

Olivet Discourse Part 8 Luke 21:34 - 36

*Luke 21:34 “But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; 35 for it will come upon all those who inhabit the face of all the earth. 36 “But keep on the alert at all times, praying earnestly that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

This will take some work. Stay with me this morning for these few minutes. In order to get at the true meaning of these verses we need to compare all 3 accounts plus another portion in Luke to get our minds in the right frame of mind to what Jesus is warning about here.

Be on the alert. Be on guard. Against what? Do you see it in verse 34? You are looking at verse 34 aren't you? What happens that we need to be alert for?

That day. That day.

*“But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and **that day** will not come on you suddenly like a trap;*

What day? He's talking about the day that changes everything. Everything! A single day, a single moment in a single day will suddenly and without warning change everything.

I remember where I was on September 11th of 2001. I was driving a Geo Metro, a 3 cylinder Chevy from Japan, that I had bought for Megan to use as a vehicle to get where she needed to go in Reno because she was starting college, living away from home for the first time, and she needed something simple and reliable.

That little car did that job pretty well. It was a 1995 car so it was only 6 years old. I bought it from an Ebay seller and I flew to Minneapolis to pick it up. I

had my cameras and I spent a couple of nice days driving it back to Nevada at a leisurely pace.

Taking pictures of the badlands. Eating a big breakfast at Wall Drug Store in South Dakota. There's billboards every 15 minutes for 300 miles. How could you not stop. I enjoyed that trip. Moving at my own pace. Drinking in all of the scenery I'd never seen before. Thinking of how cold it must get on the grasslands of Nebraska and eastern Wyoming. It just looks cold.

But on the morning of the third day, when I arrived at Heather's apartment near the college campus, my kids were watching TV somberly. A jet had crashed into one of the twin towers and smoke was coming out of the hole it had made. Then a second jet did the same thing on the other tower. At that point we knew this was no accident.

Then, before our eyes, the whole thing comes down. Collapsing in on itself, down down down until it's a pile of mangled steel and a cloud of asbestos dust. And I said to myself, this changes everything. Nothing will ever be the same after today. Not an incorrect prediction either. It was a pivotal day. Anytime you say 9-1-1 people know what you're talking about, even 20 years later.

Jesus is talking about a day like that, but far far more important. A day which ends one era and begins another one. A single moment in time that closes an era and opens a different one. Grace is finished, judgement begins. In a moment of time.

*16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.* 1 Thess. 4:16 - 17

Paul says to the Thessalonians who were sorrowing because some of their brethren had died, they didn't make it to the return of Jesus, they perished

before He came to get them. They believed that day would happen quickly. In their life times. Some had already died. They missed it. What about them? They were sad about that.

Paul says, no, no, no, on that day, the dead, those who are asleep in Jesus, will rise first to meet Him in the air, and then we will join them. All of the redeemed of all the ages will meet Jesus in the air, on that day. That day.

He's talking about the rapture of the church. Why? Because that is the pivotal day when everything on earth changes. The church is removed. The age of grace, the church age, is ended. The age of Jacob's trouble, the final seven years of Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9 begins.

That pivotal change happens in a moment. In the twinkling of an eye. Milliseconds if you're a camera guy. We use electronic flashes on our cameras these days. In one hundred thousandth of a second of brilliant light, the image is painted onto the receiving image plain. It used to be film, but y'all don't know what that stuff is any more. 1/150,000th of a second in a bright flash of light an image is captured on a few million digital receptors and saved into memory. A twinkling of an eye.

*51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.* 1 Cor. 15:51 - 53

That famous verse from the church nursery door. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed... We laugh about that. The poor lady in the nursery. She wishes they'd all take a nap, she knows she'll have to change every diaper. It's a clever thing whoever put that on the door. But that isn't what it means.

In a millisecond, the rapture happens, the age of grace is closed, the door is shut, the tribulation begins. That clock with seven years of time to elapse begins to tick in a moment. In the twinkling of an eye. It happens. A moment

too short to measure and one age ends and another age begins. Without warning.

This passage we're studying today is the warning. This is all the warning the world gets. These words of Jesus from 2000 years ago. You've been warned. And when it happens in a millisecond, if you're not ready . . . too late. The door of the age of grace will slam shut in a millisecond of time. Over. Too late.

Here, Luke, who is usually the wordiest of the gospel authors is almost too brief. Mark has more to say about this, and Matthew has a whole 'nother chapter to describe what Jesus is talking about here.

