

return? What activities should be engaged in and are there some we should be avoiding? What priorities do we use as we allocate our time daily?

34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. - Mark 13:34-36 NIV

Jesus uses a brief parable to illustrate that He will be gone for an undetermined time, but we each have an assigned task while He is away. We want to take that responsibility seriously and not fall asleep at the wheel.

What do you see as your assignment from God while awaiting Jesus' return? What are you doing to carry out that assignment while you await Jesus' return?

Despite appearances to the contrary, the goal and future of God's creation is within His control. His ultimate good purposes will triumph. Opposition to God's reign may be fierce. But his good purposes will be accomplished. The end is never in doubt. So be expectant, life for the end, but don't predict it!

WRAP-UP

We live in a space of waiting—celebrating that Jesus has already come, while trusting that He will come again. Even though we don't know when that day will be, we're reminded to stay awake, aware, and ready in how we live. Jesus' return brings both accountability and hope, made possible through His death and resurrection, which opened the way to new life with God. Instead of trying to figure out the timing, we're invited to live faithfully each day, doing what God has placed before us, and trusting that His plans are good and will be fulfilled in the right time.

MEMORY VERSE

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. - Mark 13:32-33 NIV

Challenge –

Walk to a window or step outside, then gaze up in the sky. As you look, remind yourself that this very moment Christ could roll back the clouds and return as He promised. Let that inspire your activities and conversations this week.

Be Expectant, Live for The End, Don't Predict It Gospel of Mark Ch. 13 - Week 2

INTRODUCTION

Last week our season of Advent ended with the celebration of Christmas, remembering the birth of Christ. Yet we are still in a time of waiting because Jesus has promised to return. As we resume our study in Mark's Gospel, we find Jesus discussing that time with the disciples. Earlier in the chapter they asked Jesus when the temple would be destroyed and what sign they would have. In this study we continue to learn more about what is often referred to as the End Times.

Ice Breaker

Is there something in your life that you are waiting for, but you don't know exactly when it will happen? If so, how does that make you feel; anxious, excited, hopeful...?

Key Passages

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!' " - Mark 13:32-37 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The Day of the Lord

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. - 2 Peter 3:10 NIV

Peter refers to “the Day of the Lord” coming like a thief. In what way is Peter's description like the day or hour Jesus describes in today's key passage? What events does Peter describe that will happen at that time?

*26 "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ... 32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- Mark 13:26, 32 NIV*

In Mark 13:32 Jesus refers to “that day or hour” and what He says is surprising- that even He doesn’t know when it will happen. Those terms “that day and hour” refer to Mark 13:26 when the Son of Man is coming in the clouds. This is the return of Jesus, yet He doesn’t know when it will happen!

Based on this verse, how do you think God feels about us trying to calculate a date of Christ’s return? If you knew the exact time, what would you do differently? Is there a reason not to do that today?

If we search the Scriptures, we will find that The Day of the Lord is spoken of throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the day that God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt was sometimes referred to as “The Day”. And just as Israel celebrated that deliverance through the observance of Passover, they hoped that in the future there would be another Day of the Lord when God would deliver them from all other threats. Fast forward- Jesus was their new Passover Lamb at his first coming, but the ultimate deliverance of all creation will take place when He returns one day, and that day is what we call The Day of the Lord.

The events that will happen on that day are mixture of judgement and renewal. They include, Jesus returning to earth, the resurrection of the dead, judgement, re-creation of all things new in heaven and earth. Describe how you feel about the dual nature of Christ’s return. Are you focused mainly on the renewal or the judgement? Are you mostly looking forward to Jesus’ return or does it stir up fear and if so, what is that fear based on?

When Jesus refers to “that time” in v. 33 He uses the Greek word *kairos* which means a fixed or definite time, sometimes translated as appointed time. Even though He doesn’t know when it is, He knows that it has been appointed by God and it will happen exactly when God has determined it will.

Last week as Christmas drew near you probably felt the weight of a different kind of time, the passing of time called *chronos*, which is what we often focus on watching the minutes click by much too quickly. But in our key passage Jesus is inviting us to be expectant for *kairos*.

2. The Resurrection Changed Everything

Jesus’ death and resurrection was a turning point in the order of time. It marked the beginning of the new covenant.

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ... 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. - Hebrews 9:12, 14-15 NIV

17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

What does the above passage in Hebrews say we obtained because of Christ’s sacrifice? Before the time of Christ’ sacrifice for us our eternal destiny was separation from God. What do we receive under the new covenant? How does 2 Corinthians explain the beginning of a new time in our life because of the resurrection?

*55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 NIV*

Hebrews 9 emphasizes the eternal nature of our redemption, God’s Spirit, and our inheritance. This reveals how time itself was impacted by Jesus’ death and resurrection when the power of sin was overthrown. Because the course of our eternity no longer ended in eternal death but in eternal life.

3. Our Responsibility

33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ... 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" " - Mark 13:33, 37 NIV

Jesus is pretty clear, no one knows when this will happen, not the angels, not the Son and certainly not you. Therefore, He gives two commands; beware (Gr. *blepō*) and stay awake (GR. *agrypneō*). In other words, live like you expect this to happen at any moment. And this applies to everyone!

If you have been part of the birth of a child, do you remember the time of impending birth? What preparations did you make? What signs did you stay attentive to? How did you arrange your calendar or your travel in anticipation that the baby might come at any time? How can that be reflected in the way we can arrange our lives in anticipation of Jesus’