

TWO MINUTE WARNING

Have you ever watched an NFL Football game? I used to be a fan in my youth but the image they now portray is a far cry from the former gridiron heroes of decades ago. Their conduct and criminal records (not all) are hardly roles models from the players of the 60s and 70's.

In watching the games regardless of the decade, the two-minute warning comes up at the end of each half in every NFL football game. Most fans take it for granted, but why does the NFL stop the clock with two minutes or so left in each half? Is it just so the NFL can sneak an extra commercial break into the action? Here's a little background on the two-minute warning.

The custom of giving teams a two-minute warning dates all the way back to the NFL's first years. In those days, fans and coaches couldn't just take a look at the stadium clock to see how much time remained in the half. The official game clock resided in the pocket or on the wrist of one of the officials, and the stadium's clock was just a rough estimate of how much time remained in the game. Thus, the NFL instituted a two-minute warning where the referee would stop the clock and let both teams know exactly how much time remained in the game. **(from mentalfloss.com)**

Obviously, that sort of "warning" is no longer necessary...in football.

The two-minute warning is also something that takes place at the end of certain sporting events. It's an alarm or buzzer that goes off, or a pause in the game to let the participants know that there is only two minutes left in this game.

It tells the opponents one of two things:

1. I've either got to score some points to win this game or
2. I've got to hold the lead for just two more minutes.

It is most times the crucial point of the game. Lots of games are won or lost inside of that two-minute mark.

When the two-minute warning sounds things are critical. When the two-minute warning sounds it is important the way you play the game. You can't afford to be lax during this time. You can't afford to be casual at two-minute warning. There is too much at stake. There is too much to be won or lost. When the two-minute warning sounds you ***must*** be at your best.

I've seen games where it seems the team doesn't to start playing until the two-minute warning is given. Simply foolish, they know every week at the onset just how much time they have to play the game. They prep for weeks or months off season to get in the best shape, run plays and train for the championships only to be deficient in their efforts on gameday.

I could give you many examples from football and other sports where people who either let down and lost or teams or people who dug in and held on strong and won.

Here's an example from a recent boxing match between Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad. Through the majority of the fight Oscar De La Hoya was winning rounds by a wide margin. He was out boxing his opponent. He was out punching his opponent. He was winning the fight.

But during the last four rounds he decided that he was far enough ahead that he could let up just a little bit, maybe to save himself a little pain. He had the stamina to finish strong but he decided that he could coast to victory. During the last few rounds, Felix Trinidad came on strong. During the "two-minute warning time" he

gave it his best and won the fight. The outcome of the fight was Felix Trinidad beat Oscar De La Hoya because he finished the fight strong. Too late for De La Hoya, he couldn't go back and re-do his efforts. His time was up. Too late for a second chance at that time. He let another take his crown (**Rev. 3:11**).

So why do we wait on giving God our best in our walk with Him? We do not have the benefit of a two-minute warning. In the absence of a "life clock" we never know when our time is up (**Ecc. 3:1-2, 9:12, Acts 1:7, 2 Tim. 3:1-7, James 4:14**). So why do we wait? What is our excuse for putting off God?

Could we be in our two-minute warning already? Again, we do not have a whistle or a timer to warn us of our last two minutes but we *do have* the Word of God:

Luke 21:7-11

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

8 And he said, take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Luke 21:25-28

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Luke says that we should take heed that we are not deceived for many will say that they have found another way than that of the word of God and lead many astray. Don't go after them but hold on to the word of God during two-minute warning time. We have discussed many times false prophets and false teachers.

We will hear of wars and commotions but those who are walking in obedience do not need to be frightened by this because it's just another sign that Jesus Christ is coming is soon.

Nation will rise against nation and kingdom will rise against kingdom. It's not time to get lukewarm in your walk with God but it's time to make sure you are obeying God's Word and Commandments.

There will be earthquakes in divers places the Bible says. Just recently there have been great earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan. They have caused much destruction and loss of life.

There will be famines and *pestilence* and fearful sights in the land. There will be great signs from the heavens. Signs in the sun and signs in the moon and signs in the stars. The earth will witness distress of nations with perplexity. The sea and the waves will roar. The current pandemic, is God trying to give us a two-minute warning? Perhaps not but things are heating up.

