

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

## "LIVING ON THE EDGE OF TOMORROW" | MARK 13: 28-37 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

Who or what comes to mind when you think of someone on the lookout for someone else?

### *"Parable of the Fig Tree" Mark 13: 28-31*

Jesus reminds His followers that the signs of the end times will show Jesus' return is near, and that His word endures forever. **How does knowing Jesus returns in the end help people endure tough times?**

### *"The Parable of the Watchman" Mark 13: 32-37*

Jesus shares a parable of a master leaving and telling servants to stay awake to wait for his return, not knowing when he'll come. **What does it mean to look for Jesus and not focus on the signs of end times? What's your reaction to Jesus sharing only the Father knows when the end will happen?**

Jesus repeats the command to "stay awake" at least 3 times in different ways as He shares about His second coming. **How can a Christ-follower live in a way that shows they are being watchful like Jesus commands?**

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus shares two parables to teach His return will be swift and sudden, so His followers should be watchful, living faithfully, serving and anticipating His glory, trusting in His word. **If Jesus came back today, how would you react? What does that reveal about your heart? How can you live with a more watchful focus this week? Ask God to live through you to increase your faithfulness and hope.**

**Jesus Journal: Write down at least one thing about Jesus that impressed you in the passage and message.**

## *Living on the Edge of Tomorrow*

### I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those joining us online 2nd Service.
- B. Slide1-5 Cam: Baptism. CG. Women's. CK. FPU.
- C. Slide6 Missions Prayer: Today at 1:30pm in the Agape Room.
- D. \*Additional Seating: We will be moving our *additional seating* at our 10am service to the Fellowship Hall beginning Sun, Sept. 7. (Please still use it in-between services, & 1st & 3rd)
- E. Slide7 Tomorrow marks "*Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day*" 8 years later. On Aug. 25, 2017, the Rohingya people faced unspeakable violence and mass displacement, leaving hundreds of thousands without home or country. Many remain stateless today, living in refugee camps or scattered across nations, including Nepal, where we have the privilege of walking alongside them. As a church, we pause to remember their suffering, to honor their resilience, and to recommit ourselves to prayer and action. We remember that every Rohingya man, woman, and child bears the image of God, and we long for the day when justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream (Amos 5:24).
- F. Prayer: Lord, we pray for healing, for hope, and for the day when the Rohingya will know *You, peace, dignity, and a secure home.*

### II. Slide8 Intro: *Living on the Edge of Tomorrow*

- A. Illust: Remember on Thanksgiving day 2003, President George W. Bush flew to Iraq under the cover of darkness to dine with U.S. forces at a Baghdad International Airport mess hall. Bush's surprise trip delighted troops and stunned the nation.
  1. Sometimes our Commander and Chief shares his schedule with us ... other times it is Top Secret.
  2. Sometimes our Heavenly Commander & Chief shares His schedule with us - other times it is *Top Secret, classified, confidential, hush-hush.*

- a) When we study the End Times we notice with **Israel** He shares His schedule; Regarding **The Church**, it's *Classified, confidential, hush-hush*.

B. Here, **Jesus** winds down the Olivet discourse with **2 parables**:

1. The **1st** parable of the **fig tree** emphasize knowing that His coming is near.
  - a) The **2nd** parable of the **watchman** emphasizes **not** knowing the time of His return
2. The **1st** seems to wrap up speaking to the **7 yr** Tribulation folks.
  - a) The **2nd** is to **All** believers of **Every** age.

### III. Slide9a **THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (28-31)** *Read*

A. The Fig Tree has special association with Israel. (Mark 11)

1. The people living during the Tribulation will be able to watch these things occur **and will know** that His coming is near. (*you know* 2 x's)
2. This assurance will help them *endure till the end*. vs.13

B. The fig tree's leaves appear, summer follows. If summer is near, *then the harsh winter* of the Tribulation is past.

1. Just as Daniel prophesied in 12:11, *The end will come 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation* (middle of Trib). In this, Jesus assured that the agonies of the great tribulation **would not continue indefinitely**; they **will have an end**.

