

When Heaven Breaks in

Stay Awake: Heaven breaks in unexpectedly – Matthew 24:36-44

Welcome

Can you remember a time when something happened completely out the blue that stopped you in your tracks and took you by surprise?

Worship

Listen to (and sing along if you would like to) - O Holy Night

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yPhAKvQNNE>

Word

Read Matthew 24:36-44

Q – What happens in this passage?

- What? Who? Where? When? how?
- What is the context of the events?
- What is said?

Q - What does this passage tells us about Jesus?

About his character? His mission? His relationship to us? His power?

Q – What does this passage demand of us?

If prompts are needed – these are taken from the sermon outline

- *Audit your priorities: if Christ came today, what would you want unfinished business to look like?*
- *Practice daily readiness through prayer and holiness.*
- *Keep eternity in view when making decisions this week.*

And – if Jesus can come back at any time – are there conversations we want to have this week with friends/family/colleagues? Are there invites we could be making to Christmas events that will point them to Jesus?

Witness

Pray for our mission partner GLO – you could take a picture of the prayer points and share them on your whatsapp?

Pray for our partners:

- Wisdom and discernment for the leader of each partner organisation
- For the employees that work under them, and all the families supported by each of these jobs
- For their individual ministries and projects, ranging from empowering people out of poverty to educating church leaders to street children projects.

For the nation of **Burundi**:

- Lift up the current cost of living crisis, impacted the poorest people most dramatically.
- For the president, 'Neva', and his governing officials. That they would be given strength as they carry out their duties.
- For the many living in poverty across the nation, particularly in rural communities.

For **GLO's** operations outside of Burundi:

- Simon, as international director and those working in our UK and US offices.
- For all our generous and faithful supporters who give so much in prayer and finances.
- That our fundraising efforts would continue to enable the vital work of our partners in Burundi.

When Heaven Breaks in

Stay Awake: Clear the way – heaven breaks in demanding change
Matthew 3:1-12

Welcome

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase 'Prepare the way for the Lord?'

Worship

Listen to (and sing along if you would like to) - Waymaker – Leeland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29lxnsqOkmQ>

Word

Read Matthew 23:1-12

Q – What happens in this passage?

- What? Who? Where? When? how?
- What is the context of the events?
- What is said?

Q - What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

About his character? His mission? His relationship to us? His power?

Q – What does this passage demand of us?

Prompts if needed:

- What does true repentance look like — not just saying sorry, but actually 'bearing fruit'. True repentance is urgent because The Kingdom is near (v2, 7-10)
- God's word often comes from unexpected places – are we listening. (v.1-3).

- Identify areas of life that need turning around before Christ.
- Don't settle for religious appearance; seek real transformation.
- To try and seek and welcome God's refining work rather than resist it – this might mean sitting uncomfortable with something that needs to change.

Witness

Pray for the Open Doors Campaign – Arise Africa - specific prayer points are below

- Open Doors estimates that, of the 34.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa who are displaced by violence and conflict, at least 16.2 million are Christians, with many driven from their homes because of their faith in Jesus. This growing crisis has led to food insecurity, trauma and desperation. Pray for provision, healing and comfort for our displaced family.
- Christian men are often killed to destroy livelihoods and stifle the population growth of Christians. The pressure on widows is immense, as they must find work and take sole care of children – all whilst grieving. Pray that 'the father to the fatherless, a defender of widows' (Psalm 68:5) will comfort families and be their provider.
- The violence facing Christians has had a catastrophic impact on the presence of churches in communities. Many church buildings have been destroyed, whilst others lie empty because believers have fled. Even where churches are available, many are fearful to attend. Pray for the safe rebuilding and reopening of churches throughout the region – cities built on hills that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14).

When Heaven Breaks in

Recognise the King: Heaven breaks in quietly

Welcome

Have you ever had a moment when you expected God to work one way, but He worked differently?

Worship

Listen to (and sing along if you would like to) - O Come to the Altar – Elevation Worship

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpfuKKH_SCE&list=RDOpfuKKH_SC_E&start_radio=1

Word

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Some suggestions for this:

- John's questions reveal human uncertainty and doubt – it is a given that we might doubt or be uncertain especially when things happen that we can't explain – so we bring this honestly before God and ask him the questions and share our hearts.
- Look for God's kingdom in small, everyday acts of love and healing.
- Trust that God's ways may not match your expectations, but they are still at work – how do we lean into this and actually do it?
- "Whoever is least is the greatest" - how might this challenge how we see others and or even perceive ourselves?

Witness

Pray for our mission Partner Martin Gordon in Goma

- For our 32 theology students, that they all complete their studies, and graduate ready and willing to work as evangelists.
- For our almost 1000 teachers across the diocese, and our school chaplains, that they would serve the pupils well
- That more of our schools can be funded by the government so that we can provide a better-quality education
- For peace in eastern DRC