

<sup>36</sup> "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>42</sup> Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Some years ago a gym I joined completely redid their locker room facilities. The change was major enough to have them bring temporary locker and shower trailers. So when they finally reopened the new locker room there was great rejoicing. When I first used the men's locker room I was very impressed. However when I went to take a shower the water abruptly went from hot to cold in a few seconds! Thinking that this was a one time problem, I proceeded home. But it was not. Finally after the third time this happened I started to bring an extra top just in case I had to go home and shower. You would have thought I might have done this before, because such problems can develop at any gym! I would have then been able to expect the unexpected.

The gospel lesson from Matthew for the first Sunday in advent really has that as a theme when Jesus talks about the end of all things. After Jesus makes it very clear that the date of his return is unknowable, he stresses two things in this passage. The first is that up until that day it will be business as usual (v.38 and v.40) except suddenly the day will come and all will be different. The second is to prepare by expecting this unexpected event (v.42-44).

While I'm sure they were challenging words for Jesus' disciples, how much more are they challenging words for us today? The folks in the early church really expected the Lord's return during their lifetime. Obviously their expectation didn't come to pass. So here we are in the year 2013 again hearing these words knowing that the return of the Lord still hasn't happened. So the question is; "what should we do?"

Perhaps the answer is in Jesus' words. The flood came suddenly. The thief has no scheduled arrival time. Expect the unexpected and be ready. There is a story that illustrates this point:

*A Louisiana game warden had been tracking Boudreaux, the infamous Cajun poacher, late one night he stumbled upon the criminal's cabin. Climbing upon the roof, the game warden waited for the dawn, hoping to jump the poacher as he emerged. The game warden after a fitful night of trying to keep quiet, heard Boudreaux making breakfast the next morning. The smell of bacon frying and coffee brewing became a temptation to his stomach. Then, to his surprise, Boudreaux came to the door and yelled, "Hey game warden, you might as well come on down and have some breakfast with me!" Over breakfast the game warden asked how the wily Cajun had known he was waiting on the roof. Boudreaux grinned. "I didn't, but I do that every morning just in case you are!"*

Let's not take things for granted, as we walk each day with the Lord, let's "expect the unexpected".

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