

Read: Matthew 25:1-13

Keep Watch for Jesus to Return

Matthew 25:13

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Don’t forget to prepare and practice your presentation about a United States president for next week,” Jeff’s teacher reminded his class on Friday. “Each day, starting next week Monday, I will randomly choose five students from the class to give their presentation to the class. Make sure you are ready to go on Monday in case your name is chosen!”

With 25 kids in his class, Jeff didn’t think it was likely that he would be chosen to give his presentation right away on Monday. Rather than work on his presentation for class that weekend, Jeff chose to hang out with his friends and play video games.

That following Monday, the teacher put all of the student names on slips of paper in a bag and drew one slip prior to each speech to randomly choose the next person to present to the class. Jeff sighed with relief each time his name wasn’t chosen for any of the first four presentations. Following the fourth student’s presentation, the teacher reached her hand into the bag of names one last time.

“Last up to present to the class will be...,” the teacher paused for a moment as she reached in to grab a slip of paper with the name of the next student. “...Jeff!”

Jeff’s heart sank the moment he heard his name called out. Ashamed, he turned bright red. He had to admit to his teacher and to his entire class that he had nothing prepared and was not ready to present.

Today’s Word of God warns us to make sure we are not caught unprepared for something far more important than a presentation for school. God tells us to be ready for when he comes back again on judgment day. God has kept the date and time of judgment day hidden from us because he wants us to always live ready for that day to come at any time.

How can we make sure we are prepared for judgment day? God tells us that every time we read and listen to his Word, the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts strengthening our faith and preparing us for judgment day! Rather than distancing ourselves from God’s Word or being distracted by other things in this life, God wants us to stay connected with him so we hear his important warning to be ready.

As we study God’s Word, we hear how Jesus made us fully ready for that day. The forgiveness Jesus won for us on the cross has made us right in God’s sight and made heaven our home! Through faith in Jesus, we have nothing to fear about judgment day. On that day, our heavenly

Father will identify us as his dearly loved children and bring us to our eternal home with him in heaven!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- What are some ways we can hear God's Word this week as a family?
- What are some things you are looking forward to most about heaven?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What are some things you and your family can do each week to make sure you are ready for judgment day?
- What are some things that can distract us from putting Jesus first in our lives? What can we do to avoid letting that happen?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Being ready for judgment day means making sure that we set aside time to grow in our faith. Identify what other priorities may be getting in the way of God's Word in your life? Discuss what you want to do that will help your priorities?
- Read all of Matthew 25:1-13. What evidence do you see in the world around you that people don't believe there will be an end to the world as Jesus says there will be? Why is it important for us to understand this truth from God's Word?

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Savior, thank you for lovingly reminding us that the world we live in is only temporary. Help us to always put hearing your Word on the top of our priority list. Thank you for forgiving us and earning an eternal home in heaven on our behalf, so that we can look forward to judgment day as the day where we will be forever in heaven! Amen.

Hymn: CW 219 – Lord When Your Glory I Shall See

Lord, when your glory I shall see
And taste your kingdom's pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be,
My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before your throne,
Your righteousness shall be my crown;
With these I need not hide me.
And there, in garments richly wrought,
As your own bride I shall be brought,
To stand in joy beside you.