

Saint Timothy Lutheran - Edmonds, WA
Wednesday, December 2, 2009 – Advent I
Rev. Craig A. Patterson (Based upon the sermon
series by Rev. Dr. Donald F. Hinchey)
“On Your Toes.”
(Text: Mark 13:33; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:12)

Context: Jesus instructed His disciples regarding the end of the world and taught them to “*Be alert!*” The time of His second coming is not known to men. Also, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians to “be on the *alert with all perseverance and petition* for the saints.” Later the Apostle wrote to the believers in Colossea, that Epaphroditus (their dear friend and fellow believer) was “laboring for them in prayers that you may *stand perfect and fully assured* in all the will of God.” Another way to express this plea of our Lord and the Apostle is to say, “Be on your toes!”

- I. **The World Would Encourage Us To Become “Spiritual Couch Potatoes.”**
 - A. Some, over the ages, have seen these words of Jesus as being almost cruel.
 1. The early believers felt that the Lord’s return was imminent, yet He did not return, but only reiterated these words through the gospel writer Mark, “Be alert!”
 - a. They prayed along with the prophet Isaiah when he said, “Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil – to make Your name known to Your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at Your presence!” (Isaiah 64:1-2)
 - B. Like the words of the aerobics instructor, were not spoken in sadistic cruelty, but in love – for the good of the Church. Jesus speaks these words to us who tire so easily of waiting, who are so accustomed to instant gratification: “Be on guard, keep awake!” On your toes!
 1. Await the coming of the Lord like a child straining on tiptoes for a glimpse of the coveted Christmas gifts!
 - C. When pressed for a specific time of His return, Jesus told His disciples that ‘only the Father knows.’ Then, He gave the command, “Be alert!” Be on your toes!
 1. Our task as Christ’s people is to be vigilant and expectant, trusting Jesus’ words simply because He said them: “I will come again.”
 - D. As we wait, our two great dangers are: 1) Being lulled into a false sense of security and 2) Falling into hopelessness.
- II. **God Is A God Who Keeps His Promises.**
 - A. He promised to Adam and Eve that the “seed of the woman” would come to destroy the devil and a human Savior who was totally God, also, was born.
 - B. He promised to send “Immanuel” (God with us) and Jesus came.
 - C. He promised, “I will save!” and this baby grew up, died on the cross and uttered the words, “It is finished.” The payment for sins (all sins) was paid, in full.
 - D. He promised that “on the third day” He would be raised and He was!
 - E. He promised that “This is my Body...this is My Blood.” Those who wait on their toes, see not merely bread that crumbles and wine in the cup, but the Lord’s Body and Blood for the renewing of their faith and hope in Him.
- III. **Living On Our Toes Is A Lifestyle (A Posture)**
 - A. Whether it’s the manger, cross, open tomb, bread and wine on the altar, the ones “on their toes” live in expectation.
 - B. God will supply the “signs” in His Word and Sacraments to renew us in living expectantly. His Spirit and our fellow saints cry out “Come Lord Jesus, Come!”