

# “What Are You Waiting For?”

The First Sunday of Advent sermon by The Rev. Philip A. Rodgers presented November 27th, 2016,  
at Trinity United Church in Malton, related to Matthew 24: 36-44

Eschatology is a fascinating subject – that is if you are a student of theology. It’s the mind stretching, spirit challenging stuff, behind the Matthew passage we read this morning. Eschatology contemplates the return of Jesus Christ for a second time; more popularly it’s called “The Second Coming of Christ”; some refer to it as “The Rapture”. And frankly I haven’t thought about it for decades. My guess is that neither have you. Yet Advent invites us to do precisely that.

How many of you took precautions today before you left for church against unwanted visitors? You know, extra locks on doors, peep holes in the doors, bars on the windows, alarm systems, motion detectors. How many of you are cautious about making sure the house is locked up before going to bed at night? What do we think is going to happen? What are we waiting for?

Our society has changed so much. Growing up, we never locked the doors, not even when we went away from home. Now? Super protective. Why? You never know when a thief might be coming. Wouldn't it be scary to wake up and find someone in the house? If you have known you would have been prepared. But you just can't know that, can you? So we take precautions. Like a thief breaking into a house; so will be the coming the second time of the Son of man. Just like that!

A few days ago there was a bomb threat at the airport. It happens all the time. Then another one at a Mall in Oshawa. An interview of some of the mall shoppers discovered that some were afraid, but most said they wouldn't let fear rule their lives or they would never do anything. They would continue to shop until they dropped.

So now we have it, we don't know the age, we don't know the day, we don't know the hour when the Lord of heaven and earth will return. Shudder in terror, fear, hopelessness, or worse. Our Lord Jesus does not want us to have a blasé attitude toward his coming back. You can count on it that he doesn't want us to be afraid though, to be in terror, or to have a sense of hopelessness because you can have your hands folded in prayer all the time. You can think pious, prayerful thoughts throughout the day. So he tells us to keep watch, just be ready for his return.

I don't know about you, and I can only speak for myself and I know that I really wouldn't want to face the God of the universe right now – not yet! I like the things I have acquired. I like my relationship with family and friends. I don't want to give much up. I am not even sure that I would recognize sin if it bit me. I don't like God knowing what I do or how I think, but I can't do anything about it. So I trust that my relationship with God is O.K. because I have been baptized into Christ Jesus who died for my sins, known or unknown to me. I live in a world where I did marry, do like to eat and drink, like to work and sweat, like to acquire stuff and toys and gadgets, need to have investments and pensions and so much more, but these are needed to live in this world. But what of the Eternity that awaits me? I am aware that all the sterling silver, fine china, crystal, cars, my health, my wealth is not of primary importance. Jesus is my Lord and my God. Without him, I do not exist. Without him I am estranged from God. Without him, I have no peace in the warring, violent world I live in, no confidence of healing in the face of broken health, no hope as death approaches, and nothing to look forward to.

Today is the First Sunday in Advent. A new Church Year begins. The church, you and I and all believers in Christ, take time to reflect as we begin a year that we know not the day or the hour of his coming again. We pause to take inventory of our priorities in this world. We pause to keep awake to his coming again and look at his coming with joy, with the fulfillment of all promises he has made to us, and to the blessed reunion with all the saints.

It's coming. We are always in the "advent" season. Ahead looms the dayspring from on high - the only person who gives life and hope is coming to rescue us. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Come now! Amen.