



#1 In the What's Next Series What If..... I Knew the Future.

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Standing on the Temple Steps

Matthew 24 opens with a scene that feels very familiar.

The disciples are walking out of Jerusalem, eyes lifted, admiring the massive stones and stunning architecture of the temple. It represented security, stability, permanence—*this will always be here*.

Matthew 24:1–2

“Do you see all these things?” Jesus asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

In a moment, Jesus shatters their sense of certainty.

It's the same feeling we get when something we assumed was solid suddenly isn't—

- a job disappears,
- a diagnosis comes,
- a relationship breaks,
- a plan falls apart.

We live in a world where the future feels increasingly unpredictable.

So the question beneath this passage isn't really *When will the end come?* It's this:

How do you live well when you don't know what's coming next?

I. Looking Ahead Without Losing Balance

Matthew 24:3

“Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

The disciples want a timeline.
Jesus gives them a posture.

We all approach the future differently:

- Some avoid it.
- Some obsess over it.
- Some over-plan.
- Some just drift and hope for the best.

But Jesus redirects the conversation from *prediction* to *preparation*.

A Whole-Life Faith

God didn't create you as a single-layer being. He created you as a **whole person**.

Think of life like a wheel—not a pie.
If one section is neglected, the whole thing wobbles.

Key Areas God Designed You to Steward:

- Spiritual
- Family
- Social
- Physical
- Work / Calling

When one is ignored, imbalance follows.

A. Spiritual Alignment Comes First

Matthew 22:37 – Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

When our goals contradict our convictions, something fractures inside us.

- We lose clarity.
- We lose joy.
- We lose spiritual momentum.

A misaligned life is exhausting.

B. Relationships Are Not Optional

God designed us for connection.

When life becomes *all grind and no grace*:

- Friendships fade.
- Families drift.
- Regret shows up later.

No one reaches the end of life wishing they had sent more emails.

C. Your Body Matters to God

1 Corinthians 6:19

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

God no longer dwells behind curtains and pillars—He dwells *in you*.

Which means your body is the chosen vessel of God's potential in this world.

You only get one body on this side of eternity.

- Burn it out, and ministry suffers.
- Ignore rest, and joy disappears.
- Neglect health, and service becomes harder.

Jesus said it best:

“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matt. 26:41)

D. We Are Not God.....

One of the most freeing truths of Scripture is also one of the hardest to accept: **this world does not rest on your shoulders.**

- You are not responsible for holding everything together.
- You are not expected to foresee every outcome.
- You are not required to get everything right.

- You will fail.
- You will misstep.
- You will make decisions you wish you could redo.

God is still sovereign.

That truth is not an excuse for carelessness—it is an invitation to humility and trust.

- God has never confused your limitations with His ability.
- He is not threatened by our weakness, nor surprised by our uncertainty.

Psalm 32:8

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”*

Notice the promise: God does not hand us a map and send us on our way. He walks with us. He teaches. He instructs. He watches over us with care.

Faith, then, is not knowing the whole path ahead. It is trusting the Guide who knows it completely.

- And when we finally release the burden of trying to be God, we discover the peace of letting God be God.
- Faith isn't knowing the whole path—it's trusting the Guide.

II. Preparing for What's Next

Jesus shifts from warning to illustration.

In **Matthew 25**, Jesus tells the **Parable of the Ten Virgins**—a story not about predicting the future, but about being prepared for it.

- All ten were invited.
- All ten were waiting.
- All ten expected the groom to arrive.

But when the moment finally came, the story divided them in two.

- **Five were ready.**
- **Five assumed they had time.**

The difference wasn't intelligence, opportunity, or effort in the moment. It was preparation.

1. They all slept.
2. They all heard the midnight cry.
3. They all woke up at the same moment.

But only some were ready **when it mattered most**.

That's why Scripture repeatedly warns us against living on borrowed assumptions:

Proverbs 27:1

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.”

The issue in the parable isn't that the foolish bridesmaids were careless—it's that they were **confident they could prepare later**. They assumed tomorrow would give them what today required.

And Jesus makes this clear:

- **Preparation isn't panic.**
- It isn't fear-driven anxiety or spiritual urgency fueled by dread.

Preparation is faithfulness over time.

- Quiet obedience.
- Daily trust.
- A life steadily shaped by walking with God.

Because when the moment comes, we don't rely on what we *meant* to do—we rely on what we've already practiced.

III. Timeless Principles for Living Ready

1. We Prepare Through Prayer

Preparation begins in stillness, not strategy.

Colossians 1:9–12

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you[b] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Prayer produces:

- Endurance when life is hard
- Patience when answers are slow

- Joy when circumstances don't change
- Gratitude even before results come

Prayer doesn't always change the future—sometimes it changes *us* for the future.

2. We Prepare by Holding on to Timeless Truth

Colossians 2:7-8

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits[a] of the world, and not according to Christ.

Not every new idea is a good idea.

- Culture shifts.
- Trends fade.
- Truth remains.

Paul warned the Colossians because they were pursuing spiritual shortcuts—fast-food faith instead of deep-rooted truth.

Real preparation requires:

- Intaking Scripture
- Pausing for Reflection
- Cultivating Discernment

No substitutes.

3. We Prepare by Knowing Ourselves

Psalm 139:23–24

*Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Spiritual maturity requires honest self-examination.

Growth doesn't happen accidentally—it happens intentionally.

When peace rules the heart (Col. 3:15), we become steady, confident, and relationally healthy.

As Sun Tzu observed:

“If you know yourself and the enemy, you need not fear.”

Unexamined faith is vulnerable faith.

4. We Remember the Ultimate Authority

Colossians 3:23–24

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

You don't work for applause.

You don't live for approval.

You serve Christ.

When Jesus is the authority:

- Fear loses power.
- Faith gains strength.
- Obedience becomes joy.

Conclusion:

Ready for Whatever Comes Next

Matthew 25:13

“Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

The future may bring:

- Caves
- Storms
- Giants
- Graves
- Chains

But God has always carried His people *through*:

- the Red Sea,
- the wilderness,
- the valley,
- the deep waters.

The question isn't what comes next.

The question is whether you're prepared to trust God when it does.

Because when you are ready— whatever comes next becomes another place where God proves faithful.