**Watch and Pray**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 13:28-37**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 14, 2019**

**28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors!**

Saints, in the form of a parable, Jesus answered the disciples’ question regarding when the events he spoke about would happen. So far in this lengthy discourse, Jesus has traced two key themes:

**1. The Disciples’ Suffering**

**2. Their Need to Be Watchful**

**3. Eternal Life would Soon Come**

The disciples, like anyone living in Palestine, knew how to interpret the coming of summer from the buds and leaves of the fig trees. The fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy would assure the disciples that the other prophecies he had given regarding the end times would also come true.

**1 Timothy 1:15-17**

15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

**John 3:16-21**

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

**30 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.**

Saints, there are three views of the meaning of this verse:

**1. It refers only to those alive at this time who would be alive also at the destruction of Jerusalem**

**2. It refers to the end times only**

**3. It refers both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end times**

Saints,

**Jesus singled out this generation, using the Greek word genea, which can refer both to those living at a given time as well as to race or lineage (therefore, he was speaking of the Jewish race).**

That makes the third view above most likely. Jesus used “generation” here to mean that the events that would occur initially within the lifetime of Jesus’ contemporaries. Jesus explained that many of those alive at that time would witness the destruction of Jerusalem.

In addition, the Jewish nation would be preserved and remain on earth, so Jews also would witness the end-time events. There could be no doubt in these disciples’ minds about the certainty of these prophecies. While heaven and earth as we know them would eventually disappear, Jesus’ words (including all his teachings during his time on earth) will remain forever.

**2 Peter 3:1-15**

1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,

6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

**32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.**

Saints, while Jesus had given general “signs” to observe regarding the coming of the end, he clearly explained to the disciples that the exact day or hour was not known by the angels or the Son (Jesus himself). When Jesus said that even he did not know the time of the end, he was affirming his humanity (see Philippians 2:5-8).

**Philippians 2:5-8**

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Saints, of course, God the Father knows the time, and Jesus and the Father are one. But when Jesus became a man, he voluntarily gave up the unlimited use of his divine attributes.

On earth, Jesus laid aside his divine prerogatives and submitted to the Father’s will. Thus, only the Father knows the exact time of Jesus’ return. The emphasis of this verse is not on Jesus’ lack of knowledge, but rather on the fact that no one knows. It is God the Father’s secret to be revealed when he wills. No one can predict by Scripture or science the exact day of Jesus’ return. Jesus was teaching that preparation, not calculation, was needed.

**34 It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.**

Saints, in this parable of watchfulness, Jesus described himself as a man who left home to go on a trip (Jesus would be returning to heaven). The disciples are the employees left behind to carry on their work. The gatekeeper is commanded to keep watch for the master’s return.

The employees understand that they are in charge of themselves, had their own work to do, and would not want the homeowner to return suddenly and find them being lazy. Because they do not know when the homeowner will return, these employees must keep a sharp lookout so as not to be found sleeping.

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Jesus’ followers would want to be found spiritually lax, but instead conscientiously going about the work given by God for them to do. Each of us has enough assigned work to do that we shouldn’t be neutralized or paralyzed by fear or doubt. We do not need to worry about how other employees compare to us; instead, we should devote ourselves to doing what God has given us to do.

**37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"**

Saints, Jesus had spoken this discourse to only four of his disciples. Here he instructed them to carry these words to the rest of the disciples, for their truth was of vital importance. By extension, the words were meant for all believers. Even today, we do well to watch for his return—watching out for false teaching and watching expectantly for Christ’s return as we do his work in the world.

**Luke 21:34-36**

34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

**Revelations 3:1-6**

1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**