

The Enemy Around You

Part 1 Devotional

Day 1

Matthew 24:32–35; Matthew 24:4–13

Devotional

Jesus' fig tree illustration on the Mount of Olives is not a cute nature story; it's a sober call to spiritual alertness in a world that will increasingly oppose God and His people. He says, "As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near" (Matt. 24:32). In other words: you should be able to read the signs of the times as clearly as you read the seasons. Jesus expects His people to observe and discern. "When you see all these things, recognize that He is near, at the door" (v. 33). We are not called to panic over headlines, nor to ignore them. We are called to observe them through a biblical lens. A sleepy church is easy prey for deception; an alert church anchors itself in truth and hope. The rising temperature of evil tests the quality of our faith. Are we driven more by fear of circumstances, or by faith in Christ's promises? The "enemy around us" presses from the outside, but how we respond is shaped by the "enemy within"—our fears, idols, and laziness. To be awake is not just to know what's wrong with the world; it is to know Who is coming, and to let that certainty shape how we live right now.

Application

Reflection: When you look at the world right now, do you respond more with fear, apathy, or faith and discernment? Which shapes your emotional state more? Are you more informed by Scripture or by your preferred news source and social media?

Action: *Scripture over scroll:* Choose one daily time (10–15 minutes) where you open your Bible before you open news or social media.

Guard your heart, not just your opinions: Ask God to show you if your "awareness" of evil has turned into anger, cynicism, or hopelessness. Repent where needed. Being awake is not the same as being bitter.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus, You told us to watch and be ready. Open my eyes to the times I'm living in—not so I can be afraid or angry, but so I can be faithful. Guard my mind from deception and my heart from coldness. Teach me to see my news feed and my world through Your word. Help me to endure with love and courage until You come. Amen."

Day 2

Revelation 2:1–7

Devotional

In a culture that treats “tolerance” as the highest virtue, Jesus praises holy intolerance, the refusal to accept evil as normal or to embrace false teaching as harmless. This is not about being harsh or hateful; it’s about fierce loyalty to the truth and love of Christ. Jesus sees and evaluates His church. “I know your deeds...” is repeated to each church in Revelation. We may be impressed with numbers, buildings, or programs; Jesus looks at faithfulness and purity. He commends Ephesus for not tolerating evil and for testing teachers. Discernment is love in action. Error about God always leads to damage in people’s lives. To refuse to confront false teaching is not compassion; it’s negligence. True love is willing to say, “This is evil; this is false; this is dangerous.” Truth and love must stay together. Ephesus got doctrine and discipline largely right, but Jesus warns them for having left their first love (v. 4). A church that confronts evil but forgets love will become harsh and brittle. A church that emphasizes love but forgets truth will become compromised and useless. Jesus demands both. Biblical intolerance of evil is not about self-righteousness; it’s about loyalty to Jesus and mercy toward those who will be harmed if lies go unchecked.

Application

Reflection: Where are you tempted to over-tolerate (avoid calling anything evil)? Do you become harsh and loveless in your stand for truth? Are there beliefs or practices you know are sinful, but you’ve learned to “tolerate” because resisting them feels costly?

Action: *Name one compromise:* Ask the Holy Spirit to expose one area where you have tolerated something God calls evil (content you watch, jokes you laugh at, dishonest practices at work, bitterness in your heart, etc.). Confess it and make a concrete plan to remove or resist it this week.

Stand with warmth, not weaponry: Choose one way this week to pair truth with love—e.g., gently correct a Christian friend who’s absorbed false ideas, but do it in a way that shows care and humility, not superiority.

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, You walk among Your churches and You know our deeds. Forgive me for where I have tolerated what You call evil or stayed silent when I should have spoken. Give me a tender heart and a firm backbone. Make me someone who clings to truth and overflows with love. Purify my life and my church for Your glory. Amen.

Day 3

Revelation 2:8–11; Revelation 2:12–13

Devotional

Jesus speaks to Smyrna, a suffering church: "Do not fear what you are about to suffer... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). He speaks to Pergamum: "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is... you hold fast My name..." (Rev. 2:13). These churches show us that following Christ has always meant standing firm in hostile territory. Suffering is not failure; it is expected. Smyrna was poor and persecuted, yet Jesus says, "but you are rich" (v. 9). Their tribulation was not a sign that God had abandoned them. It was proof that they belonged to Him in a city dominated by spiritual opposition (called "a synagogue of Satan"). Jesus doesn't promise escape from hardship; He promises the crown of life to those who endure. Some places really are "where Satan dwells." Pergamum was a center of idolatry and emperor worship, and Jesus calls it "where Satan's throne is." He names the spiritual reality behind the visible culture and politics. Jesus knows both the pressure and the faithfulness. He says, "I know where you dwell." He sees where you work, study, and live. He sees the cost of holding fast His name in an environment that mocks or opposes Him. But Christ has already triumphed, and He calls His people not to fear, but to stand firm and be faithful, even if it costs everything.

