

11.15.15 Mark 13

O. INTRO:

- *There are tons of books and resources on surviving the end of the world.
 - *End of the world food supplies, weapons, bunkers, financial advice.
 - *Anything about that seem strange to you?
 - *How about this...we live on the world, if the world ends...we don't survive.
 - *Not sure what good...food, weapons, bunkers will do if there is no world left to eat, shoot and sleep on.
 - *I'm being factious...most people when they speak of the end of the world preparation they mean "The world as we know it" or "devastation of systems and structures we rely on."
 - *So people can use the phrase very flexibly.
 - *"End of the world"...could mean the collapse of the US economy in the next 20 years...and everything turns into a dystopian sci-fi movie.
- OR
- *"End of the world"...could mean 5 billion years when the sun turns into a red giant and engulfs the earth.
 - *I read this question on a scientific website..."When the sun starts expanding (into a red giant) what will be the first signs of this process?"
 - *This sounds like the question the disciples asked Jesus about the end of the world.
 - *We will see, that Jesus uses end of the world language flexibly as well.
 - *The technical term for the study of the end is "eschatology"
 - *Eschaton (end)
 - *Logy (study of)
 - *We can have a personal eschaton...our own end.
 - *We can have a national eschaton...nations have come and gone
 - *We can have a worldwide eschaton...the physical planet itself could end.
 - *Today we are in Mark 13...a very complex chapter that raises more questions than it answers...but gives perspective that is crystal clear.
 - *Often the perspective it offers is missed because we get lost wandering around in the eschatological woods.

*I'm not going to read the entire chapter, just two sections...though we will be discussing the entire chapter today.

Mark 13:1 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” **2** “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” **3** As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, **4** “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”

32 “No one knows about that day or hour, 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 his 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!’”

*There are many interpretations of this passage.

*Many questions raised by it...many left unanswered.

*Why is that? The questions we have must not be the ones God wanted to answer...so perhaps we should try to discern what questions we should be asking.

*Years ago a theologian named Dodd coined the phrase..."Realized eschatology":

-Eschatology: "study of the end"

-Realized: "already happened"

*So how could the "end" have already happened if we are still here, are we in "overtime" or something?

*Later on another Theologian, George Ladd, helped complete the thought with his phrase "The Already/Not yet kingdom of God."

*At the first coming or Advent of Christ the Kingdom was inaugurated...at his second coming it will be consummated...complete.

*We live in the middle..."already/not yet."

*So as we read scripture we read from the perspective of the time it was written...

*What was all future tense then, is some future, and some past tense now.

*I like the word picture of a row of Mountain peaks seen from the distance...they appear in a line and you cannot see how close together they are until you climb one and look across to the next.

*Then you can see the length of the valley between them, but not the mountains off in the distance.

***One mountain** (one eschaton) is the end of a way of life or nation..like the deportation of Israel to Babylon.

*The prophets who spoke of the end of nations used dramatic poetic language...end of the world language.

*For the Syrian, Iraqi refugees today...there is no language too dramatic to describe how their world has changed...ended.

***A second mountain, much higher but it doesn't look like it because it is in the distance...**is the final eschaton...the end of all ends and the beginning all things made new.

*So we stand in a valley between mountains...we look back at one several "end" and forward to another.

*As we read prophetic material it is all written in our past and we have trouble knowing what parts have happened in our past, what is happening now, and what is yet to happen.

*In addition some apparently have several applications...so a single statement regarding a prophetic event might have happened in our past and have full fulfillment in our future.

*The difficulty (and disagreement) is often over what is future for us now and what is past now.

*How much is "already" and how much is "not yet."

*Don't be dismayed...this is an intramural competition...what will matter is not whether we figure out the timing of all this or who was closer to right about their view of "already/not yet", but whether we responded to the Lord Jesus in faith.

*This morning we will narrow our search to key applications and try to avoid getting lost in the woods.

