



## A Call to Steadiness and Readiness

Community Study Guide: **Mark 13:24-37** –Week of April 28th, 2024

When considering this passage in Mark, it is important for us not to fall prey to the temptation to become sidetracked. The desire to dive deeply into the end-time prophecy found in scripture is very attractive, and it often comes at the expense of something greater. Christians can and should have an understanding of the end times, as everything in the Bible is profitable for the building us up in Christ. However, we must avoid missing the forest for the trees. In this passage particularly, Jesus is using the warning about the end of times to command us to action. The focus is not on the conclusion of God's redemptive story but on the need for us to faithfully pursue all that we have been tasked to do. The command is for us to be found ready, to be awake and prepared. The key takeaway is this... **Christian lives shall be marked by steadiness and readiness as they wait for Christ's return.** This is the primary takeaway from this passage. The rest of the passage is designed to simply help shape our understanding and help refocus on the goal despite challenging circumstances. Jesus tells us that when He does return, it will be clear. There will be such evidence that it will be obvious to those who have eyes to see it. Jesus Himself confirms that the only one who knows when the end of times will come is God the Father. Not even the Son or the angels possess such knowledge, and so we as humans have no opportunity to know. Jesus tells us that ultimately we are all servants, and the master has put us in charge of His estate. His warning is to faithfully work toward the tasks that He has assigned us, without worry about the circumstances outside of our assigned work. His challenge to us to to stay focused on our task, to stay faithful to it, and to be found awake when He does finally return.

### DISCUSSION GOALS

#### Head

The priority for us as Christians is to be faithfully pursuing the work the Lord has given us. The circumstances around us will always be changing, they will always present opportunitys for worry and distraction. However, we must focus ourselves on the taks given to us by Christ, and stay faithfully awake.

#### Heart

The temptation to become distracted, to fall into our natural proclivity to pursue secondary things that pique our interest. While good, the pursuit of knowing that which we cannot know is ultimately unprofitable. We are to keep in mind the signs of the times, as we pursue our greater calling.

#### Hands

We have been tasked with being Christ ambassadors to the world, preaching and sharing the work that Christ has accomplished.

## Read Mark 13:1-37

1. Much of what Jesus warns of in this passage is designed to give us proper framing. These warnings help give us proper expectations so that we might not be shaken when these events occur. Thinking of your own life, when has trial or tribulation shaken your focus on the Lord? How did the Lord minister to you during that season? What did you ultimately learn from it, and how are you better equipped for the work?
2. While this passage included a lot of prophecy, it also is full of imperatives from Jesus. Reviewing the passage, what commands does Jesus give? What is the summary and major takeaways of these commands?
3. In this passage, Jesus contrasts the outcome of two very important items, the temple and the Word of God. What are the outcomes of these two things? What comfort is given by the promises of Christ in this passage?
4. Even though this chapter is about events in the future (some already fulfilled, some still to be fulfilled), in what way is it also trying to take our attention off of speculating about the future so that we can live faithfully in the present? Where do you find that direction in the text?
5. How should we handle speculation regarding end times? What is the purpose of the prophecy found in scripture, and how should we best apply it to our lives?
6. When does focus and speculation on the end times become unprofitable for us as Christians? What is the ultimate answer to when Christ will return?
7. **“Christian lives shall be marked by steadiness and readiness as they wait for Christ's return.”** Consider this quote and your current situation. What change would bring a greater level of improvement to your readiness and steadiness?