

Message Summary

The world is full of problems. Big problems. As part of our daily lives, we face sickness, suffering, sorrow, natural disaster, poverty, economic inequality, greed, mismanagement, racism, political turmoil, and sin. Wars and rumors of wars (Mt. 24:6) haunt us as we go to bed, and financial stress and anxiety await us when we wake up. Divisions in family, hurt in friendship, and animosity toward complete strangers mark our human relationships. What is the solution to such chaos? Though we may seek human solutions, an honest assessment quickly reveals that these problems eclipse our ability to fix. They remind us that we need a greater solution, one that can only come from God: Christ's coming.

Those in Christ's day saw their greatest problem as Roman oppression, and thus the greatest solution as political freedom. In asking, "Where is the Kingdom of God?", they were looking for a physical king to follow. Jesus responds by teaching that the kingdom of God was in their midst (vv. 20-21), referring to Himself. Though Jesus boasted little in pedigree, family status, education, or finances, He nevertheless those who saw Him saw the very kingdom of God before them. The miracles they witnessed were glimpses to the solutions to the problems they faced. Christ's first coming was to "seek and save the lost" (Mk. 10:45). He came to build people through his earthly ministry, and no way was more important than laying down His life for sinners in His crucifixion and resurrection (v. 25). In the days of Noah, people were eating, drinking, and marrying as if they were invincible (vv. 26-27). The flood reminded them that their greatest problem, sin, lacked a solution apart from God. So also with Lot. Though God warned of His impending judgment against the city, Lot's wife still turned and looked back (vv. 28-32). She was distracted by things she was leaving behind, not looking forward to her eternal inheritance.

The solution for all our worldly problems is in Christ's second coming, when he comes to establish the new heavens and new earth once and for all. Consequently, Christ told the parable of the persistent widow "to the effect that they ought always the pray and not lose heart" (Lk. 18:1-8). Though the judge over a city was unrighteous, caring nothing for God or humans but only himself, yet he finally gave justice to a poor, helpless widow because she persistently came to him. If even an unrighteous judge can administer justice, how much more is our righteous and loving Judge in heaven willing to administer justice to those who cry to Him for justice in the midst of the world's problems. The only question is whether this righteous Judge will find the faith to petition Him in our hearts when he returns (v. 8).

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

Read Hebrews 12:13-16. How is Christ's second coming the ultimate solution to our problems? How does a focus on Christ's second coming strengthen our obedience now?

Why is it so tempting to devise human "solutions" to the overwhelming problems we face? What are some specific examples of how those solutions are inadequate to address our greatest needs?

Explain the paradox Jesus teaches in v. 33: "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it." How is Christ's coming Kingdom a call to lose our earthly lives?

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.

1. What sorts of worldly problems can be especially daunting for you? How is Christ's second coming the ultimate solution for those problems specifically?
2. Are you overwhelmed by such earthly problems, or are you eternally focused on Christ's second coming? How can you cultivate a more eternal perspective this week?
3. Does your hope amidst life's problems tend to be circumstantial or grounded in God's Biblical promises?
4. Like those in Lot's day, are you more concerned with "eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building" (v. 28) than with the kingdom of God?
5. Are you "waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Pt. 3:12) with eager anticipation, or do temporary worldly distractions placate your desire to see God's kingdom finally established?
6. Like the persistent widow, does your prayer life exhibit persistent and desperate cries to God as the only solution to life's worldly problems? How can you more faithfully cry out to God in prayer this week?

Prayer

- Pray for Our Church:
 - Thank God for providing the solution to all of life's problems in Christ's coming.
 - Pray that our church would avoid the temptation of Lot's wife, to look back at the earthly goods we leave behind, and press on towards the eternal kingdom that awaits us (cf. Phil. 3:12-16).
- Pray for Our Community:
 - Pray that our community would not be distracted by "eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building" (v. 28) but would face their overwhelming need for a solution outside of themselves in God.
 - Pray that CFC would use the overwhelming human problems with which our community is beset to preach Christ as the ultimate solution. Pray that many in the Gadsden area would see the futility of alleged earthly solutions and run to Christ instead.
- Pray for Our World:
 - Pray for the Lord to raise up many from CFC to preach this solution to all the world's problems to all the world, to every tribe and nation (Mt. 28:18-20).
 - Pray for many opportunities to minister to the international students coming to Gadsden this fall. Pray that they would see the futility of education, English, or American culture as final solutions to their problems. Pray that they would be driven toward Christ as the only right solution.