

Watch, Therefore

Matthew 24–25

What We Found

- Jesus foretold the temple's fall, and it happened within a generation, in the year 70; many interpreters read “this generation” as pointing to that event. The close of the age he expressly left undated: no one knows the day or hour. Anyone selling a date contradicts the discourse itself.
- “Son of man” has an address: Daniel 7, where one like a son of man comes on the clouds to the Ancient of Days and receives everlasting dominion. The humble-sounding title was an enthronement claim hiding in plain sight.
- The waiting time is a stewardship: oil that cannot be borrowed, talents that must not be buried. Watch means become someone, and be found so doing.
- At the judgment, the King is found hidden in the least: hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned. As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. Six of the Church's corporal works of mercy come straight off this list; tradition adds a seventh, burying the dead, and the Church names seven spiritual works besides (CCC 2447).
- Both sheep and goats are surprised: no one was keeping a ledger. Salvation is grace from first to last, and the grace that saves transforms: the sheep are what grace looks like when it has been allowed to finish its work.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homily 50 on Matthew)

Do not adorn the altar with silks while Christ shivers naked outside. The same Lord who said “this is my body” also said “you did it to me”: he is honored at the altar and in the poor together, or dishonored in both.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Sermons on the Gospels)

The oil could not be borrowed because it is inward: no one can lend you their conscience, their charity, their readiness. The difference at midnight was not wakefulness but what each had become before the cry.

Voices of the Church: St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures)

We preach not one coming only but a second far more splendid: the Lord who was judged will come as Judge. The time between is given for mercy.

Live It This Week

- Choose one of the six works of mercy named in this scene and do it this week, in person where possible: the scene joins material help to personal presence; give what is needed, and where possible give it face to face.
- Pray each morning: Lord, let me recognize you today in the least, and not walk past.
- Set aside a few extra quiet minutes before next session: we will stand at the cross, and we will do it reverently.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 25:40 (RSV2CE): *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 26–27, slowly and prayerfully. Come quietly next week.

Catechism References

CCC 671–673 · CCC 1038–1041 · CCC 2447