

Judge Nothing Before The Time

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Forward

Your words are incredibly powerful. They can build up, encourage and motivate.

Words can also tear down, cause scares and hurt.

Some are living with the scares of the hurtful words of others.

The Bible reminds us that life and death are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit. Proverbs 18:21

The Day of Judgment will be a time when people will have to account for every careless word they speak.

Matthew 12:36

And I tell you this that you must give an account on judgment day of every idle word you speak.

Jesus is fully aware of our devastating words.

Be ye kind to one another with your words. This will please God.

Chapter 1

Judge nothing before the time.

John 21:21-23

Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

Peter asked Jesus how John would die. Jesus replied that Peter should not concern himself with that.

We tend to compare our lives to others, whether to rationalize our own level of devotion to Christ or to question God's justice. Jesus responds to us as he did to Peter: "What is that to you? You must follow me."

Early church history reports that after John spent several years as an exile on the island of Patmos, he returned to Ephesus where he died as an old man, near the end of the first century.

God knows your earthy concerns.

Matthew 8:22

But Jesus told him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

It is possible that this disciple was not asking permission to go to his father's funeral, but rather to put off following Jesus until his elderly father died. Perhaps he was the firstborn son and wanted to be sure to claim his inheritance. Perhaps he didn't want to face his father's wrath if he left the family business to follow an itinerant preacher.

Whether his concern was financial security, family approval, or something else, he did not want to commit himself to Jesus just yet. Jesus, however, would not accept his excuse.

Jesus was always direct with those who wanted to follow him. He made sure they counted the cost and set aside any conditions they might have for following him. As God's Son, Jesus did not hesitate to demand complete loyalty.

Even family loyalty was not to take priority over the demands of obedience. His direct challenge forces us to ask ourselves about our own priorities in following him. The decision to follow Jesus should not be put off, even though other loyalties compete for our attention.

Nothing should be placed above a total commitment to living for him.

Deny yourself, take up your cross, and Follow the Lord.

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

When Jesus used this picture of his followers taking up their crosses to follow him, the disciples knew what he meant. Crucifixion was a common Roman method of execution, and condemned criminals had to carry their crosses through the streets to the execution site. Following Jesus, therefore, meant a true commitment, the risk of death, and no turning back (see Matthew 10:39).

When Jesus returns, the Lord will repay all.

Matthew 16:27

For the Son of Man will come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will repay each one according to what he has done.

Jesus Christ has been given the authority to judge all the earth (Romans 14:9-11; Phil. 2:9-11). Although his judgment is already working in our lives, there is a future, final judgment when Christ returns (Matthew 25:31-46) and everyone's life is reviewed and evaluated.

This will not be confined to unbelievers; Christians too will face a judgment. Their eternal destiny is secure, but Jesus will look at how they handled gifts, opportunities, and responsibilities in order to determine their heavenly rewards. At the time of judgment, God will deliver the righteous and condemn the wicked. We should not judge others' salvation; that is God's work.

Be not concerned with your time of death.

Matthew 16:28

Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Because all the disciples died *before* Christ's return, many believe that Jesus' words were fulfilled at the transfiguration when Peter, James, and John saw his glory (Matthew 17:1-3). Others say this statement refers to Pentecost (Acts 2) and the beginning of Christ's church. In either case, certain disciples were eyewitnesses to the power and glory of Christ's kingdom.

Judge nothing before the proper time.

1 Corinthian 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the proper time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

It is tempting to judge fellow Christians, evaluating whether or not they are good followers of Christ. But only God knows a person's heart, and he is the only one with the right to judge. Paul's warning to the Corinthians should also warn us.

We are to confront those who are sinning (see 1 Cor. 5:12-13), but we must not judge who is a better servant for Christ. When you judge someone, you invariably consider yourself better—and that is arrogant.

Communion proclaims the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Jesus has power over life and death as well as power to forgive sins. This is because he is the Creator of life (see John 14:6). He who *is* life can surely restore life. Whoever believes in Christ has a spiritual life that death cannot conquer or diminish in any way.

When we realize his power and how wonderful his offer to us really is, how can we help but commit our lives to him! To those who believe, what wonderful assurance and certainty we have: “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).

God's presence brings hope and joy.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

After all, who is our hope, our joy, our crown of boasting, if it is not you yourselves in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

Satan is real. He is called “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4) and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephes. 2:2). We don't know exactly what hindered Paul from returning to Thessalonica—opposition, illness, travel complications, or a direct attack by Satan—but Satan worked in some way to keep him away.

Many of the difficulties that prevent us from accomplishing God's work can be attributed to Satan (see Ephes. 6:12).

Chapter 2

Anticipate the Lord's return.

James 5:7

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer anticipates the precious fruit of the soil as he patiently awaits the fall and spring rains.

