

Now class, I'm going down to the principal's office, said Miss Huber. You all ~~know~~ have work to do while I'm gone. I will expect you to do it quietly ~~when I return~~ ~~while I am gone~~ I want no one to be out of their seat.

~~and~~ out the door she went. For a moment there was silence as we looked around to see what the others were doing. And as we saw that none of our third grade classmates were doing what she said, we each knew that there was no sense in my doing that work. Curtis ran to the door and peaked down the hallway. She's gone he whispered, and the room erupted. While Curtis watched we talked and chatted and made a mighty racket, until he yelled, "Here she comes, and thirty five third graders jumped into their seats and pretended to be well-behaved, diligent students.

We were children, acting in a childish way, trying to get away with whatever we could.

Jesus says to us, "Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight, or ~~in the~~ at cockcrow, or in the morning - lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

Are you ready to meet your maker. If he comes this day, how shall he discover you, about the work that he has set before you, or shall he find you fooling around, wasting the precious time, or asleep? What if it is to be today? Are you ready?

Some seem to think that it is like that classroom. If we can just get things right at the end, then we'll slip by. They remember the thief on the cross who though he lived as a scoundrel all his life, spoke the right words at the end and was promised paradise. If we only know when the teacher will be strolling back in, then we can fool her. If we only know when God will send Jesus again, then we can fool him. And so they watch for the signs,

anxious to be the first to be able to shout, "Here he comes".

They are children, their minds set in childish ways, thinking the absent Lord will care only about the last moment.

Jesus tells us what it is like for us now, in light of his coming again. "It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

Our Lord has left his creation for a time,. Yet he has not abandoned it. We are his servants, we are given the task of doing his work while he is gone, each of us given our own work by our Lord. There is earth that needs to be cared for, food to be grown, livestock to be raised. Some of you have been given this work. There ~~isx~~ are children to be raised, homes to be maintained, food to be prepared. There are houses to be built, and clothing to be sold and the gospel to be preached and people to be touched by each of us with a warm smile and a hearty embrace. Our Lord has left his creation for a time, but he has not abandoned it. He manages his household, which is this whole world through the hands and the feet and the minds of you and I, his servants. When he leaves home he puts his servants in charge, each with his work.

Watch.

I keep dreaming that one morning I will wake up and there will only be smiles and laughter in my home. I dream that one morning the ~~pains~~^{aches} will be all gone and no one will be angry with me. I dream of that morning when none of my friends will be ill, and their marriages will all be happy. I'll bet you have dreamed that dream too. Some would call our dream wishful thinking, the real world is never that way.

Watch.

I visit with a woman crippled by arthritis. Maybe she hopes that someday, one day she will no longer wake up to only the pain.

Watch.

For whom does the doorkeeper watch? For the angry teacher stomping down the ~~xxx~~ ~~xx~~ hall, coming to put an end to all the racket? For a

Lord, coming to punish, condemn?

No ~~xxxxxxx~~ he watch ~~eyes~~ straining to see the one with the new day, coming. In the pain and the wars and the disappointments and the death, don't give up hope, says out Lord. Watch.

~~xxxxxxx~~

Soon in the ~~darkness~~ of night, a cry of joy will be heard. And shepherds watching shall come and see and know that their vigil has not been in vain. And you and I shall see lying in that Bethlehem manger the one who sets the very heavens singing, and all the earth as well. Jesus, the bringer of the new day, when God will wipe away every tear, and death shall be no more when neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more. Jesus the babe of Bethlehem, ~~xxxxxxx~~ child of Mary, God's only Son, *our Lord* ~~xxxxxxx~~

He is coming again