

As the days get shorter, darker, and damper, the Church's scripture is apocalyptic. Jesus says in front of the Temple in Jerusalem, "All that you see here- the days are coming when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." These are frightening words. And for the history buffs out there, Jesus' prophesy here actually came to pass. In 70 A.D. the temple was in fact destroyed. All that was left was the western retaining wall, which is now called the Wailing Wall, the most holy site in Judaism. The prophet Malachi joins in the apocalyptic chorus saying, "Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble." St. Paul is encouraging his disciples against apathy. The Scripture is warning us against spiritual apathy.

As the days get shorter, it becomes easier to go through our days on autopilot, one cup of coffee at a time, forgetting what's important. The scripture warns us to guard against spiritual laziness by reminding us that we're mortal and that we don't have all the time in the world. We should not put off to tomorrow what we should be doing today. This is a challenging reminder. After all, who here wants to think about their mortality? I don't want to think about death and judgement right now. I want to think about Thanksgiving, family, Advent, and Christmas. The Gospel passage says, "Tough, I got news for you pal, we better think about it". We will die someday. There will be an accounting of my life! Time isn't as plentiful as I would like to delude myself into thinking! Yes, Heaven is real; however, hell is real. Hell is the consequence of living our lives contrary to God's will. It isn't what God wants for us. God sent us His Son that we might turn to Him and be saved. God has given us the gift of time for us to move about. God has given us the gift of talents so that we may build up His Kingdom. God has given us the gift of life, our world and our relationships. But these gifts are temporary. We will give them all back to God someday and much sooner than we would like. Let's contemplate those areas in our lives that we know we need to correct but have been putting off because we've been lulled into complacency, that we have all the time in the world when we don't. We lull ourselves into thinking that there's no rush to get our spiritual priorities in order. Scripture has a way of reminding us that the road to hell was paved by people who thought there was no rush. C.S. Lewis underscores this point in his book, the Screwtape Letters. Screwtape is a demon writing to his nephew Wormwood giving advice on how to ruin souls. He finishes the twelfth letter to his nephew with the wicked advice, "Indeed, the safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts, your affectionate uncle Screwtape."

Jesus is clear in His warning: there will come a day when we will be put on the spot and called to give witness, a time when we must choose between what's right and what's easy. To prepare ourselves for that time of trial, we shouldn't put off to tomorrow what we should be doing today when it comes to the care of our souls. I invite us to look at our relationships and find a broken relationship to heal. Let's heal the relationships in our family starting today so we can enjoy our Thanksgiving Holiday. It might make for a less awkward dinner. Let's look at how we spend our resources of time, talent, and treasure. Are we pleasing God with how we share these gifts? Ultimately, we want to look at our relationship with God and, if necessary, make the right choices so that our souls become healthier and holier, united with God's will for us. And perhaps our souls can then demonstrate that love for God a little more by being more kind and compassionate toward others. Ultimately, we're invited to be better witnesses and stewards of all the gifts God has given us. At the end of time, there will be an accounting. Being a follower of Jesus isn't easy. Being a Christian takes work. Christianity shows us the path to heaven. There's a catch. The road to heaven is the one that includes carrying a cross.