

Matt 24:36-44 NLT
The Second Coming

Eschatology, the study of end times, is both fascinating and controversial. It is exciting and frightening, for some. There are those who study this biblical genre with great vigor and those who avoid it with great vigor. Both can be problematic. It is my hope that this sermon today will provide some balance. Eschatology matters. It is important because it is in the scriptures, but it changes very little as it concerns the call of God upon the life of every disciple of Jesus. Furthermore, there is no reason for us, the church, to be divided over the varying eschatological positions. Listen! Whether you are pre-tribulation, post-tribulation, amillennialism, post-millennialism, historic premillennialism, or dispensational premillennialism at the end of the day we remain Brothers and Sisters in Jesus. At the end of the day, we all believe that Jesus will return. Come Lord Jesus, come! And more than the eschatological camp we belong to, we hold higher our common faith in Jesus. Now, considering we all agree that Jesus' return is imminent. That is, it will happen at any moment, and this has been the case since he ascended, we can certainly agree that this truth has implications for every believer. I find three such implications in our text this morning that I need to share.

First implication. It is futile trying to figure out exactly when. V36-39

³⁶ “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. ³⁷ “When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. ³⁸ In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. ³⁹ People didn’t realize what was going to

happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.” We know Christ’s return is sure, but no man or woman on this earth knows the exact timing. And though Jesus lays out the signs of the time, our awareness of these signs, or moments in history, only give indication that it is close. And every generation has been convinced that the end would happen in their lifetime because every generation has experienced turmoil, calamity and disasters reminiscent of the list of signs that Jesus provides and we are still here. So, stop obsessing over what you or I or no man/woman has control over and simply live in and for Jesus Christ. Furthermore, I believe it to be wiser to consider your own death, which may be more imminent than Jesus’ return.

1 Thess 5:1-9 “Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don’t really need to write you. ² For you know quite well that the day of the Lord’s return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. ³ When people are saying, “Everything is peaceful and secure,” then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman’s labor pains begin. And there will be no escape. ⁴ But you aren’t in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won’t be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don’t belong to darkness and night. ⁶ So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. ⁷ Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. ⁸ But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation. ⁹ For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.”

The end in nothing for us to be afraid of or obsessed by if we be in Christ.

Second Implication. Focus on your heart rather than signs. V40

⁴⁰Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left.” Do not miss this. What separated the two men and the two women, wasn’t what they were doing when that moment arrived, but what they believed. Stated this way, what made the difference for the man and woman taken was not external, but internal. The heart. The point here is that outwardly these men and women were indistinguishable, but not for God, not for Jesus because they see the heart. Don’t get caught up in the game of sign playing. Simply live for Jesus and regardless of how the end comes, how it plays out we will be okay. But in order to live for him you must first love him.

Luke 11:29-32 ²⁹As the crowd pressed in on Jesus, he said, “This evil generation keeps asking me to show them a miraculous sign. But the only sign I will give them is the sign of Jonah. ³⁰What happened to him was a sign to the people of Nineveh that God had sent him. What happens to the Son of Man will be a sign to these people that he was sent by God. ³¹“The queen of Sheba will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen. ³²The people of Nineveh will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.”

John 2:23-25 “²³Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. ²⁴But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew all about people. ²⁵No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person’s heart.”

Revelation 16:8-9 “⁸Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. ⁹Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory.”

Listen the only sign that truly matters has already been provided. Let us lift that sign. Let us teach that sign. Let us be convinced by that sign, Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

Final implication. Live everyday as if it could be your last. V42-44

“⁴² “So you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.”

Church, Christ’s return is imminent and our physical death is imminent. I am convinced that to keep watch it take full advantage of every moment, everyday God gives us on this earth to glorify His name. It is to take seriously the call we have as Christ’s ambassadors. It is to never assume we have tomorrow. We only have now and what will we do with it?

Will we be found honoring God, honoring Jesus, our Lord and Savior, or will we be found honoring ourselves when he returns or when we die? I want to close this message with the end of **Matthew 24, V45-51:**

“⁴⁵ “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and

feeding them. ⁴⁶If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁸But what if the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' ⁴⁹and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁵⁰The master will return unannounced and unexpected, ⁵¹and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Lord Jesus, let this not be the case for any of us now or when you return, should your return be in our lifetime. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**