
Sermon Notes

April 24, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

A Universal Church

Matthew 24:3-14

³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

⁴ And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray.

⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The Church: Local and Universal

- ❖ A small group of believers (1 Cor 16:19)

- ❖ A larger congregation in a given city (*e.g.* Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonika, etc...)
- ❖ A group of churches in a geographic region (Acts 9:31)
- ❖ The universal/global/worldwide church (1 Cor 12:28)
 - catholic = universal
 - Catholic = pertaining to the Roman Catholic Church

Your "Marching Orders" From Jesus

- ❖ Jesus is in the process of building a worldwide church made up of people *from every tribe and language and people and nation* (Revelation 5:9)
- ❖ Jesus will not finish building His church until the gospel is proclaimed in every nation
- ❖ The Great Commission = Jesus' "marching orders" for His followers in every time and place (Matthew 28:19-20)
- ❖ The church Jesus is building is the most important institution in the world
 - universal in scope
 - cosmic in significance (Ephesians 3:10)
- ❖ Those who truly belong to Jesus belong to His church
 - they unite with His plan to have both universal and cosmic significance
 - this effects every area of our lives
 - this needs to remain at the top of our thinking

Holding Onto the "Big Picture"

- ❖ The importance and value of Missions
 - a healthy church is a "Missions-minded" church
 - being "Missions-minded" is about far more than making financial contributions
 - being willing to "go" if and when called
 - persevering prayer
 - such prayer requires information and education about the needs being faced by Jesus' church around the world
- ❖ Being "Missions-minded" requires us to remember that all who die apart from Christ are destined for hell
 - the most loving thing we can do is to make sure that others hear the truth of Jesus [give! pray! go!]
 - all people must answer the question: *Who do you say the Son of Man is?* (Matthew 16:13)
 - the coming moment (Philippians 2:10-11)
 - Gospel proclamation is imperative! (1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:6, 1 John 5:12, John 3:36, Romans 10:14)

Let's Get Practical

- ❖ *Operation World*
 - a valuable resource that helps make praying for the church around the world "doable"

- includes a daily calendar that helps to provide some guidance, structure, and shape to praying for various people groups and countries

- ❖ *The Voice of the Martyrs*

- thinking about and praying for the persecuted church
- many places around the world where naming the name of Jesus as Lord and Savior is punishable by death
- www.persecution.com

- ❖ *Compassion International*

- releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name
- pairs compassionate people with children who are suffering from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty
- www.compassion.com

Personal Application

1. How will you connect with Jesus' plan & purpose for His universal church as He lays it out for us in Matt 24:14?
2. Will you ask Jesus to expand and extend your vision of the way He is building His church around the globe? Will you respond to Him in obedient love about this?
3. Will you allow Jesus to enlarge your heart for His universal church?
4. Of the three practical possibilities mentioned in this message, which one would you consider pursuing? If not one of these three, is there something else to which you will the commit yourself to help you grow your relationship with Jesus' church around the world?