The Setting:

*Jesus is walking out of the temple area with his friends.

*They are awestruck by the structures...

"Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

*It was the most beautiful and imposing structure in the world...a true wonder.

*The Temple had fallen into disrepair and became a 46 year remodel project.

*The courtyard was being enlarged to a size of 400 by 500 hundred yards...the size of 40 football fields.

*A huge platform and retaining wall had to be built on the side of the hill to accommodate the large crowds...some of the stones quarried uphill and brought down with the help of gravity weighed over a million pounds.

*You can still see some of these massive stones today.

*It was impressive space that took up 1/6 of the size of the entire City...but it wasn't just large, it was beautiful...and what a view!

*The platform held up by the massive stones jutted out over the valley 200 feet below.

*Jesus, as he walked from the Temple grounds and listens to his friends marvel at the structure responds with...**"Not a single stone will be left in place."**

*That's kind of a bummer, when you think about.

*"Wow, look at this cool building."

*"It will be demolished in a few years."

*"Thanks for that Jesus."

***Jesus was far from a pessimist but he knew when perspective was needed...**his perspective was always a "re-orientating" one...re-orientating people to God and his purposes.

*Earlier in the week Jesus had temporarily stopped the functioning of the sacrificial system in the temple...now he says the whole place and system will be demolished.

*This happened just as Jesus predicted in about 40 years.

*In AD 70 the Roman general Titus destroyed the temple

*The prophecy was specific...not a stone will be left on another.

*Even though some of the huge stones are still there...they are in disarray...Titus' army completely dismantled the structure.

*The Temple was so utterly destroyed that the exact location of the temple mount is disputed.

*Jesus brought about the end of the sacrificial system with the coming of the gospel...here he is predicting the end of that system with the end of the temple.

*The next scene may be another day or time but the setting is the Mount of Olives, a hill with a perfect view of the temple.

*Its elevation is about 2600 feet but in actual height it's only about 300 feet higher than the temple mount.

*So Jesus is on the hill nearby and is talking with his four closest friends.

*They are taking in the grandeur of the temple...no doubt diminished by the thoughts of its demise.

*Maybe Peter was thinking "I used to love looking at this place, Jesus ruined it...now all I think of is...what kind of disaster is going to happen?"

*That's the setting for the questions...look at the questions.

The Questions:

*As the four closest friends of Jesus take in the view...contemplating the future destruction of what they are looking at.

*They ask the most natural question in the world...when?

*If you hear something as important as this is going to happen the first question is...when?

*"When the Temple be destroyed like this?"

*And the second question..."And what will be the sign its about to happen?"

*This is going to be catastrophic stuff...when will it happen and how will we know ahead of time so we can get out of the way?

*Matthew reports it like this "When will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"

*There is no doubt for the disciples the destruction of the temple would signify the end of the world...they tied the two together in their minds.

*However, like I said...the events were like two mountain peaks that appear side by side but are actually separated by chronological distance.

The Answer:

*The first words out of Jesus' mouth are "Watch"

*Blepo... "keep on seeing" "pay attention."

*He will use this word four times in this passage.

v. 9, 23: Its translated "be on guard"

v.33: Its translated "be alert"

*There is another word used as well that is translated to "keep watch"...it is the task assigned to the "Watchman"

*"Keep a watch" means your job is to be alert, be on guard, pay attention.

*You are employed to "Watch"

*A sleeping watchman or a watchman on an iPhone is going to be fired...they are useless unless they are actually "watching"

*So the disciples have "When" and "What"...timing questions.

*He gives them "Watch"...an action answer.

*That is an important distinction.

***Information regarding the end is always given in order to lead us to specific actions...not in order to give timing answers.**

***Watch what?**

1. That no one deceives you into distraction.

-Watch for false teachers, false saviors.

-Watch for false alarms: wars, earthquakes, and famines

*"Hey wait, I thought these were the signs of the end."

*No, these are false alarms...so Jesus says..."do not be alarmed."

