

During the late 80's and early 90's many families couldn't wait for TGIF on ABC. Two hours in front of the TV watching four different sitcoms saying, thank goodness it's Friday. Short explanation for kids born in the 2000's: sitcoms were shows with actors playing characters in funny situations. Friday night shows were funny, clean, and parents didn't worry kids were poisoning their minds. TGIF meant no school or work for a couple of days and sleeping in. People couldn't wait for Friday.

These days I don't find I'm waiting for one day of TV as in the past. Still there are plenty of days people wait for. My dad waits for retirement. My sister is waiting for my nephew's first Christmas. Adults still wait for the weekend and so do kids. And in the last couple of weeks we've talked about a day we're waiting for, Last Judgment, the end of the world. Some might not think about it much, some might worry a lot, and others might fear it.

One thing people do is try and impersonalize Judgment Day. They think it protects them. But Jesus changes all that today by making it very personal and putting a positive spin on it. Any lingering fears Jesus addresses those. Any doubts about how it applies to us he addresses those too. Jesus wants us to be in a place after hearing the gospel where...

**Your saints say, Come Lord Jesus
Return in the clouds as promised
Bring us home as promised**

Killeen Texas and the Fort Hood Army base are probably returning to some measure of order after the panic of a week and a half ago. The last of the wounded are being treated, the damage is being fixed, and life is getting back to normal. Two Thursdays ago was anything but normal. Events like that are signals for us. They tell us Jesus was right. We live in distressing times of wars, famines, and earthquakes.

If we think the tragedy in Killeen was bad, which it was, Jesus says there's worse coming. **"Following that distress, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."** My heart and mind are shaking after reading that. Imagine the sun shaking or the moon going dark. We count on these celestial objects to be there every day. The destruction of the indestructible scares us.

We've talked before about how we can get sick of waiting, how it seems Jesus might never come. But let's get past that. We know he's coming. The Bible convinced us a long time ago when the angels said to the disciples, **"This same Jesus, will come back in the same way you saw him go into heaven."** Now we wonder how? Do you adjust your routine or skip Starbucks because you think Jesus might return before you get your double latte? Doesn't Jesus returning in the clouds mean some people will miss him. If he appears over Oklahoma how will they see him in Maine? Maybe Jesus came to somewhere in the southern hemisphere and we missed him.

Those concerns might not even begin to describe our fear. Probably the biggest fear is that when Jesus returns it means the party's over. We've grown to like it here. We have spouses, Facebook friends, lives. We don't really want to give some of those things up. If Jesus could just hold off for a while, things are good right now. Come, but not yet. Better yet, wait till a really bad time in my life, like when someone close to me dies or I'm in financial ruin. Then come.

We forget that everything in our lives is marked by sin, even the good days. Jesus longs to write the final chapter for our lives and bring the deliverance he promised. Daniel in the first lesson wrote, **"At that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered."** Could that be you, a name in the book? It is by virtue of what Christ has done. You're a saint of God with a line in the book of eternal life. Be confident your name is there. The Last Day is shaping up to be great news for you. It will mean the end of everything bad, the end of sin's reign in your life. It will validate your faith, your trust in Christ, his cross, and his resurrection.

Some groups today think Jesus will return more than once. The first will be a secret arrival of Jesus to whisk all believers away to heaven; then another return to set up his earthly kingdom. These are plain false. Jesus promised to return only once. Not to pay for sins again, but to rescue all believers and judge all unbelievers. Now is the time to share with people what they need to do, believe in the Lord Jesus. Now is the time because when Jesus returns it's too late. Take people to the Word of God and let them see for themselves what Christ has done. Then all Christ's saints will join in asking come Lord Jesus return like you promised.

The soldiers fighting bravely in Iraq and Afghanistan serve their country a half a world away. What if they couldn't look forward to going home? They would quickly lose hope and probably would lose the fight. Soldiers thrive on looking ahead to going home. Our fight isn't around the world but we thrive on the same promise from Jesus. **"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds..."** We need this hope of Jesus' second return because the second time he comes it will be to take us home. Saints call out, come Lord Jesus and bring us home.

We don't wake up with the intention of sinning. The battle comes to us. Before our morning coffee we may have yelled at our spouse or the kids. Maybe we've been jealous of everyone still sleeping and not up getting ready for school. Maybe we're bitter because we don't have a job to go to that day. Before the day is over we've glanced lustfully at countless women or men. We've taken a peek at our classmate's paper for an answer. Or we've silently hated someone over practically nothing. In short we've sinned.

Who are the elect? Paul said it this way in Ephesians, **"You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."** Have you heard the Word of God that speaks about Christ? Do you take it as truth? Do you know the good news that Jesus died for your sins and saves you? If you answer yes to those questions the gospel invitation is working in your heart. You are one of the elect. The elect living today are part of the saints militant; saints because Christ has made us holy, militant because the fight continues in the trenches fighting the devil, his temptations, and sin. Saints militant wait for Christ's return. Then they'll be saints triumphant.

Saints, we're waiting to go home. This life offers nothing for us by way of lasting happiness. Recognize that and help someone else recognize it too. Share where true lasting happiness comes from, knowing Christ Jesus as Savior. Saints called by Christ are on a life-long trek to grow in their faith and become more Christ-like. More and more we are empowered by the gospel to make decisions not to sin. Saints called by Christ are waiting and hoping for one thing, to be taken to heaven with him for eternity. We are saints waiting to go home just as Christ promised.

Many people get to Friday and say TGIF, thank goodness it's Friday. As much as we look forward to Friday we know our earthly troubles will still be there. But as saints militant fighting the long hard battle we're being assured that Jesus is returning as promised. We're being assured his return means we get to go home. Then we will be part of the glorious saints triumphant. Today as saints triumphant in waiting we cry out, come Lord Jesus!