

God's End of Days Safety Reminders

Do Not Be Deceived | Do Not Be Troubled | Do Not Give Up

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Mark 13:1-13 NKJ Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*" ² And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." ³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" ⁵ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and will deceive many. ⁷ "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows. ⁹ "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ "But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Go look on the Wisconsin DNR website. On the top of the page in big white letters you'll find, "It's Hunting Season." Click on that and one of the first articles listed is, "Returning Hunters: Brush Up On Your Safety." This article had four basic safety warnings for hunters.

It's not only hunting season it is also eschatology season, and the warnings that Jesus has posted in our text are far more important than what the DNR has posted on its site. These are things that we ought to know but which we need to be reminded of.

Jesus reminds us this morning of God's end of days safety reminders

Do not be deceived

Do not be troubled

Do not give up

Do not be deceived

It can be really annoying when you are super excited about something and you try to share it with others, and they are apathetic.

The apostles are excited in our text to point out the glory of the temple to Jesus, and it was a very impressive building. Jesus is not as excited. This is not because Jesus has anything against the temple itself. Rather he knows our tendency to be led astray by large, impressive things. He wants to warn his disciples and us against being deceived by the impressive things of this world.

Particle accelerators are a good example. The one in Geneva is 16.5 miles long and can accelerate particles to 99.9999991% the speed of light. Those particles fly around that 16.5 mile loop 11,245 times a second. That is impressive. It is amazing. It is wonderful. It would be a privilege to use tools like that to study and learn more about God's creation.

The problem of course is our tendency to be so captivated by such impressive feats that we are led astray from God and his word. We are tempted to look at these feats of science and think, "wow I guess we don't need God." Or to think wow those scientists must be really wise, all Jesus did was die for our sins, who cares about that.

Man's ability to build such impressive tools, does not prove that he is wiser than God who created the particles and forces to begin with.

Eph 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Col 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

2Pe 1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

It is so easy to be deceived by the impressive things of this world, buildings, sports stars, movie stars, etc. The most impressive thing that has ever happened is when God chose to become man, die and rise again from the dead. Forty years after Jesus spoke these words the temple, as impressive as it was, was gone, but the Gospel was preached to the ends of the earth and is still being preached to this day.

I read an article which was talking about the possibility of handheld particle accelerators. Imagine someday accomplishing with a small device what it now takes 16.5 miles of superconducting magnets to do. The irony is that if it happens, such tools will probably be taken for granted.

The enormity of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus is far beyond the impressiveness of a super collider, but it is often taken for granted.

2 Corinthians 5:19 God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them

The gospel is so often taken for granted, yet as Paul reminds us, "It is the power of God unto salvation." Its ok to be impressed with the technological advances of men, but these things are nothing to what God has done for us in Christ Jesus.

Do not be troubled

How many times in scripture does God tell us not to worry, let go of our anxiety, do not be troubled? And yet we still do.

Isa 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

Time after time God has proven to us that he is in control, that he has a plan. Jacob and his eleven sons were greatly worried when the famine persisted, but God had already prepared a place for them in Egypt. The widow of Zarephath was prepared to die with her son, yet God sent Elijah to her and caused the flour never to run out. Abraham was certain that Pharoah would kill him and take Sarah for himself, yet God protected them both, despite his sin. The disciples were convinced they were going to drown in the middle of the sea, yet Jesus stood up and calmed the storm.

How many times does God have to demonstrate that he is in control, that he had a plan all along, before we will learn to trust him. We hear of wars, of disease, of stock market crashes. We hear of kidnappings and drug cartels and persecution. Our bank accounts are low, gas prices are high, our children get their licenses and start driving themselves. All these things and so many more cause us anxiety and worry. Jesus reminds us in our text all these things must be. They are part of life on this earth, but Jesus is in control, and he has a plan.

John 14:1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.

John 16:33 In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Do not be troubled.

Do not give up

Some really terrible things are going to happen. Christians' will be arrested and persecuted. Christians will be betrayed by their own family members. Anger, hatred, resentment will abound. In the gospel of Matthew Jesus warns us that "**because lawlessness will abound the love of many will grow cold.**"

As the world becomes more and more evil, as kindness is repaid with hatred, as people gossip and lie, as more and more people turn away from Christ, it is easy to feel as though it is pointless and useless to share the gospel, or even to be kind and to forgive. The world is too evil a place. Yet as the world becomes more evil, it is not less important but more important for us to share the love of Christ in words and actions.

Why did Jesus come to die? Because people were so loving and he thought hey they are great people I'll go die for them? Or because the world was so evil, and God decided something had to be done about it.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The greater that wickedness and evil grows, the greater the need for love, kindness, forgiveness and mercy. The more horrible others are to us, the more they need forgiveness, just as we need it from Christ.

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

He who endures to the end shall be saved.

Thankfully our ability to perform these basic safety procedures is not what gets us to heaven. We have all failed every one of these points. Christ has died for our sins and is coming to take us to himself. When he comes again, we will go with to heaven, even though we are often troubled and anxious, even though we are often enamored by the things of this world, even though we do often give up doing good and forgiving one another. We will go to heaven because he died for our sins.

He who endures to the end shall be saved.

2 Timothy 1:12 know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day

We endure by his power and his grace, and by his death we are saved. Nevertheless, Jesus gives us these warnings that we may be profitable while we wait for him. Do not be deceived. Do not be troubled. Do not give up. The night is cold and long, but the morning of his salvation is approaching. Amen