

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## WHAT TIME IS IT?

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9TH SEPTEMBER 2020

Tick tock... tick tock... tick tock..... Have you ever noticed the ticking of a clock (or even your watch) when there is a period of silence?

Tick tock... tick tock... The seconds counting away time, almost reminding us in the stillness that time marches on?

Seconds that turn into minutes that become hours, that make up days and then months and eventually years. We are somewhat obsessed with time, we plan our diaries, make appointments, squeeze in visits, all dictated to us by the counting of time.

We go on holiday to relax from the normal constraints of life (and then start counting off the days remaining before we return to the normality of our busy schedules). As a kid I remember counting off the day's till Christmas and becoming more and more excited as the number of sleeps reduced to 1. Or counting out the days to any kind of event. Mel and I are excited watching Matt and Rosie plan their wedding day – but it comes with stress... will there be enough days to sort everything out – even with months till the actual wedding – so much to do and yet so little time to do it!

As a child, have you ever played 'What time is it Mr wolf?' ... the game entailed sneaking up towards someone with their back turned (Mr Wolf) and asking 'what time is it Mr Wolf?' having to freeze when they suddenly turned. And a time was uttered – 'its 3 o'clock' says Mr wolf, before turning his back and we sneak up some more asking the question again. All is well until Mr Wolf turns and claims it is 'dinner time' at which point, everyone runs back to the start whilst Mr Wolf chases us in the hope of catching the slowest or in most cases the most daring. – ahh the fun of youth.

But seriously – have you ever considered that we play what time is it Mr Wolf in real life – but with dire consequences.

The reason I say this, is that the Bible tells us to be watchful and on guard on a number of occasions. One circumstance is Jesus telling us that HE will return one day and that day will signal the end of time as we know it. The scriptures I have in mind, although there are plenty of others, can be found at the end of Matthews gospel. In fact, in chapters 24 and 25 of the gospel, we have Jesus' final teaching to his disciples and it is concerning, being ready and watchful for His return.

In Chapter 24 Jesus issues this stark warning:

**Matthew 24:40-44 (NLT)**

***“Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left.***

***Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left.***

***“So, you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming.***

***Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into.***

***You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.***

We are told of the reality of Jesus coming again and the need for us to be mindful of this and to keep watch. In our 'What time is it Mr Wolf' game, the ones who were caught by the wolf were the ones who took risk and chance, the ones who tried to sneak up closest to the wolf before dinner time.

I think that a lot of people don't consider that time doesn't just end when we die, but that there is an eternity to be aware of. If we understood the consequences that this suggests for us, then I guess it would change the way we view the time we have available to us in this life.

For the Christian, these verses give hope and expectancy, because it heralds the start of eternity with God, something we long for and we were made for. However, for those who do not have a faith and trust in Jesus, these verses are far from comfortable. What will they left to? Well the context of these verses is that Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of God, therefore the ones who are taken, are taken into Gods presence – the place that mankind was originally shaped and created for.

For those that are left then, the inference is that they will not be in God's presence for eternity – but left behind. Whatever is left behind, when God represents, love,

mercy and safety will be the opposite at the very least – no love, no mercy and nowhere to hide – a true Representation of Hell as being fully cut off from any hope of rescue. This is why the Christian can live a life with hope and assurance. We live in the possession of the knowledge that we are rescued from what we deserve – hell. Now I can only go off what the Bible tells me that hell will be. A place reserved for the devil and those who have been deceived by him, which is also a place of eternity .... I would urge you to read Matthew 24 and 25, to get a handle on this.

So, our view of time and concept of it, are very important to grasp. If we live by seconds minutes and hours then we will be drawn into a restrictive understanding that will frame every other thought we might have. Eternity becomes hard to grasp because it is constrained by our limited understanding of time. If it doesn't fit into our limited view then it can't be real .... Can it? The Bible urges us to be watchful because no one knows the hour that Jesus will return, so our most amazingly engineered timepieces will not be of much help to us here! But more than that, it requires us to be ready.

But let's just return to our game of 'what time is it Mr wolf' for the last remaining minutes (see what I did there?) The game is fun because it introduces us to risk. Who can take the most risk and still escape without being caught? ... let's just pause and let that sink in.

Who can take the most risk without being caught?

Here then is the reality that we play with every day. We take risks with what we think we can get away with. We convince ourselves that we have all the time in the world – and it is only when we get a hard dose of reality that we might come to our senses. A faith in God, we are sometimes told, is a crutch for the weak, something to hold onto when we have been dealt a bad hand in life. It's for those who need a helping hand. Well, I am glad to report that I know plenty of examples from people who have life sorted out thank you very much, and yet they are still some of the most Godly, faithful people I know.

They have learnt the secret of such scriptures as:

"With minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming" found in 1 Pet. 1:13

In times of crisis, people may well turn to God as a last resort, after all, it is well known saying that there are 'no atheists on a crashing plane'

Maybe the current Covid pandemic, has made you rethink some of your values and status in life, maybe you are thinking about God for the first time as you listen or read this? Why not visit our church website and get in touch ([www.coachhousechurch.org](http://www.coachhousechurch.org))

I will leave you with this scripture from 1 Peter 5 v 6-10, which reminds us of the need to see eternity as the goal - What we go through now is tiny compared to the vastness of time without end and yet the simple act of humbling ourselves before God could make the difference for all time.

1 Peter 5:6-10 (NLT)

So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honour. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So, after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. All power to him forever! Amen.

Tick tock.... Tick tock.....



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