**What if Jesus Doesn’t Come Back? By Thailer Jimerson**

I was trying to get some homework done, but I kept peering over my left shoulder to distract myself with a spot of window gazing. Sunlight was waning over the horizon like it was ducking under the world’s table. My bulky cellphone rattled; it was my grandfather.

He called, as he usually did, every week to check up on me: to see how work at Panera Bread was going, to receive updates on teenage love life, and to discuss my growing interest in guitar. But, mostly, he called to talk about the Lord. Like all grandfathers, he was skilled at forgetting which Bible (or general) stories he’d already told, which meant every time he said them it was like he was describing it for the very first time. All the same words, all the same turns of phrase, all the same pauses and plot coagulators. And I was a good listener. Besides that one night where I fell asleep on him while on the phone - I never interrupted, never brushed him off, never finished his lines.

I miss his stories.

But there was one line weaved in almost every discussion I had with him:

“Thailer-man, things are gettin’ real bad right now. I’d not be surprised if, in my lifetime, Jesus Christ comes back. He’s gon’ do it.”

I used to believe him. I, too, used to think that history was sort of climaxing in rampant wickedness until the world was going to explode like a volcano; that Jesus’s return in our lifetime was only inevitable.

However, history tells a different story. Some ask Have things ever been as bad as they are now? But it might be an equally fair question to ask Have things, statistically, ever been this good? A great many injustices have been rectified, and so many humanitarian projects have contributed to decreasing rates of domestic abuse, poverty, illiteracy, etc. I guess it depends on your perspective, but things are necessarily any worse today than they’ve been in the past.

(Pause. I think I should soothe your furrowed brows now by stating that I don’t actually mean Jesus is never going to come back. Of course, I believe he’s coming back. I’m just saying he might not actually come back in our lifetimes. There. Does that alleviate your concerns with my article title? Now, let me go on to say that we’re always to live as if the very next cloud we see could be the one that marks his arrival. **Luke 12.35-40** states we’re ever to be ready, waiting and watching. But it is just as likely that he will not arrive in our lifetime.)

Almost every Christian who has ever lived thought what my Papa thought. There’s even evidence in the New Testament that the first century Christians thought Jesus would return as soon as their lifetimes (**1 Thessalonians 4.15-17; 2 Timothy 2.18**). But let’s just take a little stroll through history to witness some events that might have marked a good arrival date for the Lord: Jesus didn’t return when Christians were fed to the lions in the Coliseum; Jesus didn’t return for the monks ravaged by barbarian Vikings; Jesus didn’t return for the Crusades; Jesus didn’t return for Protestants tortured at Catholic stakes; Jesus didn’t return during the Black Plague; Jesus didn’t return during the Great War or to rectify the Holocaust; Jesus didn’t return to stop 9/11.

How many Christians thought during those periods that this was the time Jesus would arrive? Every single one of them: wrong.

Here’s a thought: maybe “watching and waiting” – being ready for the Lord’s return – doesn’t mean that we’re to sit on our hands while the world burns, content to pray for Jesus to bring his giant fire extinguisher.

Maybe instead of waiting for Jesus’ return passively, we should await his return actively. Maybe we should believe his promise in **John 14.12** that we’ll do even greater works than he did. Maybe we should get busy with kingdom work, injecting the gospel into one individual soul at a time, trying to fight the fire that threatens to consume God’s good creation.

Maybe we should be busy obeying. If we’re doing this, Jesus will find us precisely as he wants us when he does decide to descend with a shout of triumph.

And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age.”

**Matthew 28.18-20**

**Schedule of Messages:**

March 10th – Why Does He Eat With Sinners? Mark 2.13-22

March 17th - Why Does He Break the Sabbath? Mark 2.23 – 3.6

March 24th – Guest Speaker

March 31st – Who Is My Mother Or My Brothers? Mark 3.20-35

**Memory Scripture:**

*Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."*

(**John 18.37**)