

## Exquisitely Tuned

Be watchful! Be alert! Really? Have we Americans ever been more psyched up, wary or wired than we are right now? We're alert to unprecedented questions about our politics, our democracy, our economy; and where we find the truth. We're on guard about how to maneuver in a Covid-infested environment. Where—or who-- are the potential dangers to be avoided? How to protect ourselves and others, when many deny the reality? Will our jobs be there tomorrow? And how will our kids be affected by delayed schooling and lack of socialization? Not least of all, we're alarmed about what toll all of these pressures might ultimately take on us and our loved ones—especially the most fragile.

So how can we possibly be more alert to anything else? Is today's gospel warning yet another layer of "alertness" laid on us, or is it the foundational one? The gospel is placing front and center the issue of Jesus' coming again, which sounds like something "out there" in the future somewhere. But many theologians say that this coming is ongoing...something that happens every day, now, in the tangle of life circumstances. Our job is not to look anxiously for Jesus' unexpectedly and spectacularly swooping in from somewhere else, but to be open to his presence in all of these hair-raising, seeming "distractions" we're experiencing. Jesus...God is in those exhausting distractions that consume us.

Paul reminds us that there's nothing we lack spiritually and that Christ will "keep us firm to the end." God, he says, is faithful. If we are open to His coming in, among and through these head-

splitting, stressful events, we can then ponder what our responses are to be to each of them.

What is He calling us to be and do? Alertness is only one step. It begs the key question: what does this require of us? Are we called to be overwhelmed and overcome or to be witnesses, healers and truth-tellers? The options are endless. We have been fortified for the work. Not only is God with us...despite how it feels, we are truly in this together.

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