Luke has already covered this ground earlier. In chapter 17 of Luke he quotes the same words of Jesus that Matthew combines with the Olivet discussion. Luke gives two examples of the finality of the moment that Jesus is speaking to when He says;

24 *“But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and **that day** will not come on you suddenly like a trap;*

Listen again to Jesus words recorded for us in Luke 17. This is why Luke doesn't repeat it here in ch. 21 like Mark and Matthew do;

Luke 17: 24 *“For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. 25 “But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 “And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 “It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from*

*heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 "On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. 32 "Remember Lot's wife. 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it. 34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left.*

On the day that Noah was finished loading the animals into the ark and he and his family, 3 sons with wives and Noah with his wife, 8 people, inside the boat, God himself sealed the door of the boat, and I believe in that moment, billions of gallons of water hit the earth and in moments the entire population of the earth was doing the dog paddle with no land to get to.

Do the math. If the volume of water covered 20,000 foot peaks in 40 days . . . it wasn't a normal rain. It wasn't even a flash flood rain. It was an overwhelming flood. It was a "that day" momentary event.

*27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.*

Nothing wrong with eating, or drinking, or giving and being given in marriage. That isn't the point. The point here is no one paid any attention to Noah for 120 years while he built the ark. Some nut job that says he has a message from God. He's building a boat because it's going to rain. Whatever that is. It never rained before. He's a nut job. Gets messages from God.

And then on one pivotal day, in a moment of time, water knocks your feet out from under you and dry land disappears. Almost instantly. It's over in a moment. You could have gotten inside the boat. The invitation was offered. But we were all too busy living our lives to do that. The door was sealed shut. The water came in with a flood. A pivotal day with no possible return.

Luke recounts another example that Jesus gives of "that day" that Matthew and Mark do not include. Sodom and Gomorrah. The saving of Lot. A pivotal day for the folks who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah for sure.

*28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

Same idea. Business as usual. Eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building. None of those is sinful in itself. Notice Jesus doesn't mention marriage and being given in marriage with the Sodom example. That institution was definitely broken there. But all the other things Jesus says about them are just business as usual.

His point isn't to talk about the sin and degradation in either case. His point is, business as usual, and then on a single day, a pivotal day, after God removes His own people and protects them from harm, fire and brimstone comes from heaven without warning. The warning was over. The day of judgement comes when no one expected it. Both times. A warning and a way of escape was offered both times. No one listened.

In the case of our discussion this morning, Jesus compares the pivotal day of the rapture to both Noah's world and Lot's situation in Sodom. But Jesus is speaking about the rapture. Two women grinding in a mill one is taken, one is left. Two men working in a field, one is taken, one is left. That's the rapture of the church.

But, you say, people will be saved during the tribulation. If someone sleeps through the warnings and is left behind, they'll know it's time to get serious, right. Wrong.

Paul clearly tells the Thessalonians that when the man of lawlessness is revealed, the antichrist as we call this person, that God will send a deluding

influence upon those who knew the truth and rejected it previously;

*8 And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.* 2 Thess. 2:8 - 12

I believe that if you hear all of the warnings like we're covering today and ignore them and just go on with your life with no regard to repentance and submission to the Saviour that after the door is shut, the age of grace is over, the church is raptured, and you're left behind . . . you'll fall for the delusion of the anti-christ, hook, line, and sinker.

Will millions of people be saved during the tribulation period? Yes. But they won't be the folks who heard the message before in the age of grace and rejected it in order to keep their sinful lifestyles. Rejected it for whatever reason. But the reason is always the same one. People love their sin. If having Jesus means walking away from this world and it's sin, maybe later, not now. Right now I'm loving my sin too much and I don't want to give it up.

The time to believe is NOW. OK, that's our introduction. We need to spend some time on our passage this morning.

*34 "But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;*

I think we've sort of covered the day coming suddenly like a trap. The door is sealed on the ark and the flood comes. Lot and his family get 2 miles away from Sodom and the fire and brimstone falls, suddenly. Boom. Even then,

one person was lost, right. Lot's wife was turned to a pillar of salt. She loved her old life in Sodom and had to look back.

That sounds like mythological fantasy type writing doesn't it. Don't look back. Lot's wife looks back and she turns into salt. A pillar of salt. Fantasyland, right. Good story for the flannel graph for the kiddies. Sort of like Aesop's fables. Well, Jesus believed the account as written. Jesus himself says; *Remember Lot's wife.*

32 *“Remember Lot’s wife.* 33 *“Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it.*

Lot's wife tarried and looked back because she loved her old life. God made a pillar of salt out of her and a warning for us. Christians need to run from this world and not look back. That same judgement is coming. Not the water. God promised not to do the water again. He didn't say anything about the fire and brimstone though. IN fact He tells us over and over that fire is coming to this place.

