

“Teacher, when will this... happen?”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, 33 years ago, in 1983, over 100 million T.V. viewers watched the, made-for-T.V., movie called **“The Day After.”** It depicted what the City of Lawrence, Kansas, would look like... the day... **after** a nuclear attack. Just before the film began, a warning flashed on the TV screen, saying:

**“Because of the graphic portrayal of nuclear war, this film may be unsuitable for children.
Parental discretion is advised.”**

That warning was well given. For, during the next 128 mins., the movie showed shocking scenes of death and destruction. The script, too, was shocking & disturbing. All said and done, it made us realize that the possibility of a nuclear attack was far greater and far more devastating than we’d ever imagined.

The words and images of today’s Gospel, which I just read to you from St. Luke, are reminiscent of words and images of that film. Jesus portrays for us, graphically, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. For the Jews, such destruction was equivalent to the destruction of their world.

Precisely for this reason, the Church uses this Gospel passage as one of its readings, as we fast approach the liturgical year’s end... in 2 weeks, on November 27th. It **wants** us to reflect on the end of the world. It **wants** us to reflect on that moment when the world, as we know it, will pass away. It **wants** us to ask ourselves:

“How prepared ARE we for that moment when ‘IT’ (the end of the world) actually comes?”

So, ‘How prepared ARE we?’ you ask.

Well... I’m glad you asked that question!

So-o, let’s do this, together, right now. Let’s choose just one aspect of our Christian life to measure our preparedness. Let’s choose the most important one: **love**.

We now ask ourselves three questions about **love**:

How loving are our **thoughts**—right now in our life?

How loving are our **words**—right now in our life?

How loving are our **actions**—right now in our life?

1st, **our thoughts**. Consider just one facet of them. How **judgmental** are we in our thoughts about people? Do we tend to **set ourselves above** others? Do we tend to **pass judgment** on them—often unkindly and unfairly? A Peanuts cartoon shows Charlie Brown and Linus standing side by side. Charlie’s looking at a drawing of a man that Linus has just made. Charlie says to Linus:

I see you have drawn the man with his hands behind his back. That shows that you are insecure.”

Linus replies:

“I didn’t put his hands behind his back because I am insecure. I did it because... I can’t draw hands!”

That story makes us ask ourselves:

“Do we tend to read into situations? Do we tend to judge others recklessly, as Charlie did in that cartoon?”

2nd **our words/speech.** Again, we consider just one aspect of our words or speech... & I'm not talking about vocabulary. Do we use our speech to talk about the faults of others? Do we gossip about others? Have you heard the one about the 3 clergymen... a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, and a Jewish rabbi—all from the same, small town, who went on a retreat together? One night they shared with each other one of their most embarrassing 'secrets.' The Catholic priest said: **"I must tell you both... I've been drinking a bit lately."** The Jewish rabbi said: **"And I must tell you both... I have been gambling a bit lately."** The Protestant minister said: **"I must tell you both that I couldn't keep a secret if my life depended on it. I am an incurable, obsessive gossip"!**

And that brings us to our **3rd** point: **our actions.** Again, we consider only one aspect of them—the one the Gospel says is the most important of all: helping others in need. Some years ago, 9 physically challenged (*handicapped*) people successfully climbed Mt. Rainier in Washington State. One of the climbers had an artificial leg; one was an epileptic; 2 were deaf and 5 were blind. In spite of their 'challenges', these 9 people negotiated the 14,000-foot mountain, up & down, without incident.

When asked about this amazing feat, one of the blind men said: **"We got a lot of help from one another."**

That story makes us ask ourselves, **"How much are we 'helping one another' in our mutual effort to climb the Mountain of Life... that leads to God and heaven?"**

And so, we return to our original question:

How prepared are **we** to meet Jesus at the end of the world **OR** at the end of our own lives--whichever comes 1st?

How prepared are we to meet him, right now, in just 3 areas of our life?

1st, our thoughts. Do we judge other people recklessly?

2nd, our words. Do we talk unkindly about others?

3rd, our actions. Do we turn our back on people in need?

If we aren't doing too well in these areas right now, what makes us think we will do any better in the future? Of course, that's up to each one of us, individually.

I close with this prayer.

Lord, give us a mind...
that will think thoughts that are kind and fair.
Give us lips...
that will speak words that are true and charitable.
Give us hands...
that will do deeds that are molded after the ones you did for people in your own lifetime.

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you...

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.