

**Sermon Series: “From Bethlehem to Calvary to Heaven”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—2/1/2004**

**Title:** “The Final Curtain Call”

**Text:** John 12: 37-50 & Mark 13: 20-23

**Intro.:** *Ills.: Two-minute warning* (image if you were disciples in days leading up to Jesus’ death & resurrection / now imagine you are his disciples leading up to his final return)

**Theme:** When it comes to the end of all things, Jesus gives his believing disciples a heads up so that they would be forewarned and forearmed in joyfully anticipating his .

***A Synopsis of the readings from the four Gospels during this coming week***

- ***A crescendo of activity and opposition*** – tension building between Jesus & religious leading to rejection/crucifixion
- ***A kaleidoscope of prophecies—past/present/future*** – showing that fulfillment of end in O.T., Jesus’ death, Last Day
- ***A flurry of story teaching riveting our focus*** – Jesus’ call is: ***“Believe, today!” “Prepare for tomorrow”***

***What causes us to be unprepared? (Print John 12: 37-43)***

- Intellectual paganism — not allowing ***“Surprise of Faith”*** to get in because ***“we are too smart for our own good”***
  1. *“the sin against the Holy Spirit”* which some of you read about and asked about after the reading in Mark 3: 28-30
  2. God speaks in Isaiah how he will not always put up with this but will eventually withdraw his saving gracious reach
- Politically correct Christianity – believing with a condition -- more worried about being liked and fitting in then
  3. ***Ills.: Penny Wise and Pound Foolish***
  4. Won’t be ready for the End Times and persecution of faith ahead if practicing watered down ***closet Christianity***
  5. *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” Matt 10: 32-33*

***Getting serious about our relationship and purpose as a “follower of Jesus” (Print John 12: 44-45)***

- Foster faith activities
  1. Lots of things about a relationship with God that challenge/defy logic—believe anyway because of past proof given
  2. Understanding that faith is an all or nothing package (Jesus and Father one; creation and redemption intertwined, etc.
  3. Faith is not about what I do but who I am and the resulting faith activity that generates from that
- Walk in the Light
  4. Shunning the ways of darkness
  1. *“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1: 5-7*
  2. ***Ills.: Light and darkness are not compatible-- turn lights out (except for candle/projector)***
    5. Intentionally choosing to walk in the light (*money, ethics, morality, and political issues*)
- Elect to be elected (***Print Mark 13: 20-23***)
  6. A strange series of things are said by Jesus our relationship to him and how he chooses us not the other way around
  1. This section of Mark is one of four very detailed sections in the Gospels about the End Times
  2. He warns us of the terrible end times and then shortens the time until his return so that we “survived” (*are saved*)
  3. ***Ills.: Threats and warnings***
  4. God knows our fallibility/mortality under extreme persecution and will for our sake with stop before it harms us
  5. *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Rom 8: 28*

7. Sure of your election because God is

1. "for the sake of the elect whom he has elected" – God has a purpose for his believers – to get us home to heaven
2. "Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." Romans 8:30

8. Making sure of your election

1. "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall." 2 Peter 1:5-10

### **Two minute warning**

On March 26, 2000, Seattle's famed Kingdome—home of the Seattle Seahawks, Mariners, and at times, the Super Sonics—was destroyed. Maryland-based Controlled Demolition Incorporated was hired to do the job of imploding the 25,000-ton structure that had marked Seattle's skyline for two dozen years. Remarkable about the event was the extreme measures taken to ensure no one was hurt. CDI had experience with over 7,000 demolitions and knew how to protect people. Engineers checked and rechecked the structure. The authorities evacuated several blocks around the Kingdome. Safety measures were in place to allow the countdown to stop at any time if there was concern about safety. All workers were individually accounted for by radio before the explosives were detonated. A large public address system was used to announce the final countdown. In short, CDI took every reasonable measure and more to warn people of the impending danger. The Bible teaches of a final judgment and destruction for this sinful world. Like the engineers who blew up the Kingdome, our heavenly Father has spared no expense to make sure everybody can "get out" safely. He warns us through our consciences, through the prophets, through the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit, through the Church, and through his Son. **Citation: Jon Mutchler, Ferndale, Washington; source: Seattle Times(3-27-00)**

### **Penny Wise and Pound Foolish**

David Bloom, *Today Show* co-host on weekends, died on April 6, 2003, while covering Operation Iraqi Freedom. Ironically, Bloom did not die from injuries sustained in conflict, but rather of a pulmonary embolism. Pulmonary emboli occur among those who sit for long periods of time, and Bloom spent much of his time in a cramped Army vehicle. When Bloom began experiencing pain, he consulted several doctors. Frederik Balfour, a reporter with *BusinessWeek* online, wrote: He consulted military doctors and described his symptoms over the phone to overseas physicians. They suspected DVT, or deep venous thrombosis, and advised him to seek proper medical attention. He ignored their advice, swallowed some aspirins, and kept on working. On Sunday he died of a pulmonary embolism. Bloom took several precautions to avoid becoming a casualty of war, but ignored the warnings of doctors who insisted that his life was in danger from a treatable condition. Bloom left behind a wife and three young daughters. **Citation: Frederik Balfour, "David Bloom's Last Ride," *BusinessWeek* online (4-7-03); submitted by David Slagle, Lawrenceville, Georgia**

### **Threats and Warnings**

God never threatens; the devil never warns. **Citation: Oswald Chambers, *Leadership*, Vol. 3, no. 1.**

### **John 12:37-50**

<sup>37</sup>Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. <sup>38</sup>This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" <sup>39</sup>For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: <sup>40</sup>"He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn--and I would heal them." <sup>41</sup>Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. <sup>42</sup>Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup>for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. <sup>44</sup>Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. <sup>45</sup>When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. <sup>46</sup>I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. <sup>47</sup>"As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. <sup>48</sup>There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. <sup>49</sup>For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. <sup>50</sup>I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

### **Mark 13:20-23**

<sup>20</sup>"If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. <sup>21</sup>At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. <sup>22</sup>For false Christ's and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect--if that were possible. <sup>23</sup>So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time."