

Living Ready in a Dark World

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Warning Signs

1 We are at a time in history when warning signs are everywhere. The rebellion and ever-darkening spiritual condition of this world has brought us to where what we once felt like something could happen soon—has now become urgent.

2 Jesus, we know, could return suddenly and unexpectedly NLT 1 Corinthians 15:52 “*It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye.*”

3 The spiritual darkness is no longer subtle—it is shouting—and sounding an alarm to awaken us and to live God’s Truth more seriously than ever.

4 NKJV Romans 13:12 “*The night is far spent, the day is at hand*”—Cast off darkness; put on light.”

5 Things that once were shocking to us are now celebrated by the world as acceptable and that everyone should accept—but God’s Word says

6 AV Isaiah 5:20 “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.*” A day of reckoning and a day of judgment approaches.

7 With the world today—sin is normalized as progress; truth is negotiable; Christian values are pushed further to the margins.

8 Most people never read the Scriptures and would never even consider applying the principles

of faith and trust on God—not for a moment. This is *not* just cultural decline; it is spiritual erosion and moral deterioration.

9 Scripture says that before the return of Christ, spiritual darkness will increase; deception will abound, and the hearts of most will grow cold Matthew 24:10–12. The signs are no longer distant—they are here and near.

10 If there was ever a time for believers in Christ to be awake spiritually; fully surrendered to God sincerely; and obedient to the Word completely—it is now. There is not much time for God to get us ready and to prepare us for His kingdom.

11 If anyone is not ready, it is not because God is not willing—because He is very willing—and “is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” NIV 2 Peter 3:9. So many are not ready because so many are rebellious and defiant to spiritual truth.

Preparation Means Transformation

12 Transformation requires humility, obedience, and sincerity for God’s Truth.

13 Jesus was well aware of the rebellious attitude of the majority, so He gives this much-needed and critical instruction of the Sermon on the Mount—Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7.

14 This sermon is not just inspirational thoughts for casual believers—but are instructions of profound importance!

15 These chapters could be called the Constitution of the Kingdom or Heaven’s Training Manual. The instructions define what it means to live a godly life in a very ungodly world.

16 Jesus gave this sermon not to impress crowds but to prepare disciples. These 3 chapters

confront us with a sobering truth that we will *not* be ready for Christ’s return if we deliberately ignore His commands and do our own thing.

17 Being ready is not just about knowing prophecy charts—but about reflecting Christ’s character in our words, actions, and general conduct.

18 Jesus gives this warning: “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his [spiritual] house on the rock.”

19 Hearing is not enough; calling oneself a believer is not enough; saying we agree with what He says is not enough—it is Obedience that is the dividing line between those who stand and those who fall. Who are His true followers? Matthew 12:50 “Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven.”

Darkness Reveals the Difference

20 Jesus begins Matthew 5 by describing the people who belong to His Kingdom. These Beatitudes are not virtues the world celebrates—because the world celebrates promoting self; being aggressive; self-sufficient; and proud.

21 Jesus says Blessed are the poor in spirit; Blessed are those who mourn; Blessed are the meek; Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

22 These virtues of humility, being gentle, feeling sorry for past sins, and desiring to be right with God—do not come naturally since we began life with a nature that is opposite to what it should be.

23 The blessed people have allowed God to develop their spiritual nature; to reshape their attitudes; and to change what they had desired.

24 In today's dark world, the devil tempts us to harden our hearts, grow cynical, or become angry at things and people.

25 AV Hebrews 3:8 "*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation [rebellion NIV, in the day of temptation [or testing] in the wilderness.*"

26 Instead of growing *critical* and *cynical*, Jesus says that our heart must remain *pliable* and *teachable*—even when the culture in which we live grows increasingly hostile. ***The darker the night, the more visible the light!***

27 Jesus says: "*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world*" Matthew 5:13–14. Salt *preserves*; Light *reveals*—but neither results if either *blends in* or *hides the truth under a cover*.

28 We are here on earth, not to *mirror* the culture, but to **confront** it with *truth, honesty, and devotion* to God.

Changed Attitudes—Changed Actions

29 Jesus makes it clear that God is not pleased with surface-level righteousness like the Pharisees—and that is why Jesus said *our* righteousness must *greatly exceed* and *surpass* that of the Pharisees who *looked* religious outwardly but had no inward sincerity of heart.

30 Jesus emphasizes the need for much more than *surface* religion by explaining the seriousness of anger, lustful thoughts, deceit, wanting revenge, and that we *must* love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. "*You have heard it said [OT law]... but I say to you NT morality.*"

31 It is not just **what you do**—but **what you desire**. *Murder* begins with unchecked anger; *Adultery* begins with unrestrained desire; *Dishonesty* begins with careless *decisions*; and *Hatred* begins with *selective* love. We must allow God

to *change* our *heart* within—not just our appearance without.

32 This inner change is *critical* because ***deception thrives where self-examination is absent***. The Holy Spirit's work is to make us *holy* before the Father—inspiring faith in us.

Secret Faith in a Public World

33 When teaching on giving, praying, and fasting—Jesus says it is not to be a public performance, but a sincere act in private devotion.

34 The deception in a dark world can be that outward religion becomes louder and true faith becomes fainter. Jesus warns against spiritual activity for *approval* rather than from *obedience*—"*Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you*" Matthew 6:4.

35 God is working with us so that our faith is *real* when **no one is watching**. If we are not really walking with God in *private*—we will not stand for Him in *public*.

36 Worry is a common concern—and it can dominate our thoughts. Freedom from worry does not result from the control of self, but by a genuine trust in God to free us from anxiety. "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" Matthew 6:33.

37 *Readiness* means God's Kingdom comes *first*—not money; not pleasure; not entertainment; not leisure activities. Righteousness *first* is wanting to be right with God *always*—and be at peace with people around us.

Discerning Deception

38 Jesus speaks on judgment; false teachers; fake professions of faith; and lack of sincerity. "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will*

enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father" Matthew 7:21.

39 Just knowing religious language does not mean we know what true faith in God is. Outward activity does not replace inward submission to the will of God.

40 As the world darkens, we must know the difference between truth that *transforms* and teaching that *entertains*. "*Why do you call Me, 'Lord,' and do not do what I say?*"

Living Ready is Living Obedient

41 Preparation for Christ's return is an active surrender to the will of God and actively living the words of His sermon. It means allowing God to *realign* our values, *reshape* our responses, and *transform* our attitudes.

42 It is not just saying we believe Jesus is returning—but answering: **1** *Are we living as He could come today?* **2** *Are we forgiving quickly?* **3** *Are we speaking truthfully?* **4** *Are we following Jesus seriously?* **5** *Are we loving people genuinely?*

43 It is not *darkness* that *delays* Christ's return—it is just **signals** it. God in His mercy is calling His people to **wake up; eliminate wrong attitudes; and live ready to meet the Master**.

44 Our worship of God and our faith in Christ must not be *Casual Christianity!* **Time** is short; our **Soul** is at stake; and **Obedience** is needed! God is looking for those who pray: "*Lord, change my attitude; transform my life; forgive my sins; help me to forgive; and make me ready by the power of Your Spirit until the King returns.*"

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