



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of Watching!

Luke 21:20-38

Message #64 of 70 – S854

Sermon given on July 28, 2019



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

A Story of Watching!

Luke 21:20-38

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 21**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- This week I responded to an online question from someone I don't know
- They were fearful because of everything they hear on the news about the world ending
- If you watch the news long enough someone will say the world will end because of global warming
- Someone else will say it is because of nuclear weapons proliferation
- And then another person will say the world will end because of a pandemic – some incurable disease will wipe out all life on earth
- Or maybe it is going to be an asteroid colliding with the planet
- The world as we know it will be coming to an end
- But not because of any one of those things
- God has already determined to recreate the earth **Revelation 21:1**
Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.
- We don't have to be afraid of a zombie apocalypse
- Though the things people are afraid are going to end the world are the things God is going to use when it comes time to judge this world
- Christians don't need to worry about how the world is going to end
- It is not going to end as long as there are Christians on the earth
- But that is for a different time and message
- We are not watching for the end of the world
- Let's pray and then look at what we ought to be watching for
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of Watching!**
- Last time, Jesus was walking with the disciples
- They were commenting on how beautiful the temple was

- Jesus dropped a bombshell on them **Luke 21:6**

These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.

- They naturally want to know when that is going to happen – what sign they should be watching for – and when will He return to establish the kingdom of God?
- Instead of answering their questions directly, He warned them about false messiahs and the persecution that would come
- In today’s text, Jesus tells them what to be watching for

- **Luke 21:20-21**

- Jesus had already told them that Jerusalem would be destroyed
- Here He tells them how – an invading army – Romans – 68-70AD
- He then tells them why it will happen

- **Luke 21:22**

- There is a terrible cost for rejecting Jesus **John 1:10-11**

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

- God in the flesh offered salvation to them and they rejected it
- To reject God’s amazing grace is to invite His terrible wrath
- Especially because Jesus came so that anyone who believes in Him can escape that wrath **John 3:16-18**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- Jesus is warning the Christians to flee from the coming judgment upon Jerusalem
- Josephus tells us that Christians fled right before the Romans arrived
- He also tells us that nearly one million Jews died and many were taken as slaves
- The Roman general Titus came to Jerusalem in 68AD to lay siege to the city – two years later he conquered it
- It was a horrible time for anyone trapped inside the city

- **Luke 21:23-24**

- ‘Jerusalem will be trampled’ – began with the Babylonian invasion in 606BC and until ‘the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled’

- Will be fulfilled when Jesus comes back in the Second Coming
- There will be some signs that it is close
- **Luke 21:25-26**
- Turn to **Joel 2**
- At the end of the ‘times of the Gentiles’ there is going to be a period of time that we refer to as the Tribulation – also the time of Jacob’s trouble
- It is a time when God prepares to save a remnant of the Jew – His Chosen People
- **Joel 2:30-32**

- Turn back to **Luke 21**

- All of humanity will be in a state of distress, perplexity, and fear
- But Christians won’t experience that **John 14:1-3**

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

- It is in Paul’s epistle to the Thessalonians that we get the concept of the Rapture of the church **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

- That will take place before the end of the times of the Gentiles
- After the church is taken out of the world by Christ – a seven-year period called the Tribulation will begin
- During that time God will judge the world for sin and for rejecting salvation through Christ
- The end of the times of the Gentiles comes with the Second Coming
- **Luke 21:27**

- The Bible teaches that Christ, the Messiah will come twice to this earth – the first time – about 2,000 years ago to be the offering that takes away the sins of the world

- It is because of that sacrifice that we can be saved, forgiven of our sins, freed from the power of sin, freed from guilt, and assured of eternal life in heaven

- That doesn’t mean life is going to be easy or trouble-free

- **Luke 21:28**
 - ‘when these things begin to happen’ = wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and persecution
 - ‘look up and lift up your head’ – the ‘these things’ of life have a way of pulling our vision down to the things of this world
 - For Kelly and me it is currently the water damage to our home
 - It has been hard on our family – hard not to get caught up in the ‘things’
 - Jesus says, ‘look up, because your redemption draws near’
 - Redemption = salvation or deliverance
 - We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but we haven’t been delivered from the presence and effects of sin in this world
 - When the hard, painful, inconvenient, annoying things of life are pulling you down – look up – choose to lift up your head
 - It is about making a conscious choice to look for God in your circumstances and to rise above them
 - Easier said than done, but possible **Mark 9:23**
- If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.**
- As hard as some of your circumstances might be, they can be a reminder to look for Christ’s deliverance – He is coming back for you
 - Jesus emphasizes that point with a parable
 - **Luke 21:29-33**
 - The earth and the heavens will burn into nothingness before a single word uttered by Christ fails to come true
 - He closes this discourse with an exhortation
 - **Luke 21:34-35**
 - Turn to **Titus 2**
 - ‘take heed to yourselves’ = watch out for yourselves
 - Gives us three things to watch out for
 - First two are not a big surprise – carousing = unrestrained behavior when drunk
 - Notice the third one – cares of this life
 - Those are things like water damage under your house, or getting fired, financial problems, or health issues, or relationship problems

- I can tell you that I have had a hard time not letting my heart get weighed down
- We had a huge set-back in the repair work this week – potentially costing us thousands of dollars – that we don't have
- My heart got weighed down – but then I have been trying to look up – choosing to lift my head – Jesus is coming for me some day
- These things are just things – cares of this life – they don't translate to heaven
- I can't let this or anything else distract me from living in anticipation of Christ's return
- **Titus 2:11-14**
- Turn back to **Luke 21**
- We were created for and saved for good works
- We have to be careful not to get distracted by the cares of this life
- Jesus could be back at any moment
- Jesus concludes with a timely message for His disciples
- **Luke 21:36**
- Some very difficult things lie ahead for the disciples of Christ
- Not only that – this world is moving rapidly toward its judgment
- We should all desire that we would be 'counted worthy to escape' what is coming upon this world when God pours out His righteous wrath on a wicked, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world **Mark 13:19-20**

For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

- So how can we be 'counted worthy to escape' that terrible time and to stand before the Son of Man? **Acts 16:31**

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...

- As terrible as it is, this world deserves what is coming to it
- I am thankful that Jesus counted me worthy to escape that through the forgiveness of my sins
- God's desire is that we would all escape what is coming to this world
- The last couple of verses and then we will close
- **Luke 21:37-38**

- Jesus is just a couple of days from the cross – teaching in the temple
- Next time we come to the Last Supper and then the cross
- After Jesus dies, is buried, rises and then ascends, things get harder and harder for the disciples
- They needed to hear what Jesus taught them here
- Just the same as we need to hear them when things get hard for us
- Three quick things as we wait for Jesus to return for us
- First – **Keep looking up!** Don't let the things and cares of this life get you down – look up and lift your head above your circumstances
- Jesus wouldn't tell us to do it if it wasn't possible to do with the Holy Spirit's help
- Second – **Keep Watching!** Jesus is coming back soon – live as if you believe that is true – look at the things of this world through the lens of His soon coming
- Third – **Keep Praying!** Ask for His help with the first two – ask Him to help you reach those who are not ready – ask Him to show you the good works you ought to be doing while you wait
- Jesus could be back at any moment – are you ready? Get ready!
- Keep looking up – keep watching – keep praying
- If you do that, you will learn to say as John did at the end of the Revelation “Come, Lord Jesus!”
- **Pray!**