

2009 11-22 Watch while we work Mark 13:32-37

I was really shocked to receive a flyer at the apple butter festival in Grand Rapids this year. The flyer wouldn't have been that shocking if it was just a Christian message. But this flyer predicted the exact date of the end of the world. I think the intent would be that there would be some action on my part to get ready for Christ to return.

Yet we know from this passage in scripture that no one knows the day or the hour, not even Jesus or the angels, so surely no one here on earth would know. I wouldn't claim to know more than Jesus, would you?

So I wondered, does Jesus coming really make a difference in our lives. Are we really watching for Jesus return as he instructs us to do in this passage to day.

I remember vividly when we had our first joint Ascension day service with Pastor Lutz. He said we shouldn't be looking up waiting for Jesus. Jesus promised to come back in the same way he left. But literally looking up all the time just wouldn't be practical any way. We would be distracted from what we are doing here now.

The people in thessollica thought just that. They thought Jesus was coming very soon. So they quit their jobs, stopped taking care of themselves because they figured jesus would return and none of that would matter. Then Paul urges them to get back to work. They needed to take care of their families. They couldn't just stand around and watch till the end.

Watching is going to have to be a little differently than just standing around looking up. We have to look around here in this life because we have to live and work and take care of things here. This is where God has placed us.

Yet we can just forget about God completely. We must fix our eyes on him constantly. A man noticed that he had some problems with some plumbing in his house. He immediately called the plumber to come over and fix it right away.

The plumber showed up within an hour and fixed the problem instantly. But then the plumber came to the man very concerned and asked him about the bomb that was ticking in his basement. But the man said, don't worry, that bomb was here when I bought the house. It doesn't have a timer on it that you can see. I have learned to just let it tick. Besides, I am too busy to worry about that right now.

Do you know when the bomb is set to explode? Exclaimed the plumber. No, said the man, but I'm not concerned about it. I have too many things to do, here is the check for your work. Good bye.

This is how many Christians think about Christ's return. The situation is an urgent matter, but we are too busy doing our other things here on earth to think about it. In this world we sometimes become complacent about our Christianity. We have lost our passion, our urgency, and our opportunities.

We often become like the church in revelation. We are neither hot or cold, instead we are lukewarm. Remember that there are people dying and going to hell every day. And I think that we can more readily watch for opportunities. We might be casually waiting for opportunities instead of watching for them.

Too often we are caught up in our own little world acting like the world revolves around us instead of Jesus. Right now we need to watch by thinking spiritually. A couple weeks ago we read a passage in Bible study that really sparked a lot of discussion. Set your minds on things above, not on things of the earth.

First of all, we could be thinking about our eternal destination for ourselves and for others. We get caught up in the things of this world instead of the things that will really last forever in heaven.

We think about and covet material things, thinking that when we receive them we will be fulfilled.

It's not that we really need to be thinking about something else, it's just that we need to be looking at the same thing in a different light. The church is people not a building. People have health concerns physically but it is their spiritual health that really matters. When wondering about who should serve in leadership positions we should consider who is being filled with God's word, not just an individual's abilities in this world.

We need to be thinking in terms of relationships, not things. If God wanted to he could drop every good thing in our laps, but he is concerned with our heart and soul, not our physical well being. We also can look beyond how much money the church brings in and be more concerned about how many people are really connected with God.

As we go along with our jobs we watch while we work. Kind of like the seven dwarves that whistled while they worked. They could work at the same time, even though whistling was a skilled task in itself. We also can walk and chew gum at the same time, can't we?

Deuteronomy has a great passage that commands us to talk about God while we walk along the road, teach it to our children along the way, and put it on the doorposts so that we are constantly reminded of God's laws and covenant.

This OT passage can be translated in to God's new covenant with us through Jesus. Now we talk about Christ as we walk along the road, we teach his love to our children while we drive in the car or we eat our meals together. And I sometimes really just need to see a cross as a reminder. I often drive across the Midwest to get to Missouri, and I almost everytime am shocked to see that huge cross on the interstate. You might know what I am talking about. What an incredible reminder of God's love.

Just this last week I was instructing some students to draw four squares together and what do you know, their was a cross. It is amazing how often a cross shows up in our lives. We can even intentionally remind ourselves of it.

God sometimes purposely intervenes to remind us. Every time we get a disease or need surgery, we are really reminded how much we need God. It is when we have struggles that we are pushed to sit in the lap of God so he can help us see things from a spiritual stand point.

Don't you think that the world, and all it's wealth is ripping families apart. Big houses, expensive cars and nice things start to slowly become more important than people for us. Soon enough we find ourselves alone, heartbroken, fooled by the world's promises.

So Christ says, "Be on guard, be alert" Haven't we heard this somewhere else in the Bible. Be alert the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. This is a spiritual battle, not between flesh and blood, but between demons and angels and spiritual souls.

And it doesn't hurt to be watching also for the actual end. It doesn't hurt to remember that Christ will return and it will be all over. This world will pass away. But Christ will not. I think it is good to remember that this will all be gone.

Story of the people Archetect and his wife who went ot Honduras.

Maybe there is more to life than just this boring Jesus stuff. Maybe it is time to seize the day, take a chance, be a little more aggressive. And then we will be watching, we will be watching so close we will be on the edge of our seat. Story about redwings Hockey. Guys in the way. Anticipating the score. And God is certainly more exciting that watching sports, isn't he? We will be so to speak living on the edge.