

Behold, I come as a thief (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

- [0 : 00] I'm feeling so much to need the Lord's merciful and gracious help. I must venture in directing your thoughts to the Revelation chapter 16, reading the 15th verse.
- The Revelation chapter 16, reading verse 15. Behold, I come as a thief.
- Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.
- The Revelation chapter 16, verse 15. Behold, I come as a thief.
- Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.
- [1 : 21] Lord, we have before us a most solemn subject which is speaking regarding the seven last plagues which will be poured out upon the earth.
- And this, as I understand it, some time at least before the second coming of Christ. Some ten days ago I travelled to Brixton Tabernacle in London to preach.
- And on my arrival at the chapel house, and some of you know the new Brixton Tabernacle that the chapel and the chapel house are built on the same ground, linked together, really in one building.
- But as I arrived there during the afternoon, I found that only a little while before I arrived that thieves or a thief had entered the house and had stolen things from the dear friends there that were of great value to them.
- Not so much regarding their financial value, but the value that they were to them personally. The dear lady, the deacon's wife, was in the chapel seeking to prepare it for the evening service.
- [3 : 21] And whilst attending to these duties, so the thieves or the thief came and broke open the front door that was locked and stole a good many things that were of value to them.
- And I found this dear lady in great distress. The police were there asking questions.
- Now this word that I have ventured with, and dear friends, almost to the last moment before coming to chapel, I was still seeking the word of God to come with.
- And I can only venture with this. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.
- This verse is in the midst of the solemn truths concerning the seven last dear beloved friends.
- [4 : 47] This fifteenth verse is a direct word from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It comes directly from him.
- May we, all of us, feel that Jesus, the Lord of all, the King of Kings, is speaking to us each in our souls.
- Because we each have a never-dying soul. And if we die a natural death, or if we die in the way that God may be pleased to bring us to death, death, in death our souls will leave our bodies.

Now this is a mystery to the human mind. It will only be understood by faith and God-given faith.

And yet it is true. And whilst we have heard, I'm sure if not almost if not all of us here have heard this spoken in our lives by one or another of God's servants, perhaps by parents or others, Sunday school teachers, that we all have a never-dying soul.

[6 : 43] And as I stand here on this Lord's Day morning, I stand in a most solemn position. And this is why I venture to read those few verses in Ezekiel 33.

And what have we read, among other truths? So thou, O Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel.

Therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. How solemn then is the work of the ministry.

And if the Lord should yet speak or has spoken such truth to any poor trembling man that might be in this chapel this Lord's Day morning, they will have known the effect of it in their heart.

So thou, O Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel. Then hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

[8 : 02] Well, I would make it clear then that this verse, the truth it contains, is the voice of God. Behold, I come as a thief.

Many of you know that this same truth is spoken concerning the second coming of Christ. Behold, I come as a thief.

Dear friends, I so often feel these days that the second coming of Christ draws near us.

No man knows when it will be. No, none, said Jesus, but my Father which is in heaven. Oh, friends, that day is coming.

When the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory, and all the holy angels with him. Another solemn day that awaits us if he tarries is the day of death.

[9 : 19] And as I stand here, I have to deal with your never-dying souls. I'm concerned about your bodies.

I'm concerned about your lives. I wish you well in every possible way. But friends, my most solemn responsibility as a pastor and minister is your never-dying soul.

I am aware that we have a solemn subject. And I hope that none of you will feel, well, he's come with this again.

We've heard it all before. Well, friends, I do not know how you'll respond in your hearts to the word of God on this Lord's Day morning, but on the other hand, I am burdened with it and have been burdened with it.

And especially in connection with the present situation in the Middle East, I have no intention of saying very much about this, that I feel there is the need to speak about it.

[10 : 35] I hope that none of us here look upon the events that are taking place in the Middle East as unimportant or something that does not concern us here in England.

It does concern us. It concerns the whole nation. Many of you will know that they are now purposing to send so many more thousand troops and tanks and so on from Germany into the Middle East.