Application

Reflection: Where do you "dwell" that feels spiritually hostile (workplace, school, extended family, online environment)? In what concrete ways does that hostility show itself? How do you usually respond to pressure: withdraw, blend in, or courageously hold to Christ?

Action: *Name your Pergamum:* Write down the specific spheres where it feels hardest to live openly as a Christian. Next to each, write one way you can "hold fast His name" there (e.g., refusing to join in gossip, gently speaking biblical truth when asked, refusing to lie, quietly praying for co-workers).

Armor up intentionally: This week, pray through Ephesians 6:10–18 each morning. Name the pieces of armor out loud and ask God to help you consciously "wear" them in your difficult places.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus, You know where I dwell and the pressures I face. Thank You that my suffering or opposition is not hidden from You. Strengthen me to be faithful, even when it costs me reputation, comfort, or relationships. Help me see the spiritual battle behind what I experience, and stand firm in Your strength, not my own. I trust You for the crown of life. Amen."

Day 4

2 Timothy 4:1–5; Galatians 1:6–9

Devotional

Paul warns Timothy that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate... teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Tim. 4:3). He also writes to the Galatians, astonished that they are deserting the true gospel for “a different gospel,” adding, “even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary... he is accursed” (Gal. 1:8). The problem is not only false teachers; it is itching ears. When we want affirmation more than transformation, we’ll collect teachers who tell us what we want to hear—about sin, sexuality, money, success, or even the nature of God. This can happen in Christian churches as easily as in other religions or ideologies. In an age of spiritual confusion and religious pluralism, the church’s most urgent need is not clever arguments, but clear, courageously held gospel truth.

Application

Reflection: Where are your “itching ears”? Are there biblical teachings you instinctively resist (on repentance, judgment, holiness, self-denial), and therefore prefer teachers who downplay them? If someone asked you, “What is the gospel?” could you explain it clearly from Scripture, not just with vague phrases?

Action: *Clarify the gospel:* Write out a concise explanation of the gospel in your own words, then check it against key passages (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:1–4; Eph. 2:1–9; Rom. 3:21–26). Adjust where needed so it matches Scripture, not tradition or opinion.

Evaluate your input: Make a list of the main spiritual voices you listen to (pastors, authors, podcasts, influencers). Do they clearly preach repentance and faith in Christ crucified and risen? Do they treat Scripture as final authority? Do they confront sin, or mainly offer comfort? Be willing to step back from any voice that consistently distorts or dilutes the gospel.

Prayer: “Father, thank You for the true gospel of Your Son—Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for my salvation. Forgive me for the times I’ve wanted my ears tickled instead of my heart transformed. Root me deeply in Your word so I can recognize and reject any ‘different gospel,’ no matter how impressive the messenger. Make me a faithful guardian and joyful sharer of the gospel. Amen.”

Day 5

Esther 4:12–16

Devotional

Throughout Scripture, God's people are never called to hide from culture, but to live faithfully in the midst of it. Esther risked her life in the royal court; Mordecai's words to Esther are famous: "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). She did not choose her circumstances, but she chose obedience in them. You may feel your workplace, neighborhood, or community involvement is random. In reality, God has placed you there as His ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20). Our ultimate allegiance is heavenly, but our responsibility is earthly. "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20), yet that heavenly citizenship should make us the best earthly neighbors, workers, and citizens—people who stand against evil, speak truth, care for the vulnerable, and point others to Christ.

A watching world is asking not only what we believe, but why we live differently. Healthy engagement with the "enemy around us" means we are neither naive nor hostile, but deeply rooted in Christ and actively loving and serving where He has placed us.

Application

Reflection: Where has God placed you "for such a time as this"? Think in terms of neighborhood, workplace, school, family, and community. What causes you to avoid interacting with where God has placed you?

Action: *Define your sphere of influence:* Write down the top 2–3 spheres where you have regular contact with unbelievers.

For each sphere, answer: What are the main needs or problems here (spiritual, emotional, practical) What is one small way I can bring Christ's presence and truth into this space?

Commit to taking an action to share the Love of Jesus in one of your spheres this week.

Prayer: "Sovereign God, thank You that You have placed me where I am on purpose. Forgive me for apathy, fear, or misplaced hope in human systems. Like Esther, Nehemiah, and Paul, help me to see my position, rights, and opportunities as tools for Your kingdom, not my comfort. Show me how to be a faithful witness in my community—to speak truth, oppose evil, love my neighbors, and make much of Jesus in all I do. Start revival in me, and use me as You will. Amen."