

Don't Lose the Best by Living for the Good

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Women's Retreat (12 days away) - Today is last day to sign up and purchase shirts. Ladies start *paying balances*. Also, if anyone would like to *Sponsor* a lady (single mom) to be able to go, see Cindy in info booth.
- B. Slide3 CMCS Preview Night/Open House - join this is Friday night at 5 PM. We will be *servicing a complimentary dinner, introducing ourselves to a church body, & discussing 2017/2018 school year*.
- C. Slide4 Children at Risk - Next Sun. Natalie Franks from *Shared Hope International* will be sharing about their org that works with *trafficking victims worldwide to prevent trafficking, restore victims, and bring guilty to justice. sharedhope.org*
- D. Slide5 Fresh Hope - Wayne Dollarhide & Mekenna Cipres.
- E. Slide6 Prayer: Ever wonder how a bird sleeping on its perch/branch never falls off? When their leg is *bent at the knee*, the claws contract and grip like a steel trap. The claws refuse to let go until the knees are unbent again. From sleeping birds we can learn the secret of *holding things which are most precious to us: honest, purity, thoughtfulness, honor, humility, character*. That secret is **the knee bent in prayer**, seeking to get a firmer grip on those **values** which *make life worth living*.
1. Titus 2:11-13 nlt *For the **grace** of God has been revealed, bringing **salvation** to all people. And we are instructed to **turn from godless living and sinful pleasures**. We should live in this evil world with *wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God*, while we look forward with **hope** to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to **doing good deeds**.*

II. Slide7 Intro: Don't Lose the Best by Living for the Good

- A. I said 2 weeks ago said *the Rapture is not discussed till the end of chapter...I would like to change that to *the rapture is not discussed here*. [the prob of hearing something taught growing up 1 way, too many times, is that when you see it your brain reverts back to that]*

B. Wrap up this chapter w/5 Practical Lessons taught thru 5 Illustrations.

1. A lesson from... *a Tree. Noah. a Thief. a Wise Servant. an Evil Servant.*
 - a) *God's great book of nature is full of illustrations for those who have eyes to perceive them.*

III. Slide8 A LESSON FROM A TREE (32-35)

A. The Fig Tree has special association with *Israel*.

1. The people living during the Tribulation will be able to watch these things occur & will know that His coming is near.
2. This assurance will help them *endure till the end*. vs.13

B. Summer is near - and the harsh winter of the Tribulation is past.

1. When you see signs of Spring, you know Summer is near. Here in our Valley...
2. When you see our parking lot trees in bloom...you know summer is near..
When you see the Strawberry stands start opening...you know summer is near.
When you see Calif wild Poppy's pop up along our 15fwy...u know summer is near.

C. (31) My words – Wow. We've heard Is.40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever. Hear Jesus puts His words on equal footing w/the OT Scriptures.

1. We as believers do not depend on signs, we depend on His unchanging Word, *we have the prophetic word confirmed.*
2. Everything wrong, everything evil, everything unjust, every prejudice, bias, & discrimination will pass away. And we have the Hope of a new Heaven & Earth. Where peace, justice, hope, joy, love, & everything right & good will have no end.

IV. Slide9 A LESSON FROM NOAH (36-42) be ready His 2nd Coming is near

A. (37-39) Days of Noah - Plenty of warning, but utter unpreparedness.

1. Here Jesus says, *History will repeat itself.*
2. When He comes He will find many unprepared & unconcerned, even as the antediluvians were when the flood came, & took them away.

- B. (38) What kept them from listening & obeying Noah's message? The common interests of life. They weren't *bad* things...just the normal pursuits of life.
- C. Note: both men (Noah/Lot, *Lk.17:28-30*) lived just before great judgments.
1. The world was living in sin, oblivious to God. It's what will the world be like just before the final judgment and the *Coming* of the Lord? It will be *business as usual*.
- D. So Jesus warning was, *Don't lose the best by living for the good*.
1. It's a dangerous thing to get so absorbed in *the pursuits of life* that we forget **Jesus is Coming**.
 2. Jesus consistently taught the **certainty** of the fact of **His Coming**, but the **uncertainty** of the time.
- E. Slide10 Let's take a side lesson from *anableps*: There's a minnow-like fish called **Four eyes** (*anableps*), which makes his home in Central and South America. What's unusual about him is his large, bulging eyes. They are so situated on his head that he can spend his time cruising along the water with only the upper half of each eye above the surface. The top half has an **air lens** and the bottom half has a **water lens**, which amounts to a set of bifocals, giving him the ability to see in both the **upper** and **under world**. And...they spend *most of their time* at the surface of the water. :)
1. Our lesson from the *anableps*? 1/2 of your eyes focused on earth & the other 1/2 focused on heaven.
- F. Slide11 While **those** observing Noah building the ark could anticipate that a flood was impending, it was obvious that the flood could not come **until** the ark was **completed**.¹
1. When the ark was completed & Noah, his family, & the animals were in it, **those** observing could anticipate the flood **any day**. But even then, they could not predict **the day nor the hour**. [context, *predicting time* from vs.36]
 - a) So **Christ's Coming**, *just like the flood*, will be sudden, unexpected, & universal in its effects.
- G. Slide12a (40,41) **Taken - up in the Rapture or off to Judgment?** [only place Lk.17:20-37 *same context*]
1. At the end of tribulation - some people are **taken away to judgment**, while **others** will **remain to enter the kingdom**.

