

The Parish of Wellow

Searching Issues

What do we need to know about the second coming?

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during next week to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

Luke 17 vv 20-35

20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,

21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is among you."

22 Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it.

23 Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them.

24 For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.

25 But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

26 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.

32 Remember Lot's wife!

33 Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

34 I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.

35 Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left."

2. Sermon Notes

2.1 Introduction

- Whenever something climatic occurs in our world; whether it be "The First Persian Gulf War" in 1990, or the September 11 Terrorist Attack in 2001 or the latest invasion of Iraq we hear the question, "Do you think this could be the beginning of the end times?"
- The subject of the "end times," or eschatology has always been an area of fascination for people down the ages.
- It was clearly an area of fascination for the disciples.
- From the above passage Jesus teaches his disciples, and by inference us, his church today, three important lessons about the second coming.

2.2 Lesson 1: We will not know the exact timing of Jesus' return and we should therefore not trust anyone who thinks they do'. Verses 20 and 21: "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is among you."

- The Pharisees saw themselves as the experts on the coming of the kingdom of God but Jesus warns his disciples in these verses that we are not to trust anyone who says to us, "I know when the Kingdom is coming." or "I know when the last days will be."
- The irony here is huge, because the Pharisees were arrogantly and unknowingly asking the kingdom's King, indeed the King of Kings, when His kingdom would come."
- They thought that their position as religious experts assured them that they knew the "where" and "when" of the appearance of the kingdom of God.
- They were trying to make the coming of Jesus fit their preconceived notions and expectations they were missing out the greatest thing that had ever happened in history, that God has put on human flesh and was dwelling there among them hence Jesus' phrase 'the kingdom of God is among you.'

2.3 Lesson 2: The disciples and his church are not to be obsessed in study and thought about end times or eschatology verses 23 to 25. "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.'

- Having answered the Pharisees, Jesus now turned to his disciples and instructs them not to become so obsessed with His return that they end up doing nothing else except trying to track down the time of His return.

- Many Christians can become so obsessed by prophecy that they spend lots of time fretting about the future and how will it all end!
- But God is concerned with Today. Today is where He wants to meet us and provide for us.

2.4 Lesson 3: Jesus teaches his disciples and us, the church, that we must not allow worldly concerns to dim our desire for the Lord's return: verses 26 and 27 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

- Jesus teaches here that Noah's neighbours were not necessarily evil; they were just too busy eating and drinking, marrying and burying, and conducting business.
- It was not their sin, as great as it was, that damned them to destruction, it was their indifference. They were just too busy to think about the impending judgment.
- The point is that when we live our lives for the things of the world, we lose the life that God intended us to live.
- As Noah built the Ark, he warned the people that God's judgment was coming, yet the indifference of the people as a whole continued until the very day the Noah entered the Ark.
- The attitude of the world in Lot's day was the same as in Noah's day. In verse 28 we see, "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.
- All of these activities stress the preoccupation and the indifference of these people. Yet they are not much different than many people today, who are so preoccupied with the concerns of this life that spiritually speaking they are shallow, complacent, comfortable - and lost.

2.5 Lesson 4: Jesus tells his disciples that he is coming again and the resulting judgment will be selective and final verses 29 and 30: But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

- What Jesus reveals is not intended for us to seek or develop an exact pattern for the end times, but for us to prepare our hearts.
- But, says Jesus, just like when the flood started or when God started to destroy Sodom so too when Jesus returns verse 31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.
- Just as in Noah's day people were given time to repent and follow God so to have we been given time to repent and follow Jesus. But at the appointed hour judgment will be sudden and climatic.
- To underscore how total and swift this judgment will be, Jesus notes that people will not have time to grab things out of their homes to take with them as they flee. Nor can workers in the field go home to recover their possessions. There will be no time to retrace their steps.
- Those who live for eternity will be ready to drop everything to welcome His coming.
- In verse thirty-two, the believer is cautioned "Remember Lot's wife." Even Lot's wife was so consumed with life in Sodom that she looked back in spite of the angel's warning (Gen 19:17). Perhaps Lot's wife just cannot imagine living without all the "things" she has had to leave behind and looks back with one lingering look. That one lingering look cost her heavily according to Genesis 19:26: "But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

2.6 Jesus is coming again, make no mistake about it, and whether we believe it or not, or whether we are ready or not, HE IS COMING!!!

- For those that know Him there is nothing to fear.
- For those who know that they do not know Him there is every reason to prepare.
- The moments that remain to each one of us should motivate us to reach out and inform.
- Every moment, therefore, until the Lord returns is an opportunity to be an instrument for change in the destiny of someone who does not know Jesus personally. Are we challenged by the urgency of this task?

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 What is eschatology? Why are we so fascinated by it?

3.2 A friend of yours says that we only need to read Nostradamus to know the exact date when the world will end. What would your response be?

3.3 Which book in Bible has eschatology as its major theme? How does Jesus encourage us to approach this book?

3.4 What was it that the majority of people living in Noah's day and the time of Sodom got wrong?

3.5 Why did Lot's wife get turned into a pillar of salt?

3.6 If Jesus was to return tomorrow, how prepared would you be? How should we be preparing others?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293