

Time to Get Ready:
November 30, 2025

My wife... **[1 5:15]**

Wakes up every morning...
At 5:15 to get ready for work.

I'm a light sleeper...
So when she wakes up...
And starts rumbling through the house...
I wake up too.

And honestly...
Sometimes I'm already awake...
Just trying to fall back asleep.
But... as you know... it doesn't always work.

Anyway... on Friday...
I did fall back asleep...
A light half-in half-out...
Kind of sleep.

One minute I was awake...
The next minute there was this...
Creepy shadowy figure...
Looming over me...
While I was laying in bed...
All vulnerable...

I jumped. Literally... I jumped.
When my eyes finally cleared...
I could see it was a creeper... it was my wife...
Who came into the room...
To say goodbye!

But... I'm telling you...
She scared the Thanksgiving stuffing...
Out of me.

I don't know about you... **[2 Fear Response]**
But there is something instinctual...
Inside of me...

That does not like...
To be vulnerable...
Does not like...
To be caught unaware.

And actually...
Causes a fight, flight, or play dead...
Reaction... but to be honest...
Most the time... I fight.

It can be terrifying...
To come face to face...
With our own human weakness...
Our vulnerabilities...
Our fears.

Especially... when we're...just not ready.

Now... in the gospel lesson... Jesus says... **[3 Ready?]**
You must be ready...
For the return of the Son of Man.

And I don't know about you...
But the first thing...
That pops into my mind...
Every time I read this lesson...
Is Preppers...

You know... what I'm talking about?...
Those people... who have...
Two years worth of food...
In hermetically sealed buckets...
In their subterranean shelter...
In order to avoid...
The inevitable woes...
Of the APOCALYPSE.

There's something that bugs about that idea.
Maybe it's because...
That's not how I understand God.

Like the things on earth...
Are going to become so bad...
That we humans...
Need to take our fate...
Into our own hands.

Be prepared to sustain this body.

Be ready to fight.
Against the scary old world.

But actually... the way the bible talks about it...
The Apocalypse is...
The will of God.
And you remember...
This is the same God...
Who loves you.
Who cares for you...

And now... all the sudden... you need to be scared???
And ready to fight???
That does not make sense to me. **[4 Apocalypse]**

Can we talk about that word for a minute?
I'm not sure how this happened...
But the word Apocalypse has been stolen...
By the world... from us.
Now it means something...
That it actually doesn't mean.

When we say Apocalypse...
We think it means...
A series of catastrophic...
World-ending events...
Where we will have to fight...
For our existence...
In a world gone completely mad.

Well... we don't have to wait for the world to go mad.
It has always been...
And I'm pretty sure...
Will always be...
A bit mad.

However the word Apocalypse...
Actually means...
To uncover.
To take the lid off...
And look inside.

It's a word that means...
Revealing something that has been hidden.

So... when we say...
The book of Revelation...
Is an apocalyptic writing...
Actually the title in Greek is...
APOKALUPSIS... because the first words are...
Apokalupsis Iesous Christos.
The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

We don't mean... catastrophic...
We mean... it reveals something...
About nature of God... that we did not know...
Until it was revealed by the Holy Spirit...
Until it was written down by John...
Until it was read by us.

That's all.

So. The gospel reading today...
Might give you... the heebie jeebies.
Might make you feel a bit uncomfortable... **[5 Unexpected]**
Be ready... because the Son of Man... is coming...
At an unexpected hour...

When we hear those words...
With our modern ears...
We hear scary organ music...
In the background.

We have mental glimpses...
Of Kirk Cameron...
Being Left Behind...
Fending for himself...
On God's scorched and brown earth.

We fret about some people...
Being taken into heaven...
And the possibility of us... of me... not being...
One of the chosen ones.

But I don't think that's the purpose...
Of this text.
I don't think...
Jesus is trying to scare the stuffing out of us.

I think the purpose is to re-emphasize...
The fact... that this faith...
Is supposed to change...
Our whole life.
Change us... as disciples...

Our faith in Jesus...
Is supposed to be so deeply incorporated...
Into who we are...
How we think...
The choices we make...

That it doesn't matter.
When the Son of Man returns.

I mean... it matters...
Because it will be a great day...
For those of us who believe...
That Jesus is the Messiah.

But it doesn't matter... in the sense...
That it's not a bad day for us..
It's not supposed to be scary.
It's supposed to be good.

From the Gospel of St. Luke, chapter 21: **[6 Stand Up]**

There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars,
And on the earth dismay among the nations,
Bewildered by the roaring of the sea and the surging of the waves.

People will faint from fear and anxiety

Over what is coming upon the earth,
For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

At that time they will see the Son of Man
Coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

When these things begin to happen,
Stand up and lift up your heads,
Because your redemption is drawing near.

I'm telling you.
We are not supposed to hide in a hole...
In our backyard...
With provisions...
For survival.

We are supposed to stand up.
Lift up our heads.
Look to the Son of Man.
For he is our redemption.

He's the good guy.
He's the Messiah.
The Savior.
The Christ.

