

When Will the Lord Come?
Mark 13:1-8, 24-27, 32-33
November 14, 2021

We are living in a world that is dominated by a philosophy called postmodernism. The term “postmodernism” literally means “after modernism.” It is the philosophy that denies the existence of absolute truth. They say there is no objective or absolute truth. “Truth is relative”, they say. What I consider truth could be different from what you think truth is. Whatever you believe may be true to you, but not to me. With this mind set, they don’t reject religion. Instead, they embrace the idea that all religions are equal. This idea leads to religious pluralism. They say that you or your religion cannot claim to have the truth. It is the truth only for you, not for someone else.

Postmodern culture is entheogenic, which means "the birth of the divine within." In other words, God is within us. Whoever I believe is my god, and whoever you believe is your god. Whatever I believe is my truth, and whatever you believe is your truth. And they may be mutually exclusive. In other words, religion and faith are nothing but our preference and there is nothing absolute.

Because it rejects the absolute truth, we have nothing to guide us. As a result, we have moral chaos in our world. Spiritual liberalism, secular humanism, and social relativism seem to lead us to deeper moral confusion.

Today’s passage tells us that there will be a day when the Christ will come again. Whether people believe this or not, that is the prophecy Jesus gave to his followers.

St. Paul described the end time, or the time when Christ will come, to be like this:

“There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power.”¹

¹ 2 Timothy 3:1-5a. NIV

When you consider Paul's description, don't you think the present world fits into his description?

Jesus said no one knows when Christ will come but he said that there will be enough signs for you to know.

In one of the articles in *Leadership* magazine, missionary Gregory L. Fisher, tells of the time when he taught a class at the West African Bible College. One day the class was discussing the Second Coming of Christ. A student asked Fisher a question that took him by surprise. The question was this: "What will the Lord say when he shouts?"

The student said, "Reverend, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says that Christ will descend from heaven with a loud command. I would like to know what that command will be." Fisher wanted to leave the question unanswered, to tell the student that they must not go past what Scripture has revealed but his mind wandered to an encounter he had earlier in the day with a refugee from the Liberian civil war. The man, a high school principal, told him how he was apprehended by a two-man death squad. After several hours of terror, as the men described how they would torture and kill him, he narrowly escaped. After hiding in the bush for two days, he was able to find his family and escape to a neighboring country. The escape cost him dearly: two of his children lost their lives.

The stark cruelty unleashed on an unsuspecting, undeserving population had touched Fisher deeply. He also saw flashbacks of the beggars that he passed each morning on his way to the office. Every day he saw how poverty destroys dignity, robs people of the best of what it means to be human, and sometimes substitutes the worst of what it means to be an animal. Fisher says even now he is haunted by the vacant eyes of people who have lost all hope.

"Reverend, you have not given me an answer," the student demanded. "What will [Christ] say?"

The question hadn't gone away. "Enough," Fisher said in answer to the question. "He will shout enough! when he returns."

A look of surprise appeared on the face of the student. "What do you mean, enough?" And Fisher said firmly, "Enough suffering. Enough starvation. Enough terror. Enough death. Enough indignity. Enough lives trapped in hopelessness."

Enough sickness, and enough disease. Enough time. ENOUGH! He will say Enough!”²

I believe Reverend Fisher is right. When evil is flooding and overflowing in this world that is the time when the Lord will come. Of course, we don't know when that “Enough” moment is.

So, we need to prepare ourselves each and every day as if today is the day of Christ's return. The question is, “How do we prepare ourselves?”

In his letter to Philippians, Paul says, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”³ That is how we need to prepare ourselves. But what does that mean? Aren't we saved the moment in which we believe and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior? Of course, we are. Yes, we are saved but what that means is our salvation has only begun. Salvation is a process. We need to mature in our relationship with the Lord. Because there are so many things we need to be saved from. We must keep that process of salvation alive. This is something we all have to do for ourselves. No one can do it for us. We have to do it ourselves.

So, how do we do it? We need to focus on the Lord each and every day. We need to recognize Jesus as our Lord each and every day. And live our lives to honor his Lordship in our lives. We need to keep our eyes on the Lord always.

In his book, *Lift High The Cross*, Robert Morgan tells a story about a man named Dave. Dave was a camp counselor at a Christian camp in Arkansas. In the hills above the camp there is a huge cross. It is the camp's landmark and it is lighted at night. It is visible even from the sky in an airplane.

One winter night, a stranger came to Dave's home to ask Dave if he would take him up the mountain to see the cross. It was cold, icy, snowy night. Dave did not want to go up there. So, he tried to discourage him. He said, “It is very dangerous to go up there now. It is dark, icy and slippery. With all this snow, it is even more dangerous.” But this stranger insisted. He seemed desperate to see it. So, Dave reluctantly agreed. As they drove the narrow winding road up the mountain, the stranger told his story.

The night before, the man had set out in his small plane to fly to Little Rock. He was very depressed over his chaotic life. Everything in his life was falling

² Missionary Gregory Fisher Writes: "what Will He ... - Shared by Bobby Scobey - Sermon Illustrations - SermonCentral.com

³ Philippians 2:12.

apart. He wanted to run away from everything. He even thought about killing himself by crashing the plane. As he was thinking about that, a snowstorm suddenly overtook him. He couldn't see anything. He became disoriented and began to panic.

When he called for help, he couldn't tell the control tower where he was because the snow had blotted out the landmarks for miles around him. He couldn't see anything. Then suddenly, from out of nowhere, the man saw a glowing cross in front of him. At first, he thought it was a hallucination but when he described the cross, the traffic controller immediately knew where he was and was able to guide him to safety. "That cross saved me," the man told Dave. He wanted to see that cross. When they reached the hilltop the man said, "I would never have found my way without that cross, and now my life is different. I'll never be the same again."⁴

That man was saved by the cross. That's what the cross has done for so many people throughout history. That is what it does for us as well. It transforms our lives. It brings us back to God.

So, as we wait for the Lord's return, let us focus on the cross, let us fix our eyes on the Lord each and every day, no matter what we face. By doing that, we will always find our way home to God.

⁴ From Lee Griess's sermon, "A Salvation Army Parade", www.esermons.com