

“Tree Watcher!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. **Memorial Day** – to commemorate soldiers who **died** in war. Also, extended to those who **have served** or are **servicing** their country **presently**.
- 1.2. The ancient sport of **falconry** employed trained hawks in the chase of wild game. When the "*educated predator*" was allowed to fly, however, it often rose too high for human eyes to see it against the blue sky. It was therefore not uncommon to carry a small caged bird called a **shrike**. The hunter could then easily tell where his hawk was located by watching the antics of the little creature in front of him, for it **instinctively** feared the falcon and **always cocked its head to keep it in view**. The Christian desperately needs the **sensitivity** and **perception** of the shrike though **not in fear** but with **loving expectation**.

2. TREE WATCHER! (29-38)

- 2.1. **THE SYMBOL!** (29)
- 2.2. Not only the parable of the Fig tree, but really **all trees** for that matter!
 - 2.2.1. Maybe just happened to be a Fig tree in front of them.
 - 2.2.2. But **any tree** will work for this illustration. (i.e. not Israel=Fig Tree here)
- 2.3. **THE SIGNIFICANCE!** (30,31)
- 2.4. (30) **When you see signs of spring you know summer is near.**
 - 2.4.1. Here in our Valley, **when you see** the Strawberry stands start opening... you know summer is near!
 - 2.4.2. **When you see California Wild Poppy's** pop up along our 15 frwy...
 - 2.4.3. **When you see** our staff start wearing **flip flops** to work...
- 2.5. (31) **When you see signs of end times you know His Coming is near.**
 - 2.5.1. Even as **the leafing of a tree** announces the coming of summer, so the **signs of 21:25,26** will **announce & guarantee** the Son of Man's coming.
 - 2.5.2. **“Watch everything, & watching it, see God, & know that the Kingdom is ever near!”** (Morgan)
- 2.6. **THE STABILITY!** (32,33)
- 2.7. The certainty of all this is assured by 2 emphatic elements.
- 2.8. [1] **This generation**(the 1 present at that time) **won't pass from the scene** (32)
 - 2.8.1. Backed by the promise – **“Assuredly I say unto you”**.
- 2.9. [2] **God's Word won't pass from the scene** (33)
 - 2.9.1. The **coming** of the Son of Man is a more enduring promise...than the **existence** of heaven & earth.

- 2.9.2. It's good for **every age & every generation**.
- 2.9.3. **Q:** How does that promise regarding His Words warm your heart?
- 2.10. **Heaven & earth will pass away** – The promise of God is that the future is **not** going to be like the present.
- 2.10.1. Everything **wrong**, everything **evil** will pass away, & we have the hope of a new Heaven & Earth. **Where peace, justice, hope, joy, & love will have no end!!!**
- 2.11. **THE SUMMARY!** (34-36)
- 2.12. (34) **Take heed to yourselves** – Be on your guard. Don't get lazy. Don't give up. Don't cave in.
- 2.12.1. **Ok, but can you give me a few things that You'd warning me against?**
- 2.13. **Lest your heart weighed down with:** (*weigh down* = pressed, depressed, heavy)
- 2.13.1. The sense of being **no longer sensitive** to what is happening.
- 2.13.2. [1] **Carousing** – dissipation.
- 2.13.2.1. **Drunken nausea**. Signifies the distressing **after effects** of intoxication. [LKGNT]
- 2.13.2.2. **Strong**s – “the giddiness & headache caused by drinking wine to excess”.
- 2.13.3. [2] **Drunkenness** – Intoxication.
- 2.13.4. [3] **Cares of this life** – Anxieties.
- 2.13.4.1. Don't be *weighed down* with concern & worry for your life here.
- 2.13.4.2. **Anxiety** for this life, daily life, worldly life, secular life, everyday life
- 2.13.4.3. The **worries of this life** are a **distraction** - They are **dangerous to our spiritual growth** because they **take focus off Jesus!**
- 2.13.4.4. **Stop worrying: If something concerns you, do something about it. If you can't do anything about it, let it go!**
- 2.13.4.4.1. **Be concerned** for things you **are** responsible for.
- 2.13.4.4.2. **Worry** is being concerned for things over which you **have no control**.
- 2.13.4.5. When we worry we **deny the faithfulness of God!**
- 2.13.4.6. I wonder if the cure is to be **so anxious** for the **next life?**
- 2.13.4.7. **Anxiety** is a **thin stream of fear** trickling through the **mind**. If **encouraged**, it **cuts a channel** into which **all others thoughts** are **drained**. - Arthur Somers Roche
- 2.13.4.8. The **beginning of anxiety** is the **end of faith**, and the **beginning of true faith** is the **end of anxiety**. George Mueller

