

Watch for the Signs

Intro. Farmers, no matter what century they live in, have always paid attention to the signs. Their lives and the lives of their families depend on it. This knowledge is handed down from one generation to the next. Much of this information was collected in what might be called the farmer's bible, *The Old Farmer's Almanac*. It gives a general prediction of important things like the last winter freeze of the year and advice on when to plant various vegetables. It has the phases of the moon and high and low tides for the year. For those of us who are not farmers or gardeners, it can be a helpful guide to read the signs in nature. Most people in the Lord's time were fishermen, farmers and shepherds. They also had to read the signs of the seasons or they might not be prepared.

I. After the lesson about the widow's generosity, the Lord led the disciples out of the temple. They talked about how beautiful the temple was. The Lord told them it would be totally destroyed. They were stunned and asked when it would happen and how they would know. He said to watch for the signs, on the earth and in the heavens. He described wars, earthquakes and persecutions, predictions of what would happen to the Christian community at the hands of the Roman emperors. It might feel like it, but it would not necessarily *be* the end of the world.

We are coming to the end of some things in our own time. In two weeks we end our church year and we begin again with the season of Advent and prepare to celebrate the birth of the Lord. In five weeks we end our calendar year and get to start over.

Concl. We can read the signs and tell winter is coming (such as it is in north Florida). This week many of us unpacked sweaters, jackets and warm socks. There are other signs we can see. It seems there are more storms and fires lately. But there have been earthquakes, hurricanes and fires in every time in history. Due to technology we just know about them faster. How can we respond to the difficulties we see and prepare for the coming of the Lord? We could worry, be upset and hide in bunkers like was done in the sixties with the threat of nuclear war [M.McGlone, *America*] and is being done today. Or as one person at our bible study said, “Look for the good, trust in God and do good work” [Annette]. The Lord is encouraging us to pay attention to the world of around us. Read the signs and respond to them *positively*, rather than *negatively*. Pray for

people struggling with the hurricanes and fires and help with food and clothing. **And** remember the Lord’s promise: He will gather into heaven his elect, his faithful people who believe that God is still at work in our world [Ibid]. The Old Farmers’ Almanac gives guidance to gardeners, but the Bible gives hope to believers. We prepare for the Lord’s coming whenever that is: **not with fear but with hope.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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