

“Be Ready – Part 2”
Mark 13:28-37
(Preached at Trinity, October 8, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After a period of intense teaching in the Temple Jesus turns to leave. As He was departing His disciples came to Him boasting about the beauty and greatness of the Temple structure. Jesus divulges to them that the entire system of Judaism was about to come crashing down. The Temple structure was going to be utterly destroyed. Every stone would be moved from its place. Of course, this occurred in 70 A.D.
2. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, however, was not the end of the age and the second coming of Christ. Christ would not return until many hundreds of years later. This entire period is called the interadvental period.
 - A. This period is characterized by wars, famines, natural disasters, and tribulation.
 - B. This period is also characterized by the church pressing on through persecution. Jesus tells us in this passage that after the church has endured and persevered through the persecution of this evil world He will return with power.
3. This great Day will come at a time most unexpected. There will be no signs.
 - A. The ultimate sign will be the appearing of Christ

Matthew 24:29-30 NAS - "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,
³⁰ and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky"

 - B. He will come forth in all His glory accompanied by His army of mighty angels – He will give forth an ear piercing shout and the voice of the Archangel will also be heard and the sound of the trumpet shall go forth. It will be a loud and dreadful sight to the wicked
4. For the Christian we continue in a state of watchfulness
5. Last time we began to give solemn attention to our Lord's admonition to remain on the alert. Jesus gave several illustrations to stress His point. We look across the synoptic to discover these illustrations:
 - A. Illustration of the Days of Noah – **Matthew 24:37-39**

Matthew 24:37-39 NAU - "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be."

Life was going on as usual for the wicked of Noah's day
They were eating and drinking. They were beginning new families and planning futures until the very end

B. Illustration of the lost opportunity

When Christ returns every opportunity to be saved will be lost forever

Matthew 24:40-42 NAU - "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women *will* be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

1. People working side by side shall be forever divided
2. It will happen in an instant
3. Multitudes will be caught unprepared and be forever lost

Mark 13:33 NAU - "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time will come."

C. The Illustration of the thief

Matthew 24:43-44 NAU - "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*."

1. We lock our doors for robbers do not announce their arrival. They come at unexpected times – one is wise to always be prepared
2. Likewise it will be with the return of Christ. We must be always on the alert.

D. Illustration of the Servants

Mark 13:34 NAU - "*It is* like a man away on a journey, *who* upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, *assigning* to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert."

1. Jesus has left us as servants with a responsibility to provide for His household – His church.
2. The servant found laboring and watching for the Master's return shall receive a reward
3. The servant, on the other hand, that does not stay prepared for the Master's return shall be caught unaware.

6. Tonight I want to continue as we carefully consider the importance of being found ready. What does this demand of us? What does it mean to be on the alert?

I. First of all, staying alert demands watchfulness. It demands wakefulness. We can't afford to slumber

Mark 13:36 NAU - "in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep."

A. The Christian must maintain a state of alertness

1 Thessalonians 5:1-7 NAU - "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night."

1. Paul says that most people live as though they were asleep secure and careless. All attention is placed on the affairs of this life.
 - There are endless activities that occupy the mind and heart.
 - There are endless objects of delight that captivate the heart.
2. The lost man lives in a state of darkness—blinded to the realities that stand before him. He lives as if today is all there is. He gives his greatest energies to the things of this world.

But this is not us.

Ephesians 5:8 NAU - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"

3. As Christians we must not indulge in spiritual sloth and idleness. We must not squander time that can never be regained.
- Ephesians 5:14-16 NAU** - "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵ Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil."
- Eph. 5:16 KJV** - "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
4. **Matthew Henry**: "What! shall Christians, who have the light of the blessed gospel shining in their faces, be careless about their souls, and unmindful of another world?"

- B. The Christian must be continually on guard against our spiritual enemies
1. He remains alert against the attacks of Satan
- 1 Peter 5:8 NAU** - "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."
2. The Christian recognizes his life as a battle, a war.
 - a. The warrior on watch never removes his armor

2 Timothy 2:3-4 NAU - "Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

 - b. We must always be on guard against the lure of the world
 3. We must be on guard against the sinfulness of our own flesh – we must keep our appetites and desires in check
We must understand that our greatest enemy is inward
- 1 Peter 2:11 NAU** - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul."

- C. What are some signs of slumbering?
1. When a Christian cannot hear the voice of God's Word as it is preached – He leaves unchanged, unaffected – he easily dismisses what he hears.
 2. When a Christian thinks he is in a better condition than he is –
- Rev. 3:17 NAU** - "Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked"
3. When a Christian forgets the business of the day - when he grows slothful to duty
 4. The warning to us! We are prone to slumber let us continue watching, waiting

- II. Second of all, staying alert demands discipline
 - A. The disciple who is eagerly waiting for Christ gives himself to a life of strict discipline that he might live in holiness
 - 1. Like an athlete in training, the Christian must continually strive towards conforming to God's demand for us to be holy
 - 2. He maintains a strict standard for his life

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 NAU - "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷ but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."
 - 3. We've begun a study during DT on Christian Discipline.
So far I've simply stressed the battle. Our flesh continually seeks to be satisfied.
I stressed that the Christian life demands moral, doctrinal, and spiritual purity. He must resist compromise in any of these areas.
 - B. But our interest in the topic demands practical instruction. What are some particular areas of discipline? We must encourage one another in the discipline of the Christian life.

Hebrews 10:24 NAU - "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,"

 - 1. First of all, we must focus upon "means of grace." By this we are simply pointing to the Biblical means God has appointed for our edification.
How are we to grow in holiness? How are we to mortify the flesh?
 - a. We must maintain a steady intake of God's Word
Preaching, reading, studying, memorizing, meditating
 - b. We must remain constant in prayer
J.C. Ryle - "What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe that those who are not eminently holy pray little, and those who are eminently holy pray much."
 - c. We must be consistent in worship
We must desire to meet with God, to adore Him, to praise Him, to be transformed by Him—and to encourage one another in worship
 - d. The sacraments are also means of edification.
 - 2. But there are other disciplines that should be a part of the Christian life
 - a. Along with prayer, we must include times of fasting
Erroll Hulse - "Fasting reinforces our earnestness in seeking God"
David Brainerd - "I set apart this day for secret fasting and prayer, to entreat God to direct and bless me with regard to the great work I have in view, the preaching of the Gospel"
 - b. We must be careful to maintain a proper reverence for the Sabbath
R.L. Dabney - "It is historically true that the vitality and holiness of the church are usually in proportion to its reverence for the Sabbath."

- c. We should be careful in our training as a soul-winner.
- We must continually remind ourselves what is at stake
Heaven or hell is at stake – and time is uncertain
- We must be alert for opportunities
- We must be diligent to live righteously before them
- We must seek to bring them under the preaching of God's Word
- d. We must be careful to maintain the discipline of service.
Remember the nature of our calling – we are called to serve
Ephesians 2:10 NAU - "For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared
beforehand so that we would walk in them."
We are naturally given to sloth
- e. We must be careful to maintain a God honoring stewardship
Stewardship - The employment or use of one's time, talents, and possessions

Conclusion:

1. The Christian is in a state of waiting – he lives with patient expectancy. We must keep an eye on eternity and maintain a proper prospective on this world.
2 Peter 3:10-14 NAS - "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,"
1 John 3:2-3 NAU - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
2. By faith we continue watching for our Savior. We must patiently wait for the end of our faith – to see Christ face to face.