

Daily Reading & Meditation

Watch Expectantly Today - Your Master Is Coming!

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2020 / GOSPEL READING: Mark 13:33-37

33 Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35 Watch therefore -- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning -- 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

Meditation: What do you do when someone you love very dearly and miss very much has been gone a very long time but promises to return soon? Do you ignore their absence, or do you anticipate their return and send them messages to let them know how much you long to be with them again? Jesus' parable about the long-expected return of the Master to his household brings this point home.

Parable of the watchful servants waiting for the master's return

Wealthy landowners often left their estates in the hands of their trustworthy servants and stewards. This gave them freedom to travel, trade, and expand their business ventures. They expected loyalty and hard work from their servants and rewarded them accordingly. Dutiful servants would eagerly anticipate their master's return by keeping the house and estate in good order. Jesus doesn't tell us in his parable whether the servants were ready to receive the unexpected return of their master. Were these servants excited or anxious about their master's return? The watchful servants, no doubt, looked forward to the future because they knew their master would be pleased and would reward them for their vigilance and hard work. Disaster and reprisal, however, awaited those who were unprepared because of carelessness or laziness.

Watching with hopeful expectation and vigilance for Christ's return

When we expect some very important event to happen, we often wait for it with excited anticipation. The Lord Jesus expects us to watch in great anticipation for the most important event of all - his return in glory at the end of this present age! The Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the Lord when *he shall judge between the nations and decide for many peoples* (Isaiah 2:5). The Advent season reminds us that we are living in the end times. The end times begin with the first coming of Christ (when *the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us* - John 1:14) and it culminates in Christ's second coming

on the Day of Judgment and vindication for his people. Jesus spoke of his return in glory at the close of the ages as an indisputable fact and predetermined act which he will perform as the Judge and Ruler of all peoples, nations, and individuals who ever lived on the earth.

"May your kingdom come!"

While the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is for certain, the time of his appearance is not yet disclosed. The Lord's day of visitation and judgment will come swiftly and unexpectedly. Jesus warns his listeners to not be caught off guard when that day arrives. It will surely come in God's good time! The Lord invites us to pray for the coming of his kingdom into our present lives and future as well. Jesus taught his disciples to pray - "may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Do you earnestly pray for the coming of God's kingdom - both now and at the end of the world?

The Lord will reward those who wait for him

The prophet Isaiah tells us that God will surely reward those who wait for his visitation: "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who works for those who wait for him" (Isaiah 64:4). Our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, has entrusted us with his gifts and graces (his abundant favours and blessings). He expects us to make good use of the gifts and resources he gives us for his glory and for the benefit of helping and blessing others as well. He does not want us to use the present time we have here on earth in idleness or wasted living. He has work for us to do - loving, honouring and serving him and loving, honouring, and serving our families, neighbours, and communities as well.

OPENING PRAYER " Lord Jesus, awaken my heart and mind to receive your word and to prepare for your coming again. Free me from complacency, from the grip of sin and worldliness, and from attachments to things which pass away. May I always be eager to receive your word and be ready to meet you when you come again. " **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Excite in me"

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a wonder at the wisdom and power of Your Father and ours. Receive my prayer as part of my service of the Lord who enlists me in God's own work for justice. Excite in me a hunger for peace: peace in the world, peace in my home, peace in myself. Excite in me a joy responsive to the Father's joy. I seek His will so I can serve with gladness, singing and love. **Amen.**