



Introduction: Jesus has just described the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the signs that point to His return. Now, he closes the discussion with a call to live in the wake of his prophecies.

Those of us who follow Jesus should not live in fear or speculation, but in faith-filled vigilance. This passage teaches that the right response to prophetic truth is not curiosity, but consistency.

Transition: Let's look together at how Jesus teaches His disciples to live faithfully in light of the end.

First: Discern the Times. 29-31

And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near."

As he often does, Jesus points to something every Hebrew understood. In this case, it's the seasonal life of a fruit trees in Israel.

In Israel, fig trees begin to blossom and leaf out in late March to early April, right around the time of Passover and the beginning of spring.

More info about fig trees:

- Late March–April: Tender leaves and small "early figs" (called *paggim* in Hebrew) begin to appear. These early figs are not yet ripe but signal that the full crop is coming.

- June–August: The main fig harvest occurs; the fruit ripens fully during the summer heat.
- September–October: A second, smaller crop (the “late figs”) sometimes ripens before the cooler autumn weather.
- November–February: The tree becomes dormant, shedding its leaves through winter.

When it becomes Autumn in Northeast Tennessee, the churches change colors. When the fig tree buds in Israel, you know summer is near.

In the same way, Jesus gave his disciples signs about the coming of his kingdom. But, and this is important, Jesus’ words are not about predicting dates but perceiving God’s movement in history.

Just as the Hebrews read the signs of approaching spring, and we can see the signs of Autumn, we should read the signs of God’s approaching kingdom.

We should read the moral climate of the world through the lens of God’s word, not the world’s panic.

21:28 - Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

21:30 - So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

NOTE: Is the fig tree, in this text, a symbol of Israel? I don’t think so.

It is true that in places like Joel 1:7, God uses the fig tree as a symbol of Israel.

But in this text, Jesus says, “*Look at the fig tree, and all the trees*” (v 29). That expansion of “all the trees” points to nature, not Israel.

It’s a simple agricultural metaphor for recognizing seasons and what comes next. In this case, it’s akin to the “*these things*” (v 31) of the Temple, Jerusalem and creation’s destruction.

IMP: BUT, Notice Jesus’ focus – v 31 – *So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.*

The point is not about reading the times, i.e., looking at fig trees and determining their symbolism. It's about looking for the kingdom.

We shouldn't trust the times but the One whose words define the times.

Transition: Instead of trying to set a schedule for Jesus' return, we should focus on the Savior and his words.

Second: Trust the Word. 32–33

*Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place.
Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

Next year, Lord willing, we are going to walk through Psalm 119 in a series titled, The Word-Centered Life. Christians are a people of the book, God's revelation to us.

What is the Bible?

- 1 – A Piercing Sword – Hebrews 4:12-13
- 2 – A Revealing Mirror – James 1:23
- 3 – A Reproducing Seed – 1 Peter 1:23
- 4 – Nourishing Milk – 1 Peter 2:2
- 5 – A Shining Light – Psalm 119:105
- 6 – A Consuming Fire – Jeremiah 23:29a
- 7 – A Shattering Hammer – Jeremiah 23:29b
- 8 – An Everlasting Word – Luke 21:22-23

*This is the mighty oak, which stood in the mountains of eternity
and wrapped its roots around the rock of ages while the winds of criticism
vainly lashed themselves to a fury in its branches.*

*This is the everlasting, eternal, incorruptible,
unchanging, blessed Word of God.*

-B. R. Lakin.

Every visible thing will one day prove its frailty, but Jesus' words are eternal.

When Jesus said, *"this generation will not pass away,"* (32), He affirmed that His prophecies would begin to unfold in their lifetime, starting with the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem.

Does "this generation" of verse 32 symbolize Israel? Some people think it means that Israel will not pass away until Jesus returns. But I don't think that's the interpretation of "this generation" in this text. There are 3 main interpretive explanations for that phrase:

- a) The contemporary generation of AD 30-70.
- b) The Jewish race as a whole
- c) The generation of unbelief

I think it's 'A.'

Luke 21:5–24 describes the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, which occurred within that very generation.

Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled when Rome destroyed the city in AD 70, something His listeners *did* live to see. So, when He says "*this generation will not pass away until all has taken place*," (32), he refers to the generation that witnessed Jerusalem's fall.

This means Jesus uses the near event (the Temple's destruction and Jerusalem's fall) as a pattern and preview of the ultimate end. In that sense, what was true for "*this generation*" remains true for *every* generation. If those prophecies came true, all of Jesus' words are true and can be trusted.

APP: There are times when it is difficult to believe Jesus, but we can.

The larger truth in these verses is that nothing God has spoken will ever fail.

Empires, buildings, and civilizations crumble, but every word of Christ still stands. Scripture has outlived kings and critics alike.