C. Slide9b (31) **My words will not** pass away – we've heard Is.40:8 *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever*.

1. Here now, **Jesus** puts **His words** on equal footing w/the OT Scriptures.

D. We as believers do not **depend on signs**, we **depend on His unchanging Word**.

Slide9c As Peter said, *We have the prophetic word more fully confirmed*. 2 Pt.1:19

1. The context was the Transfiguration in the preceding few vss. I will sum up 2 Pet.1:16-18. Peter, James/John said, *we were eyewitnesses of his majesty* (16). Peter said, *we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven (This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased)* (17,18a). Then said, *for we were with him on the holy mountain* (Transfiguration) (18b).

E. What was the purpose of the **Transfiguration** any ways?

1. It was an open display *for the disciples* of **the glory Jesus** had *before* the Incarnation.
2. A mountain was *often* a place of revelation *and Moses, Elijah, & Jesus all had their **most intimate experiences of God** on a Mountain top.*
  - a) **Moses** - met w/God and received *the Law* on **Mnt. Sinai**.
  - b) **Elijah** - found God on **Mnt. Horeb**, *not in the wind, & not in the earthquake, but in the still small voice*. It was on **Mnt. Carmel** where Elijah saw God respond *visually w/fire* to defeat his enemy.
  - c) **Jesus** - gave the **Beatitudes** on a mnt; Was found **praying** on a mnt; was found **resting & healing** on a mnt; after His Res He meets the disciples on a mnt. in Galilee; His 3 famous **discourses** were given on a mnt. (bread of life; sermon on the mnt; Olivet). He also **Ascends** from Mnt Olivet. *And* His **Return** is to the same.
3. *We have Christ's Transfiguration as **another assurance** that His kingdom **is coming**.*
  - a) *Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Mt.16:28). *And then* Mt.17 *goes right into* the Transfiguration (as do Mrk/Lk). *And so* we see **the linkage** between the **Mount experience** & the **2nd coming**.*

F. *\*note the change: They (trib saints) are to watch for **Signs** - We watch for **The Savior!***

#### IV. Slide10 **THE PARABLE OF THE WATCHMAN (32-37)** *Read*

- A. **No one knows** – so far everything has been *calc'd out* down to the day in dealing w/ Israel. *Now* in dealing with **the church**, time is *deliberately unspecific*.
- B. Many people have speculated about **the date** of Christ's return and they all have one thing in common ... *they have all been **wrong**.*
  1. *So* we are *not* to look for signs *but* to look for **Him**.

2. Remember, we are on **the welcoming committee** not on **the planning committee**.
3. We must learn to live in the tension between: **readiness for Jesus return** and **planning for generations to come**.

C. **Slide11 We distinguish:** Christ coming **for** His church & Christ coming **with** His saints.

Aspect	<b>Rapture</b> <i>arpazo/rapturo/caught up</i> (Christ coming for His church)	<b>Second Coming</b> <i>parousia/coming</i> (Christ coming with His saints)
<b>Who Comes</b>	Jesus comes <b>for</b> His saints (1 Thess. 4:17)	Jesus comes <b>with</b> His saints (Jude 14)
<b>Where We Meet</b>	Saints meet Christ in the air	Saints return with Christ to earth
<b>Change to Saints</b>	Saints are changed	No change to saints
<b>Timing</b>	Imminent (could happen anytime)	Preceded by definite signs, calculated to the day
<b>Focus</b>	Deals with the saved	Deals with saved and unsaved
<b>Satan</b>	Satan not bound	Satan bound
<b>World Impact</b>	World not changed	World radically changed
<b>Visibility</b>	No one sees Jesus	All will see Him

