

Bible Study for Sunday Nov 28, 2021

Our texts for this Sunday are:

- Luke 21:25-36
- 1Thessalonians 3:9-13

Opening Question: Would you rather be "aware" or "blissfully ignorant?"

Gospel set-up: Individuals and groups throughout history have used the symbolic language of apocalyptic literature to predict the precise date of the end of the world. They have, so far, been wrong. Jesus exhorted His followers to “stay awake” and to “be alert at all times,” but He was also very clear about the futility of predicting the exact day or hour. It will happen, He said, at a time you do not expect.

Luke 21:25-36

²⁵“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” ²⁹Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁴“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Well, hello “end of the world” text! What troubles you in this text and what brings you comfort? What do you wish wasn’t in there or more of something else?

Do you like the season of Advent? Why or why not? How might these texts prepare us for Christ's birth?

Text like these seem to stir up conversations about the Rapture or the Parousia. The Parousia is a theological concept (meaning not explicitly spelled out in the Bible) that comes from the Greek word parousia meaning "coming" or "presence." It is used throughout the Greek New Testament and most often refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of time.

- If we are secure in our faith in the promise of Jesus now, why do we like talking about (usually with fear and foreboding) the "when" of the Second Coming?

What does Jesus tell His disciples to do when "these things" take place? Why are we (also) supposed to do *that* and what do you think that action does for us?

What does fear do to you? What is the opposite of fear?

In vs 33 we read "My words will not pass away." Name some of those promised "words of Jesus" (throughout the Bible) that bring you comfort when you are experiencing fear.

If Jesus' promises do not make the claim to eliminate our fear or hardships, what *do* they tell us?

What do you think "watch...stay awake" means for your life? How about for the life of this community?

Read vs 34 carefully, what are we supposed to pay attention to as the skies are falling and the fig trees are blooming?

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 (NIV translation)

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² 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.

What do you think begins to "lack in your faith" over time? What might help with that?

We read in vs 13..."may He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy..." What do you think that looks like? What might a stronger heart give you? Look up Romans 5:3-6, what connection might exist between these two texts or what might they be telling us?

The end of verse 13 talks about Jesus coming "with all of His holy ones." What could that mean if earlier in that verse Paul prays that YOU will be holy?