We hear yesterday how France, affected by that that took place concerning their ambassadors' residence in Iraq, and so now they are sending so many more thousand troops.

The United States have thousands of men there and they intend to send more. Even Syria sent, if memory serves me rightly, ten thousand men, and so we could go on.

But you know this, that many nations are involved. Now, do not misunderstand me, because I would make it clear that I do not pretend to understand prophecy.

[11 : 55] I do not pretend to begin, really, to understand these solemn truths that I have read to you concerning the seven last plagues.

But I do know this, that it is going to happen. I do know this, that it is going to be fulfilled. And how near this is, we do not know.

But among other things, we have read, and the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

Now, Iraq is very close to Israel. Iran is very close to Israel. And while I do not understand or even suggest that I do, yet, on the other hand, surely the things that are happening are a voice to us all.

They are a voice to us all. Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man come in. And then again, after this verse that I have read as a text, it says, and he gathered them.

[13 : 21] You see, God is the one who is going to gather. We know that the various rulers of nations are responding, and they are sending their troops.

But dear friends, God is over all this. Our God is over all this. God is over all this. But it is very evidently bound up with his sovereign, holy, permissive will.

We know that he has his sovereign will, he has his permissive will. But you see, we would not pry into this. On the other hand, this chapter here has really been in my thoughts and mind for weeks now.

And it seems to keep coming back to this. So then, God is saying, and he gathered them together unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

And you see, the Bible speaks of this as the last great battle in the world. Now, whatever the Lord's will is, I would seek to leave it.

[14 : 36] I must do so. But, hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me.

But there's something even more solemn and dreadful, full of awe in this, to my heart. You see, in the world today, we still have the communists.

It would seem that their power is declining. Well, to my understanding, the communists are atheists. The communists are those that J.C. Philpott spoke of as the sin of infidelity, which means that they do not believe there is a God.

The communists do not have a Bible. They're atheists. We also have the Church of Rome. Rome has her Bible.

But it is not the Word of God. It has, as it were, parts of it, as it is with the Jehovah's Witnesses and others.

[15 : 53] They bring a certain amount of God's Word into it, but they have their own Bibles. and the Church of Rome is still very active.

I believe, you know, that the Pope of Rome is sitting, as it were, in his palace and he's watching these events. And the Jesuits, that awful system, are alive and very powerful in the affairs of the world.

A friend who seemed to understand this was only saying to me recently that the Jesuits, they have, as it were, control, or some control over a number of our newspapers.

The media is in, to some extent at least, is in the hands of the Jesuits. And friends, they are working in our land, they are working in the world, a dreadful system.

You see then, there's communism, there's Romanism, and there's Islam. Now, in this, Iraq, Iran, surely we could say is the very seat of Islam.

[17 : 04] You might say, well, what does that mean? It means those that are Muslims. Muslims, and their prophet is Mohammed. Their Bible is the Koran.

And so we could go on. But you see, if we just think of those three powers, communism, Romanism, Islam, and they are great powers, and I'm sure I'm right when I say that they are motivated by the devil.

You see, friends, in the world we have satanic powers. And they are great. In comparison, true Christians are in a minority.

If we're among them, we're in a minority. And our only hope in all this is in our God. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Therefore, with all this that is upon us in the world, not knowing yet what will happen, and therefore we come in the midst of all this we feel with God's own word.

[18 : 21] Again, I repeat it, the word of Christ. The word of Christ to his people everywhere, and the word of Christ to us here as a church and people, and the word of Christ to us in our families, and the word of Christ to us in our own souls.

Behold, I come as a thief. We have spoken of his second coming, and the Bible plainly tells us that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, and when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as a woman in travail.

Regarding my second coming, it is beyond my finite mind, but I believe it, and when that day comes, what did the heavenly messengers say to the dear disciples, when their Saviour led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he blessed them, he was taken from them.

