

Getting Ready for the Coming of Christ

by Brian Kirik

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being ready for Christ's return and sharing the gospel with others to prepare the world for His coming.

Duration: 18:28

Scripture: Matthew 24:14, Matthew 25:13, Mark 16:15, John 4:13-14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Peter 3:8-9

Topics: "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experiences driving through Asia and noticing the constant presence of people along the road. However, he also realizes that there are no signs of Christianity or churches in these areas. This realization leads him to reflect on his own self-centeredness and the need to focus on spreading the gospel to those who have not heard it. The speaker emphasizes the importance of reaching the two billion people who still have not heard about Jesus and encourages the audience to read a book called 'Revolutionary World Missions' to gain a deeper understanding of God's work in the world.

Transcript

We have a special guest in the pulpit this morning. Father Brian Kerrick is a priest in the Believer's Church in India, and he was here for Synod this weekend, and we invited him to stay over and be with us this morning. You may not know that church, but it is a rapidly growing Christian church, planting 10 new churches a day, with over 300 people having been converted in India to Christian faith.

Doing exciting work, our Archbishop and Bishop have visited there in India and have extended a hand of partnership to that church, hoping that together we can continue to bring people throughout the world to faith in Christ. Father Brian, good to have you. Thank you, Father Eric.

Good morning, everyone. Blessed to be here with you and to share this time of worshiping our God. Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen. As Father Eric said, I'm with a church called Believer's Church and a missionary organization called Gospel for Asia, and our heart, our passion is to reach people with the gospel who have never heard of Jesus before. And so it's just a blessing.

I'm really excited, to be honest, about this growing partnership with the Anglican Church of North America. I think the term fellowship has become, has a lot more meaning for me during this time as I've spent time

with priests and bishops and the Archbishop to understand the fellowship that we have in Christ Jesus. And so today we look at three different passages, all referring to the return of Christ, to the end times.

And I don't know if any of you have ever had that situation where you have an upcoming event that's coming that's kind of bittersweet. Maybe you're excited about it because it's very, very important, but at the same time you're also maybe nervous or anxious. Maybe it's a big test that you have coming up.

And this test is the test that if you pass this, you have graduated, you can go forth into the world, and you think you know what you need to know for the test, but because it's so big, it's so important, you're quite nervous. Or maybe it's that first date with that other significant person that you've been wanting for, and you're certain that this person is the one. This is the one I've been waiting for.

But you're nervous because you're thinking, but what if they don't like me? What if we get there and I mess it up? I'm so nervous I just bungle through it. And in many ways the return of the Lord is somewhat that way. Every Sunday we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. The return of Christ is the hope of the church. It's the time where we look forward to.

We have a living hope. And in 1 Thessalonians we see Paul consoling the Thessalonians, saying, don't worry about those who have died. And they were concerned because they were so expectant about the return of Christ.

The early church, it was this event that loomed ahead of them. And so going back to that idea of a test or a date, imagine if you had your test but you didn't know when it was coming. It might be today, it might be tomorrow, it might be a week from now.

But I have to know my material. And for us who know the Lord, we know that there's no fear of the coming of the Lord. It's what we long for.

It's what we look forward to. It is the anchor and hope of our soul. But I can remember the first time I read this passage from the book of Amos.

And it quite confused me. Because it said, the day of the Lord is a dark day. You think, well, why is that? Because all those who don't know Christ will be under judgment.

It'll be a time, it'll be dark for millions and millions of people. But we have a God that's not a God of judgment. In 2 Peter 3, Peter tells us that he's consoling regarding the coming of the Lord.

Once again, they're longing for it, looking for it. He's like, God's not slack concerning His promises. His promise is coming, don't worry about it.

But God is patient. He's long-suffering. Because His will is that none perish but all come to repentance.

And so He's giving us time for people to believe in Christ. For us to get the gospel to those who don't know Him. And today on planet earth, believe it or not, there's still 2 billion people who've not heard what Jesus did for them once.

He gave their lives for them 2,000 years ago. And at this point, we still have not reached them. And to help you understand that world, you know, Thomasville Road goes out here in front of us.

Imagine you're driving down Thomasville Road, and it's dirty, it's dusty. You have little stalls alongside of it. But one of the things you notice first is that you never lose sight of people.

You drive, whether it's night or day, there's always people alongside the road. And you drive for an hour. Always people.

Never lose sight of the people. You drive for 2 hours. Still more and more people.

3 hours. You never lose sight. And this is describing so many different drives that I've taken in Asia.

