



July 5, 2020
Luke 21:29-38

SCRIPTURE

²⁹ He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

³² "Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³⁴ "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

³⁷ Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, ³⁸ and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

COMMENTARY

21:29-33. Luke, like Mark 13:28-32; Matt 24:32-36, now added a parable to illustrate how the "signs" of Luke 21:25-26 serve to indicate that the deliverance just mentioned in 21:28 is near. The account consists of a short parable (21:29-30) involving an analogy of a fig tree. To this has been added an application (21:31) and two warnings (21:32-33). Just as a fig tree (and most other trees) gives certain signs that reveal summer is near, so there will be certain signs that will reveal that the redemption brought by the

Son of Man is also near. Instead of cowering in the face of these signs, believers should be encouraged because they indicate that the divine plan for redemption is being completed and the advent of the kingdom of God is near. It is like watching trees sprouting leaves in the spring and knowing that summer is at hand. “This generation” probably refers to those who will be alive when the various phenomena described by Jesus begin to take place in rapid succession. Since “generation” occasionally means “family” or “posterity,” some believe that it refers specifically to the people of Israel.

21:34-36. Luke ended his eschatological discourse with a practical appeal consisting of two warnings unique to his Gospel. The first involves a warning to beware of being overcome with drunken revelry or worldly concerns for this life, for these may cause one to be unprepared for “that day” (21:34). The second is to be watchful and to pray in order to be prepared for “that day.” This is described as being able to stand before the Son of Man (21:36). Only by heeding these warnings will Luke’s readers be able to escape the judgment that is coming in that day and which, despite the signs of 21:25-26, will catch the rest of the world unawares (21:34b-35).

21:37-38. These two verses form a concluding summary not only for Jesus’ eschatological teaching (21:5-36) but also for the entire section devoted to Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem (19:28–21:38). The theme of Jesus’ teaching found in 19:47; 20:1 is repeated here, and the material is uniquely Lukan.

MAIN POINT

We should live as though Jesus is on His way back and that we will have to give an account for our lives.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever been to a sporting event that had a very close conclusion?

How did the teams play differently toward the end than they did in the beginning?

How do the fans react after a close game when their team pulls off the victory?

Jesus came to save mankind from Satan, sin, and death. These forces have wrought havoc on mankind since the fall in the garden of Eden. If we were to talk about this in sporting terms, we might say that God has opposed these enemies in three periods. In the first period, the prophets of the Old Testament longed for the revelation of the Messiah to come and free us from the curse of the Fall. In the second period, Jesus our Great Savior arrived and overcame Satan, sin, and death by living the perfect life for us and dying for our sins. Now, in this final period, the church is taking the good news of

Christ into all the world so that many may be saved by Him. We are awaiting “the end” when Jesus finally returns to set all things right and to make all things new. This is an exciting time to live! Jesus Christ has overcome the world, and now we are simply waiting on Him to return in final victory.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

- Ask a volunteer to read Luke 21:29-33.

What does the parable of the fig tree communicate to us about Jesus’ return?

In Palestine, most trees remained green throughout the year, with the exception of the fig tree. During the fall, the fig tree would lose its leaves. In the spring, the sap would fill the branches and the tree would begin the process of putting forth its leaves. This meant that summer was not far away. Jesus did not want His disciples to despair about the persecution they would face. Jesus was showing that just as He promised there would be persecution, deliverance would follow through His return as the Son of Man.

How does Jesus want us to respond to His words about the future?

How would the promises of verses 32-33 have been comforting to the disciples? Discomforting? What impact do they have on you today?

Jesus’ second coming is key to the gospel, because He has promised to return and that is our great hope. At the time of His return, He will be recognized for who He is—King and Lord of all—and will bring to ultimate completion the redemption of all believers.

- Ask a volunteer to read Luke 21:34-38.

In the midst of this heavy news, how did Jesus caution His followers? What things might prevent people from being prepared for Jesus’ return?

What do you think enables believers to be ready to stand before the Lord without fear or shame at His return?

How well does your life reflect verse 36? What will you do this week to become better at watching and praying?

After giving the parable of the fig tree, Jesus turned His attention to a practical appeal consisting of two warnings. The first warning called the disciples to beware of being overcome with drunken revelry or worldly concerns for this life. Jesus’ followers must keep a constant check on their attitudes and conduct. Jesus’ second warning is positive. Be always alert, always ready, always living your life with a sense of urgency and

anticipation of Christ's return. Such alertness is not done in a sense of dread, fearing we might miss His return. Instead, our alertness demonstrates love for Him. We want to be with Christ, our trust is in Him, and we are ever ready to meet Him.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is wrong with living according to the philosophy that since Jesus has forgiven our sins, we can do whatever we want?

Do you live out the implications of Jesus' second coming? How can we use Jesus' teaching in these verses as motivation for evangelism?

How can you live expectantly? What does it look like practically?

PRAYER

Thank God that in His wisdom He made a plan and has given us glimpses of it in Scripture. Pray that you would be prepared and expectant of the return of Christ.