2. Watch...That you are not distracted by trouble.

-Mistreated by governments...this will be normal.

*Doesn't mean we shouldn't try to bring social change...but expect to have trouble for your faith.

-Families may break over the gospel and its claims

-People will hate you simply because you love me, no other reason.

*Stay alert...don't be distracted by trouble.

3. Watch...That you are not distracted by the delay

*Its going to be a lot like a man who goes away and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and one he puts at the door to watch.

*The watchman is supposed to watch precisely because he doesn't know when the owner will return...

*What is of vital importance for the watchman is that when the owner does return (and he will) that the watchman is not asleep but actually "watching."

*This is 2000 years old...where is he? Is he really going to end this?

*Perspective: 1000 years are like a day that has just gone by (Ps. 104)...for us its been 2,000 years...for him, a couple of days.

*So they don't a "When" answer...they get a "Watch" answer.

The Unanswered questions:

1. Exactly what part of this is "already" and what part is "not yet"?

*Some say all of it...some say some of it.

*Clearly some of it is "already."

*The historian Josephus tells the terrible tale of the siege of Jerusalem in 70AD.

*People starved, ate their own babies to stay alive, fought over scraps of dirty food, killed each other over in factional fighting.

*Jerusalem became a hell on earth.

*Jesus first said that his people were to stand firm, then in v. 14 he says when you see this...if you live in Judea (the larger province where Jerusalem was located)...head to the hills.

*Run, without going home to get your coat...pray you are not pregnant, pray its not winter.

*What is the "This" that signals they should flee the city?

*"The abomination that causes desolation."

**"Abomination of desolation"...very cool, ominous sounding phrase.

*Comes from the Book of Daniel.

*The phrase suggests something "repugnant" to God (abomination) that leaves the temple deserted (desolation).

*Daniel's prophecy was likely fulfilled several hundred years earlier when a wicked ruler desecrated the Temple.

*This statement of Jesus indicates though there are more than one of these instances.

*The imminent danger that Jesus was warning of was just 40 years in the future at that time...when the Roman army took over the temple and as had been done before, defiled the altar...

*So, Jesus said, when you see that...Roman soldiers in the temple...flee for safety into the hills...It is about to get really bad.

*In AD 70 Christians headed this warning and they were saved, while those who stayed in the city...saw the streets run in rivers of blood.

*Thousands of Jews were tortured to death on crosses...terrible, horrifying, evil time.

*The language used to describe this was like Isaiah describing the fall of Babylon...a dark sun, and stars falling from the sky.

*Those who fled became refugees...but at least they survived...and the gospel continued to spread.

*So clearly Jesus referred to what is a "then" future and "now" past event.

*But some of the language seems to indicate a future fulfillment beyond AD 70...so we are left wondering how much applies to "the already" and how much to the "not yet."

*There are those who would disagree and say they know exactly what falls in each category...I am not one who professes to know...I don't.

*I can see several possibilities.

*"But Terry, clearly stars haven't fallen from the skies so much of this is future, maybe all."

*This is called apocalyptic language...Stars are technically suns and they are not in the sky and don't fall.

*It is poetic language designed to communicate great catastrophe...it was used in the OT for the destruction of a nation.

*Like if you say "It was a dark day for our family."...you don't mean the sun didn't shine, but that it was a day of trial.

2. Who is "This generation will not pass away until all these things have happened?"

*There are many views on what this means...won't list them all.

*Some say those alive at the time it was spoken...which is the most natural sense of the phrase.

*Two views on what that means:

*First, it could mean those alive when the words were spoken because all this is "already"...it happened in AD70.

*Second, it could mean those alive when "All these things" begin.

*"All these things" refers to the beginning of the end not the end of the end.

*So in this view Jesus is saying, "you guys are going to live to see some of what I am talking about began to happen."

*You will see the beginning of the end times.

*And all time between the first coming of Christ and the return of Christ is called the "end times" in Scripture.