But then you begin to notice, you begin to think, and you begin to realize something peculiar. And you go, you know what? I don't remember St. Peter's being on that road. Or Good Shepherd across the street.

Or, for that matter of fact, I don't remember seeing any churches. Or any sign of Christianity whatsoever. I remember being in Delhi one time, and I was all alone basically.

I didn't know anybody there. And just all of a sudden, the reality of millions and millions of people surrounding me who didn't know Jesus. And many of them never even hearing His name one time.

You know, it's not uncommon for us, our missionaries, to go to a village and begin to try to share the gospel, to share about Jesus. And they ask, do you know Jesus? Reasonable question. And the people will think about it, and go, well, I've lived in this village my whole life, and your friend Jesus doesn't live here.

Maybe if you go down to the next village, you might find Him there. And we laugh. I mean, that's the common reaction.

But can you think of anything more sad than the fact that they think Jesus is just some guy. They have no idea. You know, we use His, or not we, hopefully, but our society uses His name as a swear word.

But there's people still waiting to hear it for the very first time. And so as a mission organization, as a church, we're an indigenous church. We're an indigenous organization, meaning we don't send Westerners to Asia, typically.

We're all for those who do it. But for us, what we've always done is we've always raised up the local people, because they already know the language, they know the culture, they don't need a visa to get into the country, and they're so effective. Each one of our missionaries typically reach at least five villages with the Gospel.

And we have 50 Bible colleges throughout Asia where we train them and we send them out. And when we send them out, our leaders literally lay hands on them and send them out with what's called a one-way ticket, meaning they go out to die if need be. They're encouraged to dig their grave outside the village, knowing that they may not return.

But we see through their lives. They go out. I remember the commitment is amazing.

I was talking to one of our leaders in northern India, and we sponsor missionaries. We have a missionary sponsorship program. And I was talking to him.

His name was Father Johnny, and I said, Father Johnny, do you know this brother? And he starts laughing. He goes, oh yeah, I know him. He's a super timid brother.

He said he actually cried the first time he was beaten. Can you believe that? And, you know, it just kind of struck me, like, that's his world. I mean, think about that.

I mean, like, the first time he was beaten for the Gospel, this leader who loves this brother could laugh saying, yeah, he actually cried about that. I remember being at a prayer meeting in southern India, and we lose people on the mission field all the time. They're killed.

And this time around, though, someone said, Father so-and-so in this area of the field just died. And all of a sudden, everybody starts to cry. He'd worked in that office, and they just sent him out from there about six months earlier.

And now he had gone to be the Lord. But why are they doing that? Why are they going out? Because they have this hope of Jesus' return in them. And they know that Jesus is the hope for these people.

And God is true to His promises. He's not slack. And what we're seeing the Lord do is just absolutely amazing.

I remember we had a basically a synod, very similar to the one that was just here. And one of our leaders saw one of our missionaries walking along, and he was holding his back and kind of rubbing his legs. It was obvious he was in pain.

And so the leader called him over. He said, Brother, come here. He said, Were you beaten? He said, No.

He said, Uncle, that's a term of affection over there. He said, Yesterday I had to stand in icy cold waters and baptize 88 people. He said, Oh, praise the Lord.

We'll pray for you, and you can go back to your ministry, and God will heal you. He said, Please do, because tomorrow I have to baptize 133 more. I went to visit one of our missionaries in northern India, a place called Uttar Pradesh.

If it was its own country, it would be the sixth largest country in the world, just one state of India. Completely, just so unreached. And we went to visit a missionary there by the name, I'll just call him Father Hubert.

And Father Hubert had gone to this area. It was known as the Banjara village. It was this very low caste, bottom of society, a lot of criminals and things like that, people who just did not know anything about you.

No Christian had ever stepped foot in that village. When he gets there, he sees all kinds of disease and sickness, and he gets water filters for them, and then gets a well dug for them, so they can get clean water. And they say, Oh, you know, your God healed us.

And Father Hubert said, Well, no, the clean water healed you. He said, Yeah, but your God gave us that clean water. And he began to share the love of Christ with people, and he had this woman come, and he prays for her, God heals her, and she gives her life to the Lord.

And she goes back to her husband, and her husband had been in and out of jail regularly, and he's part of this kind of group of criminals that had this village as their home base. And he's looking at her, and he's

like, What happened to you? And she goes, Jesus gave me a clean heart, a new heart. He goes, Well, how did he do that? She goes, I don't know.

