

Hope Is Being Ready

Matthew 24:36-44

Introduction

The only way we can look forward with **Hope** is to be ready for the coming of Christ. We must be vigilant, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour we do not expect. We must be vigilant, because the devil is the thief, seeking to break in and steal our faith before Christ returns. As Peter says, *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (**1 Peter 5:8**).

Home Security

Home security is big today. Jesus tells us how to be secure when it comes to our faith. But we may be tempted to think we can improve on it, like trusting in technology for home security. Technology is a good thing but can have drawbacks. It's good to get notifications on our phones if someone shows up at the door of the church. But it's another to be woken up at 3:40 AM to see a deer run by the front door. If we try to rely on ourselves to be ready, we'll be susceptible to false teachings or false prophets and be led astray *by every wind of doctrine* (**Ephesians 4:14**).

Real Security

Between Jesus, Peter and the church fathers, we can get a good idea of the tried and true security we can have for our soul.

Light

As we all know, **light** is a good deterrent to crime. Thieves don't like well-lit places. They like to be able to hide in the shadows. So does the devil. Peter talks about the *lamp of the prophetic Word*. We want to make sure the recesses of our hearts are lit by the Gospel. *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. ... I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you* (**Psalms 119:105, 11**).

Locks

From the **Incomplete Work on Matthew**, we read: *If you wish to be secure, install a bolt on your door, which is to say, put the law of the fear of God in your mouth so that you can say with the psalmist, “I will guard my ways that I might not sin with my tongue. I will put a guard at my mouth”* (**Psalms 39:1**).

Look Out

Of course, we've all heard the saying: *Locks were made to keep honest people out*. So, in addition to the lock of the **law of the fear of God**, we must be **vigilant**. We must guard the **ports of entry** into our souls. These are our **mouth, ears, eyes** and **mind**. It's not enough to refrain from evil. That only blocks the access of good spirits as well as bad. But we fill the **mouth with holy speech**, the **ears with pious sounds**, the **eyes with visions of the wondrous works of God** and the **mind with heavenly thoughts**. Or, as Paul says, *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,*

whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Philippians 4:8).

Means of Grace

We can do this by immersing ourselves in the **Means of Grace**. As we dwell in His **Word**, our minds are filled with heavenly thoughts and partaking of the **Sacrament** strengthens our faith, keeping us ready for His coming, whenever it is.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*
