

The Gospel of Hope for the World in Despair

Matthew 24: 4-14

4 “And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you dare not be alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Discussion Questions

Dr. Kuzmic said that we were “not merely the community of the redeemed, but the redeemed community on mission.” He followed that up by saying that we were “Not God’s waiting room for the hereafter, but God’s agents of transformation in the world.”

1. What is the danger of viewing ourselves only as “the community of the redeemed”? What social and spiritual dangers does that open us up to?
2. What qualities of a community are necessary if a community is going to be “the redeemed community on mission” together in transforming the world?

Dr. Kuzmic stated that we must answer two key questions: “Where am I going?” and “Where is history going?” He noted that Matthew 24:6-12 reads much like a modern newspaper describing the dire situation of our world. In responding, he stated that we must avoid the poles of naïve optimism and cynical pessimism by standing on the foundation of Biblical Realism. This is a worldview that has both a solid understanding of depravity and an accurate understanding of redemption.

3. When do you tend to camp out in one of the extremes of naïve optimism or cynical pessimism? To what extent is this simply personality and to what extent is it more of a spiritual condition or a worldview?
4. How would you describe Biblical Realism? How does that affect the way we view the two poles? What is necessary in order to hold on to that focus?

Augustine said “Hope has two beautiful daughters, anger and courage, Holy indignation at the way things are, and courage to act and change something.” Kuzmic went on to say that Hope is energy from the future from the Kingdom of God to act in the present with faith, hope, and love to change the world.

5. How do you see the relationship between hope and holy anger? Aren't they contradictory?

6. How does hope fuel courage? What prevents you from experiencing the connection between hope and courage? In other words, when do you lack courage, and how could a deeper understanding of hope give you more courage?

“Being engaged in world missions means being a world changer.”

7. What spot on the world might God be calling you to change this week, this year, with the energy from the future available to you through the Kingdom of God?