

Luke 21:25-36
A “JESUS-WILL-RETURN” LIFESTYLE
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Luke 21:25-36 New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

25 “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

29 He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 “I tell you the truth, this generation[a] will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

34 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

So often in life it is the last moment that counts. The scoring through out the big game can see-saw wildly back and forth or it can be almost non-existent through most of the game, but what matters is the score at the end of the game. For all the time spent on preparations for the turkey, pie and trimmings for Thanksgiving dinner, the moment that mattered the most was when everyone started eating and said how delicious it all was. For all the time and effort you will spend thinking about, looking for and spending money on Christmas gifts this year it is the moment the gifts are opened that really counts. Yes, it is that last moment that makes or breaks it. Everything else simply leads up to that last moment that really counts.

That is also true about the Lord Jesus’ return on the Last Day, the day we call Judgment Day, the final moment of all history. The day of Jesus’ return is the ONLY day that will really matter for anyone and everyone in the history of the world, and that includes you and me! Every other moment in our lives, in the history of the world, simply leads up to the Lord Jesus’ return.

That tells us something about our lives leading up to Jesus' return. We want to be living them in view of Jesus' return. We want our lifestyle to be one which prepares us for that one final moment in our lives, the moment in the history of the world that is really going to count. Let's focus on what Jesus said in our text about his return so that we can learn to live A "JESUS-WILL-RETURN" LIFESTYLE.

I

Among other things, one thing God makes clear to us in the Bible is that there will be a Last Day, a day when the Lord Jesus returns to earth. The Old Testament repeatedly mentions "the Day of the Lord," usually describing it as a day of judgment by God on all people. In all four gospels Jesus talks about the Last Day, Judgment Day, that day on which he returns in all his glory as Judge of all people. Paul and Peter in their letters talk about the Lord's return. Why all this talk about the Lord Jesus' return? It is because God wants us to expect it. He doesn't want us to be caught off guard and unprepared for it. He certainly does not want us to be disappointed and grieved when Jesus returns. And, O what a day that will be, too! Do you know what all is going to happen when the Lord Jesus returns?

Jesus says, "The heavenly bodies will be shaken." That's putting it mildly. Through his Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:10 the Lord Jesus tells us "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."

Do you get the picture? The house, wardrobe, the money in the wallet, the smart phone, iPad or other gadget you get for Christmas will all be destroyed by fire. Every earthly thing that anyone has ever valued will be valueless when the Lord Jesus returns. We'll watch it happen, too! So, maybe we don't want to get attached to those things, huh? Yes, part of A "JESUS-WILL-RETURN" LIFESTYLE is not getting attached to the things of this world.

While the whole universe is being destroyed by fire we are also going to see Jesus "coming in a cloud with power and great glory." What a sight that will be! Such glory is out of this world.

We'll see something else, too. We'll see all the dead coming out of their graves alive. Yes, as this whole world crumbles to pieces and burns up, everyone who has ever lived on earth will rise to live again. As they are coming out of their graves Jesus will have his holy angels divide all of humanity into two groups- one group will consist of those who believe in Jesus as their God and Savior from sin, and the other group will be those who do not believe in Jesus.

The group of unbelievers, vast billions of them, will be cast off to the eternal fires of hell along with the devil and his evil angels. At the same time, the believers, unknown billions of them, will be ascending to meet Jesus in the air. Their bodies will be glorified, made perfect, holy and eternal. They will spend eternity with Jesus in the joys and pleasures of the new heaven and new earth as Jesus promises.

Were you aware of all that? Have you been expecting all those things to happen one of these days? You should, because they will happen! Let your lifestyle reflect that. How? A “JESUS-WILL-RETURN” LIFESTYLE doesn’t mean we are thinking about it twenty-four hours and day seven days a week. But it is in the back of our minds. News of destructive storms like the east coast had last month are reminders that even worse will happen when Jesus returns. View such things as reminders that someday you will lose all and even more in worldly possessions than those people did in that storm. Look at them now and say, “OK, they’re nice to have, but I’m not going to set my heart on them, I’m not going to make chasing after and getting them a main objective in my life because I have to give them all up when Jesus’ returns.”

II

But just expecting the Lord’s return is only half of A “JESUS-WILL-RETURN” LIFESTYLE. The other half is actually preparing for it. Jesus points out three things that will help prepare us for his return.

One is: Don’t let your hearts be weighted down with dissipation and the anxieties of life. In simpler terms Jesus says, “Don’t get depressed because you can’t have everything you want in this world.” We know that to be true, and yet we often live our lives trying to get it anyway! And we get so stressed out in the process. Maybe the credit card debts pile up from all the things we “gotta” have, so we try adding a second or third part-time job, and then try to relax by spending more money on entertainment and recreation only to find out we still can’t make ends meet! Remember what will happen when the Lord returns? BANG! BURN! Those things will all be gone. We’ll be much better prepared to watch those things go up in smoke on the Last Day if we don’t make them so all important now.

We’ll also be prepared for the Lord’s return by taking more time for prayer. “Be always on the watch,” Jesus said, “and pray that you will be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

A hymn writer reminds us, “What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to him in prayer.” Yes, we have lots of sins and griefs to bear in life- lots of sins for which we deserve eternal damnation and griefs which tempt us to turn away from God because we think he doesn’t care. But he does care- Jesus cares more than we can care about them! That’s why he came

here the first time, so he could take care of the problem of our sin and griefs. He did it by living his life perfectly as our Substitute. Not once was he guilty of putting worldly things above spiritual things. He also paid the debt we owe for loving the worldly more than God with his own life-blood on the cross. In him we have forgiveness full and free. In Jesus we have help in all our griefs because he experienced them in his life, too, and he knows what we are going through and he has not only the desire but the ability to help us bear up under them. Prayer, it is a good daily preparation for the Lord's return.

And so is this: "Heaven and earth will pass away," Jesus says, "But my words will never pass away." Jesus' precious words, his Holy Bible- there is no better preparation for Jesus' return than hearing and learning God's Word which is able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. How better to prepare for Jesus' return than to listen to Jesus himself tell us all those things about the Last Day in his Word? Listen to Jesus comfort and assure you in his Word that all will be well with you when he returns because he has already made things well between you and him. Let him reassure you in his Word that he is even now with his Father in heaven preparing a place for you and he will come again to take you to be with him there forever. There is no better way to prepare for the Lord's return than through the hearing and learning of God's Word.

As said at the beginning of the sermon, Jesus' return will be the most important day in the history of the world and in your life. It is the one day that will matter and make all the difference for eternity for all people forever. But that does not mean all the other days are not important. They are important, too, because they are when we live A "JESUS-WILL-RETURN" LIFESTYLE in expectation of, and in preparation for, the Lord's return. Amen.