

Sermon – August 7, 2022

Pastor Dan Hollis

Luke 12:35-40

Once upon a time, in a place called Smallville, Kansas, two farmers named John and Martha Kent were struggling with the fact that they couldn't have a child, even though that was everything they wanted in this world. And one fateful day, a *meteor* crashed in a cornfield outside Smallville, and what John and Martha found in the crater... was a baby boy, who would one day grow up to be known as "Superman."

For John and Martha Kent that baby was a blessing, a miracle, an answer to their prayers and a gift that never stopped giving. But it was also a duty—that day they were given the responsibility to raise that amazing child into a good, selfless, loving man who could go on to use his powers to save *countless* lives and inspire countless more.

When *something* spectacular showed up on their doorsteps, they proved themselves more than ready for it—an example we should all live up to.

Let us pray: Gracious God, may we always be prepared for the spectacular to show up in *our* lives. Help us make ourselves ready for those days when your Spirit alights upon our hearts... and may it do so *now*, as we contemplate words of Scripture and seek to determine your role in our lives. Amen.

There are a few things that most Christians believe are *true* about God. There are a lot *more* things about God that they *disagree* about, but there are at least a couple that are pretty solid across the board. *Three* of those are easy to remember because they follow the same format—you could call them "the three omnis." God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. *Omnipotent* means all-powerful, *omniscient* means all-knowing, and *omnipresent* means God is everywhere. In every breath of air we take and in every place we go, God is there.

These three characteristics of God are a source of *comfort* to me. There's *nothing* that can cut me off from the love and care of God—not my own mistakes, not the actions of others, and not even death itself.

But they can also be a source of *discomfort*, too, can't they?

Who here has ever seen the movie "The Truman Show," with Jim Carrey? It's one of my favorite movies of all time. Jim Carrey plays a character who from the moment of his birth is being watched by hidden cameras, and *broadcast* as Reality TV to the whole world. His entire life—from the town he lived in to the other people who lived *in* it—were fake: actors and set dressing. There was never a moment he *wasn't* being watched; the cameras were always pointed at him, and he was always "on," even if he didn't know it.

There was even a *god*-like figure for this TV world—Ed Harris played "the director," who worked in a control room high above the town, fed the actors their lines, and

coordinated the events happening in the main character's life, all for the worldwide audience watching at home.

I first saw The Truman Show at a young, impressionable age, and between The Truman Show and Christianity, I developed a real *complex* for a little while there. Imagine as a kid thinking on one hand, "What if *my* life is like the Truman Show? What if there's a director and an audience secretly watching *me* every moment of *my* life?" and on the other hand thinking, "*God* is watching me every moment of my life; everywhere I go, God is *standing* in the room with me *staring* at me and hearing *every* thought that comes to my mind—even *this* one!" All of a sudden, omniscience and omnipresence becomes a really discomfoting idea.

Imagine going through puberty, with all the *embarrassing* changes and thoughts and actions that come with it, believing *all* the while that God is *in* the room standing *right* next to you.

It can be a comfort to know that God is watching over you when you're facing a difficult time or undertaking a risky challenge, but there are times when God watching over you is the *last* thing you want.

There are some things *nobody* should have to see, not even God. You want God sitting there watching you have *diarrhea*? Come on. And frankly, I'd imagine *God* doesn't have much interest in staring deep into your toilet bowl *either*.

I like to think that if you *need* time alone—even from *God*—God cares about you enough to let you have that. If nothing else than to keep you from going insane.

My point is, God *will* be there when you call because God is everywhere and in everything; it's the same reason God *knows* your struggles and your joys and *loves* you every single day—but there's a *difference* between the *everyday* love and stability and *accessibility* of the omnipresent God... and those moments when God *brings* the full force of God's focus and attention and power to bear on *you* and you alone.

The moments when God shows up.

That's what I see when I read today's Scripture. Sure, there's a conversation to be had on what different Christians believe about a "Second Coming" of Jesus upon the Earth, but *that's* a *specific* example of God "showing up." I'm talking about *all* of them.

*All* of the moments to come in *each* of our lives when God's presence and power and attention arrives at our doorstep and comes knocking, just for you. When God has a *message* for you or a *task* for you or an *opportunity* for you. When God needs you to *understand* something, when God needs you to *feel* something, *and* when God needs you to *do* something.

“But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

We can't predict those moments that Christ will appear in our midst, or that the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts. We can't *predict* those moments that *God* shows up, any more than we can predict a sudden bout of diarrhea! But show up God will, with all God's presence and *complete* attention, in *your* life... and it certainly won't be the *last* time. And so...

“Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks.”

You don't have to be embarrassed and full of paranoia and self-loathing—like teenage-*me* was—even *knowing* that God is everywhere.

We just have to make ourselves *ready* so that when God *chooses* to *bring* the *full* force of God's *attention* to us, we will *not* be found wanting.

We live on the Maine seacoast; do you have a hurricane evacuation plan? Are you *ready* to drop everything—to throw the dog into the car, and drive to Berwick or wherever—when the sirens go off and the waves start knocking at your door? *That's* how ready we should be, for God's omnipresence to go from being *transcendent*... to being *immanent*. From being gentle and passive... to being *active* and *urgent* and on your heart.

Because when God shows up—when the Spirit arrives in your heart like a meteor in a Kansas cornfield—it's either because God has *need* of you, God has something *for* you... or very likely both. Either there's something that needs to be done *for* God, or something God wants to do *for* *you*... or very likely both.

So let us make ourselves ready. Let us open our eyes and our hearts to *feel* the presence of God all around us. Let us prick up our ears for those times when God starts doing something *different*. And let us be *sure* that when God comes calling, we are prepared to *act*. May we never miss a blessing God brings to our doorstep. And may we never fall short when God asks us to drop everything, and do something *good*. Thanks be to God. Amen.