

DCF:

Sam’s buddies had chartered a boat to go salmon fishing on Lake Michigan. They were going to pick him up early in the morning, so he made sure he was ready to go. He made sure he had his fishing license with the salmon stamp in his wallet. He made sure he had the proper gear to wear on the boat. He checked and rechecked the list that his friend had given him. When their car showed up at 4am, Sam was ready to go.

They had invited George to go with them, too. When they arrived at his place, he hadn’t done a thing to prepare. He didn’t have a license. He didn’t have the gear that was needed. He wasn’t ready. He asked them if they could wait a bit until he got ready, but they couldn’t. The boat was leaving promptly at 5am and they had to be on it. So, they drove away, leaving him at home. George missed out because he wasn’t ready.

We know the Lord is coming back to take us home to heaven. Will you be like Sam, or will you be like George? “**ARE YOU READY?**” Jesus is coming back so be ready and watch for Him. That’s what Jesus is reminding us of in today’s Bible lesson. So, let’s get to it!

Part One: He’s coming back

Jesus had been talking to His disciples about the Last Day. He described what would happen before His return to this world. He gave them some painful details, such as persecution and terrible times of distress for believers. False messiahs would try and deceive people. There would be pain. But He then tells them that He would return, “***coming in clouds with great power and glory.***” He would come to gather all His followers to Himself in heaven. Jesus talked about this day as if it were an accomplished fact. It was. It will happen just the way He describes it.

But here’s the kicker. Jesus hadn’t yet left this earth. He hadn’t yet suffered, died and risen again. Not yet. He was still here. Jesus came the first time to prepare the world for His second coming. He was laying the groundwork for His return. It’s like a mountain climber who is preparing to scale Mt. Everest. He makes a few trips to his base camp to lay in supplies and then comes back down. He travels a bit further up the mountain to stash a few oxygen bottles for his ascent and then comes back down. When his route is fully stocked, he then goes back up on his final trip to scale the mountain. He’s able to do that because he made those previous trips to prepare.

That’s what Jesus was doing the first time He came to this earth. He was laying in the supplies He needed for His second coming. He came and laid in a perfect life for us. He suffered and died for all our sins so He could come and take us home. He rose again, ascended back into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to create faith in the hearts of those chosen by God. He laid in all that was needed for His return trip.

Now, He’s waiting for the perfect time to come back. When He was here, having laid aside the full use of His godly powers, He didn’t know when that day was. As verse 32 says “***No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.***” He knows now. When He went back into heaven He reassumed all the power, all the glory, all the knowledge that is rightfully His as God. Now, He waits for the day He will return. He knows when that is. He’s given us some clues, some signs that tell us the Last Day is near. All those signs have been completed. Now He is waiting for the day when all who are chosen by the Lord to receive faith have received it. Then, He’s coming back.

The question many ask today is “will he?” So many people don’t think that Jesus is coming back. Oh, they believe He came once. But they think He was just a good man, a wonderful teacher. They don’t believe He is God, and think that the words Jesus spoke about His return were just a nice story to give His followers hope as they suffered in life. You know, tell them a little white lie to make life easier to take. God tells us again and again in His Word that He is coming back, and they just ignore the clear words of the Lord.

We know He’s coming back, but we can be lulled into hoping that it’s way in the future. We’re enjoying the pleasures of this world so much that we don’t think He’s coming soon. Or, we hope He’s not. Sometimes we say to ourselves “I’ve got time to get right with God. I’ll focus on Him when I’m older, when I can’t do the fun things I’m doing right now.” Or, we try and time Jesus’ return, like some try and time the stock market. “I’ll

sow my wild oats now, enjoy the pleasures of the flesh and hope I repent in time. Yeah, that's what I'll do."

That's a terrible gamble, a gamble with your eternal soul. As verse 32 reminds us **"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."** Are you ready for His return? It could be today.

Part Two: Watch for Him

Until Jesus returns to this world, He wants us to work for Him. That's the reason we're here, isn't it? Jesus tells the short story about a man going away for a bit and leaving his servants in charge. Each one of them has a job to do, and the owner expects his servants to do their job until he comes back.

Until Jesus returns, we too have a job to do. God has called us to faith and He expects our lives to show our faith. Our duty, our job as believers is to fear and love, serve and obey Him. Our duty is to work for Him while it is day, before the night comes when no one can work. We have been called to grow in our faith, to raise our children to know their Savior. We have been given the responsibility of telling the world about Jesus and support those who do the very same thing. Our duty is to love the Lord with all our hearts and love our neighbors as ourselves. Our work is to glorify God in everything we do, whether that's eating, working or playing. As we do so, we keep watch, knowing He's coming back.

Jesus is coming. Soon. But I sometimes get the impression that some are sleepwalking through life. Oh, they know what Jesus said about sin, His return, repentance and living our lives for Him. But there are times they ignore what the Lord says and do their own thing. They neglect their souls and the feeding of their faith with the Word. It's almost as if they're snoozing through life, even when God sends them a wake-up call. Sometimes God allows an illness, a job loss, a death in the family to try and wake them up to the fact that He is coming soon. Watch for Him.

Yeah, I hear ya, pastor. But there are so many distractions in my life! This world is beautiful and I love to see more of it. There's camping, hunting and fishing. There's friends and family and fantastic trips with people I love. So many experiences to experience. Plus, there's other blessings we can enjoy like technology. So many apps, so little time. God has given us those blessings in our lives, but He doesn't want it to overshadow the fact that He is coming back.

Hard to do, isn't it? Especially when it comes to social media. Did you know that the algorithms that drive social media are designed to be addictive? Nir Eyal, a tech consultant, wrote a book called *"Hooked. How to Build Habit-Forming Products."* Social media is designed to draw us back to it as many times during the day as it can. It's designed to be addictive. And when it does its job, it takes our focus off our Savior. It's tailored to appeal to your human nature, not your spiritual nature.

So let me ask you this, as we see the Last Day approaching. Are you spending more time checking your Facebook feed than being in God's Word? Are you ready for Jesus' second coming?

It's time we renew our attention on the Lord. As Jesus tells us in verse 37 **"What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!"** Put down your phone. Pick up God's Word. Spend time in God's Word. When you read the Word, it's like taking a spiritual 5 hour energy drink. It helps you focus on the important things in life, like God's forgiveness, love and directions for life. Spend time actually thinking about what Jesus says. Put down the phone, the computer, the hammer, the fishing pole and pick up the Bible.

I can guarantee you this: as you focus on God's Word, as you watch for His second coming, you will be blessed. You will have clarity in life. You'll realize that the bad things happening in life are simply signs of the end. He's coming soon. You clearly understand how to live for God's glory. Your decisions will get easier, because you'll make them based on the clear Word of God. Your heart will be lighter, for you know that God is always with you and is making all things work out for your spiritual good. You'll be content with where you are in life, for you will once again focus on what is in store for you when Jesus comes again. Paradise. Life with Him forever. And who wouldn't look forward to that in this sinful, painful world?

Are you ready? Are you like Sam or are you like George? I pray that the Lord's words of encouragement move us all to be ready for His return. He is coming back. **"What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!"**

Amen