

Jesus is Coming- Luke 21:25-38

- We're now in the season of Advent.
- It's often mistakenly believed that Advent points us to Christmas.
- But in fact Advent doesn't point to Christmas and Jesus' incarnation,
- But rather his second Advent,
- His second coming.
- You see that clearly in the readings for each Sunday throughout Advent.
- And you can see that distinction rather remarkably in our reading today from Jeremiah 33;

“In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; he will do what is just and right in the land.¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: The Lord is our Righteousness” Jeremiah 33:15-16

- v15 sounds like a Christmas quote about how Jesus was born from the line of David.
- Which was true for his incarnation.
- But v16 didn't happen that first Christmas,
- And hasn't happened for any other Christmas.
- In fact the fulfilment of Judah being saved and Jerusalem living in safety,
- Won't occur until Jesus returns and brings in the new heavens and a new earth.
- So 'in those days' is a reference to 'the Day',
- The day of Jesus' return.

- The gospel passage is clearly about the return of Christ,
- Because it comes in response to the disciple's question about when the Temple will be destroyed.
- Jesus tells them how nation will rise against nation,
- There'll be earthquakes, famines and pestilence,
- And then in v27 he says;

“At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Luke 21:27

- So why does Jesus give his disciples such clear instruction about his second coming?

-As I was pondering that question I looked at the other gospels where Jesus gives the exact same details.

-In Mark's gospel Jesus concludes by saying that his return will be like a man going away,

-Who leaves his servants in charge of the house till he comes back,

-And then warns the disciples to keep watch,

-Because they don't want to be like servants who are caught napping when the master returns.

-Here's a little bit of New Testament insight for you,

-Both Matthew and Luke used the gospel of Mark to write their gospels,

-So you see in them what looks like large quotes from Mark.

-But then they add their own unique stories or quotes from Jesus to make their own point.

-In Matthew's gospel,

-After Jesus has spoken about all the signs of his return,

-He puts in three parables,

-The parable of the ten virgins and their oil lamps,

-The parable of the talents and the resources each servant was given to manage,

-And the parable of the separation of the sheep and the goats.

-At the conclusion of each of the parables,

-There's a message about how disciples ought to respond to the certainty of Jesus' return.

-In the parable of the ten virgins the five women who didn't bring extra oil,

-Have to go out and buy more,

-And are not around when the groom arrives and the wedding starts.

-Jesus conclusion is;

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

Matthew 25:13

-That's the same message of Mark's gospel via a longer parable,

-That says be prepared,

- Don't get caught unawares by Jesus' sudden return.

- In Matthew's second parable,
 - The man going on a journey gives three of his servants each different amounts of resources to manage.
 - You know how the story goes,
 - One gets five talents,
 - The second two talents,
 - And the third gets one.
 - When the master returns and calls them all to account for how they've stewarded his money,
 - The first two get a reward for doubling it.
 - But the third gives a mealy mouthed excuse for doing nothing with what was entrusted to him.
 - The master's response is;
 - “take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Mathew 25”28-30

- Just like Mark's gospel,
 - Servants are put in charge of assigned tasks and should expect the master's return.
 - The clear implication of the Matthew parable is that God expects us to use the talents profitably that he's entrusted us with,
 - And we'll have to give account for our ministries and service of him when Jesus returns.

- The third parable also involves judgement, reward and punishment;

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the

sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”

-This parable begins with a warning of the universal implication of Jesus' return,

-The whole world is involved.

-What Jesus says next completely surprises his followers however;

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Matthew 25:34-36

-Rightly the disciples will ask ‘when did we do all this?’

-Jesus' answer is;

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:40

-The Great Commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength,

-And to love your neighbour as yourself.

-This parable gives examples of that love,

-Providing sustenance to the needy,

-Hospitality to the stranger,

-Clothing for the poor,

-Care for the sick,

-Grace to the prisoner.

-And Jesus puts it in the context that to do that for others is to do it for him.

-It's obvious from those parables that the return of Jesus ought to be a great spur to us disciples,

-To be living a life worthy of Christ.

-That seems to be the reason Jesus give his disciples such clear instruction about his second coming.

-And that's born out in each of our readings for today.

-Just look at Psalm 25:3;

"Show me your ways O Lord and teach me your paths. Lead me in the ways of your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation." Psalm 25:3-

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-The Psalmist's prayer is that God would be guiding his steps,

-His day-to-day living.

-Although the writer wouldn't have known anything about Jesus and his return,

-He does know that the source of forgiveness, life and salvation is found in God alone.

-And he knows that to live in obedience is the appropriate response to the grace, mercy and love of God.

-Similarly in the Jeremiah reading,

-There's the expectation that the faithful follower of God will be living a life worthy of the Lord they worship.

-You have to look at it fairly closely but notice what Jeremiah prophecies about Jesus coming as King;

"In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: The Lord is our Righteousness"

Jeremiah 33:15-16

-Judah and Jerusalem are references to the people of God.

-In the book of Revelation we see the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

-It's to that Jerusalem that Jeremiah is referring,

-Not the physical one he knew in his day,

-Nor the one we see on the news too frequently in ours.

-What's the significance of the name 'The Lord is our Righteousness'?

-It's that the source of our righteousness,

-Our right relationship with God and others,

-Comes from the Lord himself.

-Just like the Psalmist writes,

-It's God who gives us the direction for living the life worthy of him,

-Of being the people he calls us to be.

-When Paul was writing his first letter to the Thessalonian Christians,

-They had a concern about Jesus' coming again.

-Later in ch5 Paul puts their minds at ease that those who had died might somehow miss out on the resurrection.

-But in ch3 he's more concerned with the ongoing lifestyle of the Thessalonians.

-Listen to what he says in vv12ff;

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones." 1Thessalonians 3:12-13

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-Pauls' heart is that their love for one another would increase,

-And that God would strengthen their hearts to follow him in holiness,

-So that they'd be blameless when Jesus returns.

-And the follower of Jesus will need strength as that day approaches.

-Look at Luke 21:36.

-Jesus gives two commands;

"Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36

-These will be fearful times as the sun is darkened,

-The moon turns to blood and stars fall from the sky.

-Those things are apocalyptic references to the Day of the Lord,

-And Jesus describes the reaction;

"People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Luke 21:26

-But that will be the unbelievers response,

-People who look at what's occurring in the world with no understanding of God's plans and purposes.

- All they see is catastrophes and unnerving disasters.
- But for the follower of Jesus it's a reminder of the truth that Jesus will return,
- So that when we contemplate the fact that Jesus is coming back,
- That that return could be at any time,
- And it will wrap up this world as we know it,
- Rather than fear these times and the world we currently live in,
- We'll take the advice of Jesus to his disciples;

“Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” Luke 21:28

- Rather than cower at the thought of Jesus' return like unbelievers and the worldly,
- We can stand in confidence that Jesus' return means our salvation with the coming of his kingdom.
- So take heart,
- Be on your guard,
- Be alert to the dangers of fearing what the world fears and losing heart in God.
- Be prepared for Jesus coming,
- Using the gifts and talents he's poured out upon his people,
- To serve him through service of others;

“And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.” 1Thessalonians 3:13