

Dark Days, Double Dose

Message Notes

Series intro

Letter from beginning of the year:

*Happy New Year! As we step into 2024, I find myself carrying two powerful words in my spirit: **faithful and focused**. These are not just words; they are a call to action, a divine guidance for the year ahead. As we navigate the complexities of our world, reminiscent of the chaotic seas described by Daniel in the Scriptures, let us remember that amidst the turmoil, our strength lies in remaining steadfast in our faith and resolute in our purpose.*

Faithful: I encourage each of us to embody faithfulness in all aspects of our lives. This year may present challenges that tempt us to let go of our commitments and lose sight of the mission God has placed before us, but remember the importance of promise for those that remain faithful. On this first day of the year, choose in your heart that this will be a year of faithfulness.

Focused: Let us also be focused, with our eyes firmly fixed on the mission God has entrusted to us. The stakes are high, as the souls of many hang in the balance. In the face of numerous distractions and the brevity of time, let us concentrate on what truly matters, dedicating ourselves to the tasks that deserve our utmost attention. Let's focus on the King, and His Kingdom.

Sermon intro:

- Today we're going to start on the first word FAITHFULNESS
 - In the Old Testament - Pillar, Rock, Foundation, Anchor, Fortress, Shield, Rock
 - Kids trying to push me over but me not budging
- New Testament
 - Matthew 25:21 (NLT) — 21 “The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

Passage

Matthew 25:1–14 (NLT) — 1 “Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 The five who were foolish didn’t take enough olive oil for their lamps, 4 but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. 5 When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. 6 “At midnight they

were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!' 7 "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8 Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.' 10 "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. 11 Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' 12 "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!' 13 "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return. 14 "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone.

Contextual thoughts:

- **kee-doo-SHEEN - Sanctify**
- **nee-soo-EEN - Lift up, elevate**

Points

1. **Dark Days**

1. Dark days are DEGENERATE
 1. Most violent crimes happen at night
 2. Jesus always compared evil with darkness
 3. What we saw happen at the opening of the Olympics
 1. Drag Queens taking the Lord's Supper
2. Dark days are CONFUSING
 1. Getting lost in a hotel room and couldn't get out
 2. These days are confusing
 3. We need REVELATION AND DISCERNMENT
3. Dark days are LONG
 1. Up in Sweden the nights last almost 24 hours
 2. My brother went camping out one time and had the most miserable night and thought it was over, when he woke up, it was only 11 o'clock
4. Dark days are SLEEPY
 1. Here's the point, it's easy to let your guard down and become complacent. We are required to STAY AWAKE, STAY ON FIRE!

2. **Double Dosage**

1. You're going to need a double dose
2. Going to Bucces and getting the 52 oz for 10 cents more!
3. Holy Spirit
 1. Ephesians 5:18 (NLT) — 18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,
4. Prayer

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 - "Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
2. Ephesians 6:18 - "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."
3. Colossians 4:2 - "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."
4. Romans 12:12 - "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."
5. Luke 21:36 - "Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."
6. Philippians 4:6-7 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

5. Word

1. Matthew 4:4 (NLT) — 4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

3. Definite Division

1. Faithfulness separates
2. The wheat from the chaff - with picture
3. The falsely saved and the truly saved
4. The wicked and the righteous

Altar:

- If you're lamp is growing dim