- D. **Be on your Guard** - watch carefully, be vigilant, be on the lookout, be careful.
- E. **Keep awake & Stay Awake** (3 x's) - to beware, be on alert, keep awake, to watch.
1. **Raise your hand if your name is Gregory?** The english name **Gregory** comes from this word γρηγορέω/*grēgoreō* meaning: **be awake, be alert, be alive**.
  2. **Why must we be alert?** – to be ready for **Christ's unpredictable return all the time**. [**He** will come *suddenly, unexpectedly, but unmistakably*]
  3. **2 reminders:** (1) He said, **keep watch not keep predicting**. (2) Even **Jesus** didn't predict His return while on earth.
- F. **Slide12** In biblical times, the *watches of the night* were divided into **4 periods**: *Roman*
1. First Watch (**evening watch**): 6 PM – 9 PM
  2. Second Watch (**midnight watch**): 9 PM – 12 AM

3. Third Watch (**cockcrow watch**): 12 AM – 3 AM

4. Fourth Watch (**morning watch**): 3 AM – 6 AM

G. **Slide13a-e** Let's go practical - the main practical thought for this chapter is *watchfulness*.

1. **Staying Spiritually Awake** - regular prayer, Scripture reading, and fellowship. Not letting *our faith* drift into autopilot.
2. **Living With Eternity in View** - making decisions about *money, career, and relationships* with the awareness that Christ could return at any time.
3. **Moral Alertness** - guarding against subtle sin and temptation. Watchfulness means saying, "*I can't afford to drift, by God's grace I'll walk in holiness today.*"
4. **Mission-Mindedness** - sharing the gospel with **urgency** because every day brings us closer to Christ's return.
5. **Hopeful Anticipation** - watchfulness means saying, "*This world is groaning, but my King is coming.*"

H. **Summary:** To be watchful **doesn't mean** standing on one of Murrieta's hills *looking at the sky*; **it means** *faithfully living, serving, and hoping* as though Jesus could come today!

I. **Slide14a-c** Illustrations: Being *ever watchful* like:

1. **A Security Guard on duty** (his job is to stay alert, not nod off, nor staring at his phone). **Tie-in:** Watchfulness isn't about constant excitement **but faithful readiness**, even when things seem quiet.
2. **A Pilot on Final Approach** (can't look at their phone or glance away for even a moment, hundreds of lives depend on their vigilance). **Tie-in:** Jesus calls us to *keep our eyes fixed on Him*, because the final approach (**His return**) is **critical**.
3. **A Expectant Parent's Hospital Bag** (parents awaiting their baby to arrive often have a Go-Bag packed by the door, ready to go at a moment's notice). **Tie-in:** Watchfulness means **living ready**, **not scrambling at the last minute**.

J. **Summary:** *Eyes open, heart ready, always alert for the coming of Christ.*



K. Don't miss the word **ALL** in the last vs. This parable warns **all** of us today.

1. Like **the Master of the house**, before **Jesus** went back to heaven, **He** gave each of us **work** to do.
2. **He expects us to be faithful** while He is gone; **and** to **be working** when He returns.
3. The teachings on **the Return of Christ** is **not** to excite our imagination, **but** to challenge the way we live here and now.
  - a) It should spur us to live **holy lives**, **and** to be actively involved in **service** and **sharing the good news we've been entrusted with**. As **James Gray** famously said, *Who can mind the journey when the road leads home?*

L. **End:** Back to that Secret Mission Thanksgiving dinner. With the president standing *out of sight*, **Paul Bremer**, the chief U.S. civilian administrator, told the soldiers it was time to read the president's Thanksgiving proclamation and that it was a task for **the most senior official present**. Then asked, *"Is there anybody back there more senior than us?"* - That was the cue for Bush, to promptly come from behind a curtain, setting off pandemonium among the troops. His 1st words at the mic were, *"I was just looking for a warm meal somewhere,"* **Then** said, *"I can't think of finer folks to have Thanksgiving dinner with than you all."*

1. Oh what a Thanksgiving dinner Our **Heavenly Commander in Chief Jesus** has prepared for us, **at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb**.
2. **He** might even say, *"I can't think of finer folks to have Thanksgiving dinner with than you all"*. (If Jesus has a southern accent?)
3. **How will your heart react if it's today?**

M. Keywords: watchful, stay awake,