Run to safety christians. Jesus mentions three things here that stop people short of becoming true believers. The churches will be full of people who think they are christians, think they are just fine, the Sunday after the rapture. Church attendance the Sunday following the rapture will hardly even be noticeably less.

Three reasons people won't leave with the true believers in the rapture. Listen to Jesus; 34 *“But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with **dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life***

The issue here that we must guard is our heart. In Revelation chapter 3, the first letter of the seven letters to the churches was to Ephesus. And the issue in that church that threatened to cause them to die and to cease from existence wasn't doctrine. They had all of their *t*'s crossed and their *i*'s dotted just fine. No, their problem was they had lost their first love. Guard your hearts.

They had slipped into a heart condition where the hot love for Jesus was gone. That's deadly. Jesus warns us here, in view of His coming on that pivotal day, guard your hearts. Do not let your hearts be overcome. And He gives us three things that cause people's hearts to be emptied of Him and filled with this world instead. Deadly if that happens. Guard against your heart following and loving anything more than Jesus. Three possibilities.

### *dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life*

These words are all related to the same idea. But the most interesting to me was dissipation. We associate that word with drunkenness but Jesus covers that with a single word on its own. He speaks of drunkenness separately.

Well then, what is dissipation. I was thinking about how to explain this word when suddenly the illustration came to me in real life. But it's gross. Let's just say there was an unpleasant odor in the water closet. So I shut the door. Why. Well, the window was open in that room, and over a few minutes, what happens. The odor is dissipated. The air molecules that somehow carried the unpleasant odor mixed with the air in the atmosphere and over time, the odor I found unpleasant was all dissipated.

The word means to be scattered. It also means to be wasted. If it was a smell I wanted to keep, I wasted it by allowing it to mix with the whole outdoors until it was all gone.

That scattering or waste is what we would call a dissolute life. Intemperance brings a dissolute life. Scattered and wasted. In the case of Jesus' usage here, it describes whatever it is we're doing, instead of living for Jesus. Uh oh.

Did anyone say; screen time. How many hours a week is your mind looking at stuff that while it may not be sin, it's certainly dissipation in the sense of wasted time, wasted life. 168 hours in a week, and I thought about Jesus for 1%. 1.68 hours. What happened to the other 99%? Wasted. Dissipated. But I call Him Lord? Who needs a slave that doesn't pay any attention to what you've said 99% of the time? 90%? 80%

Is He really Lord. He says; *Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but do not do what I say.* Luke 6:46 Wasted time is dissipation. In Matthews account of exactly the same day and hour Jesus gives us the example of a Lord who calls his slaves together and gives them each an enormous amount of His money to invest for Him while He's away. He goes on a long journey. He gives them a large sum of His money to invest for Him and He expects a return.

Two of the slaves doubled His investment for Him. They were given different amounts to invest, but in each case, the Master's original amount was doubled for Him. 100% interest.

But one of the slaves sort of says, Why would I make money for you. I'm going to make money for me. I'm going to squander the opportunity to increase your investment for your benefit. Who do you think you are anyways, expecting me to work for your interests? I'm workin' for me. He buries the Master's money and gives it back to Him when He returns from His journey. Then He has the audacity to complain about his treatment by the Master.

Matt. 25:24 *“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25 ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.’ 26 “But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. 27 ‘Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28 ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’*

Dissipation is wasting the resources God has given you in order to be used for the increase of His kingdom. It's the same idea of the salt. When the salt has no taste any more because it's all mixed up with the world, it's not distinct, it gets thrown out. They used that salt to pave their walking paths. That's all it's good for.

Dissipation is squandering the gospel. Wasting the gospel. It makes the ear connection but it never makes it to the heart. We had this big discussion about 35 years ago about Lordship salvation. One group in evangelicalism was saying Jesus can be Saviour but He doesn't have to be your Lord. Lordship isn't required.

That's the guy who buried the talent in the ground. He knew very well what the Master wanted him to accomplish with the talent. He was too busy living his own life his own way to be subject to any other master. He buries the talent in the ground.

It's the maidens waiting for the bride groom to come whose lamps are not lit when He makes the call. No oil. The ones with the oil go into the feast. The ones with no oil go looking for some oil to buy, but the door is shut. That's dissipation. Wasted opportunity. Too much of this world, too little of Jesus. Pretty soon what little you thought you had of Jesus is vanished. Evaporated.

*34 "But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life*

drunkenness. It doesn't necessarily have to mean alcohol. What is it that you're doing that causes you to be disconnected with reality. Our culture is awash in all of the different ways to be disconnected from reality. Video games? Maybe. Marijauna, for sure. And yes, of course, the abuse of alcoholic beverages. The classic old school drunkenness.

