

THE BOOK OF LUKE
STUDY TWENTY FIVE (LUKE 21:29-38)
PARABLES FOR THE DISCIPLES
"THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE"
JULY 6, 2008

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 21:36, "But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man."

INTRODUCTION

In the parable of the "Fig Tree," Jesus taught that we can tell what is coming by closely watching the signs. When the leaves on a fig tree begin to sprout in April, we know that summer is near. In the same way, when the signs mentioned in the preceding verses of Luke 21 begin to take place, we should know the kingdom of God is near. Jesus told the disciples to keep a constant watch for His return. It has been almost 2000 years since Jesus spoke these words; however, the truth of this message still rings loud and clear - Christ is coming again and we need to watch closely and be spiritually ready for His return. This means we should always work faithfully at the tasks God has given us. We should not allow our mind and spirit to become dull and/or insensitive due to careless living, drunkenness or the foolish pursuit of pleasure. We should never let our guard down and never give up. Jesus calls us to live for Him and obey His command to share the truth and hope of His gospel message with all who will listen. In this passage, we see that God's Word is sure and infallible and will never pass away. God is in control of all aspects of this life and He has made it clear in His Word that Jesus is coming back for us. It is not for us to know "the times or dates." The day and hour are only known by God, therefore believers should be ready at all times. While we wait for His return, there is plenty of work for the church to do. These are exciting days to live for God!

LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

1. Based on Luke 21:29-30, what can you learn by observing a fig tree? What can you learn by observing the signs that are around you? What are the signs that are listed in Luke 21:8-28?

2. How were the promises in Luke 21:32-33 a comfort to the disciples? How might they have been a discomfort to them? What did Jesus mean by the statement, "this generation will not pass away until all has taken place?"

3. What was Jesus referring to with the phrase, "that day," in Luke 21:34? In the midst of this heavy news and heavy times, how does Jesus caution His followers in Luke 21:34-35? What is the danger for a believer of not heeding these cautions?

4. Jesus taught directly with words, but He also taught by modeling how we should live. What do you observe in Luke 21:37-38 concerning the basic schedule Jesus had each day? What does this tell you about His priorities?

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. Rather than dwelling on the circumstances of the end times, Jesus tells us in Luke 21:34-36 that our focus should be elsewhere. Why is this warning for believers so important today? How are you personally doing in this area of warning and priority living? What steps should you take to align your promises with those of Jesus?

2. When reading the parable of the fig tree, do you think the "fig tree" is near to sprouting today? What leads you to believe that? How should this affect the way you live your life?

3. It has been said, "Live as though Jesus may return today. Work as though He won't return for thirty years." What practical things can we do to keep this balance? What might you do this week to become better at living the life Jesus talks about and models in Luke 21:36-38?

4. If you could ask Jesus one question about either the second coming or the end of the world, what might you ask? How do you think He would respond to this question?

GOING DEEPER

1. Read Mark 1:35, 6:46; Luke 5:16, 9:18, and 22:41. What do these verses reveal to you concerning the importance Jesus placed on prayer? Why is prayer so important in the life of a believer?

2. What further insights do Matthew 24:1-35 and 2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-23 give you regarding the end times?