

## On the Clouds – Pr Sprengle – Last Sunday of the Church Year – Nov 21, 2021

- I. **Mark 13:26-27** – <sup>26</sup> And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And then He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.
- II. **Do you remember studying clouds in school?**
  - a. For some reason, I don't remember a lot about other subjects, but I do recall sitting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade science class learning the types of clouds...
    - i. I'm pretty sure I got a bad grade on that test – just too many types!
  - b. Some people really enjoy identifying the cloud types, but rather than scientific names, mine are simple, like thunder clouds and thin clouds.
    - i. We know when a thunderstorm is brewing (or at least heavy rains) when we see a very tall, dark cloud coming our way.
    - ii. We also know high, thin clouds don't usually give us rain.
    - iii. When living in the Midwest, clouds moving in different directions meant a tornado could be forming
    - iv. And in Colorado, huge storms rolled in many summer afternoons that included lightning strikes all around
  - c. Another example of cloud watching is from last night on my walk...
    - i. Just as I crested a hill at around 5pm, did any of you see the sky? It was bright pinkish red all across the western and southern horizon... which means?
      1. "Red skies at night, sailors delight" – it will be a nice day tomorrow...
      2. Or, "Red skies in morning, sailors take warning" – it will be a stormy day today.
      3. I'm not sure how accurate that is, but I will have to ask Mark Nelsen the Chief Meteorologist at KPTV about that one...
  - d. The Bible often uses clouds and vapor in connection to God's glory.
    - i. From the cloud that covered Mt Sinai (Exodus 19:9; 16-19) to the cloud that covered the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:34-35)
    - ii. God's presence filled the temple in smoke with Isaiah (6:1-8), and many other references to God's power and glory either coming out... or... being veiled or hidden by clouds.
  - e. Jesus also is connected to the clouds – as on the day of His ascension into heaven He rose up and... "a cloud took Him out of their sight," and then the angels said, "[He] will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9; 11)
  - f. And if we are still alive when the Last Day comes, it says that we will be "caught up into the clouds" (1 Thessalonians 4:17) as Jesus returns to redeem all things.

- g. So, here we sit with our “heads in the clouds”...
  - i. It’s funny because that saying means we are not plugged into reality – and, those who have no faith often look at us like we are crazy for thinking that God, Jesus Christ will return in glory.
  - ii. 2 Peter 3:3-4 says, “Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’”

III. **Assuming you believe in the promises** of God to return, are you ready?

- a. Are you ready for the return of Jesus?
- b. Is the return of Jesus a bad thing in your mind... or a good thing?
- c. The interesting thing about being ready for the return of Jesus on the Last Day... it is filled with doom and gloom on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is filled with exhilaration and joy.
- d. Do we see the signs that Jesus talks about in the Bible?
  - i. Kind of like when we see a dark thundercloud in the distance, we know it’s time to roll up the windows on the car and grab the cushions from the lawn furniture.
  - ii. How many of you notice the signs of the end of the age?
    - 1. Of course we can name hundreds of examples that point to the trials and tribulations – from wars to politics to unrest to pandemics to weather...
    - 2. Yet none of that should be a surprise – and none of that should change the readiness in our hearts
    - 3. In fact, it should make us all the more ready to see Jesus’ return, because the worse things get, the more we desire the Lord to redeem and restore all things.
- e. I would venture to say that a couple of things keep us from being ready:
  - i. One, the world and what it gives us makes us comfortable.
  - ii. Two, we aren’t looking forward to a day of judgment because of our own brokenness and sin.
- f. Some people don’t want Jesus to come back quite yet until they see their children grow up, or until they have grandchildren, or maybe until they’ve had a chance to live life for a while... besides heaven will probably be boring anyway (Oh what a sad statement that is!)
- g. Some people don’t want Jesus to come back because they feel the burden and weight of sin...
  - i. Like Martin Luther, they fear the judgment of Christ on the Last Day, and they are not totally sure that He won’t condemn them.
  - ii. Again, what a sad statement that is!
- h. We may not be ready to have Jesus bring everything to completion because of misunderstandings... but there is a way...

IV. **The way to be ready is a very simple, one word answer.**

- a. Faith.
- b. At some point in time during your life, God's grace came to you through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) so that you could believe in God and believe God.
  - i. We might have faith that God exists and Jesus is our Savior, but with that comes believing God at His word and promise – that what He promises will happen.
  - ii. Faith is not only belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but also in God's promises – including the return of Jesus Christ.
- c. Remember, Jesus tells us these things over and over in the Gospels as He prepares His followers to get through the most difficult times of life and look forward in hope to His return.
  - i. It's easy to get comfortable in the world, but again, through faith we can enjoy the world with a heart that's in alignment with God's much bigger plan of salvation.
  - ii. It's easy to feel like sin wins the day in our lives and Jesus might condemn us for going one step too far... but through faith we are saved and forgiven by His sacrifice on the cross.
- d. Look, I know it's hard to believe that our Savior might come back at any time, but if you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord – then you can be absolutely sure that He is coming back one day.
- e. Through faith we are ready for that day without fear or anxiety, because He promises that His children are safe in His arms – and nothing can separate us from His love (John 10:28; Romans 8:39)

V. **So, take some time to look in the clouds today and remember...**

- a. One day, we "will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (vs 26)
- b. It will be no secret arrival where some people know about it and others are unaware.
- c. No, a great trumpet call of God will sound... and the whole earth will know the time has come.
  - i. 1 Corinthians 15:52 - For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
  - ii. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.
  - iii. Matthew 24:31 - And [Jesus] will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call.
- d. First, all the dead will be raised, and then all who are living will join every believer from the beginning of time with new, glorified bodies... and a new heaven and new earth will begin with our God and His presence in the center of it all (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Revelation 21:1-4)

e. Jesus Christ our Savior is coming back, and praise be to God that He has every intention of “gathering His elect,” (vs 27) and through faith, we “His elect” are definitely ready! Amen.