

"The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24-25

Part 22

Introduction: This week in our study of the Olivet Discourse I want to go back to what we looked at last week and look a little deeper what our Lord is saying. Last week we started to look at Matthew 24:42-51 and as we continue tonight we will consider a question, "What is the point which our Lord is making within these verses. We will not get to all of the verses but we shall grasp onto one of the points which Jesus is making.

Now we have already considered that Jesus was speaking these Words because there will be at the end of the Great Tribulation the need for people to be prepared for the return of Jesus Christ. Last week I entitled Matthew 24:42-44 "Be Alert" and Matthew 24:45-51 "Be Prepared". As we continue tonight we will get deeper into each of these passages. As we look at these verses tonight I want us to consider the main thought in each of these passages.

Before we get to the verses let me just remind you again that these Words which are spoken by our Lord are directed toward those who will be alive at the end of the tribulation. We need to keep this in mind in order to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Now one of the reasons I remind you of this is because there are Bible teachers who teach that starting in Matthew 24:45 and going through Matthew 25:30 that Jesus is now addressing the church. They teach that these verses have nothing to do with the second coming of Jesus at the end of the Great Tribulation. But they are wrong. This entire section from Matthew

24:4-25:46 is focused completely upon the 70th Week of Daniel and the 75 days which after the Great Tribulation which lead up to the establishment of the Kingdom. Let me show you how we can know this.

Notice Matthew 24:44-46

In verse 44 Jesus speaks of the day and the hour of His coming after the tribulation. The first 2 words of verse 45 show us that He still has the very same thought in mind. He says "Who THEN". The statement is a connective which tells us our Lord is teaching with the same thought in mind. Then in verse 46 we see that Jesus is still focused upon His return and the need for the people to be prepared.

Notice Matthew 24:50

He we can see that Jesus is still speaking of the "day and the hour" of His return.

Notice Matthew 25:1

The first word of the verse tells us He is speaking of His return at the end of the tribulation. It is the word "THEN" and this word clarifies the setting for this parable. The parable is an earthly story to teach a spiritual Truth.

Notice Matthew 25:13

Here again Jesus speaks of the day and the hour of His second coming.

Notice Matthew 25:14

The first word in this verse is the word "For" and it is also a connective which tells us Jesus is still speaking about His return and the end of the tribulation.

Notice Matthew 25:31

This verse is very clear about when this event takes place. It is when our Lord returns and sets up His earthly Kingdom.

These verses all show that our Lord is focused upon His return at the end of the tribulation. So when He speaks the Words which we are going to study it is so important to keep in mind that they are directed not to the church but to the people who will have survived the Great Tribulation. There is application for the church but we cannot place the church into these verses because the church will not be here at the end of the tribulation. We will return with our Lord for His second coming.

Now let us get into our study of these verses.

A. Be Alert

Notice Matthew 24:42-44

The focus here is for the people to be alert for the Lord's return and then to help them to see the seriousness of the entire matter Jesus points them to a man who owns a home.

In verse 43 we see that there is a contrast. The contrast is between man's inability to know the day and the hour and his ability to ready. They will be able to read the signs which will be the birth pains so therefore they will have no excuse. When they see the signs they can know that His return is very near.

Then in this verse he points to a man who owned his own home and did not know the thief was coming and so it cost him greatly but had he known he could have been ready for the thief.

So what is the point Jesus is making here by telling the story of the home owner? We know that He is telling them to be alert but I think there is more here.

The return of Jesus is often referred to as a "thief coming unexpectedly".

1 Thessalonians 5:2-4

² *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

³ *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

⁴ *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

2 Peter 3:10

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Revelation 16:15

¹⁵ *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

These are just a few of the references but from them you can see that Jesus' return is often paralleled with a thief coming in the night. I thought about this for the past week because I believe there must be

more than the need to be alert. Jesus could have used another illustration to show the need to be alert but He chose the illustration of a thief in the night as we also see in our passages in the Bible. So what is the deeper message?

"The Cost"

I believe the Bible uses the parallel between Jesus coming and a thief in the night for the reason of helping people to see the need to be alert but also to help them to consider the cost of not being prepared.

When a thief comes in the night and no one is prepared he will take the most valuable possessions which a man has. When Jesus returns at the end of the tribulation and finds many who will be unprepared they will lose everything they have. But the most costly loss will be the loss of their soul.

Remember what Luke said about the people who will go through the Great Tribulation?

Luke 21:31-35

³¹ So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

³² Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

³³ Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

³⁴ And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged [weighed down] with surfeiting [effects of too much wine], and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

³⁵ For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Luke reminds us that many people will become intoxicated with the riches and the cares of this world during the tribulation period and the return of Christ will come upon them as a "snare". The idea of the "snare" means that it will catch them completely by surprise. It is the same idea as the home owner who was not prepared for the thief.

Now let me just say that the "snare" also speaks of great loss. The bird or the animal which gets caught in the snare will lose their lives.

During the tribulation much of the world will continue to live for the riches and the pleasures of this world. We have already looked at how people will mourn and weep when the economic system falls apart. The idea is this: all will see the signs which Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24 and in Revelation but they will be so intoxicated with the goods of this world they will continue to put off salvation. Many will know they need to be saved but there will be a struggle to walk away from the riches of this world and to turn to Christ.

Luke 13:23-28

²³ Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

²⁴ Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

The word "strive" here tells us there is a battle when salvation takes place. It is a battle between the pulling of the Holy Spirit and the person's love for this world. There are many who will not repent and

come through the strait gate because they love the riches and the sin of this world far too much.

²⁵ When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

²⁶ Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

²⁷ But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

²⁸ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

We can clearly see that there will be many who will not be permitted entrance into the Kingdom because they were not willing to say, "NO" to the pleasures of sin and, "YES" to a new life with Christ.

Now getting back to the return of Christ, when Jesus returns at the end of the tribulation and many people have put off salvation due to their love for the riches of this world they will be heartbroken. Not only will they lose everything which they had gathered of this world but even worse than that they will lose their souls. Let me show you how the riches of the world can be a hindrance for many.

Mark 10:17-25

¹⁷ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

¹⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

¹⁹ Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

²⁰ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

²² And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

²³ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

²⁴ And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Notice the searching question which Jesus asked in Mark.

Mark 8:36

³⁶ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Let us look at the rich man in Luke 16.

Luke 16:19-25

¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Here was a man who had great wealth but in hell it brought him absolutely NO comfort. In hell he had nothing but torments. He had memories of what he had on earth but the memories only added to his torment. When he died he lost it all, forever.

Conclusion:

This is exactly what our Lord is warning the people of who will survive the tribulation. If they do not get saved and be prepared when Jesus comes they will lose it all including their own souls.