

J.J.

WATCH OUT FOR THE COMING DAYS

Matthew 24:36-42

Matthew 24: 36 “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, [f] but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

INTRODUCTION :

I came from an almost 3-week vacation. It was really great meeting my Nanay and my siblings once again after 5 years. We really had a grand time together. It was one of my best homecoming by God's grace.

I also got to preach at the church in Bulacan where Ptr Fred is the pastor. He's one of the missionary pastors that we support. I never really intended to preach there. Ptr. Fred messaged me in Facebook and invited me to preach there. I left it unread.

But when I was praying, the Lord really spoke to me and said, "Preach there. Encourage the people." Then the Holy Spirit reminded me of 2 Timothy 4:2

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

I did not know what to preach about but then I preached about the faith of the Canaanite woman - one of the passages I like preaching. I preached there January 1. A lot of people were encouraged but also convicted. They said they needed to hear that message from the Lord. (Now I'll tell you later how this affected me.)

Today, since this is my first preaching for 2023, I really asked the Lord for wisdom on what to preach.

I came from vacation and it was a really good vacation and I praise the Lord for that because all of us would need rest from time to time.

The challenge with vacation is that it's not real life, if you get used to it. It like an anesthesia from real life to what is really happening outside the fun, the adventure, the beautiful sights, the abundant food. It numbs you from today and can make you lose sight of what is still going to happen.

Illustration : It's like when the disciples saw the glorified Lord in the Transfiguration and didn't want to go down anymore.

One of the things that led me to preach on what is today is when my best friend messaged me when I was in El Nido. He was just asking how was my vacation? How was I enjoying the beauty of God's creation and then he said he prayed for me. I replied that God's creation is really beautiful, if this is how beautiful the world is, imagine how beautiful heaven is.

In the airplane, since I got to rest and enjoyed pure fun, abundance and worldly peace, I had this sudden attack in my soul, asking, "Is God real?" "Is the God I'm serving the real God?" "What if there are other gods or all other religion are the same?" The attack was so intense that I cried out in my soul, to the Holy Spirit like a man drowning, "Help me!"

Again, by His grace, He reminded me, **one basic truth that makes it all real for me that the God I'm serving is the one and only true God – that truth is the RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

We have to remember, faith is based on the truth. It is based on facts! Faith is not blind.

Illustration : One of the things I did is jump from a 35 foot cliff into the river below. I'm scared to jump but the reason I jumped is because of the fact that there's water below that will catch me. That's when the "leap of faith" comes in. It's not based on positive thinking or imagination that everything will be alright. Faith is based on fact. I wouldn't jump hoping that there's water below. I took the "leap of faith" because I know the truth is my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is alive! He rose from the dead.

One of these days He will come back again.

And that is what by God's grace, the message of God today.

I was pondering that one of these days, there will be a new heaven here according to God's Word. There will be no water except from that river flowing from God's throne.

But before that happens, all that we see will be destroyed by fire.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

As Christians, we better be ready.

How? We will do a quick exposition of Matthew 24

Things to watch out for to make sure you are ready.

Illustration: You might be thinking right now, "How can pastor preach this at the start of the year?" You know what, while I was in El Nido, I was enjoying the view and I was taking photograph when I saw one of the helpers in the resort and was asking me to move. It was early in the morning and I wasn't bothering anyone. He told me I was sitting under the coconut tree and one of the coconuts might fall on me anytime. I don't want the coconut to fall on your head in the middle of your vacation and relaxation.

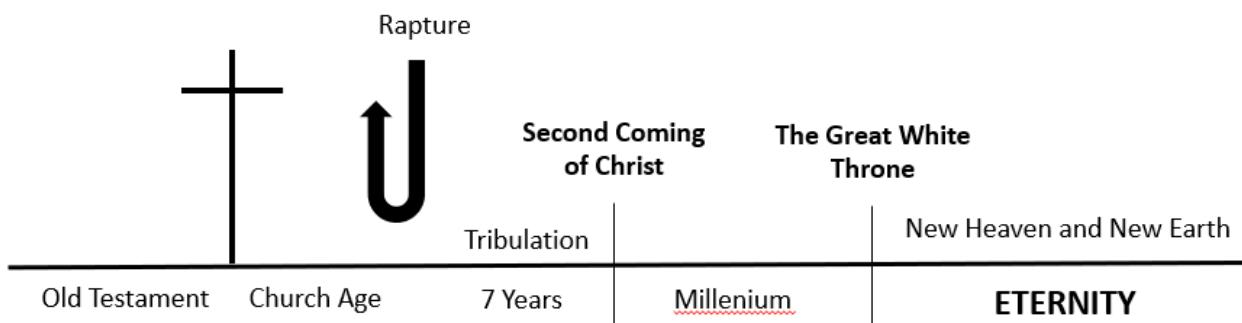
THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

SOUL
SIGNS
SON

I. WATCH OUT FOR YOUR OWN SOUL

9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Now, we have to put things in context here. Our Lord is talking about the tribulation. I preached before based on the escathological timeline that before the tribulation, Christians, and when I say this, the true followers of Christ will be raptured.