(also: Ezek. 7:1-8, Matt. 11:21-24, 13:15-16, 24:15-22, Mark 1:15, 13:33, John 16:4, Acts 17:30, 1 Thess. 5:1-6, 2 Tim. 4:3, 1 John 2:18, Rev. 22:10).

It's time. Do we either give it our best shot (**Rom. 13:11, Heb. 2:1**) or do we just give up altogether (**Luke 9:62**)? It's time that we live for God with all of our strength (**Deut. 6:5, Matt. 22:37**) and draw nearer to God. We can be a million miles away from Him but it is only one step back. We can repent and be forgiven (**Mark 1:4**).

Or are we drawing nearer to the world (**John 15:9, 1 Pet. 2:9**)? Are we living a holy life or do we just go ahead and live like the rest of the world (**Lev. 11:44, 1 Pet. 1:16**)? We must live according to the Word of God (**Matt. 4:4, Luke 4:4**) or are we still living according to the morals of this age (**2 Cor. 6:17**)?

It's time to be fully obedient to God's Word and His Commandments. It's time that we get ourselves to Bible study and into the Word of God. We cannot forsake His Sabbaths and Holy Days. This is not a time for the child of God to get casual or lackadaisical (**Rev. 3:16**).

More than ever we need to pay attention to: our walk with God, our prayer life, our heart, our attitude, our words and the way we think and act (**Rom. 13:11**).

Jesus said all these things must happen but don't be afraid but rather be encouraged because it's just my "two-minute warning." There is NO stadium clock to stare at. Our best course of action is to *prepare and be ready*.

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."- **Mark 13:32-33**.

Christ is going to come for His church. He is coming for a church that has neither spot, wrinkle, blemish or any such thing, He is coming for a church that has their lamps filled with the Holy Spirit, He is coming for a church that has been washed in the Blood of the Lamb, He is coming for a church that has been baptized into his body, He is coming for a church that is *looking* for his return, He is coming for a church that has their wedding garments on, He is coming for a church that has his name applied to their lives.

This is not a scary thing to those who baptized into the Body of Christ and are living for God by obeying and keeping His Commandments. (**Psalm 106:3, 119:2, Prov. 8:32, Isa. 30:18, Rev. 19:9, Rev. 22:14**)

How can such terrible things bring hope to anyone? It brings hope because we know: It's almost homecoming time. Jesus will return for His bride.

There will be no more sickness, no more pain, no more sadness, no more death, no more tears, no more sorrow (**Rev. 21:4**) FOREVER, we will be in the city where the lamb is the light. We will forever be with our savior Jesus Christ. (**Rev. 21:23-25**)

Titus 2:13

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

It's a blessed hope!

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so, shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

It's a comforting hope.

1 Peter 1:3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

It's not a dead hope that died years ago but it is a lively hope.

1 John 3:2-3

2 Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

It's a purifying hope.

Hebrews 6:18-19

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

It's an anchoring hope. In troubled times we've got hope. In perplexing times we've got hope. In sickness we've got hope. In pain we've got hope. In sorrow we've got hope. In distress we've got hope. In hard times we've got hope. In dark days we've got hope. It's a great hope. It's a blessed hope. It's a comforting hope. It's a purifying hope. It's an anchoring hope.

If you want this kind of hope in your life you can have it. If you have had this kind of hope in the past but no longer have it, you can get it back in your life.

What you need to do is what the Bible says in:

2 Peter 1:10

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

That means live in such a way as to be sure you will rise to meet the Lord in the air when he comes. I would hate for it to happen that when the Lord returned, He would say you didn't do everything that you needed to do to be part of the bride of Christ. You let some things creep into your life that didn't belong there and now it's too late. Do not be a Laodicean! (**Rev. 3:16**)

We still have time today though to make our calling and election sure. We need to make it as sure as we can every day. **(Rev. 3:12)**

The greatest gift you'll ever receive is free, but it will cost you everything. It takes a commitment. The greatest victory you'll ever have is when you totally surrender. The greatest life you can have is when you die to yourself. Keeping God first, following and obeying His Commandments, keeping His Sabbaths and His Holy Days is NOT a journey for the faint-hearted, but God will equip His chosen.

We won't hear any whistles, but when we hear God's trumpet our time will be up. If it happened today, will you be glad you're prepared or will you have a feeling of panic you weren't ready? It's two-minute warning time. Jesus is coming soon.

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(segments from Sermon Central website, Thomas Dibble)