

³⁶“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But 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. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

It was certainly an unexpected hour. Morning in New York, blue sky, sun creeping higher. A day like any other day. Suddenly life was interrupted.

We have heard so very much about the hours and days that followed. But what of the hours before?

Can you imagine that one young father left home that morning angry about the mess his children had left? Or angry with his wife over credit card debt? Or as he left home was his mind on the new woman in the office – a romance, forbidden fruit?

Did another curse the driver who cut him off in traffic? Still another cling to his seat on the train as an obviously weaker person struggled to stand? Did still another sneak in line while others waited to pass through the turnstiles thinking she had a more important day than they?

And in those twin towers that morning?

Was this one taking an upper, that one snorting some coke, the one over there sneaking a drink to chase away the remains of yesterday's consumption? Was another stealing time from an employer to pray for her daughter who was sick? Another sneaking a peek at some online pornography?

I am sure a lot of the folks in that tower that day were about the business of making money. At whatever cost making the most money that could be made. For on that morning like every other morning money was more important than all else.

“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 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, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field, one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”

For many of them Jesus came September 11. Life was interrupted. Their world ended. Just as surely as if the whole world ended, for many that day, their world ended. And they had no idea it would.

If your life were to end this morning, would that be a tragedy? The better a person that you are, the more you give and love and care, the more tragic your death will be to all the people of your life - the way that Jesus' death was a tragedy to the disciples. But as God the Father saw things Jesus' death marked the completion of a job well done. I think Jesus with his words to us this morning wants to call us all to living a life like his. He calls us to a life that whenever it is over God will greet us with the words, “Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master.”

It is not just at the end of time that there are two people working in a field, one taken, the other left, but it is happening every day. Those of you in your eighties and nineties have seen so many taken year after year and you are the ones left. You have seen people who live wonderful lives of caring and sharing and giving. And you have seen people who have been selfish, destructive of themselves and others. And all along the way you never knew who would be the one meeting Jesus, who the one living on in this life.

Is there some meaning in who is taken, and who is left? Are the ones who die first better or worse than the ones who live on? When the end of the world does come will it be better to be the one taken or the one left? In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians the ones taken are those who will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air. But in the Gospel according to St. Matthew Jesus speaks of the ones taken as those who will be gathered first – the weeds – that will be put into bundles and burned.

There is so much that we do not know. But we do know this: Jesus wants you and I to put first things first. Jesus wants you to trust in him, in his love, in his mercy. And Jesus wants you to share his love and his mercy.

To trust in him and share him – everyday when you go about your daily tasks.

Every evening when you return home,

In the morning when you awaken to a new day.

At night when you close your eyes in sleep.

Jesus wants you to trust in him, to share him and his love.

He will take care of all the rest. Even if the end of your world should explode all around you or the end of all the world happen this very day – trust in Jesus. Share his love. He will take care of all the rest.