I also have to focus on

10 At that time many will turn away from the faith

Does this mean that you can lose your salvation if you turned away from your belief?

If you are a true Christian, you will never turn away from your belief.

That's why Jesus said, "

13 but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Remember, the Bible is very clear on two things :

First, if you are truly saved, then you can never lose your salvation.

John 10: 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

Second, those who turn away from their faith just shows they were never saved in the first place.

John 8: 31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

1 John 2: 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Now, what is one of the signs that someone is saved or not?

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold

Remember, the Bible is clear that God gives us test to find out what's really inside our hearts.

Proverbs 17:3 Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the LORD tests the heart.

What are the two tests that God will usually send us?

PAIN AND PLEASURE

For Pain :

6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains. 9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

How many in our ranks whether in this church or even other churches, their love has grown cold because of trials in their life? Or for others, it's because they were hurt by other believers.

Illustration : I have told the story countless time about a businesswoman who was faithful in attending worship service and even bible studies suddenly stopped attending. Why? It's because she said when she started to become born again, her business started to fail.

For Pleasure:

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.

In short, this people do not think they need God because life is good and happy. They were eating, drinking and marrying (weddings are one of the happiest celebrations in life). Who needs God? Wickedness or lawlessness is living life as if there's no Law-Giver.

IMPORTANT : Pleasure has a way of letting us forget our need for God.

Isn't this very rampant now? Look at how Paul describes it to Timothy.

2 Timothy 3: 1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholly, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

I have mentioned this quote also several times, that the test of prosperity is harder than the test of poverty.

So watch out for your soul. Test yourself if you are in the faith.

2 Corinthians 13: 5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

So the question is, how do you watch out for your soul? How do you test it?

The question is, "How's your love for God?

Isn't that the question our Lord asked the Ephesians?

Revelation 2: 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

The Bible is not saying that the Ephesians have lost their love for Jesus. It's just that that He has become second priority in their lives.

Watch out for your soul, beloved of God. Has Jesus something against you? That's why He says,
Matthew 6: 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Illustration : When I preached in Norzagaray, Bulacan, it's on top of a zigzag mountain. People would usually ride a tricycle going to and fro to the church. I met and talked to a lady there and I learned that she walks about 1 hour going to church on this mountain that's zig zagging in order to serve God and others. I began to ask myself, how come this young lady is able to walk 1 hour going to a church that's really hot with uncomfortable chairs while people in North America have nice cars and would only take them 30 minutes the most to go to church? The answer is L-O-V-E.

How's your love for other people in the church?"

John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 John 4 : 7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Of course, loving people in the church is not only the ones who love you back or who are good to you.
Matthew 5: 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

Remember, love is not passive, it's active. It's shown more in our actions rather than our words.
It's because love entails sacrifice and is shown by our actions.

Illustration : One of the things that I asked my siblings when I went to the Philippines is to take me to the turo-turo areas where the locals eat food, like in Tondo, in Quiapo or in palengkes and etc. I don't want to go to the malls and fancy restaurants. In short, I want to eat street food. The problem is we had no time to go there because our schedule was jampacked. So in my despedida, without me knowing it, instead of us going to a restaurant, my mom and my sibling prepared street food – inihaw na

chicken feet, hotdog, balon-balonan, atay and etc..They even had a frying pan for bola-bola and we had the stick and the sauce. They prepared lugaw and even had sago at gulaman and many more...all street food. But one of the things I missed most is Bulalo, the one in Batangas.

Without no one knowing, my kuya came with bulalo straight from Batangas. Mind you, we leave in Quezon City, the drive to Batangas is ok but the traffic is horrendous. So it took him 2 hours to go to Batangas, buy the Bulalo and drive 3 hours back because of the traffic simply because he wanted me to get the Bulalo I wished for.

The reason why I'm telling this, it's because my Kuya doesn't say "I love you" but through this action he told me loud and clear how much he does.

What I'm saying is this. Watch out for your soul.

How's your love for God and for others? It's easy to say I love you but how do we show it through our actions?

Just like the lady in Norzagaray, Bulacan – how much of your time, your money, your resources, your energy are you willing to sacrifice because that's how we show our love.

That's how God showed His love to us through His Son.

1 John 4: 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Next week by God's grace...

Watch out for the signs and the Son

S.G.D.