

If Jesus Came Back Today ...

- I Thessalonians 4:13-18

- **I am excited to be here this morning and I am glad that we worship a living Savior today. He sits high & lifted up today on His throne & we as His people should give praise and honor to Him for what He has done & what He will do for us in the future.**
 - God has blessed us all in different ways, but if you are saved this morning, He has given you a gift that you could never put a price tag on.
 - He has saved us from our sins, Jesus has redeemed us through His blood, and the mistakes of yesterday are in the past never to be remembered again, AMEN?
 - And best of all, this is only the beginning! This life that we live today is just preparation for what is to come, b/c the Bible tells us that He is coming again one day & when He comes, we will meet Him in the clouds & so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 - In that moment, the scripture tells us that we shall be like Him! You say, "What does that mean for me? What will I look like?" I have no idea, but the Bible tells us we will be like Him and that is good enough for me!
- **I am looking forward to the return of Christ, but a lot of people have a lot of different ideas about the return of Christ. Even those in the church have a mixed view of what the return of Christ will look like.**
 - Some believe that He will return, but only after we have gone through a period of judgment called Tribulation.
 - Others believe that this is our Heaven, and this is the best it will ever be.
 - I Corinthians 2:9 – "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."
 - Still others are not sure that Jesus will return at all, after all we have been waiting on His return for close to 2,000 years now.
- **But I am here to tell you this morning that He is coming again & I will bank my life on it b/c He has promised in His Word that He will return and claim His own, and God has never broken even one of His promises.**
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **What a marvelous assurance we have from Jesus Himself that He is coming again one day & we will be free from:**
 - The sins of this world,
 - Our aged & diseased bodies,
 - We will be reunited with those that have gone on before us,
 - We will receive our reward in Heaven,
 - But best of all we will be with our Redeemer & our Lord.
- **Yet as much as the return of Christ has been talked about (especially in recent years with Y2K), when Jesus returns, there will be some significant things that He will find:**
- 1. **Many Will Be Greatly Surprised**
 - Now hopefully, the Christian community & those that follow the Lord are anticipating His return; but those that have never trusted in Christ will be greatly surprised to see Jesus return & take His children out of this world.
 - The Bible tells us in I Corinthians 15, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
 - Over in Luke 17, Jesus says, "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."
 - At that moment, I imagine there will be a lot of regret in the opportunities passed up & refusing to believe in His return.

- They may remember Mom & Dad taking them to church and teaching them about the things of God.
- They might remember the visits made by the Pastor or the tracts they were given by people of the church.
- They may remember even attending services & feeling the conviction of the Holy Spirit to turn to God.
- And though the prophets have foretold of His coming since Bible days, I believe many in that day will be shocked to see this truth come to fruition.
 - Some people may even laugh at the idea that Jesus would return to this earth. That's OK, b/c church, their doubts are more proof that He is coming again.
 - II Peter 3:3-4 - "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?"
- Don't allow the doubters to quite your faith. Let me remind you that there were doubters in the days when Jesus died on the cross as well.
 - Those that crucified Jesus doubted His power as they mocked Him & taunted Him to take Himself down from the cross & save Himself. But His intention was not to save Himself, He was sent to save us.
 - Many doubted that He could really take back His life & rise from the dead as He had promised, even some of His followers thought it was over.
 - If you will remember, they placed guards at the tomb of Jesus to keep others from stealing His body.
- But the presence of doubters did not stand in the way of Jesus defeating death, hell, and the grave, and the presence of doubters will not stand in the way of His Second Coming either. He lives today as the victorious King of Kings & Lord of Lords!
- So if Jesus came back today, I believe many would be surprised. But I also believe that Jesus would find that ...