He goes, Whatever he did to you, I want him to do to me. He goes, Well, how do I do that? She goes, I don't know. Come talk to the pastor, and he'll tell you.

As he goes, he shares the gospel with him, he gives his life to the Lord. He goes back to his buddies, he actually goes to prison to meet his fellow criminals, I guess you'd say. And they're looking at him like, What happened to you? Like, I got a new heart.

Well, how did you get a new heart? I believed in Jesus. Well, how do I get a new heart? Well, come talk to the rector, and he'll tell you. And next thing you know, almost that entire village had given their lives to Christ.

And it was such a backwards village. Before the missionary getting there, there was open sewage, the houses weren't finished because their self-worth was so low, they basically viewed each other as like cattle. And so, like, why do I need to build a, why do I need to make sure the water stays out of my home because my children are just like cattle anyway? Because they'd been programmed by the caste system and things like that.

But as they received Jesus, as they learned that there was a God who loved them, their village just got absolutely transformed. Sewage went away. Houses were finished.

You know, scriptures are actually painted on the walls of the, the outside walls of the houses. And what happened was, the surrounding villages said, what happened to your village? And they come and say, well, Jesus did this to our village. And so the village leaders are like, well, we want to, we want Jesus to do this to our village.

So our missionary, Father Hubert went over there, shared the gospel. There's five villages. So I come, see this work, see what he's doing.

And I was with our diocesan leader, we didn't have a bishop over that diocese, we had what was known as a vicar general, and come with the vicar general and a village leader found out that the head of the diocese was going to be there. And so this man, and I got to see this with my very own eyes, actually came to beg for a missionary. I want Jesus to come to my village.

God is moving in so many amazing ways right now throughout the world. He's not slack. He's patient.

Our hope is there before us. And the apostles asked, when would this come? Jesus said, don't worry about that. But we do know, in this passage in Matthew 25, in the previous chapter, Matthew 24, Jesus tells his disciples, this gospel will be preached to all nations, and then the end will come.

My brothers and sisters, we need to get this gospel to a world that's waiting before the day of the Lord comes. But Jesus brings this thing home and he's basically saying, he uses three parables in a row basically to put forward before us the question, are you ready? Are you ready for Christ's return? Maybe you've come to church year after year. Maybe you're new to church.

But are you right with God? Do you have peace? Have you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If you haven't do that, I want to encourage you, don't wait. Because one of the things Jesus says is, you

don't know when your hour is coming. And it's going to come when you least expect it.

And you may say, I have five years, I have 10 years, I have 50 years. You don't know. My aunt just died three weeks ago.

Healthiest one, healthiest person of that. She was the first of that generation in my family to go. She had a headache one morning, took some aspirin, it went away.

She woke up the next morning, headache. My uncle checked her blood pressure, it was really high. Took her to the hospital.

She had a brain hemorrhage right on the emergency room floor and died. Are you ready for Christ's return? And I want to encourage you, you know the Lord, that day, is just an amazing anchor for the soul. But I want to encourage you to share Paul's burden.

You know, Paul, thinking about being with Christ, to live is Christ, to die is gain, but I know it's more needful for me to be here, so I'm confident I'm going to stay. Philippians chapter 1. Embrace the Lord's heart for the unreached, for the lost. Live your life to share Christ with others.

And just as a way of encouragement, actually our ministry, our founder KP O'Hanna has written a book called Revolutionary World Missions. And I brought 100 copies or so with me to give to you for free. And this book is the reason I'm in missions today.

When I read this book, I was busy doing everything there was to do in my church. Doors were open, I was there. But when I read the book, I realized I had what I refer to now as a Christianized version of self-centered.

You know, we Christianize music, we Christianize movies, we Christianize yoga somehow. I don't know how we do that. But we can also Christianize self-center.

In that we go through all the motions, we do all the right things, but the reality is our lives are all about us. And maybe you're in that place, maybe you're not, maybe you just want to know more about what God's doing in the world. I really want to encourage you to get this book.

Like I said, it's absolutely free. I just ask that you sign up for it. That way it helps ensure that you actually intend to read it.

There's a table out there. But my brothers and sisters, we don't know when Christ's return is coming. And don't fall into that trap of eschatology, of trying to figure out is it pre-trib, post-trib, mid-trib? All those kinds of things.

Millennial, amillennial. You know what? The Bible is clear about one thing. Christ is coming.

Amen? And Jesus implores us to be ready. Let's be a church. Let's be a bride.

Let's be individual believers who are ready for the Lord's coming. Amen? God bless you.

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