hope in Christ?

Are you expecting him? Half of the bridesmaids. Actually expected. Him to come. And half didn't. That is the watching.

[24:36] That Jesus instructs us. Towards. Do you hope in Christ? Right. And this hope in Christ. This watching. Is a great earthly benefit.

To us as well. It is the precise opposite. Of being you know. That criticism. Too heavenly minded. To be of any earthly good. Right. If my heart. Is set on Christ. And his kingdom.

His wedding feast. Right. I won't have. Undue attachments. To this world. I won't overvalue. Things that are dust. And crumbling away.

I won't be undone. When things don't go my way. Today. If hope. If Christ is my hope. For forever. I won't be shaken.

When wars. And rumors of war. And all those. Or the earthquakes. All those things. That are the birth pains. That he talked about. Last week. When they come. If my eyes are set on Christ. If I'm anticipating.

[25:37] His return. As my greatest good. If that's where my hope lies. I might suffer. And rightly sorrow.

And rightly sorrow. Over much. In this life. My hope was never. In this life. Not in my own achievements.

And riches. And satisfaction. And health. It's somewhere else entirely. so not only is this watching, this eager expectation for the bridegroom and his coming not only is it a mark of the new birth that I'm ready for that day and that hour but it is also something that frees me in this day, in this hour to live in peace so friends, if you are ready if you are expecting the bridegroom to come if you help in him you need not fear the day of the Lord's coming you need not fear the day of your death you need not fear anything but friends, let's not be deceived because the foolish bridesmaids look very similar don't they?

from the outside they look almost the same they're all together in one big group they all attend church together they all go out for the bridesmaid they all sing the songs off the screen they're all dressed the same they all have lamps but on the inside one is filled with the glad oil of expectation for the king and the other is just reading words off the screen as they sing and so we can act like a Christian we can attend church like a Christian we can do all the things that Christians do but if we don't have that internal fuel source that burns for Christ we're not ready for that great day and what's more

I can't give you what you need they say we can't share this oil with you you need to go and get it while it may be found I can only point you to him but you must run to Christ we all begin our lives as the unfaithful servant the foolish bridesmaid only those who are transformed by the Holy Spirit as they embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ into whom he breathes new life whom he makes his disciples only they become the faithful servants the wise bridesmaids who eagerly anticipate becoming guests at his banquet so when the Lord returns will he find you transformed by his gospel into a disciple eagerly hoping in Christ friends where is your hope right this moment is it in some earthly thing or is it in Christ if your hope is set on him if he has breathed new life into you so that you love his church so that these things are all true of you this passage says that he will entrust to you the servant his riches he will welcome you the bridesmaid into his banquet next week the servant into his master's joy but if not these passages attest that he will cast you out barred from the wedding feast of the Lamb in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth but for those of us who are ready this passage ought not feel morose it shouldn't feel us with dread but excitement truly I say to you he will set him over all his possessions

[30:42] Christ's riches belong to his people by his grace the bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast and next week enter into the joy of your master friends our God is a God of infinite perfections which means that his joy is infinitely perfect and he is inviting us into his joy the great preacher Charles Simeon said this of the bridesmaids he said the bridesmaids participate in the pleasures of the wedding feast this gives us just an idea of their happiness those who are found ready at the coming of their Lord they will enter into the banquet hall where all the guests are assembled they will hear the bridegroom's voice and enjoy the testimonies of his regard the feast provided by God himself will refresh their souls while all the harmony of heaven will fill them with exquisite delight then all their pains and sorrows and worries will forever cease no longer have they any corruption to contend with or any regret their fears are dissipated their hopes are realized and their desires are swallowed up satisfied in the bridegroom forever there is so much beauty in this servants receiving charge of all their master has guests entering into the joy of his wedding banquet friends what's in store for us is joy unending let's pray oh lord our god thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you