- 2.13.4.9. An average person's anxiety is focused on :
- 40% -- things that will **never** happen
 - 30% -- things about the past that **can't be changed**
 - 12% -- things about **criticism** by others, mostly **untrue**
 - 10% -- about **health**, which gets worse with stress
 - 8% -- about **real problems** that will be faced

- 2.14. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been **200 years**, and those nations progressed through this sequence:
 From Bondage to Spiritual Faith; From Spiritual Faith to Great Courage;
 From Courage to Liberty; From Liberty to Abundance;
 From Abundance to Selfishness; From Selfishness to Complacency;
 From Complacency to Apathy; From Apathy to Dependency;
 From Dependency back again into bondage.¹
- 2.14.1. [4] **That Day come on you unexpectedly** – (i.e. 2nd Coming)
- 2.15. Notice the difference in the **attitude of Christians** & that of **other men** in times of **crisis & judgment**. **What makes the difference?**
- 2.16. (Message) **“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.”**
- 2.17. (35) **Whole earth** effected during trib not local! (also Rev.3:10)
- 2.18. (36) **Watch** – Keep on the alert.
- 2.18.1. Main practical thought for this chapter is that of **watchfulness!**
- 2.18.1.1. (vs.8,28,31,34-36)
- 2.18.2. **This how the Christian is to live!**
- 2.18.3. **It is actually a large part of our life, watching & waiting. And we've mastered it in many other areas:**
- 2.18.3.1. **As Parents of teens** (watching & waiting for their return);
- 2.18.3.2. **Every spring those who plant gardens;**
- 2.18.3.3. **Lines** at amusements parks (watching the line ahead carefully
 As we patiently waiting);
- 2.18.3.4. **A love one going through surgery** (we watch the clock, & wait for the doctors to give us the update).
- 2.18.3.5. **On Christmas morning** as kids, the grueling wait, as dad knew just how to create hunger & anticipation. (nothing to get mad at, he knew how much more special it would be)

¹ Alexander Fraser Tyler (1748-1813) in The Decline and Fall of **The Athenian Republic**.

2.18.3.6. **Q:** Haven't you ever made someone wait for something?

2.18.3.7. **Toby Mac concert @ Spirit West Coast** (get done at end, you know they'll **come back** for encore, just not sure exactly when, makes exciting)

2.18.3.8. **Watching & waiting is a reality of life here on earth!**

- 2.19. When it comes to being on the alert and ready at any moment to do the job, it's hard to beat 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 ten to fifteen 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.
- 2.20. **Pray always – Ummm what are we praying for exactly?**
- 2.20.1. [1] That you'd **have strength** to escape all these things (can't do it on own strength).
- 2.20.2. [2] That you'd be able **to stand** before Jesus.
- 2.21. Grammatically, this phrase is best understood as revealing *the means* by which one can be watchful...**be always watchful by praying.**²
- 2.22. By reminding ourselves daily that Jesus may return before the day ends, we will **walk carefully** so that we will not be caught **unprepared** when He comes.
- 2.22.1. 1 John 2:28 **"And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming"**.
- 2.22.2. (Message) **"And now, children, stay with Christ. Live deeply in Christ. Then we'll be ready for him when he appears, ready to receive him with open arms, with no cause for red-faced guilt or lame excuses when he arrives."** ☺
- 2.23. **HOW JESUS SPENT HIS LAST WEEK!** (37,38)
- 2.24. (37) His last **Days** – teaching the temple.
- 2.24.1. Wonder if He was thinking back to when He was a junior higher (age12), discussing the Word of God with the religious leaders there.
- 2.25. His **Nights** – Camping on His favorite mountain.
- 2.25.1. **Wept over Jerusalem** from there; Just gave **last sermon** there; **Gethsemane; Ascension; will Return** on that same mountain.

² Shepherd's Notes; pg.79

2.26. (38) All the people came to hear Him teach.

2.26.1. But Jesus...the **religious leaders** hate you; **the Temple** itself has become a den of thieves; then **WHY** are you teaching there?

2.26.1.1. Because **needy people** were there, who desired to hear Him!

2.26.1.2. And Jesus was quick to **seize the opportunity**; and the people were **glad to hear Him!**

2.26.1.2.1. Don't be discouraged by naysayer's, minister to those who want to hear.

2.27. Meet Jesus early in the morning!

Watchfulness:

Have you ever watched a **bird sleeping on its perch and never falling off?**

How does it manage to do this? **The secret is the tendons of the bird's legs.** They are so

constructed that when the 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. The bended knee gives the bird the ability to hold on to his perch so tightly. From sleeping birds we can learn the secret of holding

things which are most precious to us -- honest, purity, thoughtfulness, honor, character. **That**

secret is the knee bent in prayer, seeking to get a **firmer grip on those values** which make

life worth living. When we hold firmly to God in prayer, we can rest assured he will hold tightly to us.