How was he taken? A cloud received him out of their sight. And the heavenly messengers spoke to those disciples and said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?

this same Jesus, this same Jesus, whom ye have seen taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him taken into heaven.

[20 : 05] And behold, the Bible tells us, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him. Friends, every eye will see him. oh, what a day that will be.

The only way that we should be prepared for it, the only way in which we should be prepared for death and eternity and to be found right in Christ is coached in this.

It is to be washed in his precious blood, to be sheltered beneath it, and to be clothed in his righteousness.

Now that is our only hope of salvation. It is to be found in Christ. The lady I have mentioned in London, she didn't expect the thief to come.

She had locked the door. There were other locks that she couldn't use because she went out of the house. There were locks she could use if she had been in the house, but she couldn't because she went out of it.

[21 : 19] You see, it was a big, heavy door and it was just broken open and the thieves or thief entered and took away things that meant much to them.

Some of you here, I believe, have known what it is to have thieves enter your house. We have been spared that thus far, but what it must be.

I think only those that have experienced it will know what it is. And you see what happens when a thief enters or thieves and you feel that your very home has been desecrated as it were and your privacy and all that it means has been broken into.

now then the word of God is behold, pause, listen, take notice of what I'm going to say.

Behold, I come as a thief. Another thought that is very important is this, the day of death. friends, I speak to you, I trust, as God's servant, as your pastor, to those that it concerns, but dear friends, dear children, dear young people, dear all of you, you each have a never dying soul, and death is now upon the road.

[22 : 55] Whether it tarries for one year, one week, one day, one hour, whether it tarries for many years, it is coming. The moment that our lives begin, we all begin to die.

And when the Lord comes and takes away our breath, the Bible plainly tells us, he taketh away their breath, they die, they return to the dust. I've told you about the two old ladies in the home, one who was seeking to defy death, and who said, I won't.

And yet in that moment her breath was taken, the other who was evidently among the Lord's people, and therefore oh the difference in her death, one fought death, fought against death, strove as it were to live, but couldn't live when that moment came and her breath was taken, the other was waiting for the Lord to take it.

Oh that we could be favoured with an end like that, waiting for the Lord to take our breath, waiting to be with our Saviour.

Friends, how is it with us? How is it with us each? We need grace given to consider these matters.

[24 : 27] And I know it's possible for us to go out of chapel on this Lord's Day morning and forget everything that's been said. But I can only hope that you won't forget everything that's been said.

So then the word of God is behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches. What are we to watch for?

Well of course I believe primarily it means watching for our Lord. You see the contrast between those that are dead in trespasses and in sins and who have passing thoughts of death and put it from their mind but not so a living soul.

Death is a reality to every living soul. Death is a reality. And the wonder of it is that it can become a reality even to a little child as the Holy Spirit quickens them into life and brings them to realise even in their young life that they have a never dying soul.

And they're in need of a saviour. Friends none are too young for this and none are too old. Blessed is he that watches.

[25 : 52] May we then be favoured to watch for our saviour. Let me just try and illustrate the point like this.

things. And the children will understand this thought. But there are times in your life when there are special days. Birthdays, Christmas time, and other days when you have your gatherings together in the family and have such a day.

And you have invited those you love to come. children. And especially children, you know. I remember how this was in our own life with our children.

But you know, little children especially, if their grandparents are coming, or others that they love, you see, they look out of the window.

I'm sure there are those here who will understand what I mean. You look out of the window. You may even go and open the front door and look out. And you keep waiting for your loved ones to come.

[26 : 59] Oh, how pleased you are when they do come. You go out perhaps to meet them. You embrace them. You kiss them. You're so pleased to see them. Oh, friends, may we have a religion like that.

May we have a religion like that. That we may be among those that are watching for their Lord to come, waiting for him to come, looking for him to come.

You see, the promise is, to those that look for him, will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Now, are we among those that are looking for Jesus?

