

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT - PART 6
What Jesus taught about the His return
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Matt 24:36-25:13,
Subject: What Jesus told his disciples about his return as He taught on the Mount of Olives
Complement: that His coming was certain
that He wanted them to be ready.
Exegetical idea: As Jesus taught on the Mount of Olives, He told His disciples that His coming was certain and that He wanted them to be ready.
Homiletical idea: **Jesus wants you to be ready!**
Purpose: To reassure my hearers regarding the certainty of the second coming of Christ and to encourage each one to be ready by trusting fully in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Introduction

Do you remember that last time you moved from one home to another? It's an incredible amount of work, isn't it? But one of the benefits of moving is that you rediscover precious treasures that have been "lost" for years. Do you know what I'm talking about? We found one such treasure when we were packing for one of our recent moves. Here it is! Now I realize that this inexpensive cassette tape doesn't look like much of a treasure to you. But to my wife and I, it's worth its weight in gold. On this tape is a recording of our two sons, Christopher, then age 6, and Jonathan, age 3. They are singing a song that Christopher learned in Kindergarten. Listen to the words:

One day I'll look up and see Jesus coming down for me,
sitting on a cloud so white with His holy angels bright.
O then, I will shout and sing, "Glory! Glory! Glory!"

He has come our heavenly King, Glory! Glory! Glory!

The second coming of Jesus in glory is one of the most precious truths of the whole Bible. In fact, it's such good news that someone might even shout "Glory! Glory! Glory!" I want to share with you this morning what Jesus taught about His return. This message is divided into 3 parts: the good news, the bad news, and the most important news.

First, the good news that Jesus taught about His return. The return of Jesus in glory is certain. What did I say? The return of Jesus in glory is CERTAIN. What words of Jesus come to your mind when you think about the certainty of His return in glory? Jn 14:1-3. That's the text that first came to my mind as well. Jn 14:1-3. Jesus is speaking to His disciples in the upper room, and what does He say? "Let not your heart be troubled. You 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 to myself that where I am there you may be also." Amen! That's the promise of Jesus. "I will come again." The return of Jesus in glory is certain.

And that is not the only passage of Scripture where Jesus teaches about the certainty of His return in glory. We are going to focus our attention this morning on some of the comments of Jesus from the Mount of Olives, just a few days before His crucifixion. In this conversation with His disciples, Jesus has much to say about the certainty of His return in glory. Let's start with Matt 24:27. "For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also WILL the coming of the Son of Man be." The glorious return of Jesus, like lightning flashing from the east to the west, is CERTAIN. Nothing secret about His return in glory. Nothing tentative. The return of Jesus in glory is certain.

Look down at Matt 24:30. “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they WILL SEE the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Then look with me at the words of Jesus in Matt 24:44. “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man IS COMING at an hour when you do not expect Him.” We’ll come back to this verse later in the sermon. But I want you to notice once again the certainty here. The Son of Man is coming. And that’s good news, what do you say? Because when Jesus comes, as we learned in a previous sermon in this series, when Jesus comes, He’s going to wake the dead. The dead in Christ are going to rise first, when the Master calls. Amen? Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. That’s going to be a glorious day. What do you say? Yes the coming of Jesus in glory is certain, and that’s good news.

For several years, my wife worked as a nurse practitioner in an OB/GYN practice. During that time, she interacted with a lot of pregnant women. Those mothers didn’t know the exact day that their babies would be delivered. Some of them didn’t even know that they were pregnant when they came in for their first check-up. But as the weeks and months of the pregnancy progressed, it became more and more evident to those mothers that a baby was on its way. They could see the signs.

(Interview Deborah and Tracy) Let me illustrate. “Are you about to have a baby?! How do you know that you are expecting a baby? What are some of the signs that you have a baby that is about to be delivered?”

We may not know all of the details exactly. But this much we do know. The coming of baby_____ is certain!

And Jesus tells us, “My return in glory is certain. You can see the signs. You can know that the day is approaching. Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Even though no one knows the day or the hour, you can know that the return of Jesus in glory is certain. And that, my friends, is good news!

But there’s also some bad news that Jesus taught about His return in glory. It’s found in this same portion of Scripture, recording the teachings of Jesus from the Mount of Olives. Look with me at Matt 25:1-13. It’s a parable about that Jesus gave to teach about His return. It’s a parable about a wedding. “.....” (Matt 25:1-4)

Tell me, what does this wedding represent? The return of Jesus in glory. And who do the 10 virgins represent? The professed followers of Jesus. How many of these professed followers of Jesus are looking forward to the coming of the Bridegroom? All of them. How many of them have lamps? All of them. How many of them have oil in their lamps? All of them. All of them, at some point, have experienced the blessings of God. All of them have received the anointing of God’s Spirit. But not all of them will be ready for the Bridegroom’s coming. And not all of the professed followers of Jesus will be ready for His return in glory.