The farmer must wait patiently for his crops to grow; he cannot hurry the process. But he does not take the summer off and hope that all goes well in the fields. There is much work to do to ensure a good harvest. In the same way, we must wait patiently for Christ's return.

We cannot make him come back any sooner. But while we wait, there is much work that we can do to advance God's kingdom. Both the farmer and the Christian must live by faith, looking toward the future reward for their labors. Don't live as if Christ will never come. Work faithfully to build his kingdom—the King *will* come when the time is right.

When the Lord returns, he shall bring his reward.

Matthew 16:27

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Jesus Christ has been given the authority to judge all the earth (Romans 14:9-11; Phil. 2:9-11). Although his judgment is already working in our lives, there is a future, final judgment when Christ returns (Matthew 25:31-46) and everyone's life is reviewed and evaluated.

This will not be confined to unbelievers; Christians too will face a judgment.

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At the time of judgment, God will deliver the righteous and condemn the wicked. We should not judge others' salvation; that is God's work.

Disciples question Jesus concerning his return.

Matthew 24:3

And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the very place where the prophet Zechariah had predicted that the Messiah would stand when he came to establish his kingdom (Zech. 14:4)

It was a fitting place for the disciples to ask Jesus when he would come in power and what they could expect then. Jesus' reply emphasized the events that would take place before the end of the age.

He pointed out that his disciples should be less concerned with knowing the exact date and more concerned with being prepared—living God's way consistently so that no matter when Jesus came in glory, he would claim them as his own.

All shall see Jesus when he returns.

Matthew 24:27

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Jesus' warnings about false teachers still hold true. Upon close examination it becomes clear that many nice-sounding messages don't agree with God's message in the Bible. Only a solid foundation in God's Word can equip us to perceive the errors and distortions in false teaching.

In times of persecution even strong believers will find it difficult to be loyal. To keep from being deceived by false messiahs, we must understand that Jesus' return will be unmistakable (Mark 13:26); no one will doubt that it is he. If you have to be told that the Messiah has come, then he hasn't (Matthew 24:27). Christ's coming will be obvious to everyone.

Jesus shall return at an unexpected time.

Matthew 24:44

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Jesus' purpose in telling about his return is not to stimulate predictions and calculations about the date, but to warn us to be prepared. Will you be ready? The only safe choice is to obey him *today* (Matthew 24:46).

You will see the kingdom of God come with power.

Mark 9:1

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

What did Jesus mean when he said that some of the disciples would see the kingdom of God come with power? There are several possibilities. He could have been foretelling his transfiguration, resurrection and ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or his second coming.

The transfiguration is a strong possibility because Mark immediately tells that story. In the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8), Peter, James, and John saw Jesus' glory, identity, and power as the Son of God (2 Peter 1:16).

All kindred of the earth will wail when Jesus returns.

Rev. 1:7

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindred of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

He is not just a humble earthly teacher, he is the glorious God. When you read John's description of the vision, keep in mind that his words are not just good advice; they are truth from the King of kings.

Don't just read his words for their interesting and amazing portrayal of the future. Let the truth about Christ penetrate your life, deepen your faith in him, and strengthen your commitment to follow him no matter what the cost.

John is announcing the return of Jesus to earth (see also Matthew 24; Mark 13; 1 Thes. 4:15-18). Jesus' second coming will be visible and victorious.

All people will see him arrive (Mark 13:26), and they will *know* it is Jesus. When he comes, he will conquer evil and judge all people according to their deeds (Rev. 20:11-15).

"Those who pierced him" could refer to the Roman soldiers who pierced Jesus' side as he hung on the cross or to the Jews who were responsible for his death. John saw Jesus' death with his own eyes, and he never forgot the horror of it (see John 19:34-35; see also Zech. 12:10)

Chapter 3

Hold fast until Jesus returns.

Revelation 2:25

But that which you have already hold fast till I come.

Let no man take your crown.

Rev. 3:11

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Christians have differing gifts, abilities, experience, and maturity. God doesn't expect us all to be and act the same, but he does expect us to "hold on" to what we have, to persevere in using our resources for him.

The Philadelphians are commended for their effort to obey (Rev. 3:8) and encouraged to hold tightly to whatever strength they have.

You may be a new believer and feel that your faith and spiritual strength are little. Use what you have to live for Christ, and God will commend you.

Those who keep the sayings of God's word will be blessed.

Rev. 22:7

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Jesus declared his soon coming.

Rev. 22:20

He which testified these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

We don't know the day or the hour, but Jesus is coming soon and unexpectedly. This is good news to those who trust him, but a terrible message for those who have rejected him and stand under judgment. *Soon* means at any moment, and we must be ready for him, always prepared for his return.

Would Jesus' sudden appearance catch you off guard?

In summary, we could say that what God's plans for another, is not our concern.

Judge nothing or another before the time of God's judgement.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print