2. Many Will Have Fallen Away

- There was a time when many people loved God, revered God, and respected the things of God. But sadly, those days are over.
 - There was a time where men & women would stand up for the things of God regardless of whether they were saved or not.
 - People regarded the Word of God as truth, regardless of whether they chose to live by it or not.
 - But today we have those who have taken the Word of God and manipulated it in such a way as to push their own agenda or ideas to live by.
 - Unfortunately some preachers don't even preach the truth & the entirety of the Word of God today. It's a shame when people come to the house of God and they don't even hear the whole truth of God's Word. I owe it to you to preach, "thus saith the Word of God" in total & complete truth.
 - Total depravity of man.
 - We are completely & totally dependent on the grace of God b/c of our fallen state. We are not inherently good, we are totally sinful & stand in need of God's mercy & grace.
 - Salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ alone.
 - Acts 4:12 – "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - Eternal death and judgment for those who reject Christ.
 - Romans 6:23 – "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - The necessity of living a holy life.

- Romans 12:1-2
 - Being committed to God.
- When you step into the church today, you see that even this world's sin has crept into the church as the people of God are living lives that are absolutely unacceptable before God.
 - I remember as a teenager inviting some people to church on visitation & they would tell you, "I don't live that kind of life so I'm not coming."
 - But today, people live as they want, sin as they want, blaspheme God as they choose and it bothers them not in the least to step foot in the house of God.
 - People today are not broken over their sins anymore.
 - People who once use to be faithful to God & serve Him you can't hardly get them to darken the door anymore.
- In the book of Luke, Jesus asked a very appropriate question in chapter 18 when He said, "when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
- It is sad to see the shape that our world has turned into. What's even sadder is to see men & women of God who use to have a fire for God, consumed & lost in their own selfish desires & now they have no time for God.
- You see, I believe when Jesus returns, He will find many who have fallen away.
 - I wonder how many at the First Free Will Baptist Church in Inman will He find have fallen away?
- Not only will He find that some have fallen away, but If Jesus Came Back Today, our ...

3. Opportunities To Serve Him Will Be Over

- There's a lot of people who sit in a pew every week & they keep making the promise to God & the church, "Someday I am going to start living for God & serving Him", and sadly that day will come & go & when Christ returns, all those opportunities will be gone for eternity.
- Some of you use to be active in this church.
 - You were here at every service,
 - You volunteered to help out whenever we needed you,
 - You had a love & a passion for this ministry,
 - You use to be concerned about the lost,
 - But quite frankly, if we can get you here 1 or 2 Sunday mornings a month, we are doing good.
- We spoke several weeks ago about our good intentions & the danger of living off of those intentions, and yet that is what some of you are doing today & if Jesus returned today, there would be a lot of regret for not having given Him our best.
 - I told you before about the 2 men (2 million, 2 Cadillac's, 2 pigs)
 - You know what we will say, "If I had a lot of money, I would give some to the church or send some to the mission field. When I retire, I am going to be involved in the church & serve God." But the truth is, you will never do those things if you are not willing to give Him what you have now.
- But saddest of all, if Jesus Came Back Today, the ...

4. Opportunities To Be Saved Would Be Over

- Whether you choose to accept this or not, we are not promised another opportunity to accept Christ.
 - God has given you this moment, right now, to make a choice as to what you will do with Him.
 - And God may give you another opportunity, He may allow you to hear another message of repentance, He may even spare your life for several more years ... but is eternity worth taking that risk?
- The Bible declares that, "now is the day of salvation."
 - II Corinthians 6:2 – "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

▪ The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5-9)

- “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house,”

- I don't completely understand why God loved us so much that He sent His Only Son to the cross for our sins. I don't understand the kind of love that would lay His life down for the souls of people, many who would even reject Him. And I don't understand the depth of love that would forgive me for the wrong that I have done.
- But above all, I don't understand how someone could turn away from this love & this free gift of salvation.

- **So let me ask you this question. If Jesus Came Back Today ... would you be ready???**
- **Perhaps you are here this morning and you have contemplated salvation many times. God has been convicting you a lot here lately and today you want to accept Him as Lord of your life. Why don't you step out & come to this altar & someone will take the Word of God & show you how you can be saved.**
- **Maybe you are here this morning & you have been calloused by the sin in your life. You have been living with this sin for way too long & you want to give it to God today. I am going to ask you to come as well.**
- **And perhaps you have fallen away of sorts in that you have lost your fire for the things of God & you realize today you need to be more committed in your Christian walk. Won't you come & re-commit your life today?**
- **You see, Jesus could come back today, and when He returns I trust that He will find each of us prepared for His return.**