



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Waiting Watchfully (Mark 13:1-37)

GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

I've often said (and others too) something like this: "Please Jesus, come soon". Take a moment as a group to reflect on what is behind this statement. (for instance, am I really just tired of this life, its hardships? Why would I (you) say words like this?)

If you knew Christ would return tonight, next month, or next year...would you do something different? If so, what?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?

What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

What idea, context, Scripture do you think could have been expanded on, or included in the message?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Read Mark 13:1-37]

- What precipitated this discussion about the return of Christ? How may this be significant to the things Jesus says later? (vv. 1-3)
- What questions did the four disciples have for Jesus? How do those questions still resonate for us today? (v 4)
- How does Jesus answer their questions? (5-8)
- How does Jesus answer their questions? (9-13)
- How does Jesus answer their questions? (14-22)
- How does Jesus answer their questions? (23-31)
- How does Jesus answer their questions? (32-37)
- How are they similar and how are they different?

Dave mentioned two things when we interpret the Bible, particular Biblical prophecies. First, we don't determine the meaning of the passage, it is determined by the author (in this case Jesus' words recorded by Mark). We can determine how we ought to apply a passage, but the meaning is determined by Jesus (the author). It is also important to determine how the audience would have understood what Jesus said. In this case, the four disciples. So, in this setting Jesus responds to their inquiry about the impressive buildings of the temple by giving them three warnings about what will happen before He returns. 1. Don't be misled, be watchful and stay alert.

In what way are the "signs" specific, but also not particularly detailed? Why do you think Jesus does this? What do you think would be his concern for His disciples in the "in-between" when He would leave them and before He returns?

What lesson should we take for ourselves as we live in the "in-between"?

How can we be misled?

How can we not wait watchfully?

How can we fail to stay alert, or be on guard?

Lastly, scholars agree that biblical prophecy includes three elements (most often). A prophecy can be fulfilled in the past, the present or the future, and sometimes an OT prophecy includes a double fulfillment. In the case of Daniel's prophecy, the prophecy could be fulfilled in history by someone like Antiochus who defiles the temple by slaughtering pigs in it in BC 200, or by the Romans defiling the temple by setting up Roman images on its remains in AD 70, and the future, where an Anti-Christ would set up a new defilement in the temple.

Ask yourselves...

How would any of this impact the truth that Christ will one day return?

What is the one empirical way that we know Christ is returning? (vv. 26-27)

In what way could "looking for signs" actually distract us from living for Christ in the present?

Why are verses 32-33 so essential in helping us understand this passage and apply it to our lives?

READ THE TWO ILLUSTRATIONS JESUS GIVES ABOUT BEING PREPARED FOR HIS RETURN:

Verses 28-31

What lesson is Jesus helping us to understand? How does this correlate with anticipation? Dave used the story of the man coming back from Iraq to his family who were prepared for his return even though they didn't know when he would return. In what way does this relate to Jesus' lesson?

Verses 34-36

What lesson is Jesus helping us understand? How does not knowing when He will return have a vital bearing on our lives as we wait?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

How can we pray for each other?