

Watches (Not Time Pieces)

Intro. There are many ways of marking the hours, of telling time. Farmers and herders know how to read the sun and the shadows. Church bells tolling the hours were part of most towns. Later came factory whistles and the invention of the pocket watch. Wrist watches have been replaced by smart watches and cell phones. Anyone who has served in the military knows another kind of watch. It means literally keeping watch, looking for danger. The day is divided into various four or six-hour “watches” and people “stand” each watch. We now enter a heightened four-week watch. And not for the jolly big man.

I. The context of today’s gospel was a disciple admiring the beauty of the grand temple in Jerusalem. To which the Lord replied it would all be destroyed. The disciples were disturbed and distressed. The Jerusalem temple was the anchor of the Israelite culture and the symbol of God’s presence with them. Without it, they would be adrift and lost. They asked the Lord how they would know when this would happen, what the signs were. The only thing he said was to “Be watchful! Stay alert!

You do not know.” The Lord used the image of the master of the house being away and returning at a time servants do not know; during one of the four watches of the day or night. They have to keep the watch, *all the time*.

Concl. If we knew when the Lord was returning, we could set all our alarm clocks, smart watches, computers, cell phones. The ones standing the watch could let a shout. If only that is what happens. We could be lazy until the alarms go off. A few of us *have* had warnings, a close call because of an accident or illness. Most of us cannot count on it. Therefore we must stay busy doing the Lord’s work and it won’t matter when he comes back. That can get tiring, but we will be ready.

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