We must anchor their confidence in the unchanging Word of Christ. When the world trembles, His Word steadies our hearts.

Transition: If His Word is certain, then our hearts must stay clear and steady. That brings us to Jesus' next warning.

Third: Guard your Heart. 34

But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.

The Scriptures were written not to make us astronomers, but to make us saints.

- Matthew Henry

Instead of creating maps and charts, Jesus encourages us to be careful about how we live.

He names three weights that dull spiritual vigilance

- a) *indulgence* ("dissipation"), (34)
- b) *intoxication* ("drunkenness"), (34) and
- c) *anxiety* ("cares of this life") (34)

Each of these point to misplaced priorities and false saviors that crowd out Jesus from our spiritual vision.

ILL - A soldier who falls asleep on watch puts others at risk. Likewise, a believer who allows comfort, distraction or worry to dull their heart grows unprepared for Christ's return.

APP: When you hear of the signs of Jesus' coming, what fills your heart? Do you try to

- a) distract yourself – dissipation = indulgence
- b) numb yourself – drunkenness = intoxication
- c) worry yourself – cares of this life = anxiety

In this case, the danger to our Christian vitality isn't always rebellion. It's the natural way people respond to crisis. Do they drive us to Christ or away from Christ?

Transition: How then do we stay awake when the world lulls us to sleep? Jesus gives us the answer.

Fourth: Stay Awake through Prayer. 35-36

For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

As the Great Physician, the antidote Jesus prescribes to apathy is prayer. Jesus links alertness with dependence. Those who pray are those who stand firm.

Life is war. That's not all it is. But it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den. God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the kingdom of Christ advances in the world. Prayer gives us the significance of frontline forces and gives God the glory of a limitless Provider. The one who gives the power gets the glory. Thus, prayer safeguards the supremacy of God in missions while linking us with endless grace for every need.
- John Piper

Prayer keeps faith alive, humility intact, and readiness constant.

IMP: In Gethsemane, Jesus told His disciples the same words: "*Stay awake and pray*" (Matt 26:36-37).

Prayerless people drift. Prayerful people stand. Their sleep led to scattering.

The world is awake in its antagonism toward the church. We cannot be asleep.

1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

We must be vigilant and cultivate a rhythm of prayer that keeps us spiritually awake.

APP – The daily devotion will encourage your prayer life.

Transition: This vigilance isn't just for crisis moments. it's a daily pattern, modeled by Jesus Himself.

Fifth: Follow Jesus' Pattern of Daily Faithfulness. 37-38

And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. ³⁸ And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.

Think about what is going on in Jesus' life.

As the cross loomed, Jesus kept teaching by day and praying by night. The crowd's eagerness to hear Him and His commitment to commune with the Father show the balance of ministry and intimacy that defines readiness.

While the world was plotting His death, Jesus kept to His calling. He was faithful in small things and steadfast in his purpose. We are called to replicate his life.

ILL – The book of Acts shows us how the disciples responded to Jesus' words. His warnings didn't paralyze them with fear. They didn't create schools of prophecy to interpret the times. They took Jesus' words and went everywhere in the world they could, sharing the good news of God's saving grace.

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 - For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

We are called to do the same. The Great Commission unites us and provides us with a common cause to busy our lives while we wait for Jesus to return.

APP: Jesus repeatedly told us we will not know when he returns. The best preparation for eternity is not date-explorations, but daily faithfulness today. Live every day as if you'll see Jesus face-to-face tomorrow.

Transition: Jesus' call to stay awake is not about prediction, but preparation, living each day ready to meet Him.

Conclusion The end of the world is not meant to terrify us but to train us. Jesus is hoping we will pay more attention to him than world events. He's hoping we will trust his Word more than we trust the world's narrative.

IMP: The right response to prophecy is not anxiety but attentiveness, not fear but faith.

We are called to

- Discern the times with spiritual eyes.
- Trust the unshakable Word.
- Guard our hearts from distractions.
- Stay awake in prayer.
- Follow Jesus in daily faithfulness.

When Christ returns, will He find faith on the earth or distraction? Live today as those who long for His appearing.



Observation

What does the text say?

1. What is Jesus talking about in this portion of Luke?
2. What example does he use in verses 29–30 to illustrate His point?
3. According to verse 31, what are the “these things” that signal “the kingdom of God is near”?
4. How does Jesus describe “this generation” in verse 32?
5. What promise does Jesus make in verse 33 about His words?
6. What warning does Jesus give in verses 34–35?
7. What command summarizes the believer’s posture in verse 36?
8. How did Jesus conduct his life after this and before the cross?

Interpretation

What does it mean?

9. Why does Jesus compare His coming to the changing of seasons in a fig tree?
10. What truth is He teaching about discernment?
11. How might the phrase “this generation” have been understood by the first hearers? What are the leading interpretations?
12. When Jesus says “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away,” what does that reveal about His authority?
13. How do those words help us rest in Christ?
14. How do verses 34–36 show that waiting for Christ is not passive but active?
15. Why does Jesus connect spiritual watchfulness with prayer in verse 36?