Let’s read on. Matt 25:6-12. “.....” What percentage of the professed followers of Jesus in this parable were not ready for His return in glory? 50% That, my friends, is bad news. Now I realize that it is not wise to build our eschatology, our understanding about last day events, on a single parable. We would not be wise to make two lists of those attending church here at Forest Lake Church, one list for those who will be ready for the return of Jesus in glory, with 50% of the membership on it, and an equal list for those who will not be ready. Personally, I’m praying that every single man, woman and child in this church family would be

ready when Jesus returns in glory. Isn't that your prayer too? But while we don't want to read too much into this parable, one lesson is very clear. Not all of those who profess to be followers of Jesus will be ready for His return in glory. Would you agree with me on that? In this parable, 50% of the professed followers of Jesus are not ready. In the parable that follows, the parable of the talents, 33% of the servants are not ready. Both of those statistics are bad news. 50% not ready. 33% not ready. It is clear from the teaching of Jesus about His return that many of the professed followers of Jesus will not be ready for His return in glory.

I heard a story some time ago about 3 men who were standing on the platform of a train station. They were obviously waiting for a train because they were surrounded by several suitcases. But as they waited, they became engrossed in conversation. They seemed oblivious to anything happening around them. After a few minutes, the train pulled into the station. Passengers disembarked. New passengers boarded the train. But none of these three men seem to notice. They simply continued their intense conversation. Finally the whistle blew, and the train began to move. Immediately, there was a flurry of activity on the platform. Two of the men grabbed the suitcases and began to run. The train was moving now. The two men ran, threw the suitcases in through an open door and jumped on board. It was a close call. The third man stood motionless on the platform, staring at the departing train. All of a sudden, he burst into laughter. The station master was watching this whole scenario, and he couldn't contain his curiosity. So he walked over to the laughing stranger and said, "Sir, I'm puzzled. I watched this whole scenario unfold. I saw your two companions running for the train. I watched as they barely got on board before the train pulled out of the station. And then I saw you standing here. And all of a sudden, you started laughing. I just don't understand." The laughing stranger

composed himself, looked at the station master and said, “I can see that the situation didn’t look very humorous to you, sir. But you see, those two men came to say goodbye to me. I was the one who was supposed to get on the train!”

We laugh. And rightly so. Those 3 men became so distracted that none of them ended up in the right place. Two men caught a train that they weren’t supposed to catch, and the intended traveler was still standing on the platform. But I think that you would agree with me that it’s no laughing matter when you think about people not being ready for the return of Jesus. It’s no laughing matter when you think that people you love could miss the train that’s bound for glory. I don’t want to be like that man who is left standing on the platform, do you?

What have we learned so far from the teaching of Jesus about His return. First, the good news: The return of Jesus in glory is certain. And I’m so thankful for that good news, aren’t you? But then comes the bad news. Many of those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ will not be ready for His return in glory. Many of those who call Jesus “Lord” will miss the train that’s bound for glory. That’s the bad news. Now if we ended the sermon right here, we would all go home depressed.

But we’re not going to end here. If you remember at the beginning of this sermon, I told you that I’ve divided the teaching of Jesus regarding His return into 3 parts: the good news, the bad news, and the most important news. We’ve heard the good news that Jesus taught about His return. The return of Jesus in glory is certain. We’ve heard the bad news: many of those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ will not be ready for His return in glory. So what’s the most important news? What’s the most important news that Jesus taught about His return? It’s found in this same portion of Scripture, beginning with Matt 24:36. “.....” Notice, the

question is not whether Jesus will return in glory. That's certain. The question is WHEN. And Jesus says, "But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Let's read on. Matt 24:37-42. "....." Even though the generation living at the time of the flood was warned by Noah for 120 years that the end was near, the flood still came unexpectedly. So Jesus tells us, WATCH. You may be aware of the fact that some Christians have taken Matt 24:40-41 as a description of a "rapture" of the saints, when the righteous are taken, and those who are not ready are "left behind," given a second chance to repent and be saved. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Look at the parallel passage in Luke 17, beginning with verse 26. "....."

