

Keep Watch

Matthew 24:42-44

It is becoming more and more common to have cameras inside and outside your home, in your car, on your person, and at your business. Keeping watch on your property and business is becoming the norm rather than the exception. When investigating an accident or a crime, one of the first things law enforcement look for are cameras. Did a camera or cameras record the accident or crime? More and more law enforcement agencies are using body cameras to record interaction with the public. Many accidents and crimes have been solved due to a camera keeping watch.

Jesus told His followers to *“keep watch”* concerning the signs of His return. These signs would happen regularly and more frequently than any other time period. What did Jesus mean when He said to *“keep watch,”* and what are the signs of His return?

1. The phrase *“keep watch”* referred to staying alert (24:42, 44)

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

- Our Lord told His disciples to stay alert to what was happening in the world around them. Jesus likened

it to a home owner staying awake so that he was ready when a thief or burglar tried to break into his house (vs. 43-44). He likened it to a wise servant who was diligent in overseeing his master’s affairs while his master was away on a long journey (vs. 45-51). The wise servant was rewarded for his diligence and faithfulness.

- Jesus told the parable of the wedding party waiting for the groom, some were ready and some were not. Those who were not ready were not welcome to the wedding supper (25:1-13). He told the parable of the master who gave some of his wealth to his servants before he went on a long journey. When he returned, two of the servants had been diligent in increasing his master’s wealth, but the one servant was lazy and did nothing with what he was given. The two servants were rewarded, but the third servant was severely punished. The point of the parables was staying alert to the master’s return; being ready for when he came back.
- The people who were rewarded in these parables were servants who were alert to their master’s return. They were diligent in what their master told them to do while he was away. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He told His disciples to *“go everywhere in the world, and tell the Good News to everyone”* (Mark 16:15 NCV). Are you keeping watch to what is happening around you? Are you supporting the mission of the Church in telling the

Good News to everyone, everywhere? Wherever you go, be prepared to share Christ with others. Tell them what He has done for you. Pray for and support those who are going all over the world to share the Gospel.

2. The signs of Jesus' return (24:3-14)

"...The disciples came to Him privately. 'Tell us...what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?' Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you.'" (vs. 3-4).

- The disciples asked genuinely about when these prophetic events would take place. Again, Jesus uses the term, *"Watch out,"* which means to stay alert to the times and the signs. He added the warning not to be deceived or taken in by those who claim to be the Messiah or a prophet from God with special words or messages (vs. 4-5). God's Word and Spirit are sufficient for us.
- Signs preceding Christ's return will be *"wars and rumors of wars,"* and *"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom and against kingdom"* (vs. 6a, 7a). There will be *"famines and earthquakes in various places"* (v. 7b). There will be disease and fearful events (Luke 21:11). Worldwide persecution of believers: *"...you will be hated by all nations because of Me"* (v. 9). There will be false prophets and an increase in wickedness (v. 11, 12). And there will be the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel

(v. 14). Cynics will say that these events have happened for centuries. But Jesus said that these events will happen more frequently and more intensely: *"...Great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now..."* (v. 21). These signs show a world that has rejected God, and warn us of the coming of our God and Savior.

Jesus said concerning these events, *"See to it that you are not alarmed"* (v. 6b). We are to be diligent in our ministry, and faithful to our Lord. These events will take place, because it is part of God's plan. Don't be overwhelmed by world events, but worship your coming Savior. Jesus said: *"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near"* (Luke 21:28).