

12/6/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Andy Williams raised Christmas expectations when he sang his Christmas classic, “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” What a wonderful time of year for holiday songs and Hallmark Channel movies! We dream of a white Christmas and the perfect family gathering.

But what happens when our dreamy expectations for the perfect Christmas don’t come true? It may explain why holiday times are some of the most stressful days of the year for people. For some it’s the stress of fighting the crowds and trying to find the perfect gift. For others it’s the stress of getting everything decorated, baked, and ready on time. We stress from trying to create the wonderful Christmas we dream about and now, it’s only 19 days away! Stress is dangerous if it tempts us to cope with it in unhealthy ways – unhealthy for the body and the soul. That’s why Jesus warned: *[Jesus said] “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 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.” Luke 21:34-36*

Are you feeling the holiday stress? Do you want to get rid of it? Then Jesus offers this remedy: He said, “Be always on the watch, and pray” (v. 36). This time of year requires spiritual vigilance and prayer. Our hope for the perfect Christmas is connected to the One whose love led him to the cradle and then to the cross for us. Our hope for the best

future possible isn't a dream. It's certain because it rests on him who promised to come back again to take us to be with himself forever. He's the One that said "Be on guard! Be alert!"

We may not be able to completely insulate ourselves from all stress. But we can take what is stressing us to the Lord of all who loves us completely. Now we are ready to face our stress and to work it out in faith-filled, faith-building ways, in Jesus!

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, when the holiday season or earth's end time season gets me stressed, help me find rest in you and help me to remain vigilant in my walk of faith with you. Amen*

(From the WELS)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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