

“... ’TIL JESUS COMES ...”

TEXT: Mark 13:31-37

(**Note:** I am indebted to Dr. Stephen Felker of Colonial Heights, VA for some of the thoughts and parts of the organizational structure of this lesson).

INTRODUCTION:

1. The great hope of every Christian and the great fear of every lost one, should the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!
2. As Paul informed Titus, we are, “*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13)
3. Paul told Timothy that a reward awaits believers who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).
4. 2 Peter 3:11-13
5. The Hebrew writer mentions “*a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries*” Heb 10:26-27.

I. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS WHY WE LOOK FORWARD TO HIS RETURN:

- A. Sin & Death will have been defeated forever (I Cor. 15:54).
- B. When He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is (I John 3:2).
- C. Injustices done toward the righteous will be avenged: (2 Thess. 1:6-9; Romans 12:17-21).
- D. “*I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*” (John 14:1-4).
- E. “*Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself*” (Phil.3:21).
- F. So the obvious question is: “*What am I to do while awaiting His return?*”

II. WHY DO ANYTHING?

- A. Because Jesus tells us to do certain things while we wait for His return.
 - 1) These admonitions were not just for the apostles. Notice what Jesus said in v.37, “And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” That includes us!
 - 2) One of the problems the Thessalonians had is they had quit their jobs and were doing nothing! (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).
- B. In our text Mark 13:31-37 we see 3 main things we should do while we look for His coming.

III. WAIT PATIENTLY:

- A. Jesus uses a parable about a landowner who goes on a far journey.
- B. The master or owner of the house represents Christ. It says in v.34, “*It is like a man going to a far country....*”
 - 1) In that day, travel was pretty slow, so a journey to a far country would mean that he would be gone a long time.
 - 2) Likewise Jesus indicated that when He ascended back to heaven, He would be gone a long time.
 - 3) By the time the Gospel of Mark was written, He had been gone at least 30 years.
 - 4) 2Peter 3:3-4 The problem with which Peter was dealing was how long Jesus had been gone.
 - 5) That must have seemed like a long time to them but, today, He has been gone almost 2,000 years!
- C. In this parable Jesus taught that His people would have to patiently wait for His return.
 - 1) James 5:7 says, “*be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord....*”
 - 2) 1Corinthians 1:7, “*waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

- 3) Though most of us would like for Jesus to come today, we may have to keep waiting patiently, perhaps for many more years.
- D. Some day He is coming, (2 Peter 3:10), and we need to be faithful to Him while we wait:
 - 1) The long wait does not mean that Christ is not coming.
 - 2) There are at least a couple of reasons why Christ is waiting so long before He returns.
 - a) It may be that His patience with mankind has not yet run out:
 1. In Genesis 15:16 we see that God delayed sending the Israelites to possess the land of Canaan, *“for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”*
 2. 2Peter 3:9 *“longsuffering”* means *“patient”*
 - b) He is not bound by time.
 1. 2 Peter 3:8 *“one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years etc.”*
 2. 2,000 years may seem like a long delay to us, but not to God!

IV. WORK DILLIGENTLY:

- A. Jesus said in v.34, *“It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work....”*
 - 1) Like the householder in the story, before our Lord went back to heaven,
 - 2) He gave each of us work to do.
- B. In the parable of the “minas” they were told to *‘Do business till I come.’* (Luke 19:13-14).
- C. Paul admonished Timothy: *“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine... Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you”* (1 Tim 4:12-16).
- D. What work should we be doing until Jesus comes?
 - 1) Proclaiming the Gospel–
 - a) Jesus says in v.10, *“And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.”*
 - 1) Colossians 1:6 The gospel had gone to the whole world in the first century.
 - 2) Romans 1:8
 - 3) Luke 24:46-47
 - b) Acts 1:7-8, *“It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*
 - c) Our primary job is to share the Gospel & make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).
 - 2) Pray – Jesus said in v.33, *“Take heed, watch and pray....”* One of the most important activities in which we can engage is to pray.
 - a) Pray for the lost.
 - b) Pray for our missionaries.
 - c) Pray for the spiritual well-being of Christians the world over.
 - d) Pray for our various programs and efforts to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10)
 - 1) Bible Olympics
 - 2) Camp
 - 3) Gospel Meeting April 3-6 w/Mike Green.
 - 4) Vacation Bible School.
 - 3) Persevere –
 - a) The Lord expects us to be faithful while He is gone and to be working when He returns!
 - b) We are not to quit, or let up (1Cor. 15:58; John 21:18).
- D. How does Jesus motivate us to be faithful while He’s away?
 1. He Motivates Us By the Hope of His Return – Believers will face great difficulty. Yet if we know that Jesus is returning it will motivate us to persevere.
 2. He Motivates Us By the Certainty of His Return -
 - a) He says in v.31, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass*

away”