Paul says; *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is dissipation.* Eph. 5:18

Drunkenness is a dissipation. One of the few things our current vernacular gets right. We call it getting wasted. Being wasted.

Was it Karl Marx that said "religion is the opiate of the people". He was right of course. Most people in most places find some kind of opiate that disconnects their mental faculties from reality. For many in Karl Marx day and indeed in our day, it is false religion.

Politics is for many people an opiate. A false religion. Fix the world with this messiah or that one. Whatever your opiate is that carries you away from this Book and this Person, Jesus, that is an opiate and it is the drunkenness He speaks of right here. Doesn't have to be alcohol. People get drunk with causes that move them away from the purity of one Person, one book.

*34 "But be on guard, so that your hearts will not be overcome with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life*

The worries of life. How many men are going to miss the rapture because they got so consumed with the cares of this life, there was no time for Jesus. More overtime, more toys, more jobs, more wealth, more houses, more success, more 401K accounts.

All of it is going to burn up in the fire Jesus is talking about. \$3.92 / gallon gas is going to be the good old days in 5 minutes. What did that do to your 401k? Cut it in half, that's what. Joe promised not to increase taxes, but he's making my money only worth half as much while the tax rate stays the same.

The cares of life. Comfort. Security. Investments. Money. All of it more important than worship and a relationship with the owner of everything. That's how people find themselves in church the Sunday morning after the rapture has taken all of the real christians to heaven.

That's what Jesus is warning about. What is it that's going to cause you to be on the wrong side of the door after it slams shut. Now is the time to think about it. Not after it happens. Now is the time to repent and worship.

*and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; 35 for it will come upon all those who inhabit the face of all the earth.*

This pivotal day is coming, and it isn't localized like Sodom and Gomorrah was. The tribulation period that precedes Christ's return will begin when the open door of the age of grace is closed at the rapture of the true believers from

the earth. Judgement during Daniel's 70th week, that final seven years, is called Jacob's trouble . . . but Jacob's trouble is everybody's trouble.

Jesus says wake up from your sleep, wake up from your slumber, wake up from your wasted opportunity to serve your King, wake up from whatever it is that is your opiate, that's causing you to be drunk, wake up from the cares of a life that won't last to a life that will last for eternity, and that day, that pivotal day when the church leaves this earth to go to be with Jesus in heaven, won't come on you suddenly like a trap, because it IS going to come upon every person on earth, it will snap shut like a trap for everyone who inhabits the earth.

*36 "But keep on the alert **at all times**, praying earnestly that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

Does that sound like most of the christians you've met? The christian life does not consist of an insurance policy you bought one time a long time ago when you went forward and signed a card or said a prayer.

The christian life is a daily recognition that Jesus is Lord and you are slave, and we are daily in contact with our master. Like breathing. It never stops. We speak to Him in our prayers. At all times He says. And He speaks to us in His word. This book combined with the presence of His Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us, inside our hearts.

Here's an idea for you. If you don't know what this book says, how can you be on the alert? Alert for what. When this book flows in us like our blood that flows in our veins, then we can be on the alert.

Everything we hear, everything we see, everything that happens around us can get weighed in the balance of the words of this book. There's nothing to be alert about if you're ignorant. We're seeing christians, or so-called christians dropping around us like flies, because they're ignorant of what this book says, and for that reason, they're easy targets for Satan.

What was it, the evening of the next day, after all that Jesus said in the upper room discourse recorded so beautifully by John, they're in the garden and Jesus tells them to be alert and pray, and all of their eyes get heavy and they go to sleep. I can identify with that.

Jesus says Watch and Pray. I pray for myself, that if things get difficult before this pivotal day comes, I won't waver. I want to be found standing before the King, not knocked off balance because I'm half asleep. Now more than ever.

A pivotal moment is coming. Jesus is coming to remove His church, His beloved bride, out of this world, to be with Him in heaven. What will you be doing, in that moment. Will you be so caught up in the cares and pleasures and concerns of this world that your heart has gone cold and there is no distinction between you and the ones who will be left behind.

*36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying earnestly that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

There is vigilance in that verse. It's a heart vigilance. We pray and watch at all times, waiting for His return. We don't let our hearts wander away from Him. We guard our hearts, our loves. Two ways. We fill our hearts up constantly with the words of this book, and we pray for strength to be able to stand in His presence.

Ultimately we are vigilant because when this 5 minute life is over, we want to be able to say with Paul;

*7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;  
8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.* 2Tim 4:7,8

There's an old gospel chorus that we used to sing. From 1917 so it's about my speed. And Jeff's.

*1. Living for Jesus, a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.*

*Refrain:*

*O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee,  
For Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me;  
I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne;  
My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.*