¹ Walvoord

2. **2 working in a field** - 1 taken, the other left (40)
3. **2 grinding grain** - 1 taken, the other left (41)
4. **[Lk adds] 2 in a bed** - 1 taken, the other left (Lk.17:34)
 - a) Some will be **taken** into judgment.
 - (1) In some parts of the world it will be **nighttime** (they'll be in bed).
 - (2) In other parts of the world it will be **daytime** (they'll be doing daily tasks)
 - (3) The **taken** away means **taken away** to Judgment, **not taken up in the Rapture**.
 - b) **Slide12b** The ones **left** are those who will **enter into** the kingdom.
 - (1) We'll read in ch.25, the **sheep** were told... **Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**
 - (2) The **goats** were told **depart from Me you cursed...**

H. **Slide13** (42) **Watch** - main practical thought is that of **watchfulness** (Mrk, Lk, 1 Thes.)

I. Lk.21:34-36 msg *But be on your guard. Don't let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping. Otherwise, that Day is going to take you by complete surprise, spring on you suddenly like a trap, for it's going to come on everyone, everywhere, at once. So, whatever you do, don't go to sleep at the switch. Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that's coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man.*

J. **Slide14 The Pony Express**. This historically famous **mail service** between St. Joseph, Missouri, and California depended on **constant movement** and **readiness**. Relay stations were established every 10-15 miles. A rider would **shout aloud** as he approached a station, giving the station master **very short notice** that he needed to be outside **waiting with a fresh mount**. Even when a rider came to the station where he was to spend the night, another rider was already mounted and waiting, ready to grab the first rider's bundle of packages and continue the trip. The completion of the **transcontinental telegraph system** rendered the Pony Express obsolete after just **19 months**. But we have this service's intriguing example of what it means to be **ever watchful**.²

² Today in the Word, December, 1997, p. 17

K. **Watch** – This word γρηγορέω *grēgoreō* is where the English name *Gregory* comes from meaning, *be awake; be alert; be alive*.

L. **Slide15a** Maybe we should **keep watch** like *Argus* in Greek mythology.

1. **Argus Panop-tes** was a giant with 100 eyes. He was thus a very effective **watchman**, as only a few of the eyes would sleep at a time; there were always eyes still awake. Argus was Hera's servant. To free Io [ee-oh], Zeus had Argus slain by Hermes. *Hermes, disguised as a shepherd, first put all of Argus's eyes asleep with boring stories.* To commemorate her faithful watchman, Hera had **Slide15b** the hundred eyes of Argus preserved forever, in a **peacock's tail**.
2. **Note:** He said, **keep watch...not keep predicting.**

V. **Slide16 A LESSON FROM A THIEF (43,44) watch & be ready**

A. Jesus is so practical. It's an obvious assumption...you'd protect your home.

1. Many have spent a lot of \$ on *locks, alarms, weapons, dogs* to be ready for a thief...but not *The Thief in the Night* (aka Jesus).

VI. **Slide17 A LESSON FROM A WISE SERVANT (45-47) be a faithful/wise Servant**

A. (46) **The servants task** is not to be *popular*, but to be **obedient**.

B. Like the householder, *before our Lord went from us back to heaven*, He gave each of us **work to do**.

1. As a parent how do you feel when you left things for your kids to do before you got home...you arrive home & they *aren't* done?
2. He expects us to be *faithful* while He is gone & to be *working* when He returns.
3. The teachings on the return of Christ is not to **excite** our imagination, but to challenge *the way we live here & now*.
 - a) It should spur us to live **holy lives** & to be actively involved in service & sharing our faith.
 - b) **Slide18** *Who can mind the journey when the road leads home?* James Gray (hymn)

C. (47) The **reward** for obedient service is the capacity for greater service.

VII. Slide19 **A LESSON FROM AN EVIL SERVANT (48-51)** *don't act as though He's delaying*

- A. Professing servants in the house of God.
- B. (51) The *chopped in two* is bad (physical/temporary), **but** not in comparison to the *weeping & gnashing of teeth* (sp/eternal).
- C. When you see signs of end times you know His Coming is near.
1. *Watch everything & watching it, see God, & know that the Kingdom is ever near.*³
 - a) His kingdom is **already**. His kingdom is **not yet**. His kingdom is **always advancing**.
 - b) We **ARE** a day closer to His soon return...**watch**.
- D. Slide20 If you visit **the Library of Congress**, in the Main Reading Room, are these words from *Alfred, Lord Tennyson's* poem: *“One God, One Law, One Element, and One Far-Off Divine Event, to which the Whole Creation Moves.”*
- E. **Remember**, we are on the **welcoming** committee **not** on the **planning** committee.
- F. We must learn to live in the **tension** between...readiness for Jesus return **&** planning for generations to come.
- G. *****
- H. If we genuinely embrace **His** sacrifice, you will joyfully embrace a **sacrificial life**.(McManus)
1. God's will for us is **less** about our **comfort** **than** it is about our **contribution**.
 2. God would never choose for us **safety** at the cost of **significance**.
 3. God created you so that **your life would count**, **not** so that you could **count the days of your life**.

³ G.Campbell Morgan

- I. **We distinguish:** Christ coming **for** His church (arpazo/rapturo/**caught up** 1 Thes.4:17), & Christ coming **with** His saints (*parousia/coming* Jude14, *the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints*).
1. At Rapture Jesus comes **for** His saints. At 2nd Coming Jesus comes **w/His** saints.
 2. At Rapture we meet Christ in the air. At 2nd Coming we return with Christ.
 3. At Rapture saints are changed. At 2nd Coming no change to saints.
 4. The Rapture is imminent. 2nd Coming proceeded by definite signs & is calculated to the day.
 5. At Rapture deals with the saved. At 2nd Coming deals with the saved & unsaved.
 6. At Rapture Satan is not bound. At 2nd Coming Satan is bound.
 7. At Rapture the world is not changed. At 2nd Coming the world is radically changed.
 8. The Rapture no one sees Jesus. The 2nd Coming all will see Him.