You dear children and friends that are here, whatever may be in your life, whatever point you may be in your life, whatever it is, and to all of us here, the thing that matters is, are we looking for Jesus?

Are we looking for Jesus? You may have some important thing in your life tomorrow, or in coming days, but in this, are you looking for Jesus?

[28 : 11] Do you remember how it was with Jesus after his resurrection? He said this, go and tell my disciples and Peter, behold, although I go before you into Galilee, there shall you see me.

Is that how you're viewing the future? Is that how you're waiting upon your Lord? For everything that's in your life? You're looking for Jesus. And you see, if we are, he says that he will go before us into Galilee.

He'll go before us wherever our life will be led, and whatever it is, and there shall ye see me. Now, is this the point with us today?

Do you want to see Jesus above everything else in your life? Do you need him? Do you want him? Can you join with the hymn writer when he or she said, oh, thou Saviour, keep me nigh?

You want to be near him. This is the most important thing in your life. You want to be near your Saviour, and you want to be with him. You want to sit at his feet as Mary did, and Martha too, as the Lord favoured her.

[29 : 33] Behold, I come as a thief, blessed is he that watches. Now, dear friends, you know the opening hymn that we had this morning, 608.

Blessed is he that watches. Now, if we are among the Lord's people, we shall be watching concerning our very life, our conduct, our conversation, the way we live, that that goes on in our lives.

You see, real religion will take everything to do with our life. It's not just something that we, as it were, put on on the Lord's day, as we may put on our best clothes.

Real religion is something that's with the precious souls that the Lord has touched. It's with them every day of their life. It's an everyday thing.

It's an everyday exercise. life. And so we shall need to be given grace to watch in everything that we do. And what did we sing in our opening hymn?

[30 : 47] We sang this among other truths there, and to my heart it's so essential. Keep Christ, your living head in view, in all you say, in all you do.

Blessed is he that watches. So we need grace to watch our words, watch our actions.

We need grace to watch concerning everything that's in our life. You know, friends, there are thousands upon thousands of people in our land that are, every day of their life they're watching their television sets.

To my heart, it is one of the greatest evils that the world has ever known. Not the thing in itself, but that that it conveys to people.

And you see thousands of people, you know this is true. There are thousands I go sometimes, I walk past homes, and you see people, you cannot help see them. There they are, the television's on and they come home and they put it on.

[32 : 06] And, oh, you see, even this, and of course there are many other evils, but television is one of the greatest evils of our day and it leads souls away from God.

Some of us here know what we're speaking about. just to show you what I mean, I went into the DGH, our hospital here in Eastbourne with one of my sons some years ago.

And he, I had to stay there to see, or we had to stay to see a certain person. And we were ushered into this room and the television was on.

You know, friends, in a moment I was attracted to it. Some of you know that in my earlier days I went regularly to the cinema, constantly watched everything and anything.

Now, I found myself attracted in a moment and I felt the effect of it. You see, as I came out of the hospital. But, oh, the contrast then between watching the television or watching whatever you might think of, all the different sports that there are.

[33 : 23] And I loved sport. As a young man, I loved it. Could always watch it. And there's that in me now that would. But, oh, the difference if we are found among those that are spoken of here.

Blessed is he that watches. So the essential thing is then to watch for our Saviour. Watch for him in your life. You'll be found there. And then it says, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

What is this garment then that we need, as it were, grace to keep? The garment is the garment of the righteousness of Christ.

Now, one last solemn word here. in the day of judgment, in the day of death, we shall all need, we do need, to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

And if the Lord has favoured us with this, we shall be very concerned to live and walk as our master. You see, we need grace to keep our garments.

[34 : 48] Oh, how quickly we can lose this. We lose it often. But blessed is he that keepeth his garments, lest he be found naked, and they see his shame.

Well, friends, I have tried to preach to you once more, but how solemn it will be for us if we are found naked, that is, before God in the day of judgment and when we come to die, if we are found naked.

So we all need this sacred garment, the righteousness of Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.