So. Rather than worry...
About if it's today or tomorrow...

Rather than worry...
About the world going to Hell...
In a proverbial handbasket.

Rather than getting ourselves...
And the people around us...
Wound around the axle.

We should spend our time...
And our lives...
Getting ready.

BUT the big question for us... is HOW.
How do we get ourselves ready...
For the coming...
Of the Son of Man.

Because getting ready... seems like a really big idea.
Overwhelming.
Intimidating.

The first thing I thought of...
While writing this sermon is...
The old joke... **[7 Elephant]**

How do you eat an elephant?
One bite at a time.

But just this week...
I heard a traditional Gallic saying...
That I think applies to our situation... **[8 Weak]**

Bionn gach tosach lag.
Which mean... Every beginning starts weak.

Which is a way of giving ourselves permission...
To try to work on the problem...
Without having to be perfect.

We can start weak.
And get stronger...
Over time...
As we go.

But... to be ready... we have to begin.
We have to do something.

So here are some ideas I have...
About HOW we get ready... **[9 How]**
First... you're here.
In worship.
With other people of faith.

I would say... keep doing what you're doing.
Put yourself in a position...
To hear God's Word.
To learn more about God.
To think and talk... about your faith...
With other people...
Who are on the exact same journey... you're on.
Come to worship.
Go to bible study.
Take a Sunday morning class.
Volunteer.
Ask a lotta questions.
Think. And grow.

Secondly... and maybe this should be first... repent.
I know it sounds a little trite.

Repent... just means... to turn around.
Stop doing those things that hurt you...
And hurt other people.

And repentance is NOT a one time deal.
We... you and I... need to keep repenting.
Keep coming back to God.

Keep asking for forgiveness...
And strength.

Thirdly... Follow Jesus.
Sometimes we get overwhelmed...
We think that religion is a hard set of rules...
That we have to follow. And we can't be good enough.

You know Jesus made it kind of simple.
Because he knew we would need it to be simple.
He said... love God.
And love people.

And you know... how doctors practice medicine.
Have you ever thought about that word... practice.
It means... that they are constantly learning and growing...
From their experience.

We can do the same thing... as people of faith.
We can learn... and grow...
In our love for God...
And our love for each other.

We just need to practice...

And finally... live with hope... not fear.

In the days to come... we are going to hear stories...
Of angels... the messengers of God...
Who come to Mary and Joseph and Shepherds.
And they always say the same thing.

Don't be afraid. Because...

Fear is debilitating.
Fear steals the life that God intends for us.
Fear breaks our will... and immobilizes us.

But hope gives us strength.
If we see what God is doing...
In our lives...
In our world...

If we look through the lens of hope.
Then we can have joy.
That God is with us...
And moving through us.

All the time. Even the hard times...
Good and bad. Happy and sad.
God is with us.
So... we can be strong... and carry on.

Hope is the remedy for fear.

I mean... we could brainstorm this.
And spend the rest of the day...
Thinking of ways...
We can make ourselves ready.

But I want to give one more example today...
Of someone who is getting ready for Jesus. **[10 Eternal Wall]**

Have you heard of the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer?

This month... in the UK near Birmingham...
A man named Richard Gamble... broke ground...
On a 168-foot tall... Mobius strip.
It's going to be the length of a football field...

And when it's done... it will be covered...
With one million... small rectangle bricks.
Each brick will be digitally linked...
To a story... about someone's answered prayer.
And YOU can access it... on a mobile app.

The scale of this architectural wonder...
Is shorter than Big Ben...
But taller than Christ the Redeemer statue...
In Rio De Janeiro.

The plan is to open it to the public in 2028.

He did this whole enormous project...
In response to the decline of Christianity... in the UK.

But God is still working in the lives of people.
If you look it up online...
You can read some of the answered prayers...

Things like...
We prayed for food.
And God left groceries on our doorstep.

God said... Love her...
And our marriage was healed.

After 30 years of prayer...
Our son met Jesus...
And was transformed.

And what's cool is...
YOU can share your answered prayer too.
You can go on the website...

And pledge to tell your story...
Of how God has worked in your life.

How God has answered your prayer.

They don't want your money.
They want your story.
They want you faith story.
They have a goal of getting 250,000 stories...
By the time construction is done.

Interesting. Powerful. Good.

I guess my point is this. **[11 Come Lord Jesus]**
The way we get ourselves ready...
For the return of Jesus.

Is to see him right now... right here.
Moving and working in our lives.
Answering our prayers.
Giving us hope.

So when he returns...
Like he promised...
It won't be scary to us...
Because we know him.
We will recognize him.

We won't be afraid...

We will understand...
That this day... IS the day...
We have been waiting for...
Longing for...
Hoping for...

It's the day...
When the love of God...
Is completely fulfilled.

And will we say...
With our eyes lifted up...
And our heads held high...
And our hearts filled with joy.

We will says....
Come on.
Come Lord Jesus. Come.
I've been waiting.

Thanks be to God.
Amen.