

I've Heard That Before

Study Guide

Summary

This sermon, titled "I've Heard That Before," explores the theme of waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a belief that is central to Seventh-day Adventist identity. Pastor Chris opens with a heartfelt story about a faithful deacon who longed to see Jesus return, and uses the relatable frustration of waiting at a baggage carousel to illustrate how our perception of time shapes our patience. Drawing from Acts 1, 2 Peter 3, and Matthew 24, the sermon reminds believers that no one knows the day or hour of Christ's return, but that God's apparent delay is rooted in His patience and desire for all people to come to repentance.

Pastor Chris also addresses the reality of scoffers, both external critics and our own doubting thoughts, and offers practical wisdom for responding with calm, humility, and love rather than anger or defensiveness. The Adventist movement's origins in the Great Disappointment of 1844 are briefly recounted to show that even sincere believers can misread timing, yet the promise of Christ's return remains unshaken. Using the image of a check that never expires, the sermon encourages the congregation to trust God's timing, stay rooted in Scripture and community, and press forward with patience and purpose while waiting for Jesus.

Key Verses

- Acts 1:6-8
- Acts 1:9-11
- 2 Peter 3:1-9
- Matthew 24:36-44

- James 5:7-8

Questions

1. Pastor Chris described a faithful deacon who had been a lifelong Adventist and sincerely asked, 'When is Jesus going to return?' Have you ever felt that same longing or frustration? How did you work through it?
2. In Acts 1:7-8, Jesus tells His disciples it is not for them to know the times or dates, but that they will receive power to be His witnesses. What does it look like practically to shift our focus from 'when' to 'what am I doing while I wait'?
3. 2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV) reminds us that 'with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.' How does understanding that God's sense of time is different from ours change the way you think about unanswered prayers or delayed promises?
4. Pastor Chris mentioned that God's patience in delaying Christ's return is connected to His desire that no one perish. How does that perspective change the way you feel about the wait, and does it motivate you to share your faith with others?
5. The sermon briefly recounted the Great Disappointment of 1844 and how the Adventist movement grew out of that experience of sincere but mistaken expectation. What can we learn from that history about holding our interpretations of prophecy with both conviction and humility?
6. Pastor Chris talked about scoffers, people who mock or dismiss the hope of Christ's return, and noted that we can sometimes be our own worst scoffers through negative thinking. How do you guard your mind against doubt and discouragement when the wait feels long?
7. Matthew 24:44 (NIV) says, 'So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.' What does it mean to you personally to 'be ready,' and what habits or practices help you stay spiritually prepared?

8. Pastor Chris used the image of a check that never expires to describe God's promise of salvation and the Second Coming. How does holding onto an unbreakable promise change the way you live day to day, especially during difficult or discouraging seasons?

Life Application

This week, practice what Pastor called the '24-hour hold.' Identify one situation, decision, or conflict where you have been rushing to act out of impatience or anxiety. Instead of reacting immediately, pause, bring it to God in prayer, and wait 24 hours before responding. Use that time to ask God for wisdom and to reflect on whether you are trusting His timing or trying to take control on your own. At the end of the week, journal or share with a trusted friend what you noticed about your own patience and your reliance on God during that waiting period.

Key Takeaways

- No one knows the day or hour of Christ's return, and that uncertainty is by God's design. Our calling is not to calculate the timing but to remain faithful and ready while we wait.
- God's apparent delay in fulfilling His promise is not slowness or forgetfulness. It is patience, giving more people the opportunity to hear the gospel and turn to Him (2 Peter 3:9, NIV).
- Scoffers, whether outside voices or our own doubting thoughts, are a predicted reality of the last days. The best response is calm, humble, and loving engagement rooted in the character of Christ rather than defensive argument.
- The Adventist identity is built on the hope of Christ's return. That hope is not naive wishfulness but a theologically grounded conviction supported by hundreds of biblical promises that have never expired.
- Waiting well requires intentional spiritual preparation. Reading Scripture, gathering in community, and staying connected to Jesus through prayer are the practices that keep our hope alive and our hearts ready.