Correlation

How does this connect with the rest of Scripture?

16. Compare Jesus' teaching here with Matthew 24:32–44. What similar warnings and encouragements do you find?
17. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6. How does Paul echo Jesus' command to "stay awake"?
18. How does 2 Peter 3:10–14 deepen our understanding of readiness and holy living?
19. In light of Psalm 1, what does it mean to remain steadfast when the world around us is unstable?

Application

How should this shape us today?

20. How can an imbalanced concern with prophecy paralyze you?
21. Have you seen differing eschatological plans break fellowship between Christians?
22. How would Jesus words in v 33 encourage you in our modern world?
23. When in your life, has it been hard to trust Jesus' words in v 33?
24. What are some ways we today can become "weighed down" (v. 34) by life's distractions?
25. How can you cultivate greater spiritual alertness in your daily life?
26. In what practical ways can prayer help you "have strength to escape" and "stand before the Son of Man" (v. 36)?
27. What would it look like for our CG to live more consciously in light of Jesus' return?



Friends, our theme this week is: “Living Awake” as we wait for the Lord’s return. Although it uses different words, the Daily Devotion is built on the same scheme by which I study the text each week and the CG questions of *Observation, Interpretation, Correlation and Application*. My hope is the Daily Devotion will reinforce Jesus’ words to you, enabling you to live well in an unwell world. Using the Think, Reflect, Apply, Pray, method, we are trying to ‘*trap*’ or “*take every thought captive to obey Christ*” (2 Cor 10:5). I’ve also included a prayer in each devotion to help you apply verse 36.

Monday the 27th.

The Fig Tree Lesson.

Read: Luke 21:29–31

Think: Jesus pointed to the fig tree as a simple sign. Just as new leaves signal summer, certain events will signal the nearness of God’s kingdom. His point is not to invite speculation but to teach discernment. Faith views world events in the light of Jesus’ work in the world and his return.

Reflect: Am I paying attention to the spiritual “seasons” around me, the larger picture of God’s redeeming work, or am I distracted by lesser things? (That’s a great question).

Apply: Ask God to help you read the times with wisdom, not fear. Pay attention to how His Word is being fulfilled in small and large ways.

Pray: Lord, open my eyes to see Your hand at work in the world. Teach me to watch with faith instead of worry.

Tuesday, the 28th.

The Generation That Will See.

Read: Luke 21:32

Think: Some of Jesus' words were fulfilled within that first generation when Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. Yet others point forward to His final return. God's Word holds both immediate and ultimate fulfillment, proving His word transcends time and that He is faithful from age to age.

Reflect: Do I trust that God's promises are sure, even when I cannot see their full fulfillment? (That's a hard question).

Apply: Rest in the reliability of God's Word. His timing may stretch across the years of your life and even throughout many generations, but His faithfulness never fails.

Pray: Father, thank You that Your Word is sure. Help me to trust Your promises and live like that, even when they unfold slowly.

Wednesday, the 29th.

The Word That Endures.

Read: Luke 21:33

Think: In a world where everything fades, Jesus' words stand forever. His promise is not just poetic exaggeration. It is divine authority. The same voice that spoke creation into existence will have the final word in your life and will have the final word at the end of all things.

Reflect: What words do I rely on most, the shifting words of the world or the unchanging Word of Christ?

Apply: Anchor your hope to what cannot be shaken. Read, remember, and rehearse Christ's words daily.

Pray: Jesus, remind me that Your Word will never fail. Help me build my life on what lasts.

Thursday, the 30th.
The Danger of Distraction.
Read: Luke 21:34–35

Think: Jesus warned that hearts can become “weighed down...” with various distractions. The danger isn’t only in moral failure but in quiet interference. The heart that drifts into comfort and busyness will be caught unaware in a time of crisis.

Reflect: What distractions am I employing to dull my alertness to Christ’s return?

Apply: Identify one area of distraction this week and set it aside to focus more fully on Christ.

Pray: Lord, keep my heart awake. Guard me from the cares of life that pull me away from You.

Friday, the 31st.
Stay Awake and Pray.
Read: Luke 21:36–38

Think: “Stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength.” The command to stay awake is not about sleeplessness but spiritual readiness. Jesus invites His followers to live prayerfully, expectantly, and faithfully in every season. Those who watch and pray will stand unashamed before the Son of Man.

Reflect: How can prayer help me stay spiritually alert and faithful each day?

Apply: Begin and end each day this week with a short prayer of readiness: “Lord, help me to be faithful until You come.”

Pray: Father, make me a watchful disciple. Strengthen my heart through prayer and keep me ready for the day I stand before You.