There is no second chance for those who are left behind. They are destroyed, just as it was when judgment came upon Noah's generation and Lot's generation. Where the dead body is, there the vultures will fly. So what is the most important news that Jesus teaches about His return in glory? Look again at the words of Jesus recorded in Matt 24:44. This is the most important news. What does Jesus tell us? "Therefore, you also BE READY, for the Son of Man is coming.... He is coming, church. The return of Jesus in glory is CERTAIN. For the Son of Man is coming in an hour when you do not expect Him." Friend, Jesus wants you to be ready.

When we lived in the mountains of southern California, we became accustomed to wild fires during the dry summer months. One of those wild fires came within half of mile of our house. It's was actually quite a fascinating sight to behold. The fire swept up the south side of the ridge, right over the top, and was on it's way down to where we live. But the firefighters were well prepared. The fire engines were strategically positioned. And then came the air

support. Small twin engine planes. Helicopters. And then the huge mother of all planes that dropped the fire retardant. While I stood outside, gawking at the pyrotechnic display, my wife was busy in the house. She gathered all of our important papers. She carried 15-20 family photo albums and put them in the trunk of the car. She got a change of clothes for everyone. While I was sight-seeing, my wife was preparing. I was preoccupied. She was ready!

There's a lesson in that story. Don't be preoccupied by things of lesser importance. Don't be preoccupied with the helicopters and the tabloid headlines. The most important news that Jesus gives us about his return in this: BE READY. Friend, Jesus wants you to be ready for His return in glory. Did you hear what I said? Jesus wants you to be ready for His return in glory. That's the bottom line. That's the most important news that Jesus taught about His return.

You say to me, "Pastor, I want to be ready. I believe the return of Jesus in glory is certain. I don't want to miss the train that's bound for glory. I want to be ready. But how can I BE READY?" That's a good question, isn't it? How can a person be ready? The answer is found in the parable of Jesus that we just studied. Matt 25:12. To those who were not ready, Jesus said, "I do not know you." You don't have a personal relationship with Me. Remember the words of Jesus in His great prayer of John 17. "This is life eternal, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son, has life." 1 John 5:11-12 And that relationship with Jesus will be manifested in loving obedience to His commands. According to Jesus, "Not everyone who calls Him "Lord" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who do the will of our Father in heaven. That's what Jesus taught. He said, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do the things I say?" A saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life-changing experience!

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, you have everlasting life. You are READY for His return in glory. That's the most important news of all! Because Jesus wants you to be ready. Listen to the rest of the song that my son Christopher learned in Kindergarten.

Gabriel will His trumpet blow, wake the sleeping ones below

They in beauty shall arise to meet Jesus in the skies.

O then, I will shout and sing, "Glory! Glory! Glory!"

He has come, our heavenly King. Glory! Glory! Glory!

My brother, my sister, Jesus wants you to be ready for that day! Jesus wants you to be ready! Don't you want to join in the chorus that shouts, "Glory! Glory! Glory!"? You can have that assurance today. If you are trusting Jesus as your personal Savior and Lord, you are ready for His return in glory. His return in glory is certain. That's what Jesus taught. And while it's a sad reality that many of His professed followers will not be ready for His return in glory, Jesus wants you to be ready. Will you trust Him fully today as your Savior and Lord? You may have walked with Jesus for 50 years, or this may be your first day in church. But will you trust Him fully today as your Savior and Lord? Jesus wants you to be ready for His return in glory. Jesus wants you to be ready.

Remember that my wife and I found this treasure as we were getting ready to move. (Hold up the cassette). This is worth it's weight in gold. I want to suggest that we're also getting ready for a move. Not east or west, but up! Amen? And we have found some treasure that is worth it's weight in gold. Jesus wants you to be ready for His return in glory. Jesus wants you to be ready.

Appeal:

I have a very specific appeal this morning in response to this message. I believe that many, if not most, of the people here this morning have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You have the assurance that you are known by Jesus and ready for His return in glory. But as you were listening to the story of the man left standing on the platform of the train station, perhaps you thought of someone you love who does not know Jesus, someone you love who is not ready, someone you love who might miss the train that's bound for glory. I want to give you an opportunity to bring that person before the Lord in prayer this morning. But more than that, I want to invite you to ask God to do whatever He needs to do in your life so that His love can flow through you to that person. Are you willing to make that commitment? If so, I want to invite you to join me here at the front of the church as we pray. Someone might be thinking, "Pastor, I need to make a commitment to Jesus Christ myself. I want Jesus to know me. I want to be ready for His return in glory. Then you come too. Come now, and let's pray together.