

Luke 12:35-48 Lecture

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon calls Christians to recognize the world's moral decay while remaining watchful and prepared for Christ's return through faithful service.

Scripture: Luke 12:35

Topics: "Christian Identity", "Waiting for Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the fallen state of the world due to man's sin and distrust in God, illustrating how worldly advancements do not equate to moral progress. He highlights that true Christians are called to be witnesses of grace, living in anticipation of Christ's return while remaining detached from worldly pursuits. Darby urges believers to keep their hearts focused on Christ, who serves them and redeems them from this present evil world. He stresses the importance of being prepared and vigilant, with hearts and actions aligned with their faith, as they await the Lord's return. Ultimately, he encourages Christians to find their identity and purpose in Christ rather than in the transient things of this world.

Transcript

This world is in a state of ruin, the result of man having distrusted God and sinned and of his being driven out of Paradise. No one can shut out the fact that the evil is here. Outward things prove it. What is the magistrate for if there is no evil to stop? There it is, and God has dealt with it. He called out Abraham, He gave a law, He sent prophets, and He sent His Son. Yet the world has gone totally wrong. There has been great development in it, no doubt, such as telegraphs and railroads, arts and sciences, and so on, but all that is just what Cain set out to do because he was away from God. People will tell you, there is no harm in it. Why no, of course, there is not. The harm is in the use we make of such things. The trees in the Garden of Eden were good enough in themselves, but they were not intended for Adam to hide himself from God behind them. If I strike a man dead, the harm is not in my strength in itself, but in the use I am making of it.

What is wrong in music? The sounds are beautiful, just look around in this great City and see the purpose music is serving at public houses, etc., etc.

Adam sinned against God, and Cain sinned against his brother, and then he builds a city in order to make himself as comfortable as he can without God. Workers in brass and iron and music are found therein. And the difficulty now is that Christians do not understand that they are to be witnesses of grace in a world that will only last for a time and then it will be given over to judgment.

People talk of the progress of the world! Well, I do not deny it, but what will that be to you when you are dead? For the next generation? And where will you be when the next generation comes? All sorts of conveniences have been made, but then are people morally nearer to God by these things? The moment they are used to make the need of reconciliation to God less important to people's souls, they are simply Cain's works. There may be hundreds of things yet to be found out, but can anybody say that my soul is in a better state before God because of telegraphs and other inventions? But directly my soul learns that I have got to do with God for ever, I have a sense of what I am.

183 The truth is that God has brought light into this world, which tells me everything that concerns me for eternity, whilst it leaves other things where they are. And in the Christ of God I find that which gives me a relationship that shall last for ever. Thus God has dealt with this world as with a world that has departed from Him, and yet He has dealt with it in perfect grace.

And Christ coming into this world has become a servant for the believer. He says, "I am among you as he that serveth," that is to say, to glorify God and to save us. As taking up our cause, He has set Himself to carry this out, and to be, eternally, the minister of blessing to us according to God. Alone with God He has done all that which was needed, for He has been "made sin." God cannot allow sin, and so Christ gave Himself for our sins that instead of putting me away for my sins He might put my sins away for me.

The effect of this is that Christ has become everything to us who believe, and our hearts are taken out of this world altogether. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God and faith follows Him there in Spirit, so that now we do not belong any more to this world. Quite true, we have to go through the wilderness, but it is with the consciousness of belonging to Christ outside of it.

Well then, Christ has redeemed us from this present evil world, and the more we see the world making progress, the more we need to learn that Christianity consists in our being Christ's and not the world's. The world that I am in, but not of, is the world that has rejected and crucified the Son of God. The Christian is to be gracious in the world as Christ was, but his heart is with Christ. How blessedly this works! It brings hearts down that have had too much of this world and it lifts hearts up that have much of sorrow and trial. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low." Christ fixes our hearts upon Himself, outside of this world.

And we are to be as men that wait for their Lord. The meaning of "lights burning" is, that we have a distinct definite profession so that men should know what we are. "Your loins . . . girded," is the practical application of the power of the word. Christ looks for the distinct and full confession of Himself in word and deed, and also that your hearts should be all right and in order. Loins girded and lights burning should characterise Christians in the world Truth in the heart and a good confession of Christ. It is an astonishing fact that nobody with a false religion is ashamed of it. A Mohammedan will say his prayers while he is making a bargain with you. And yet how many a true Christian is ashamed of Christ! But the Lord wants us to be as men that wait for their Lord. Are our hearts really waiting for God's Son from heaven? I do not talk of understanding the prophecies - very blessed in their place - but the Morning Star is what belongs to us, a heavenly Christ who has given His life for us. As, then, we are found looking to be with and like Christ for ever, this helps us to go through this world. The character attaching to the Christian is, then, that of watching. It is not understanding prophecy, but it is attachment to Christ as having got the promise that He is coming so that we are waiting for Him. Such have found Christ precious to them, and they say, "Oh, that He would come!" Are we Christians, then, as men that wait for their Lord? If the Lord were to come to-night, would He be able to say of each one of us, "there is a blessed servant"? Remember He is waiting

more truly than we are. Christ has become our servant - love likes to serve, and selfishness likes to be served - and He never gives up His service. In this wicked world we must keep our loins girt, whilst so watching, but when He comes He will gird Himself and make us sit down. Not merely shall we have the best in heaven, but we shall have Christ Himself to minister to us.

184 He adds another thing. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Here we have the service of Christians. We have had the state, now it is the service; we have just to fill up the little niche He has put us into. So, accordingly, the promise here is different: "He will make him ruler over all that he hath." This is not the best of heaven ministered by Christ to us, but it is the kingdom "you must come and reign with me." The perfect love of Christ is not merely satisfied with ministering to our happiness, but all that is His own He makes ours.

Now what has brought in the evil around us? Just this, "My lord delayeth his coming." If we were really waiting for Christ, would we be heaping up money and property here? Would we be really glad if Christ came to-night, I mean as to the state of our hearts? Ah! the shaking that will next come will be the shaking of the things that can be shaken, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. The Lord give us to have our loins girded and our lights burning, and ourselves to be as men waiting for their Lord!

185 The Lord give us to know Him in His love as manifested down here in the efficacy of His work on the cross, and then, whilst waiting for Him, to have our hearts looking up to Him and longing to be like Him!

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