



SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE  
FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

“Be Ready” | Rev. Craig Chapman | December 1, 2019

Isaiah 2:1-5 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, 3 and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. 5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Romans 13:11-14 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 24:36-44 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came

*Ad Ventus*: Latin phrase denoting the act of coming towards. Jesus urges His disciples to prepare for what is surely coming, to be ready for the future reality. Christians celebrate three advents—the first advent when God became man in the person of Jesus, the second when Jesus Christ shall return at the end of the church age, and the third advent of the daily, constant coming of the Holy Spirit’s power into the hearts of believers.

Jesus warns in Mt 24 that the timetable on the second coming has begun and that believers must prepare. Signs of the end include (1) Elijah will return to prepare the way, as fulfilled by John the Baptist; (2) the Son of Man will suffer, die, and be raised; (3) The Temple will be razed; (4) the disciples will meet persecution; (5) the Good News will reach all nations. All signs have been fulfilled.

**What does “ready” look like?**

It does not look like unbelief, as in the days of Noah. Jesus Christ’s second coming should affect every part of our approach to life, unlike the men of Noah’s time, who ignored the warning signs. Advent turns our faces to our fallen, broken world without sugarplum escapism. It recognizes the Genesis fall from grace into sin and brings good news to lives filled with bad news, the promise of the return of Shekinah glory to lead believers back to Eden and God’s glory. The entire world will revel in God’s presence. Compassionate Christians long for justice to prevail everywhere and for the end of war. If your life is too comfortable to long for the second coming, step outside the historically rare bubble of 21<sup>st</sup> century America to see the rest of the world in its poverty, injustice, and suffering. The second advent should raise our hopes for justice and move us from our fatal self-absorption to readiness for the judgement to come under Jesus. We must forgive those who have sinned against us and reconcile with those against whom we have sinned. Until Jesus comes, the judgement seat is empty. Only God can fill that place, not we ourselves.

**Our “ready” problem**

We want judgement on others, but not on ourselves. As long as we resist seeing ourselves as deserving judgement, we cannot be ready for Christ’s return. Jesus already experienced judgement for us on the cross when he cried out, “My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?” When we look at His judgement and are moved by His sacrifice, we learn to long for His return. Aids to our preparation: All Saints’ Ten spiritual formation practices, especially fasting and moderation, which make room for Jesus. What fasting is needed for your season of preparation? Pray, looking for opportunities to give, rather than get, e.g. limit presents to each other in order to provide basic necessities for those who lack them.

and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. 42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

### **Application**

Make your mission to consider what might be keeping you from living a “ready” life and abstain or fast so that you might have room to receive Him.

1. Make a list of what demands most of your attention or time. You might ask someone who knows you well to help compile the list. Does it glorify God or prepare for His second coming? What could you do to turn your life towards the return of Jesus?
2. Are there activities or expenditures you could forego in order to share more of your time or resources with others? How will you transfer your abundance to someone else in a way that will benefit him or her and glorify God?
3. Consider thoughtfully rereading these passages from God’s word while praying for a life that reflects belief in Jesus and a yearning for His return. Note what you have learned from your rereading