

## August 23, 2020 James Gallaher Until That Day

**Matthew 24:4-14** Jesus uses the illustration of childbirth to talk about the final and difficult days. Labor in childbirth has a tremendous amount of pain, fear, and discomfort, yet it is accompanied by a tremendous amount of excitement, anticipation, and joy. The labor has to be completed to receive the great and beautiful gift of a child. The fear and anxiousness are replaced by this beautiful gift.

The struggle and difficult days before Jesus returns are like birth pains that must take place in order for Jesus to come again. Birth pains are hard and difficult but they must transpire for the Son to return. The church has been more focused on making life on earth better rather than keeping our eyes on His coming. The Word of God refers to the second coming over 2000 times - 8 times more than the first coming.

Jesus tells us two things to be aware of in **Matthew 24**:

**1) False Prophets. Verse 5 and 11.** False prophets will arise and mislead many. They use deception by taking truth and manipulating it a little bit. It makes truth more palatable to us – less confusing. Jesus says be aware of this and be ready and prepared for Jesus' return. False leaders are accompanied by a version of truth without offering the whole truth. You cannot take a little from God's Word and claim that you are honoring the absoluteness of the Word. We have to take the Word in whole. False leaders will lead people away from who He has called us to be.

Holiness requires something of me – to die to my own preferences and desires and to become more like Jesus. False leaders want us to look like and follow them instead of Christ. They become effective in leading people astray. There are so many directions that don't lead us toward Christ and toward holiness. Be aware.

**2) Discouragement. Verse 12.** Lawlessness is increasing throughout the world - partly because of false teaching. When truth becomes relative then we can't judge other people's truth – it means everyone has their own version of the truth. But God's Word sets a standard of truth. Jesus says don't be discouraged. As people's love grows cold, don't be discouraged. Do we stop praying for people who curse us or hurt us? But when we get discouraged, we tend to stop doing what God calls us to. Be aware.

There is talk about how the world is falling apart, how to get a better person elected, how to make changes, but God talks about this. The condition of the world, though difficult, painful, hard to understand what's happening, complicated, challenging, is simply the birth pains leading us to the great return of our King. Look at this time with anticipation. Jesus is preparing. Jesus is coming. We are a step closer every day.

The birth pains are a reminder that there is a rescue coming. We need not be disappointed because we win in the end. When we see these things taking place, do not respond as the world but with an eye to the sky that today could be the day that Jesus returns.

**John 16:33** *These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*

God gave us His Word on the struggles and pain of today:

- **James 1:2-4** *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*
- **Matthew 11:28** *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*
- **I Peter 5:7** *Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*
- **II Corinthians 1:3** *The Father of mercies and God of all comfort...*

Jesus came to restore, to redeem, to rebuild, to give a hope and a future and a life beyond this life. All of our challenges that we have in this world have answers for us written in God's Word and He tells us to keep looking to the horizon. There will be a day and we will see a King on a white horse – *What a glorious day!*

Discouragement comes when we believe that this world is our permanent home. **I Peter 2:11** calls us *strangers and aliens* in this place. We tend to make this earth our home as we want all the comforts but then we get discouraged when expectations don't work out. But so much more is being stored up in Heaven.

Jesus says there is one more thing to take place. **Matthew 24:14** *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.* The gospel will be preached. The Joshua Project has identified 218 unreached people groups today and is being strategic to tell the Good News so all will know the Savior of the World. Christianity is growing faster now than it ever has in the history of the world – the Good News is being told. Freedom Fellowship believes in missions and the preaching of God's Word throughout the world. We serve a God who has promised His return and His hand to those willing to receive it. We must engage and support evangelism.

**II Peter 3:9** (The Message) *God isn't late with His promise as some measure lateness. He is restraining Himself on account of you, holding back the End because He doesn't want anyone lost. He's giving everyone space and time to change.*

But what about you, right now? How are you suffering through the birth pains of Christ's return? His return is imminent. He will return, but will we be ready?

**Matthew 24:42-44** *Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.*

Jesus says to the disciples that there will be signs, wars, earthquakes, false teachers, discouragement, love growing cold for each other, but the gospel will go forth. Be ready. Be alert. It's not about looking busy, but when we see these things, get excited and draw near as the promised blessing is coming.

Are you ready? Commit to be ready. Surrender. Confess and believe and He will adopt us and bring us to a new life.

Prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame and You died for it. You faced hell for me, so I wouldn't have to. And You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with Your Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. And now, God is my Father, Jesus is my Savior, The Holy Spirit is my Helper. And Heaven is my home. Amen.*

---

What birth pains do you experience today?

What enemy do you pray for?

How have you experienced a false teacher? Discouragement?

What would I change right now if Jesus were coming tonight? Who is that one person you would want to talk to?