

Family Bible Series for August 14: Until Jesus comes, live faithfully

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Until Jesus comes, live faithfully

- Luke 21:5-36

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At the funeral of a dear friend, two elderly men stood near the gravesite contemplating their friend's death. They grieved for the widow, the children and the grandchildren. Watching this mournful scene play out in front of them, one of the friends asked the other, "Hey, how much did Charlie leave behind?" Peering over his half-moon glasses, the other man replied, "All of it!"

It was the same type of common sense used by Jesus, when he surprised a group of temple gossips (Luke 21:5-6). Jesus was teaching in the temple and a group of Jewish faithful came by talking about the ornate beauty of the building. Overhearing them, Jesus decided to teach them something very valuable—even more valuable than the stones they adored.

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Readers will be wise to understand at what point this sermon is delivered. First, Jesus had just witnessed the elaborate practice of wealthy people making a show of themselves as they gave their tithes and offerings. He compared them with a poor woman he had witnessed. She gave little in direct comparison to the wealthy, but in the eyes of Jesus, she had given much more.

Second, the other gospels tell of an incident that would have been very close to this sermon. Jesus was very distraught at what was taking place in the temple, especially the corruption of money changers (Mark 11:15-19). The hard working faithful were coming to worship their God, but those inside the temple were cheating them. Jesus turned their tables and took a whip to them. Needless to say, Jesus was very agitated at the priorities of the temple elite. His stern warning about the destruction of the temple took many by surprise.

They asked him, “When will this be and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” Their question was the open door for which he was looking, so he launched into a warning and message. He wanted the temple gossips to understand the importance of eternal treasures, verses the shallow rewards of this world. The elaborateness of the temple would one day wither with time and invading armies, but the treasures of heaven are eternal.

Those seeking earthly treasures will be warning them about wars and

insurrections. They will be using fear to bring about treasures for themselves. The world will be divided, and nation will rise up against nation. Instead of peace leading the way to future glory, war and destruction will lead the way for divine intervention.

Jesus warned about persecution for those who follow him before the end arrived. He spoke of family turning on family, so that the division of the world becomes complete as brother is set against brother. Jesus even took his destruction analogy a step further and out of the temple. He warned even mighty Jerusalem would fall. The pinnacle of Jewish faith will come crumbling down, but the eternal Father will not allow the spirit of his followers to falter.

Followers of Christ are to live by faith, knowing a day is coming when Jesus will return. True justice will reign as the world will submit to his authority, and all will live according to his reign.

Yet, until then, we are called to live faithfully. We are taught to love God with all of our heart, mind and strength; and to love others as we would love ourselves. We are called to be the very presence of Jesus in this world. We are called to love the sinner and help the poor. We are called to feed the hungry and befriend the straggler. Jesus will return one day, and when he does, let him catch us doing his work.

Discussion questions

- What does the world consider important? What does Jesus consider important? Do they contradict?
- How does the world of today compare to the world that Jesus speaks about in this text?

- What will you be doing when Jesus returns?

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