3. What are we to do with the statement of Jesus...

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father"?

*How could Jesus not know?

*Why does he know some details, the "what" but not the "When"?

*Somehow Jesus purposely and temporally, laid aside the exercise of his omniscience as part of what was involved in becoming man.

*This is all way above our pay grade...but what is self-evident here...we are not intended to know the timing.

*If only the Father is privy to the timing...why do people continue to try to map out the precise timing of the end?

*This passage leaves us with questions...but one thing there is no question about...we are to leave the issue of timing to God.

*So we have some answered questions and we have some unanswered questions...what are we to conclude from all this?

*The chapter ends with a parable told by Jesus about an owner of a house with servants.

*The owner leaves town and gives each employee a specific task, including one whose task it is to watch the door.

*He's not watching for the owner...he's there on security detail...its his job.

*However if your job is security and the boss might show up for a surprise inspection at any moment...you better stay awake.

*This ties in with the theme from last week...be found faithful.

*If you are super interested in "end times" stuff...its fine as long as you are more interested in faithfulness.

*If you are not remotely interested in all this "end times" stuff...its also fine as long as you are very interested in faithfulness.

*The narrative starts with a Jerusalem version of 911, but much, much more impactful...it is the destruction of the center of their lives as a people...the end of the Temple system.

*The obvious question "When" gets a "Watch" answer.

*Your assigned task, Jesus says...it to "stay awake"...to "Watch"

*Not to "watch" the papers and the Web for clues as to "when" but to "Watch" as in...do your job...play your role...be faithful.

Application:

*"Watch" is not a passive thing here...like "watching" a movie or a "sunset"

*It is more like standing watch...an active job description.

*"Watch" "Be alert" is "Be faithful" at the post God has placed you.

*Where has he put you? What are your circumstances? What are your opportunities?

*Watch.

1. Watch for trouble...it will come so watch that you don't let it either surprise you or cause to stop being alert.

*Trouble has a built in capacity to move our eyes to ourselves.

*It makes it very difficult to see anything else.

*The world, life, existence shrinks down to the size of a hospital room, or a tumor, or a relationship gone wrong.

*Watch! Don't let trouble shrink your existence down to unreality.

*God's work is larger, much bigger than this trouble...our lives are larger than our physical existence now.

*To maintain this perspective takes vigilance...trouble has the capacity to diminish that vigilance.

2. Watch for the help that is beyond your ability

*In the passage Jesus promised direct help beyond our ability via the Holy Spirit.

*When you are brought to trial because of your faith...do not worry beforehand about what to say...you will give what you need when you need it.

*This is not permission to neglect planning and preparation.

*It is about watching...watching with expectancy for God to bring help.

*We all must, ultimately, put our hopes in God...he will give what we need when we need it.

*We will be unlikely to see this help come if we are not watching for it expectantly or do not believe it is will be available to us.

3. Watch for opportunity:

*A transformational concept for many came through a man named Henry Blackby's experience with God that he shared through books and seminars.

*His premise is that we should be "Watching for where God is moving and join him."

*Its the opposite of launching out on our own and asking God to join us.

*Its also the opposite of passively "watching" God move from the sidelines.

*"Watch" is not passive it is actively "joining God."

*Here in our narrative today God's opportunity is embedded in challenge.

*"You will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them"

*"Hey...that's nice, get to meet famous people and witness to them."

*No, they are not getting backstage passes or presidential medals...they are on trial.

*Watch for opportunity to have impact in the lives people, it is going to be there.

*But the context may a surprise.

***Very rarely will opportunity come at an opportune time.**

*My daughter Corrie had a great ministry to the nurses that served in the NICU in KC.

*They have visited her here in Wichita, she has seen them there in KC.

*There was opportunity...in the midst of trial.

*This is not uncommon...but we must be watching for the opportunity...the movement of God...every when opportunity has for us...bad timing.

Conclusion:

*Why didn't we get more clarity on this?

