

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

Text: Luke 12:35-48

The “Occupy Movement” has received massive media attention in recent months. As far as I can tell it has not offered solid solutions or core values to aid in solving the issues which they are protesting. I am reminded of the Scripture describing the riot in Ephesus in which the mob shouted for two straight hours “great is Artemas of the Ephesians”. Luke’s editorial remark was: “The assembly was in confusion: some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there.” Acts 19:32

Well, I’m with you to day to recruit believers in Christ to serve in a truly valid, vital and ultimately **occupy movement**. Prior to the His ascension Jesus told His church to “occupy until I come.” Luke 13:19

In Billy Graham’s autobiography he shares a conversation with the then President Elect, John Kennedy. They were driving back to the Kennedy’s house when Kennedy stopped the car and turned to the evangelist and asked, “Do you believe in the second coming of Jesus?” **“I most certainly do!”** Billy replied. “Well, does my church believe it?” Billy responded, “They have it in their creeds.” Kennedy in sarcasm said, **“They don’t preach it. They don’t say much about it. I’d like to know what you think.”** So Billy shared the reason for the first coming of Jesus, to die for our sins, the resurrection and the promise of his return. “Only then,” Billy said—“are we going to have permanent peace.” The president elect said, **“We’ll have to talk about that someday.”** Billy Graham gave President Kennedy the Biblical teaching in Hebrews 9:28—*“so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”*

I believe that many church goers today might agree with John Kennedy’s assessment. The second coming of Jesus is in the doctrinal statement of many churches and denominations but they are not saying much about it. The second coming of Jesus is a missing note in today’s pulpit. I reviewed a book entitled, **“Preaching with Passion”** 50 sermons of the most notable Southern Baptist preachers. Not one sermon title identified the second coming of Jesus. I think this would be true of other denominations. It certainly is true in the music industry. In my review of five major hymnals there were less than a dozen hymns in each of them featuring the second coming and the latest chorus I found was written 26 years ago. One needs to go back to the Gathers to find solid hymns about the return of Jesus.

This is in contrast to the very literal words of the Bible such as

John 14:1-3 “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God,
Believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many
mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go
to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again, and receive you
unto myself; that where I am ye may be also.”

Acts 1:11 As Jesus was caught up in a cloud in His ascension two angels asked, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven, this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

I Thessalonians 4:16-17

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The second coming of Jesus is mentioned 318 times in the second volume of the Bible. 7 out of every ten chapters refer to his second coming. One out of every ten verses in the epistles mention it. For every prophecy on the 1st coming of Christ, there are eight on the second coming

Charles Wesley, the great Methodist wrote 7000 songs, 5000 of them related in some way to the second coming.

The Nicene Creed reads, “He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead.” So then I am on solid ground when I claim, **The return of Jesus will be absolute, public, unmistakable, and of cosmic dimensions.**

In the Bible reading this morning Jesus gives us two stories that emphasize a believer’s game plan for His return. Let us briefly look them.

The stories or parables of Jesus serve both as windows in which we see kingdom truth and a mirrors in which we see ourselves.

They present two of the best practices for you who believe in the second coming of Jesus.

1. FLAVOR OUR LIFE WITH EXPECTANCY.

Describe the Jewish wedding..

Unencumbered, v. 35 After the afternoon wedding celebration the bride and groom would go to his home for a special dinner for the household. The servant is keenly aware that every thing must be ready. He doesn’t want to embarrass the groom on his wedding night. So the admonition is to be alert.

Tuck the long flowing robe under the belt.—free to move.

Trim the wicks so the light might
be bright, v. 35

Be ready regardless of the time. Whether the groom and
bride come during the:

1st watch—the wedding banquet 6-9 p.m. or,

2nd watch, vv.36—9-12 or

3rd watch –12-3 am

TWIST—THE GROOM

**WILL SERVE YOU. (remember
the breakfast by the sea, J. 21:12,
“Come have breakfast.”**

**Rom. 13:11-14, “And do this, understanding
the present time. The hour has come for you
to wake up from your slumber, because our
salvation is nearer now than when we first
believed; the night is nearly over;
the day is almost here.**

Jesus leaves us with an image...the thief, v. 39

2. EXERCISE YOUR LEADERSHIP WITH COMPETENCY,

Explain the trust the master placed in the steward.

The nearer meaning may refer to those who
were stewards of the ministry when Jesus came, but
it also speaks to us who profess to be leaders in Christ’s
church.

The steward’s life deteriorates as he grows
cynical of the Master’s return, v. 45

If we stop looking we begin to stop loving the
people of God and concern for the unbelieving.

These are some of the harshest words Jesus spoke.

Jesus expects his followers to be productive, in a
ministry, doing a work for the kingdom. For many years I listened to fellow
preachers say, “Well after all we are only called
to be faithful.” Yes, faithfulness is required, but that’s
not the whole story. **FRUITFULNESS IS
EXPECTED.** John 15 fruit, more fruit and much fruit,
some thirty fold, sixty fold and 1000 fold.

The Thessalonian believers, turned from idols to serve
a living God and to wait for his son from
heaven. I Thess. 1:9-10

In my preparation for this sermon I came across the brief sermon of A.W. Tozer. Many
believe that he was truly a prophet in his own time. This sermon was given nearly 35
years ago. He was deeply taken by the reduced excitement shown in the lives of

Christians and the sermons of ministers concerning the second coming of Jesus: He listed a few of his ideas that promoted this relaxation of the church regarding the second return.

1. We have lost patience in the waiting for Jesus. Just think how quickly the new becomes old. Do you have the 4G? It will give you just a few second advance notice.
This week I received an email from AT&T “You are qualified for a faster internet service. I can’t even keep up with the one I have.
2. Many believers have so much to enjoy...the good life. In 1976 I left a church on Mission Street in SF to become pastor of a rather large church in a northwest suburb of Chicago. Not long after being there I realized that the majority of the members looked upon their church facilities and pastor as part of their “good life.” During the last year of my ministry there the Jim Jones tragedy happened which involved a good number from the Bay area. I could not get over the deep need of the people on Market Street in SF must have experienced. So when asked to come to a dying church in the heart of SF Joyce and I came. Church was a rescue ministry for those who needed the promises of Jesus. Truths about the 1st and the 2nd coming of Jesus turned the church around.
3. Perhaps we have become cynical of preachers who have set dates for Jesus return only to disappoint their supporters. We preachers went through a score card mentality. As I graduated from seminary in 1962 one of my classmates went on to write a best selling “The Late Great Planet Earth.” i.e. Hal Lindsey I heard that at one time there was a copy of this book on every desk in the Pentagon. During the middle sixties I held prophecy meetings in New England. Though the churches were small they were packed each night. But I have come to believe it may be better to be part of the “welcoming committee than the program committee.”

Dr. Tozer did not speak with harshness. He understood the laxness of the times. He also said he did not know what it would take to return eagerness of the 40’s, 50’s and 60’s.

We have not given up on the promised hope, but we have little eagerness and anticipation of it happening anytime.

Coming here I have prayed that the Holy Spirit would light a fire in someone’s heart even my own to look to the heavens and say, “Come Lord

Jesus.” **Lord, revive my heart by the promises of the return of Jesus:**

Rev. 22:7 Behold, I am coming soon! 22:12 I am coming soon!

22:20 Yes, I am coming soon! 22:22, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.