

# What to Do Until Jesus Comes

## Mark 13:28-37

As you look into the future of our world, are you optimistic that things are going to get better? Or are you pessimistic? I believe for the first time polls are indicating that most Americans are beginning to feel that conditions will be worse for their children & grandchildren, than they have been for themselves. But I have good news! The great hope of every Christian is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In fact, Titus 2:13 says that we are “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” The Bible says that a reward awaits believers who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8). There are a number of reasons why we should love His appearing. Sin & Death will be defeated forever (1 Cor. 15:54). The Bible says that when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). We will have a glorified body like Jesus had! Furthermore, when Christ returns, Satan will be defeated. The curse will be lifted. Christ will be worshiped throughout the world, and creation will be liberated. The earth will once again be like a Garden of Eden. The Lord’s Second Coming is a real event that will take place in history, just as His first coming did.

Up to this point in Mark 13 Jesus has been giving a series of predictions concerning the future, about the destruction of the temple and about His second coming. But in the section we look at today, admonition replaces prediction. Christ admonishes us to do certain things while we wait for His return. And 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!**” These admonitions were for all believers. That includes us!

Listen to the words of Jesus from **Mark 13:28-37**:

- 28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.**
- 29 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors!**
- 30 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.**
- 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.**
- 32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**
- 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.**
- 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, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.**
- 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--**
- 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.**
- 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"**

In this text we see 3 main things we should do while we look for His coming. First of all, we are to:

## I. WAIT EXPECTANTLY

In this text our Lord gives 2 parables: one about the fig tree, and one about a landowner who goes on a far journey. In the first parable Jesus gives us the analogy of the fig tree. **"Now learn this parable from the fig tree."** Luke says, "From all the trees, any tree will teach you this." **"When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near."** That's a pretty simple illustration. Jesus follows it with an application: **"So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors!"**

Who is you? You is that group of people who see these things begin to happen. What are these things? The things Jesus just described surrounding His second coming: the abomination of desolation, the time of the Tribulation, the signs in the heavens. When you see these things happening, recognize He is near, right at the door.

So Jesus says in verse 30, **"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."** That is, those things happen, when the abomination comes, when the tribulation takes place, when the signs in the heavens happen, the generation alive at that time will see the return of Christ.

The Jesus gives us His assurance that it will happen just as He said. In verse 31 Jesus says, **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."** Our Lord always spoke with this level of authority. In Luke 16:17 He said, **"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail."** It is easier for the universe to collapse, and it will some day, than for one dot to come off an "I" in My Word. This is a testimony from God as to how He feels about His Word.

So Jesus' coming is as sure as the Word of God. Jesus wants us to be sure about His coming. But He does not want us to know the day of His coming. Verse 32, **"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."** We are not to be looking for the date of Christ's return, we are to be looking for Christ!

So Jesus says in verse 33, **"Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is."**

Then Jesus goes on to tell the second parable. He says in v.34, **"It is like a man going to a far country..."** The master or owner of the house represents Christ. In that day, travel was pretty slow, so a journey to a far country would mean that he would be gone a long time.

Even so, Jesus indicated that when He ascended back to heaven, He would be gone a long time. Indeed, by the time the Gospel of Mark was written, He had probably been gone at least 30 years. That must have seemed like a long time. Today, He has been gone almost 2,000 years! He has certainly been away a long time by now.

By the way, does the long wait mean that Christ is not coming at all? Certainly not! 2 Peter 3:9 says, **"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."**

How does this apply to us? Jesus implied that His people would have to patiently wait for His return. In fact, James 5:7 says, **"be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord..."** 1 Corinthians 1:7 says that we are to be, **"waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."** Don't give up on Jesus! He is coming again, just wait!

Kathy and I got engaged the night before I graduated from the Air Force Academy.

Then, just a few weeks later I had to leave her to report to my duty station in California. But we knew we would be together again soon. We wrote letters and made phone calls and made plans for the wedding. And a few months later I returned to Colorado Springs to get my bride and take her to live with me.

