

JESUS IS COMING TO TAKE US HOME

Are you like other “good” people? -- Are you like God?

Matthew 24:37-44

TEXT: *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Put yourself in their shoes. After 120 years of building the awesome water-proofed box, or ark, that God had commanded him to build, the day of judgment arrived: ***The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ... On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ... as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.*** Ge 7 Put yourself in their shoes. Looking for the last time at that perfect and beautiful creation; it's perfect climate all over the globe; it's gentle seas; it's rolling hills and mountains that were easy to climb and that offered nothing formidable or threatening to the humans for whom the Lord had made all these things. With tear-filled eyes and heavy hearts Noah and his wife looked out the massive door of the ark until the mighty hand of God closed and sealed it as the Bible says: ***Then the LORD shut him in.*** The judgment would now begin. Climate change, designed by God's own hand, would rapidly destroy all life on the face of the earth.

Now we live in this second world, a world vastly different than the one that the Lord had created and then changed by the mighty flood. But this world, too, is about to be changed, not by climate change, but by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter writes: ***...long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ... That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.*** 2 Pe 3 Jesus, who is the Judge who is coming on this Last Day of the World is COMING TO TAKE US HOME. Before us is our Lord's warning to consider who we are who expect to go to heaven when he comes. Each of us must ask the question: Am I a good person? Or, Am I like God?

It was just too much for the people to believe. A man building an ark and voicing the warning that the Lord was about to send a universal flood. But it wasn't just the ark that made them snicker at the old man and laugh at his apparent dementia, it was what he was preaching. The inspired apostle Peter clearly points out that while Noah managed the building of the ark, he continued his full-time ministry of the Gospel. Peter writes: ***(God) protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness...*** 2 Pe 2 Noah was a preacher of the Gospel, the good news of God's plan to send a Savior from sin, death and the devil. This was his work, along with this new project that gave humanity 120 years to think about the power and might of God, along with man's sin and God's gracious promise of a Savior. But nobody cared about preaching, about sin, or about a Savior.

Jesus points to this as the way things will be at the time of His coming on the Last Day: ***As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*** We live in a world that will not deny the historical facts of Jesus' birth, crucifixion and death. Just as the first world could not deny that an ark was being built, and that a man

was preaching, so today, no one denies Jesus' birth.

What they do not care about is that Jesus was born to die for our sins. The world does not want forgiveness, it wants it sinning: party animals want to be party animals; homosexuals want to continue in their perversion; the rich want to get richer; the powerful want more power; and there is no repentance, and so there is no need for a Savior, and finally, there is no reason to believe that God would ever do such a thing as to send anyone to hell.

But God didn't send Jesus to earth to die for "good" people. Anyone who believes he is a "good" person must also believe that he doesn't need Jesus. And they are those who think that they do not need Jesus are those who don't feel the desire to worship him, hear his Word, or have to obey him as Savior AND King! Even among us who are gathered here today because we love Jesus and WANT to worship him, there are those who want to look like us by having their name on a membership list, but are rarely seen among us because they are busy with other things. Jesus didn't come here the first time to die for the "good" people, that is, for those who don't think that they need a spiritual physician, but for the sins of all humanity. It's as Scripture says:

...(Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. He 9

Be ready for Jesus' coming, not by comparing yourself to other "good" people, but by comparing yourself to God Himself!

Now that's truly a hopeless thought, for who can ever be as good as God? Only those who put their hope in what God has promised concerning the Savior of the world can also boldly stand before the Lord and declare: I am already judged righteous because through Jesus' blood and righteousness God has taken away the sins of the world, including mine! The Bible says that **Abraham believed and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness...** Ge 15. And then it says: **The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness-for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.** Ro 4 Now, who are you going to believe? Are you considered "a good person?" Or, are you declared through faith in Jesus "as good as God himself?" Who are you going to believe? Believe God!

We live among a people who are just like what Jesus says the world will be like when he comes again on Judgment Day. Jesus says: **For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.** They were all doing normal-life, everyday good things, but they were not "going to church." The Lord and his word was far from their hearts, because they already thought that they were good people. But then the flood came.

Jesus says that as the end of the world draws near, not everyone will look like gross sinners: **Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.** On the outside, these men and women look alike: hard workers, moms and dads trying to live right, do their jobs and just be what they are: two men in a field; two women grinding grain. But one man has faith and goes to heaven; the other has no faith and goes to hell. The question for each of us who is listening today, "Which one am I."

Therefore, Jesus warns us to know this answer. He says: **But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.** We know what's coming, we just don't know when. Only by the Gospel that is proclaimed and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper does God, the Holy Spirit, refresh, strengthen, nourish and keep saving faith alive, for we all are weak sinners whose most basic sin is that of ancient Cain: self-righteous arrogance that would seek its assurance by the judgments of others who would number us among themselves: the "good people." It is my sinful nature what seeks its comfort from a consensus of others rather than from the Word of God that declares: **... no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This**

righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Ro 3 Noah believed this and was saved. Abraham believed this and was saved. And you believe this and confess that you are a lost and condemned creature AND by God's declaration and righteous child of God because Jesus came once to pay for our sins and to rise again for our justification, and he is coming again to take you to heaven!

Be ready for Jesus' coming. Martin Luther liked to think that it would be on a Sunday morning when, like in Noah's day, few would be in church. But may NOT be on a Sunday morning, but when we are going about our daily chores. But when you know that God has declared you RIGHTEOUS, you are always ready for Jesus to take you home. Amen