

DOES ANYBODY REALLY KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

What if the end came, and you weren't ready?

The Scriptures lob out a couple of big questions at us today:

- Are you ready?... ready for when God shows up?
- Do you know what time it is?... None of us really do, but are you ready anyway?

Jesus warned us, "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour," the hour of His return.

- Jesus will come again, for real, in time but to end time, and to begin the new creation.
- It's going to feel like Judgment Day to some. It's going to feel like a party to others.
- Do we know when? No.
- Do we need to be ready anyway? Yes.



Jesus warns us by telling a story about a wedding.

- In those days, the groom and his friends would start out from his house to begin a long, meandering parade-of-a-journey through the whole village or town, eventually to where the bride lived with her parents.
- The bride didn't know exactly how long the parade would take, didn't know when the groom would show up. The bride and her friends would all wait, ready to welcome the groom, ready for the big party to begin, a party that would light up the darkness.
- For the 10 bridesmaids in Jesus' story, being ready meant having enough oil in their lamps to get the party started. Five are ready. Five are not.
- It's midnight before the groom comes. The five unready bridesmaids have left to find more oil. By the time they return, the time had passed, the door was closed to them.
- It's a hard story. There's no happy ending for the five who were not ready.

Do we know when Jesus is going to show up next? No!

Do we need to be ready anyway? Yes!

Remember the song by the band Chicago, "Does Anybody Know What Time It is?"

Get this, it was recorded 1969.

- Here we are, half a century later, and it's never been harder to know what time it is.
- The times are confusing and disorienting.

We're in COVID time.

- Days have a way of melting into each other in endless repetition.
- For some it's an endless daily repetition of sitting with not much to do.
- For many it's an endless daily repetition of scrambling with too much to do.
- For all, it's an endless wondering, "How long? How long will it be, O Lord?"
"Does anybody really know what time it is?" No!

Yet everything also seems scrambled now. Pivot is the norm.

- **Schools** open and close and repeat.
- Yesterday's game plan at **work** has completely changed for today... along with the tools and skills required to do your ever-changing job.
- Last year, most of us never had even heard of "Zoom."
- Even the **weather** often seems scrambled these days.
- Have you ever seen **politics** so scramble us as people?

Time itself seems scrambled now.

- If time was a merry-go-round, you might just be feeling dizzy from the ride.
- Write this down and later do a google image search on, "Salvador Dali melting clocks." The wonderfully bizarre painting fits the times.

*"Does anybody really know what time it is?" No!
Do we need to be ready anyway? Yes!*

One of the first things God does in the biblical creation story is to tame chaos.

- Unordered time is one of those forces of chaos.
- God tames time by creating night and day.
- God tames time by creating seasons.
- The crown jewel of time-taming is God's gift of the Sabbath Day.

The Sabbath Day is a holy time, God's time, a time for time-out from work, a time for worship first, a time for rest and renewal so the rest of your days are not just endless slavery to lower and ultimately unrewarding purposes.

- Deuteronomy 5:15 actually makes a connection between release from slavery and the command and gift of the Sabbath. It says, *"Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, but the Lord your God brought you out... to keep the sabbath day."*
- Keeping Sabbath worship is the first step in taming the dangers of time chaos and its slavery.
- The worship day prepares you for all your other days. Worship grounds you back into God's greater purposes. Aligning your life to God's purposes is what will tame and harness your time for greater meaning and enjoyment.

Do we know when Jesus is coming again? No!

- Do we know when we might be going home to Jesus first? No.
- What we do know is that Christ has called us to be ready.
- What we also know is that worship grounds us in God's time and purposes no matter what else is going on around us.

Here are some homework "life transformation" questions for this week:

- How does God's word call me to spend my time? How am I doing at that?
- Is my time held in slavery to anything it should not be? How might I trust the Lord to lead me out of that slavery?
- What's one change I can make in my use of time to better honor God, bring blessing to others, and be made ready myself for the end?

"Does anybody really know what time it is?"

- **Yes!** It's God's time, time for God's purposes.
- **Yes!** It's time to be ready. Jesus is coming soon.

Amen.