1. It needed to apply to many generations of believers, who knows how many more.

-So the principles are clear, the specifics not as much.

2. It is about the gospel...putting our trust in Christ...it is a survivor's guide to the future...but not as in food and weapons but as in "faith"

-Our hope is in Christ...we do not expect to ultimately survive this life...but to experience eternal life.

3. We did get clarity...we got right answers to the right question?

***You will know what faithfulness looks like if you know that faithfulness is what you are looking for.**

*Jesus has you at a post...watch...be faithful there.

*Don't worry, don't fret, don't become overwhelmed...Watch...mostly watching for where God is moving so you can join him.

*He is moving...he will empower you to join him...so "watch"

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Intro:

1. Would you consider yourself: a. very interested b. not interested c. ambivalent... regarding "end times" discussions?
2. None of those three answers is wrong, so why do you think there are differences among Christians regarding their interest level?
3. Why do you think some Christians "look down" on those who have a different interest level than they do (more or less interest)?
4. Why do you think the general culture is fascinated (at least currently) with dystopian and end of the world movies?

Read:

Mark 13

Discuss:

1. What did Terry (borrowing from G.E. Ladd) mean by the "Already/Not Yet" Kingdom of God?
2. How does this principle help explain how things in Scripture can have partial fulfillment in the past and present and "full" fulfillment in the future?
3. Jesus predicted the end of the Temple structure (which happened in AD 70). His life, death, resurrection brought an end to the Temple system (sacrifices). What is your understanding of how this all fits together?
4. The disciples asked a very natural question for such a dramatic statement..."When?"
*What are some reasons you can think of that God didn't just tell us exactly when?
5. Jesus said to "Watch" for distractions that can come from:
 - a. Deceptive teaching
 - b. Trouble
 - c. Delay

*How can each of these three things lead to distraction away from faithfulness?

6. This passage raised some questions that it did not answer. What do you think God didn't answer all the questions we have...some that even seem like they are very important?

7. Of course we can't know the full answer to this question but ponder it anyway..."How is that Jesus didn't know the exact time of the end yet he knew details regarding the destruction of the temple?"

Apply:

1. How has (or is) trouble causing you to be distracted from faithfulness?

2. Are you consistently "watching" for God's help in your life? In both large and small issues? If not, do you know why? If so, what does that look like?

3. What might it look like if you began to more consistently "look for where God is moving in the world around you and join him there?"

4. Very rarely does opportunity come at an opportune time...how does this tie the first three applications together and how does it fit into your life right now?

THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Mark 13

**“FOR EVEN THE
SON OF MAN
DID NOT COME
TO BE SERVED,
BUT TO SERVE,
AND TO GIVE
HIS LIFE AS A
RANSOM FOR
MANY.”**

MARK 10:45

J. STILL



eschatology

Mark 13:1-4, 32-37 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?” ...“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. “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. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

"Realized Eschatology"

"Already/Not Yet"



The Setting



The Questions:

"When?"

"What will be the signs?"

The Answer

"Watch"

**Information regarding the end is always
given in order to lead us to specific
actions...not in order to give answers to
the timing.**

Watch:

- 1. That no one deceives you into distraction**
- 2. That you are not distracted by trouble**
- 3. That you are not distracted by delay**

The Unanswered Questions:

- 1. What part of this is "already" and what part is "not yet"?**
- 2. Who is "this generation that will not pass away until these things have happened?"**
- 3. Why didn't Jesus know when?**

"Watch" = active not passive

Watch for trouble

**Watch for the help that is beyond your
own ability**

Watch for opportunity

"Very rarely will opportunity come at an opportune time."

Why is this so vague?

- 1. It applies to the generations**
- 2. It is about the gospel...and that's not vague.**
- 3. We get clarity when we ask the right question.**

"We will know what faithfulness looks like when we know that faithfulness is what we are looking for."

**Watch...so you can see where God is
moving and join Him.**