The point is that we have been betrothed to Jesus Christ. Some day He is coming for His bride, and we need to wait patiently for His return, and be faithful to Him while we wait.

But waiting does not mean doing nothing. Jesus shows us we are to:

## **II. WORK FAITHFULLY WHILE WE WAIT**

Jesus did not want His disciples to get so involved in the prophecies of the future that they would neglect the responsibilities of the present. He left us with work to do. So notice with me:

**A. The Mandate of Faithful Service** – 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, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.”** Like the householder in the story, before our Lord went back to heaven, He gave each of us work to do. In Luke 19:13 Jesus gave another parable said, **“Do business till I come.”**

What is our Lord's business? What is the work He left us to do?

**1. Proclaim the Gospel to All Nations** – Jesus says in v.10, **“And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.”** In Acts 1:7-8 Jesus said to His disciples, **“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.”** Our primary job is to share the Gospel & make disciples.

**2. Pray** – Jesus said in v.33, **“Take heed, watch and pray....”** One of the most important ministries we can engage in is to pray.

What are we to pray for? We should pray for the lost. We should pray for our missionaries. We should pray for the spiritual well-being of fellow believers. We should pray the ministry of our church. We should pray for His coming.

**3. Persevere** – The Lord expects us to be faithful while He is gone and to be working when He returns. We are not to quit, or let up. Yet in this context Jesus warns for several forces at work in the last days that could turn believers away from the Lord. He warned of persecution (vv.9-13). That same week He said in John 16:33, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” He also warned of deception (vv.21-22). We must not allow anyone to deceive us in these last days, and draw us away from faithfully serving the Lord.

Are you still serving the Lord while you wait on His return? Some of our Senior Adults may feel you can't do much, but you can certainly pray! You can give to help spread the Gospel. Jesus has gone to heaven, but while we wait, let us be faithful to do the work He has assigned to us.

Why should you work & serve Jesus while you wait? Well we not only see the mandate of faithful service, but let's consider next of all:

**B. The Motives for Faithful Service** – Notice how Jesus motivates us to be faithful in our service while He's away. First of all:

**1. He Motivates Us By the Hope of His Near Return** – Believers in the last days will face great difficulty. Yet if they know that Jesus is returning very soon, it will motivate them to persevere. So Jesus said in vv.28-29, **“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors!”** What an encouragement to remain faithful during those difficult days of stress & persecution.

**2. He Motivates Us By the Certainty of His Return** - He says in v.31, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”** What Jesus here drives home is that the physical universe, as we now see it, no matter how firm and strong some of it may appear to be, is actually going to pass away in its present form. However, His own words will continue to prove their stability and worth forever and ever.

Another motive to be faithfully serving until the Lord returns is this:

**3. He Motivates Us By Holding Us Accountable** - This is implied in the parable of the owner returning to his household & servants, to hold them accountable for their work.

In verse 35 Jesus says, **“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--lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping”**

In the Roman twelve-hour night watch, there are four three-hour periods. There is the evening, from six to nine. Then there is midnight, nine to midnight. Then there the rooster crow until three A.M., and morning ends at six. So you don't know when the master is going to come. You don't know if he's going to come in the evening, at midnight, rooster crow or morning, the names identifying the end of each period. These watches, by the way, are also mentioned in Mark 14 and Mark 15 in the account that is given of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Be on the alert...Be on the alert.

You and I ought to live our lives in the light of the fact that we are to stand in the presence of Christ. 2 Cor. 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.”**

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.”** If Jesus were to come today, would you be ashamed of how you have been living? Would you be ashamed of how little you have served Him? If He were to come again on a Sunday morning, would He find you in church? If not, would you be ashamed? Always remember that one purpose for the return of Christ is to examine our lives, and determine if we will receive a reward. 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.”**

Conclusion: Are you ready for the events of the return of Christ? If you aren't a believer, you aren't ready for Christ's return. Don't put off getting saved another day. Repent of your sins & trust in Christ as your Savior. He died on the cross for you. When Christ comes again, it will be too late to get saved.

If you are saved, are you waiting expectantly and working faithfully? Are you ready for His return?