

Sermon 115: Responding Appropriately to God's Word: Luke 21:29-38

Text: Luke 21:29-38 "And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him..."

Introduction: Christ concludes with an appeal to trust God's promises.

- **The spoken word: Hebrews 1:1-2** "God...spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..."
 - **Isaiah 55:11** "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it..."
 - **Isaiah 40:8** "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever..."
- **The written word: Matthew 5:18** "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled..."
 - **Psalms 19:7** "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple..."
 - **2 Peter 1:16-21** "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost..."
- **The unbreakable word: Titus 1:2** "God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began..."

Summary: Christ is coming again, and we should be living with a healthy anticipation of His promised return.

Proposition: We must live consistently with what we affirm and who we are.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: The Day of the LORD is imminent: 21:31 "See and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. ..."

- **Three similar yet distinct concepts:**

- **The Rapture of the church is imminent:**

- **1 Corinthians 15:50-53** "I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed..."
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope...we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words..."

- **The Day of the LORD is imminent:**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-4** "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...then sudden destruction cometh upon them...and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief..."
 - **2 Peter 3:8-10** "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..."

- **The Second Coming will be preceded by signs taking place during the Day of the LORD:**

- **Luke 21:30-32** "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand..."
- **2 Thessalonians 2:1-5** "Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

Truth 2: His word is completely reliable: 21:32 "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled..."

- **Some events point to an immediate future event: 21:29-30**
"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand..."
- **These events confirm His word and encourage His people: 21:30** "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand..."
- **This promise is absolutely certain: 21:32** "Verily I say unto you..."
- **When it comes to pass, it will happen rapidly: 21:32** "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled..."
- **Nothing can stop what God has promised:** "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away..."
- **Those who ignore His word will be taken by surprise:** "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth..."
- **Believers will escape these things:** "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass..."

Truth 3: We must take personal inventory: 21:34-35 "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth..."

- **He makes a distinction between two groups:**
 - **You:** "Take heed to yourselves..."
 - **Them:** "A snare shall it come on all them..."
- **Why the distinction matters:**

- **The warning is given within the context of security.**
 - **Warning:** It is possible to live inconsistently with what you know.
 - **Warning:** There are real consequences for this inconsistency.
 - **Security:** These things will come upon them, not you.
- **Comparing scripture with scripture makes this concept clearer:**
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:1-4** "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...then sudden destruction cometh upon them...and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief..."
 - **2 Peter 2:4-9** "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah...bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished..."
- **Why the example of Lot matters:**
 - He is called just.
 - He was constantly vexed by his personal choices.
 - He was physically removed from the city before its destruction.
 - He lost everything but his life.
 - His choices and end are a warning to compromised believer.
- **The specific warning:**
 - **Do not be like a person with a hangover:** "Overcharged with surfeiting..."
 - **Do not be like an intoxicated person:** Drunkenness..."
 - **Do not be anxious:** "Cares of this life..."
 - **Do not be unprepared:** "So that day come upon you unawares..."

Truth 4: Our lives should reflect who we are: 21:36 "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man..."

- **Three facts about "being accounted worthy:"**

- **Fact 1: Our acceptance before God is entirely rooted in our union with Christ: Philippians 3:8-9** "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith..."

- **Fact 2: Our choices should reflect who we are in Christ:**

- **Because we are righteous in Christ, we should walk obediently: Romans 6:5-6, 11-13** "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin... reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body...Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead..."

- **Because we are called to a holy walk, we should walk consistently: Ephesians 4:1** "I the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called..."

- **Fact 3: When our actions are consistent with our position, we are walking in a manner worthy of who we are in Christ: 2 Thessalonians 1:4-7** "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure...that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us..."

- **Two potential causes for a wrong response to Christ's return:**

- **Cause 1: Someone does not actually believe it is true.**
- **Cause 2: Someone is living inconsistently with who they are in Christ.**

- **Three potential outcomes:**

- **Outcome 1: Eternal destruction to the unbeliever:**
Revelation 20:15 "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire..."
- **Outcome 2: Loss and shame at the Judgment Seat: 1**
Corinthians 3:15 "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire..."
- **Outcome 3: Commendation and reward at the Judgment Seat: Matthew 25:21** "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord..."

Application:

- We must take God's word literally.
- We cannot allow delayed fulfillment to cause us to become complacent.
- We must live with an anticipation of Christ's return.
- We must live consistent with who we are in Christ.