

On a day just like this day. A day of the week. A day on the calendar. The sun, the moon, and the stars, which for thousands of years have given light to the earth, will suddenly cease giving light and will fall from the heavens. And then the Lord Jesus Himself will come in the clouds with great power and glory, and every eye will see Him.

When that day comes, a day that will begin just as this day began in every way, everything on earth will cease, for the earth will have come to its end. The heavens above us, and the earth beneath our feet and all around us, will pass away with a roar.

And if Jesus had revealed to us when that day would come, you can be sure that each and everyone of us would have that day marked in red on our calendars. But He did not. And so we do not. And perhaps we wonder, why not?

We have Thanksgiving Day marked on our calendars. We have Christmas Day marked. We know that Thanksgiving Day is this coming Thursday, and that Christmas Day is one month after that. We plan for these days, and so we need to know when these days are coming. We don't make Thanksgiving plans on the day it arrives. Neither do we plan for Christmas on Christmas Day. How foolish that would be. We begin weeks, even months ahead to plan meals, bake goodies, shop for gifts, wrap gifts, decorate, and invite guests, or accept an invitation elsewhere.

Thanksgiving and Christmas come and go, and life continues as before. Yet when the Last Day comes, everything will cease. And so, how much more important for us to plan for that day than for upcoming holidays.

But how can we? For none of us have that day marked on our calendars. And so, here is what the wise virgins do. They mark every day on their calendars in red. We do not know the day when "*heaven and earth will pass away,*" and so we live as though each day that greets us is our last day.

This is how we keep awake, how we prepare and plan for the day that will come when all things cease. All things except for one thing. For although heaven and earth will pass away on a day just like this day, "*My words,*" says Jesus, "*will not pass away.*"

Is this statement comforting or is it threatening? It all depends. The one who rejects Jesus and does not receive His words has a judge. "*The word that I have spoken,*" says Jesus, "*will judge him on the Last Day.*" So yes, there is indeed a threat contained in Jesus' statement. Heaven and earth will not be our judge, nor anything in them, for they will all pass away. But Jesus' words will be the final judge, for they will not pass away. And those who dismiss His words now will be judged by them in the end. All their supposed good works will burn up and pass away with heaven and earth. And they will face their judge without anything or anyone to defend them.

When you and I are tempted to dismiss the words of Jesus, to ignore them, and live apart from them, we would do well to recall Jesus' statement: heaven and earth will pass away on a day that we do not know, by My words will not pass away.

Some, yes many, are threatened by this. But not you who love the words of Jesus. What a precious thing it is for you to hear Jesus' words regularly and faithfully, and His words to you are not a threat but are pure comfort.

And so, what a privilege and joy for me to remind you of some of Jesus' words which you know and dearly love. In John 6, "I am the bread of life...whoever comes to Me, I will never cast out." In John 8 to the woman caught in sin, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." In John 10, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." In John 11, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live." In John 14, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me. I will come again and will take you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also." In Luke 23, "Father, forgive them." And to the thief, "Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise." And in John 20, "Peace be with you."

All these words of Jesus will never pass away. They will stand by you now and on the Last Day. They are your comfort now and your sure defense when everything else does pass away. And so, in your hearts, mark these words of Jesus in red.

And friend, know this for certain, that all your days Jesus has marked in red. This is what your baptism means for you. Each and every day of your life He has marked in red, red with His own blood poured out for you on the cross. You are forgiven, my friend. That day on the calendar when you lusted, the day when you were greedy, the day you were hateful, when you lied, when you dismissed the words of Jesus...all those days, everyone of them, no matter how many and how awful they were, are all marked in red. Jesus' blood covers all your days. His blood covers you. He forgives you.

This is why you do not fear the day when heaven and earth will pass away. You know who is coming. The King of kings, the Judge of the living and the dead, yes, but also your Lord and your Savior, the One who loves you and forgives you. Jesus is the One who will come in the clouds with great power and glory. He will come to take you home with Him because in your baptism He has marked you, yes you, in red. Amen.