- b) 1 Peter 1:24-25 says, *“The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever”* (cf. Isaiah 40:8).
- 3. He Motivates Us By Holding Us Accountable -
 - a) Accountability is taught in the parable of the owner returning to his household & servants, to hold them accountable for their work (vs.35).
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:10 says. *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*
 - c) Income tax illustration.
 - 1) We do so out of obedience to the Lord (Mark 12:17; Romans 13:7).
 - 2) But we are also motivated by the fact that the I.R.S. could require us to undergo an audit (has happened to me 3 or 4 times).
 - 3) In the same sense, we should always keep in mind that Jesus could come again, & hold us accountable for how we have been living & serving.
 - 4) 1 John 2:28 says, *“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”*
 - 5) Jesus said in Matthew 16:27, *“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”*
- E. We are to proclaim, pray and persevere because the Lord will come someday to settle accounts with us!

V. WATCH EXPECTANTLY:

- A. Hide and seek illustration: *“Ready or not, here I come!”*
- B. That statement can be applied to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - 1) We are to watch expectantly for the Lord’s return, and always be ready.
 - 2) He says in v.33, *“Take heed, watch and pray....”*
 - 3) Then he says in v.37, *“And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”*
 - 4) The command to watch is in the present tense: *“Keep on watching.”*
- C. Paul said in Philippians 3:20, *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”*
- D. The apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 4:7, *“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful”*
- E. The primary reason Jesus gives for us to be constantly watching for His return is this: We do not know in advance when He will return.
 - 1) He says in v.32, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*
 - 2) *“The angels, though standing in a very close relationship to God and though intimately associated with the events pertaining to the Second Coming (Matt. 13:41; 24:31; Rev. 14:19), did not know the day nor the hour.”* (Dr. Stephen Felker).
 - 3) It is futile and sinful to try to predict the date when Jesus will return. Likewise, in the last of v.33 He says, *“for you do not know when the time is.”*
 - 4) He also says in v.35, *“Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning.”*
 - 5) Luke 12:40, *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*
 - 6) Why did the Lord make this a secret?
 - a) Because He wants every generation to live in expectation of it.
 - b) Because watching has a purifying effect, knowing that you could stand before the Lord in judgment almost any moment.
 - 1. *“Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought*

you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11).

2. “And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

C. We Should Be Ever Alert –

- 1) Jesus says in v.36 that we are to watch for His return “lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.”
- 2) Notice in the last of v.34 that the master “commanded the doorkeeper to watch”
- 3) Luke 12:45 pictures this condition vividly, “But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk.”
- 4) In Matthew’s account, he adds the following, “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37; cf. Luke 17:26-27).
- 5) “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:11-12).

CONCLUSION:

1. What are we to do until Jesus comes?
 - a) Wait patiently
 - b) Work diligently
 - c) Watch expectantly
2. In William Barclay’s commentary, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), p. 317, he writes: “There is a fable which tells of three apprentice devils who were coming to this earth to finish their apprenticeship. They were talking to Satan about their plans to tempt and ruin men. The first said, ‘I will tell them there is no God.’ Satan said, ‘That will not delude many, for they know there is a God [or heaven]. The second said, ‘I will tell men there is no hell.’ Satan answered, ‘You will deceive no one that way; men know even now that there is a hell for sin.’ The third said, ‘I will tell men there is no hurry.’ ‘Go,’ said Satan, ‘and you will ruin them by the thousands!’”
3. “Till Jesus comes I’ll sing his praise, and then to glory go, and reign with him through endless days because He loved me so!” (“Because He Loves Me So” J.G. Daily).
4. What about you? Haven’t you waited long enough? Are you ready to obey now?