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SERMON TITLE If You Love the Lord, part 8

SERIES If you love the Lord

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KEY SCRIPTURE Matthew 24

SYNOPSIS Watch out!

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ If You Love the Lord

John 14:15

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

True love will be shown and, to demonstrate your love for the Lord, you will obey him.

☞ Today, we will be in **Matthew 24**...

Matthew 24:4-5

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many.

☞ Don't be Deceived

Watch out = beware – this is a strong warning.

Deceives you = mislead; lead into error; lead away from the truth

The disciples wanted to know about the time when Jesus would return and what the signs would be. In this chapter and the next, Jesus spends considerable time telling us what types of signs would indicate his soon return... Signs in nature, signs in society, signs in technology, signs in politics, signs in Israel, and even spiritual signs. We could talk a long time about all these and how they are becoming more and more typical of the times in which we are living. But, that's not our subject matter today.

Before Jesus even begins describing the last days, he gives a warning – don't be deceived! This is the primary concern of Jesus and the New Testament writers when discussing the end times. Apparently, they were all concerned that even disciples of Christ could be deceived at the end of the age.

Jesus warns us several times in the Gospels.

Paul warns us in Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Timothy.

Peter warns us in his books.

John warns us too.

☞ They all say there will be **false teachers, false prophets, and liars**, especially as we near the return of Christ. In Colossians 2:4 Paul warns there will be some with **fine-sounding arguments** that could lead us astray.



There's a lot of false teaching today, which sounds good on the surface, but is not really true and in line with God's Word. For instance, people love to emphasize the teaching of Jesus on love, but they take it beyond what Jesus actually taught and make it out to mean that everything is acceptable and okay with the Lord. But, that doesn't even make sense. You love your kids, but you realize that some things are not good for them, so you tell them "no."

☞ In Romans 16:18 Paul warns about **smooth talk and flattery**, which can easily deceive. When someone is buttering you up, you better know there's a reason for it. Even back in Obadiah, he talked about how **our own pride** can deceive us. So, watch out.

Then, in 1 John 4:1, John admonishes us to **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God. How ☞ do you do that? **Compare everything to the Word of God**. Don't be deceived.

The closer we get to the end, the more the Devil will try to deceive.

Christian Cheong... There will be an increase in the works of deception. Satan will use all his means to deceive the world. Anyone can be deceived.

If there are false christs out to cheat us, then we must better know the true Christ. When the FBI trains its agents to identify counterfeit money, they are not required to study fake bills. Instead they undergo a thorough study of genuine currency – how it looks, how it feels. One agent said, "We get to know the real thing so well, so thoroughly, that it's easy to spot the fake."

If the devil is working very hard to deceive, then we must work hard at learning the Word of God. Satan's strategy has not changed. The first thing he did to Adam and Eve was deceive them. The first thing he did to Jesus when He started His ministry was try to deceive Him in the wilderness. Satan has not retired.

He uses three steps to deceive us:

☞ (1) **Dispute God's Word**. Genesis 3:1... "Did God really say?" He suggested to Eve that somehow, she had misunderstood what God meant. You think you know God's Word, and then someone comes and says that there is a new interpretation to what God has said. You're confused. And then you might say, "Now, I'm not sure I know what the Bible says." Don't be deceived.

☞ (2) **Deny God's Word**. The road from doubt to denial is very short. If you don't take care, you'll end up denying the Word. Satan contradicts the Word of God. In Genesis 3:4 he says to Eve, "You will not surely die." Don't be deceived.



Dr. David Jeremiah describes it very well... “every time you try to find an interpretation of a Scripture that will permit you to do something you know is wrong – every time you give a little ground to the devil and lose some ground from the Word of God – it isn’t long until Satan drives a truck through that opening and dumps a load of stinking garbage in your life.”

☞ (3) **Displace God’s Word.** In Genesis 3:5 Satan says, “For God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” In other words, go ahead, do what you think is good. It is no longer important what God thinks. Our world is in such a state today. Little by little the idea of absolute truth is being eroded out of our life. Don’t be deceived.

“Don’t be deceived” is Jesus’ first warning, and we must take it to heart. Only the Word of God can give us the strength we need. Already the spirit of deception is rampant in our world today. The only sure way to stay strong in a deceptive world is to know the Scripture and obey what God tells us. So study the Word of God diligently. Don’t be deceived.

☞ **Be Ready**

Matthew 24:42-44

“Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Cf. Matthew 25:13; 26:41

You never know when your time is up, nor when the world may come to an end. Therefore, Jesus commands us to always be ready to go! He is coming soon.

Keep watch = be vigilant; be alert; wake up

Be ready = be prepared

He gives a list of signs of the times, but he isn’t saying we are to focus on the signs. He’s saying those are reminders that he is coming soon, so be ready. Always be ready! In fact, he actually says that even though there will be plenty of signs, he will still return unexpectedly. Surprise! You ☞ just have to be ready. And, if you’re noticing signs abounding, **don’t be alarmed** (v.6).

He compares the timing of his return to the timing of the flood in Noah’s day. Two things stand out about that. 1) there was overwhelming evil pervading the world, and it’s the same today. 2)



people were still just going about normal, everyday life, oblivious to the warnings. Sound familiar? Jesus is coming soon and whether it's today or years from now, we must be ready!

In 1 Thessalonians 5, when Paul was talking about the very last days, he tells us how to be ready. He says:

☞ **Be alert.** There's a lot of deception going on, so watch out. Don't be deceived.

☞ **Be self-controlled.** There's a lot of misleading and temptation going on, so be ready.

☞ **Encourage each other.** Jesus is coming soon! For the believer, that's fantastic news! Also, encourage each other about being ready and avoiding deception. We are in this together.

☞ **Don't be deceived! Be ready!**