

A lot of Christians are caught up nowadays in the end-of-the-world, or end-of-time studies and literature. Personally, I'm not sure where this infatuation comes from. To me it harkens back to the first Christian heresy of the second century: Gnosticism. Gnosticism was A system of religious thought that emphasized secret knowledge as the keys to salvation. Many Christians treat the biblical interpretation of the "end-times" and the apocalypse as a similar kind of secret knowledge, which if you are not privy too, leaves you open to being caught off-guard and not prepared for the Lord's coming and judgment. The problem is, there are as many interpretations of this Biblical literature as there are words in the Bible.

Now you don't see too many Catholics or Catholic churches getting caught up in this kind of stuff. Why is that? Well, if I may oversimplify it, I think it's because we are old. The Catholic Church is nearly 2000 years old, whereas mainline-denominational Protestant churches are at best 400 years old, with non-denominational Protestant churches having life-histories on the order of decades. The point I'm trying to make is that with age comes wisdom. The early Catholic church and the first generation of Christians was certainly caught-up and convinced that they themselves would see Jesus coming in glory from the sky. St. Paul was convinced that the end of the world would occur in his lifetime.

But almost 2000 years has passed, and the world is still here. IN those 2000 years the Church has learned a lot. And one of those lessons is that our faith teaches us that the world will **indeed** end, but it is that same faith which teaches us that if we are authentically **living** that faith, we need not worry or concern ourselves with when the end will actually come.

We all know the saying, “live each day as if it were your last.” That’s a wise little nugget, but I’d like to know if anyone was ever successful at it. I know I’m not. Anybody *here* successful at it? Perhaps, that’s why there are so many Christians caught up in getting ready for that ***last*** day, with the mentality that: “If I can just read and interpret the signs that the last day is here or right around the corner, then I can *truly* make myself ready.” Well that’s great, but look at what you’re doing with this gift of ***time*** God has given you. You end up using it for ***yourself***. And I don’t think that’s what Jesus wanted.

What Jesus **wants**, is for us to use our time and talent **for others**, not in self-consumed worry about how I'm going to save my eternal skin. Our salvation has already been won folks. The question is: How do we **authentically respond** to that fact? Well, worry, fear, or, anxiety, ain't it. And Jesus doesn't want **it** either. What He wants us to do with regard to His preaching about the end of the world, is to prayerfully reflect upon **how** we live our lives with the time God has given us, and in light of that, ask ourselves **how well** that squares with Gospel we not only **profess**, but **rely on** to save us.

We have a gift; the precious gift of time, from our Father in heaven. And, yes, it will run out. But God in His love and mercy has already taken care of and **told** us, what **will** happen when it does; so that we have nothing to worry or concern ourselves about, other than “how can I **best use** this gracious gift of time God has given me, which is my life here on earth?” For in the words of St. John of the cross:

“In the twilight of life,
God will not judge us on our earthly
Possessions and human successes,
But, rather, on how well we have loved.”