

Series: Surprising Words from Jesus about Being a Disciple

Sermon: **Knowing the Times**

Delivered by: **Rev. Todd Augustine**, pastor of congregational life

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Bible text explored: **Luke 12:54–56**

⁵⁴He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? [ESV]

Review and application:

1. Why was predicting the weather a major concern in an agricultural economy?
What are some equivalent indicators that are often preoccupations in a commercial- and information-based economy such as ours?
2. What indicators of “the finger of God” working in their midst (Exodus 8:19) should have caused the crowd to make a positive response? (See, for instance, Luke 7:22-23 and 11:20.)
How did the people’s failure to decide to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah lead to his crucifixion, to judgment by Rome of the Jewish nation within a generation, and to eternal individual consequences?
3. In 79 A.D., Pastor Augustine noted, the eruption of Mount Vesuvius near Pompeii, Italy, was preceded by four days of minor earthquakes which went unheeded. The result was the entombment in volcanic ash of residents of several cities (remains of about 1,500 persons have been found). Are their warning signs today of the likely imminence of God’s intervention?
4. Pastor Todd called complacent focusing on every-day temporary concerns at the expense of eternal outcomes a “fatal flaw.” What changes in perspective should Jesus’ warning cause us to make?
How might that affect our lifestyle?