

Ready Or Not, He Will Come

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

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It may be a while since you played it, but I am sure we all remember hide and seek. Hiding, we would try not to be caught, but for the seeker – there was the challenge. They would hide their eyes and count to give the players a chance to hide, and then you would hear: “Ready or not, here I come”.

Now...Four things ...were always certain ...in the game:

1. The Seeker was surely coming.
2. The Seeker was coming when they were good and ready and not before.
3. The Seeker was coming, whether you were ready or not
4. And if you were not ready, you would pay the consequences.

How much this game of hide and seek parallels the return, The Second Coming, of Jesus Christ. Paul exhorted the church at Thessalonica and taught us today the importance of readiness.

"Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well of that the day." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2)

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is one of the most repeated teachings in all Scripture.

Paul was well aware of Christ's return and shared this truth with the believers in Thessalonica. Paul told them he should not have to remind them about this truth again. That Christ would return it is a certainty. The Scriptures inform us that the Messiah will return as a thief in the night." (1 Thessalonians 5:2)

The question is not "If Jesus will return?" but "When he will return?" and Paul answers this question with an obvious response, "No one knows." Paul explains this by describing the time of Jesus' return as A thief in the night, just as a thief plans his entry at an uncertain time that is when least expected so that it will be with the coming of the Son of Man.

Paul, in our reading this morning, continues with these words:

"When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and the day; we are not of the night or darkness." (1 Thessalonians 5:3-5)

Throughout scripture, the "Day of the Lord" was the designation of that latter time when God would pour out His wrath on the ungodly.

After Jesus returns, He will begin to pour out His judgments upon them in a time often called the "Great Tribulation." The tragedy of this day is that so many, so many will be unprepared. And not only will they be unprepared, we are told they will be deceived. And they will actively deceive others as they proclaim we have "Peace and Safety." Many will be convinced that there is no danger when, in fact, destruction is at the doorstep, and the end is near. We must live daily with an Attitude of Watchfulness with an attitude of readiness. Hear God's Word to us: *"So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep; sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night." (1 Thessalonians 5:6-7)*

Much As a soldier is commanded to "Stay alert while on his post", so must we as Christians. Paul instructs us to watch "Gregorio", which means staying wide awake and vigilant. Beloved The command to watch is in the present tense, which means this state of being vigilant must be a continual practice of every Christian. It is a matter of attitude.

A Roman soldier would be put to death for falling asleep on his watch. The outcome could be just as fatal for those not constantly alert. We, as disciples, must be Disciplined in our walk. We are image bearers of the Lord and should be diligent in that calling. Disciples know who they are in Christ and seek to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

Paul is warning us that we must not allow anything to invade our lives that will harm our moral alertness. An overabundance of alcohol will inhibit a person's ability to focus and make wise decisions. A person does not become drunk with just one drink. Slowly, the drinker becomes intoxicated until a point is reached when all of the senses become blurred, and You become a danger to yourself and others.

In the same way, if we do not control sin in our lives, we could soon be overcome by its effects. An intoxicated person will pass out and become oblivious to the world. An uncontrolled sinner will Spiritually pass out and become oblivious to the workings of the flesh and the evil one.

We must live daily in the light in obedience to God's word. We must be prepared. We must be alert and prepared at all times. There is a unique spiritual Peace in knowing that you are always ready and prepared for the Coming of Our Lord. If you are ready, you will have God's heart—a spiritual yearning to serve others and a desire to love them.

During one of his expeditions to the Antarctic, Sir Ernest Shackleton left some of his men on Elephant Island. He did this intending to return for them and carry them back to England. But he was delayed. By the time he could return for them, the sea had frozen, and he had no access to the island. He tried to reach them three times but was prevented by the ice. Finally, on his fourth attempt, he broke through and located a narrow channel. To his surprise, he found the crew members waiting, supplies packed and ready to board. They were soon on their way back to England. He asked them how they knew he was coming that day. They told him they did not know when he would return, but they were sure he would. So, every morning, the group's leader rolled up his bag, packed his gear, and told the crew to do the same. Every day, instructing them, "Get your things ready, boys. The boss may come today."

Just as a thief plans his entry at an uncertain time, that is, when least expected, it will be with the coming of the Son of Man. We are Children of the living God and Children of the Light.

Be ready. Be prepared. Be Vigilant.

99, 100... Ready or Not, He Will Come.

Amen and Amen!