

## Pastor Jon's November 29, 2020 Sermon

Text: Mark 13:24-37

“Stay Woke as we wait for Jesus”

Keep awake for you do not know when the master of the house will come. Keep awake. Aren't we awake enough these days? Do you find that your anxiety is up lately due to things like Covid-19, the election results, and the tough decisions we have to make to let go of long held traditions around Thanksgiving and Christmas?. This is one of those passages we shouldn't take literally in the Bible. If we kept awake all the time, we would be crabby as all get out. We need our beauty sleep. So what is Jesus getting at?

The African American community, and I am sure other communities, use the term “woke” to come to a new understanding about injustices happening in our world. “Get woke” means to wake up. Maybe, just maybe, this phrase resembles more of what Jesus is getting at. We need to be “get woke” as we wait for Jesus' coming... to keep awake is to keep our eyes open to the hurts around us... to see people in need or injustices against women, people with disabilities, or people whose skin is a different color than most of ours.

In our Gospel, after a time of great suffering, which seems like now, Jesus, the Son of Man, promises to return. He will come on the clouds and send his angels ahead of him to gather his elect from the four corners of the earth. Who is Jesus' elect you ask? Who did Jesus have in mind when he went to the cross? Jesus' elect according to John 3:16 is everyone. For God so loved the world... the entire cosmos that God gave God's only Son.

Jesus' second coming will be like the fig tree in the spring. “As the branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.” This is a hopeful image for us. I just saw a confused tree on a walk that was thinking of shooting some leaves out. We had such nice weather a few weeks ago... this was hopeful for me, but then I thought about the cold winter that is coming. But Jesus is saying here, a new day is dawning. Jesus' return is hopeful, not something to despair over. Believing in Jesus gives us that blessed assurance we

have as Christians to face the future with hope... to know that the Son of man suffers with us in these times... that we are not alone.

There is a lot of suffering right now. Covid is taking over our nation, our hospitals, our communities, our resources. Covid sucks. But as Christians we are resurrection people. We have hope. Even out of death comes new life daily. The biggest thing we can take away from this passage is "Suffering will not have the last word!"

When will Jesus return? According to our passage, no one knows. So how do you prepare for a visitor or guest in your home? You clean, you organize, you prepare. The same with our faith. We clean our spiritual houses. The seasons of Advent and Lent are spiritual house cleaning seasons. The Purple and Blues of Advent and Lent mean these are penitential seasons. They are meant to get us to repent, to change our ways, and prepare for the Lord to enter our hearts anew. It is a time to confess our sins and stop doing the things that are destructive to us and those around us. We hear the words of forgiveness in communion or the absolution. We open our eyes to those on the margins in our community. We listen to their stories. And out of that God calls us to get to work. Being awake means that we are prepared at all times. It means we are to go to work using the gifts God gave us. Our work is meant to advance the kingdom of Jesus bringing justice and peace to all.

Keep awake, stay woke!

Amen